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**A History of the
Methodist
Episcopal Church.
Volume IV.**

Nathan Bangs



A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Volume IV.

Author(s): Bangs, Nathan, D.D.

Publisher: Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library

Description: Perhaps no one was better suited to provide a written history of the Methodist Episcopal Church than Nathan Bangs. The brilliant, self-educated theologian had not only served as president of Wesleyan University, but he had also volunteered himself as an itinerant preacher in Canada during the War of 1812. Later, he founded the Methodist Missionary Society. The final volume of Bangs' four-volume history carries the proceedings of the Methodist church up to the 1840s, just decades before the American Civil War. During this time, the church formulated its views on the North American slave trade, becoming a force in favor of abolition. Bangs' detailed documentation of church proceedings and projects in this volume and those before it provides church historians with an invaluable resource.

Kathleen O'Bannon

CCEL Staff

Subjects: Christian Denominations
Protestantism
Post-Reformation
Other Protestant denominations
Methodism

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A History Of The Methodist Episcopal Church

By Nathan Bangs, D.D.

In Two Volumes

(Later Expanded To Four Volumes — DVM)

VOLUME IV

FROM THE YEAR 1829 TO THE YEAR 1840.

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

“How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel,” [Numbers xxiv, 5](#).

“Behold, I send an Angel before thee — beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not. — If thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to thine enemies, and an adversary to thine adversaries,”

[Exod. xxiii, 20–22](#).

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY T. MASON AND G. LANE,

FOR THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

AT THE CONFERENCE OFFICE, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.

J. Collord, Printer.

1839.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1838, by T. Mason
& G. Lane, in the clerk’s office of the Southern District of New York

Volume IV.

FROM THE YEAR 1829 TO THE YEAR 1840.

BOOK V

CHAPTER 10

Nineteen annual conferences — episcopal duties; education — extract from report of General Conference; new missions; Publishing Fund; its objects and capital; death and character of Bishop George; numbers; controversy; Its causes; Bible Society, Clarke's Commentary, Wesley's Testament, and general economy of Methodism assaulted and defended; Its ministry; its government and success; national societies — why censured; temperance; Oneida and other missions; Mariners' Church in Boston; protracted meetings; deaths; numbers; aboriginal missions; Shawnee mission; other missions; death of Henry Holmes; numbers; Upper Canada; aboriginal missions; removal of Indians, and its effects; other missions; Wesleyan University; Randolph Macon College; La Grange College; numbers.

CHAPTER 11

General Conference of 1832; number and names of delegates; address of the bishops; report on missions; on education; Bible, Sunday School, and Tract Societies; pastoral address; report on temperance; American Colonization Society; affairs of Upper Canada; report on the episcopacy; election of Bishops Andrew and Emory; regulation lessening the number of delegates; relief of worn-out preachers; against leaving preachers without an appointment; traveling agents; jurisdiction of bishops; adjournment.

CHAPTER 12

Number of bishops and annual conferences; Liberia; how and when settled; first emigrants; disastrous results of first settlement; removal to another place; prosperity of the new colony; missions in Liberia, and appointment of Melville B. Cox; his arrival in Africa; organizes a church; plans of usefulness; sickens and dies; his character; Green Bay mission; other missions; death and character of Lemuel Green; of Wm. Phoebus; of Nathaniel Porter; numbers; work prosperous; domestic missions; their use; Dickinson and Allegheny Colleges; Genesee Conference Academy; death and character of J. M. Smith; numbers; general improvement; Liberia mission; Flat head, or Oregon mission; description of Oregon; Hudson Company; Astoria; general reflections; Visit of Flat Head Indians to General Clark; great sensation produced by the announcement of this fact; Jason and Daniel Lee appointed to the mission; on their journey; arrival; reception at Fort Vancouver, and first sermon; commence at Willamette; reinforcement sent; arrival; more sent; cattle procured from California — Temperance Society formed; revival of religion; other missions; Lebanon College; legal decision respecting class and other collections; influence of this decision; deaths of preachers; numbers; mission to South America — general state of the country; encouragements to commence the mission; appointment of Mr. Pitts; other missions; for the slave population; death and character of Bishop McKendree; death and character of Bishop Emory.

CHAPTER 13

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CHAPTER 15

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CHAPTER 16

Book Concern — its origin; first book published; others issued; death of John Dickins, the first book steward; succeeded by Ezekiel Cooper; John Wilson his assistant, and then the principal; embarrassed state of the Concern; revives under Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason; Magazine resumed; increase of publications; debts likewise increased, with means of liquidation; revised hymn and tune book; book bindery; printing office; Clarke's Commentary and other books, and stereotype plates; Christian Advocate; enlargement of the Concern — branch in Cincinnati; new arrangements; good effects of; new buildings and increased variety of books; labor of editors and agents; enlargement of buildings; consumed by fire;

origin of the fire; public sympathy and aid to rebuild; presses and hands employed; various periodicals; objects and influence of the Concern misunderstood; moral, scientific and religious; pecuniary incidental only; closing remarks.

Book V

CHAPTER 10

From the close of the General Conference of 1828 to the beginning of the General Conference of 1832

Our last volume closed with an account of the doings of the General Conference of 1828, including a brief history of the radical controversy, and its results. With a view to give a consecutive narrative of that affair, the chronological order of the history, in relation to that controversy, was anticipated for three or four years; and therefore no more need be said in reference to that subject than merely to remark, that great peace and harmony prevailed throughout the bounds of the Church, and the work of God was generally prosperous.

The Oneida conference was formed at the General Conference of 1828, making in all nineteen annual conferences to be attended by five bishops. As, however, the health of Bishop McKendree was very feeble, the labor of the superintendency devolved chiefly on the other four bishops; and as Bishop George died early in 1828, the remaining three bishops had work enough on their hands for the three succeeding years. The manner, however, in which they fulfilled their high and weighty trusts gave general satisfaction to the Church, and tended powerfully to keep up its union, and to promote its peace and prosperity.

The cause of education was now advancing with much more rapidity than heretofore. A very able report was adopted at the last General Conference in favor of education, tending to show the great importance of this subject to the welfare of the Church, and particularly to the rising generation. In addition to three academies heretofore noticed, it appears that at this time the Mississippi conference had established the "Elizabeth Female Academy," the name being given to it in honor of Mrs. Elizabeth Greenfield, who laid its foundation by the gift of a lot of land, and a building estimated to be worth three thousand dollars. Another had been commenced under hopeful prospects in Tuscaloosa, in the state of Alabama, and two others in Illinois, under the patronage of the Illinois conference, one in Green county, and the other in the county of St. Clair.

After some general statements on the number and character of the literary institutions then in existence under the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the report, the production of the late Dr. Fisk, contains the following very just and timely remarks: —

"In review of the whole, we find the efforts and successful operations in different conferences to promote the cause of literature and science have increased very considerably since the last General Conference. There are now six or seven promising institutions in successful operation, two of them having college charters, namely, Madison College and Augusta College, which are already prepared to take students through a regular course, and confer on them the ordinary degrees and literary honors of such institutions, and hold out encouragements and assurances that authorize us to recommend them to the patronage of our friends. Other institutions are advancing to the same standing, and several more are con-

templated, and will probably soon be put into operation. And it is a matter that ought to be noticed as calling for special gratitude to God, that revivals of religion have been so frequent in our literary seminaries. And this, too, ought to stimulate our people to encourage and patronize these institutions. If God smiles on our undertakings, shall we not proceed? We have reason, indeed, to think that the minds of both ministers and people are more awake to this subject than heretofore. The importance of literary institutions is more generally felt than formerly, and a greater and more general disposition to aid in this work is manifested. But we are still too much asleep on this subject. We are in danger of not keeping up with the improvements of society. If we should fail of contributing our share in this work, we should not only fall short of our obligations to society in general, but to our own Church in particular. The subject of education ought to be considered of special importance and of special interest to Methodist preachers, both as it respects their own usefulness and the interests of their families. We do not, indeed, profess to educate young men and train them up specifically for the ministry. But it will be readily seen, that, as our ministers are raised up mostly from among ourselves, their literary character will vary according to the general character of the Church.

“We said this subject was of special interest to Methodist preachers’ families. We wish this to be deeply impressed on the minds of all, and we could wish every conference would by some means make provision for the education of the children of itinerant ministers. The changeable and uncertain life of a traveling minister, the duties which call him so much from his family and domestic concerns, all show the almost imperious necessity for such a provision. Posterity will hardly suppose we have conferred a great favor upon the world, if, in our zeal to benefit others, we suffer our own children to grow up uneducated and untrained, a disgrace to the gospel we preach, and a reproach to their parents. If we would save the itinerant plan from falling into deserved disrepute, we must see to it that our children be not neglected in their moral culture and literary instruction.”

There can be no doubt that this report gave a fresh stimulus to the cause of literature and science among us, and made many feel the obligations they were under to promote it, who had hitherto been indifferent to its success.

Such was the influence which the missionary cause was now exerting on the Church generally, that most of the new places which were occupied were entered under the patronage of the Missionary Society. This year the Red Hook mission, which embraced a territory lying on the east side of the Hudson River, the inhabitants of which were chiefly descendants of the Dutch, was undertaken in compliance with the earnest request of the late Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, whose widow contributed one hundred dollars a year toward its support.

In Steuben country, in the western part of New York, there was a considerable number of Welch people settled, who could not understand the English language; and the Rev. David Cadwalder, who was able to preach in Welch, was sent as a missionary among them. His

labors were so blessed that he formed a society of sixty members, and also erected a house of worship for their accommodation.

In the western country new fields were constantly opening for gospel laborers. This year St. Marys mission was commenced. It embraced the new settlements in the northwestern counties of the state of Ohio. The labors of the missionary were blessed to the awakening and conversion of souls, and the work has gradually prospered and enlarged the sphere of its influence from that day to this. Another, called St. Clair mission, in Michigan, was also begun under favorable prospects, and it was the happy commencement of a gracious work in all that region of country.

This year the "Publishing Fund" was established. This originated in a consultation with the book agents and the editor of the *Christian Advocate* and journal, the latter of whom had prepared a constitution for the contemplated Bible Society, at the suggestion of the late Bishop Emory, who was then the senior book agent. The object was to devise ways and means to enable the Book Concern to publish Bibles and Testaments, Sunday school books and tracts, on the cheapest possible terms. When these societies were formed, the book agents had pledged themselves to furnish the books for the Sunday schools, and tracts for tract societies, as cheap as they could be purchased elsewhere; and as the American Bible, Sunday School, and Tract Societies, being largely patronized and aided by the public munificence, were able to supply the demand for their respective publications almost at cost, it was soon found that we could not compete with them in the market unless ways and means were devised to furnish the needful funds. Our Book Concern at that time was deeply in debt, and could not therefore, from its own resources, print and circulate the books for Sunday schools, and tracts, at as low prices as they were furnished by the American societies, without risking its own reputation, if not, indeed, its very existence. To remedy this defect, and to supply the deficiency in funds, at the consultation before alluded to, it was agreed to make an attempt to establish a "Publishing Fund," in connection with the Bible, Sunday School, and Tract Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was accordingly done, and the constitution, together with the address of the managers, was published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* on the 17th of October, 1828.

The following extract from this address will more fully explain the principles and objects of this fund, and show that it was not intended to increase the actual resources of the Book Concern, or to add to its available funds, but simply to meet the extra expense incurred by furnishing publications on such terms as to enable our people to purchase books at their own establishment as cheap as they could be had elsewhere, without the hazard of being compelled to use books of which they could not approve. The following is the extract: —
"The managers of these societies, in conjunction with the agents of our General Book Concern, have resolved to make a joint effort for the efficient prosecution of our common objects. God has blessed us in all our borders, temporally and spiritually. A thousand times we have

exclaimed, 'What hath be wrought.' And yet the fields are opening before us, and still whitening to the harvest. The vast extent and the immense improvements of our country; its rapid growth, both in population and resources; the great and steady increase of our own denomination as a body of Christians, and our consequent obligations as stewards of the manifold grace of Him whose we are and whom we serve, and who requires us to excel in good works; our own growing resources, which ought to be consecrated to the Author of our mercies; the wants of the millions, of every age and sex, who sit in darkness or in guilt, and who must increase with the rapidly and vastly increasing population, without increased efforts for their good; the zealous and highly liberal efforts of other denominations, and our own special call, as we have from the beginning believed to be the design of God in raising us up, to aid in spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands: — in a word, the cause of God and of our country, of the rising generation and of posterity, demand of us, at this crisis, an exertion bearing at least some ratio of proportion to our obligations and to our means.

"The present is an era in our history of unparalleled interest. In the great spiritual and moral objects avowedly contemplated by the benevolent institutions and the Christian movements of the day, we have repeatedly declared our cordial and entire concurrence. With regard to the means of accomplishing them, we have differed. For various reasons, repeatedly assigned, we have considered it our duty to decline the proposed 'national' combinations, which, in our view, threatened for a while to swallow up, and absolutely to annihilate, every other plan of operation in our country. Such a result we still believe would have been pregnant with hazard. This sentiment does not by any means necessarily imply an impeachment of the Christian motives of those who may have differed from us in judgment. Our resistance to the consolidation of denominations, in effect, has had, we believe, a happy influence. But does it free us from our responsibilities as stewards of the mysteries and of the mercies of God? Does it release us from our obligations to contribute our full share toward the great work of civilizing, moralizing, and Christianizing the world? It does not. On the contrary, it increases both, since, from the stand we have taken, it is peculiarly incumbent on us now to see to it that the great and common cause shall, at least, sustain no loss by our course. If we desire, indeed, to be 'a peculiar people,' 'redeemed from all iniquity' by the precious blood of HIM who, for this purpose, 'gave himself for us,' let us not forget that we cannot sustain this high character without being at the same time, and in a correspondent degree, 'zealous of good works,' for which also Christ died.

"The great object of the Methodist Book Concern, from the beginning, has been to serve as an auxiliary in spreading Scriptural truth and holiness. With this view it has been the medium through which our Sunday school books and tracts have been issued, and it is intended also to be the medium for the publication of our Bibles and Testaments. The well-known character and the established credit of this institution, under the direction of the General Con-

ference, and, in the intermediate years, of the New York conference, is an ample guaranty for the faithful application of funds. Hitherto almost the whole business of our general benevolent associations has been performed through the agency of this concern, with the aid of its agents abroad. And whatever expenses, or risks, or losses have been incurred, either in the general depository, or by supplying the auxiliary depositories, were so extensive a country, have been wholly borne by this establishment. If it were practicable, as in ordinary cases, to establish the prices of such publications so as to cover all such expenses, and risks, and occasional losses, and to provide for such additional service as may be required, this might, perhaps, still be done. But the terms on which Sunday school books, tracts, Bibles, and Testaments are now expected will not admit of this; nor, in the prospect of the vastly increased demand, will it be possible for us, in this way, to maintain any thing like a fair and honorable competition with other institutions, which were originally endowed with large funds, and are still largely assisted both by regular annual contributions and by occasional donations; whose treasuries, nevertheless, we are assured, are still usually exhausted, and their calls for further aid are frequent and earnest. The consequence to us must be, either that the Methodist Book Concern, if left single handed and unaided, must be run down, and its great and benevolent objects be defeated, or our own publications, of the description mentioned, must be 'forced out of circulation:' to prevent which, if we mean to prevent it, ways and means must be devised to aid this establishment. It only remains for us, therefore, to determine whether we will aid our own institutions, or contribute our funds elsewhere. For give we must, somewhere; and continue to give, as God shall continue to bless us, and as occasions and objects continue to rise before us. Without this we cannot, we ought not to maintain our name or standing as a Christian people. Shall we, then, refuse to give at home, and suffer our own institutions to flag or fail; and, after all, from sheer shame, if from no better principle, be compelled to give elsewhere? We say, no.

"In view of the facts and premises above stated, the managers of the Bible, Sunday School, and Tract Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church have resolved, jointly, to co-operate with the agents of the Book Concern, and their auxiliary agencies, to raise a fund to be vested in that concern, as a permanent and certain resource for the accomplishment of their common objects. And they have resolved to aim at a foundation broad and strong, in view not only of the wants immediately pressing on us, but also of those of which the vast prospect opens before us; and to erect a superstructure from which, with the divine favor, streams of blessing may flow to generations yet unborn.

For the buildings requisite for depositories, agents' offices, printing office, bindery, and for the transaction of the general business of the three societies, and for stereotype plates, binders' and printers' presses, and all the requisite apparatus for printing and binding, on the scale contemplated, a sum not less than fifty thousand dollars will be requisite. For these objects a debt of nearly one fourth of that sum has already been incurred by the Book Con-

cern, without any charge whatever for personal services And yet we can scarcely be said to have more than commenced in the operation of these Societies; and with regard to the Bible Society, hardly to have made a beginning, except in the preparation of a few sets of stereotype plates, in anticipation. To conduct our operations to the extent intended, and to which, with united exertion, we are amply adequate, much greater sums must yet be raised. It will doubtless be found necessary to introduce power presses, with other improvements, both to increase the rapidity of publishing, and to reduce the prices. In view of all which, after conferring together, in deliberate consultation, we are of opinion that it is not safe, for the purpose of enabling the three societies to make the necessary preparations, to name to our friends a less sum than that above mentioned. After these preparations shall have been made, it must be recollected, however, that considerable annual and current expenses still must necessarily be incurred, in the service necessary for preparing, packing, carting, and forwarding books and tracts, with the requisite clerkship, fuel, lights, insurance, ground rent, and postage, the latter item of which alone will probably increase to perhaps not less than from one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars per annum. All such expenses have heretofore been borne by the Book Concern, which, consequently, has been obliged to fix the prices of the publications so as, in a measure at least, to cover those expenses, or else to sustain heavy actual loss. With a view, therefore, still further to lessen the prices, by having respect, in fixing them, to the actual cost of paper, press-work, and binding only, on the most economical principles, it is judged indispensable that a fund be raised, and be vested in the Book Concern, the use or interest of which shall be permanently appropriated to cover the above or any other unavoidable items of current expense and in consideration of which investments, when made, the said concern has pledged itself to submit to the managers of the above societies respectively, in conjunction with the agents, the determination of the prices at which their respective publications shall be furnished, on the principles above stated. And on this plan only, in our opinion, can they be furnished at the very low rates at which they are called for, and must be supplied. The further sum necessary for these purposes, on the enlarged and extensive plan contemplated, cannot be safely estimated at less than fifty thousand dollars, the interest of which alone, namely, three thousand dollars per annum, it will be observed, is to be applied to cover the items of annual and contingent expenses above-mentioned, or which I may unavoidably occur in the course of business. In all of which, however, it may be proper to mention, that it is not intended that an addition of one cent shall be made, out of any of these funds, to the support already allowed, agreeably to Discipline, to the regular agents of the Book Concern; and that they are intended solely to cover the extra expenses incurred by the extra business of these societies, whose publications are issued in connection with that concern. It was with a view to the extra labor caused by such publications, in part, that an additional agent was appointed at the last General Conference;

and as our operations shall be extended, further help, in various ways, will undoubtedly be found indispensably requisite.”

It will be perceived that this fund was to be vested in the Book Concern, and the interest alone used to meet the unavoidable expense of publishing the requisite books for the above-mentioned societies. And though it was in contemplation to raise one hundred thousand dollars, the fund, even now, (1841,) amounts to only about forty thousand. Comparatively small, however, as it is, it has done much good, and the Book Concern has been enabled to fulfill its obligations in supplying the books on as low terms as they could be purchased at other depositories. The dissolution of the Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by which the concern has been relieved from publishing Bibles and Testaments on those terms, will be noticed in its proper place.

Twelve deaths are recorded; fifty were located; seventy returned supernumerary; one hundred and one superannuated; and three had been expelled.

Among those who had died this year was Enoch George, one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The following is taken from the Minutes of the Conferences for 1829:

—
“He was born in the state of Virginia, Lancaster county, in the year 1767 or ’68. His mother died when he was young, and he was left in the care of an elder sister. During his minority his father removed to the state of North Carolina. At about the age of eighteen or nineteen he became, through the instrumentality of the Methodist ministry, deeply convinced of sin, and sought and obtained the pardoning mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He was soon called to the exercise of public prayer and exhortation; and after fruitless struggles to suppress the impression of duty which increasingly rested upon his mind, with great diffidence he entered the field of labor as a preacher. He traveled a short time with Philip Cox, and was then sent, by Bishop Asbury, to assist Daniel Asbury in forming a circuit on the head waters of the Catawba and Broad Rivers.

“In 1790 he was received into the itinerant connection on trial, and appointed to Pamlico circuit; and in 1791 to Caswell. In 1792 he was admitted into full connection, ordained deacon, and appointed to Guilford circuit; and in 1793 to Broad River. In 1794 he was ordained elder, and appointed to Great Pee Dee. The next year he was appointed to Edisto, with instructions to labor three months in Charleston, South Carolina; and the two years following he filled the office of presiding elder.

In 1798, on account of ill health, he traveled to the north as far as New York. Having measurably recovered his health, in 1800 he resumed his labors, and was appointed presiding elder of Potomac district, in the Baltimore conference. His health failed a second time, and he located in 1801. In 1803 he again entered the itinerant field, and was appointed to Frederick circuit; in 1804 to Baltimore district; 1805, Alexandria district; 1807, Georgetown,

D.C.; 1808, Frederick; 1809, Montgomery; 1810, Baltimore circuit; 1811, Potomac district; and in 1815 to Georgetown district.

“At the General Conference held in Baltimore, May, 1816, he was elected and ordained bishop. In the active discharge of the arduous duties of this highly responsible office he continued until his death. He died at Staunton, Va., August 23, 1828, in the peace and triumph of gospel faith, and with his latest breath giving ‘glory to God.’

Bishop George was a man of deep piety, of great simplicity of manners, a very pathetic, powerful, and successful preacher, greatly beloved in life, and very extensively lamented in death.”

A more minute and extended memoir of this servant of God may be seen in the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* for 1830.

That which distinguished Bishop George among his fellows was the warmth of his zeal, and the quickness of his movements. This no doubt arose from the depth of his piety. He seemed, indeed, to live and walk in God. This was evident from the uniformity of his devotions, as well as from his general deportment, both before the public and in his more private intercourse with his friends. He always rose early in the morning, and, if circumstances permitted, would spend the morning before breakfast in a solitary walk in the field, for meditation and private devotion; and in these lonely rambles he delighted in the contemplation of the Deity, as he is seen in his works and ways, and in holding communion with him in praise and prayer.

He was naturally eloquent, and his eloquence was all natural. He never sought to embellish his subjects with those artificial tinsels of pulpit oratory substituted by some for those overflowings of the heart which proceed from being filled and fired with the truth which the lips utter. Hence his “preaching was not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom,” but it was in “demonstration and power,” and “with much assurance in the Holy Ghost.” He was more distinguished, however, for affecting the heart and moving the passions, than for enlightening the understanding and informing the judgment. Whenever, therefore, you saw him begin to rub his eyes with his fingers, as if wiping thence the gushing tear, you might expect a pouring forth of those streams of gospel truth, generally of that declamatory or hortatory character, which were calculated to move the hearer to weep or shout, according to his predominant feeling. And he seldom concluded a sermon without greatly moving his audience in either of these ways, because he was first moved himself by those sacred and heavenly emotions which were evidently produced by the energetic workings of the Holy Spirit.

Viewing him, therefore, simply as an ambassador of God, sent peculiarly to awaken the conscience of the sinner, and to alarm or to strengthen the faith of the believer, and quicken him in the divine life, he was most eminently qualified for his great work. In addition to the holy pathos with which he breathed out the “words of truth and soberness,” his voice was

exceedingly musical, shrill, and clear, his action natural, and expressive of the feelings of his heart, and all calculated to impress the hearer with the solemn truths which fell from his lips. If, however, we were to judge him by other tests of a pulpit orator, we should detect some defects. In education he was quite deficient, and his general reading was very limited. For this lack of acquired knowledge he might be considered as furnishing more than a substitute in the pointedness of his appeals, and the manner in which he fortified all his positions by direct appeals to the sacred Scriptures. And if he dealt in detached sentences instead of following a consecutive order and arrangement of argumentation, he was abundantly compensated in the blessed effects which he saw produced in the hearts of those who heard him, and knew how to appreciate the value of a sermon more from its unction than its argument. His premises were found, where every minister of Christ should find them, in the Bible; and his conclusions were thence drawn without much regard to logical arrangement, and certainly without any circumlocution, direct, and with a force it was hardly possible to resist. And from the earnestness of his manner, some have entirely mistaken his objects and motives. Beholding the emotions which were very generally produced in the pious part of his hearers, sometimes expressed in loud shouts of praise, those who were mere outward court worshipers, or uninterested hearers, have retired from the sanctuary under a conviction that Bishop George was acting the part of a mountebank, speaking for the purpose of gaining shouts of applause. A sad mistake this. He ascended the pulpit, not as a stage-player mounts the stage, but as an ambassador of Christ, commissioned to declare his counsel unto the people, and to negotiate a
“Peace ‘twixt earth and heaven.”

And in the fulfillment of this commission he did not trifle with the awful realities of time and eternity, but poured forth from a full heart the solemn truths of God, in a manner which penetrated the conscience and drew forth the confession, by sobs and shouts, that God was with him of a truth.

Such was Bishop George in the pulpit. In the chair of the conference he was less acceptable. Though he was always intent on accomplishing the greatest amount of good by the best possible means, he often defeated his purpose by the haste with which he endeavored to dispatch the business. His manner, also was sometimes abrupt and undignified, and of course did not always command that respect which every conscientious mind would wish to feel and pay to a superior. Nor were his decisions always made with that wisdom and deliberation needful to produce a conviction of their correctness in all cases. He appeared, therefore, to much greater advantage in the pulpit than in the chair of the conference; and had he lived and died simply as an itinerant Methodist preacher, he had commanded more respect than was felt for him as a general superintendent of the church. These defects, however, detract nothing from his moral worth, nor render him less worthy of affection as

a Christian bishop, or as a man deeply and seriously devoted to the best interests of the human family; for who is perfect in every respect?

But in whatever light we view him, he will long be remembered with affection, as one of our early pioneers in the ranks of the itinerancy, as an indefatigable laborer in his Lord's vineyard, who won many sinners to Christ, and was always a son of consolation to God's believing people.

The warmth of his affections won him many friends, and the affability of his manners endeared him to them as a brother beloved, who might be approached at all times with a cheerful confidence.

His death was sudden and unexpected. Its announcement, therefore, spread a temporary gloom over the Methodist community. But death did not find him unprepared. He met this "last enemy," not only with meek submission, but with a holy triumph, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life. As the words, "Glory to God!" had often fell from his lips in the pulpit, so in his last moments, in full view of the invisible world, he shouted forth the praises of God, and no doubt went to the abodes of bliss and immortality.

The following statement of the numbers will show that the work was generally prosperous. Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 359,533; Last Year: 327,932; Increase: 31,601 — Colored This Year: 58,856; Last Year: 54,065; Increase: 4,791 — Indians This Year 4,501; Last Year 4,209; Increase: 292 — Total This Year: 418,927;¹ Last Year: 382,520 — Increase: 36,407 — Preachers This Year: 1,642; Last Year: 1,576; Increase: 66.

1829

We have before alluded to a controversy which arose between us and some other denominations of Christians; and as it came to its height during this and the two following years, that the reader may have a clear and full understanding of its character and results, it is thought expedient to give a short account of it in this place. It has been before remarked, that for a long time after our establishment in this country, very little was done to enlighten the public mind from our press, except the republication of some of Wesley's and Fletcher's sermons, Checks, and tracts, and the biographies of a few eminent servants of God. But in 1818 the Methodist Magazine was resumed and in 1826 the Christian Advocate and Journal made its appearance. The extensive circulation of these two periodicals, and the publication of numerous tracts, of a doctrinal, experimental, and practical character, and the continual augmentation of books on a variety of subjects, together with the prosperous state of our missions in various parts of our country, seemed to awaken the attention of others, and to call forth strictures upon our doctrines and general economy, of such a character as called for defense on our part.

¹ The total number in the printed Minutes is set down as being 421,156, which is, 2,229 more than it should be. See Methodist Magazine, and Minutes of Conferences for 1828.

Another thing seemed to put us in somewhat of an awkward position before the public. The organization of a separate sabbath school for the Methodist Episcopal Church made it necessary to provide means to supply our schools with suitable books. This led to the preparation and publication of sabbath school books from our own press; but as Bibles and Testaments formed the principal basis of sabbath school instruction, and as the American Bible Society was an institution in which all denominations were supposed to have an equal interest, it was thought that we had a right to claim a share from that society, in Bibles and Testaments, for the use of our Sunday schools. We accordingly petitioned the "Young Men's Bible Society" of the city of New York, which had been constituted for the express purpose of supplying sabbath schools gratuitously with the Holy Scriptures, and to which the Methodists, as well as others, contributed, for a supply of Bibles and Testaments for the use of our sabbath schools but our petition was rejected, merely because, as was stated by the secretary of that society, we were sectarians, and therefore came not within the legitimate range of their charities.

This rejection of our petition compelled us, either to suffer our schools to languish for want of suitable books, or to devise ways and means to supply them from our own resources; and hence a proposition for forming a separate Bible Society was submitted to the General Conference of 1828, and the conference recommended its organization in the city of New York. In conformity with this recommendation, the Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed, with the view of obtaining a supply of Bibles and Testaments for our sabbath schools, and for the poor members of our own congregations. This separate organization, together with the steps which led to it, provoked no little opposition from various quarters, particularly from writers in the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, by whom our motives, being misunderstood, were misrepresented. These things tended to keep alive the spirit of controversy. And as religious newspapers were now very generally patronized by the several Christian denominations, and agents employed for the several societies now in operation were traveling extensively through the country, each one zealous for his own sect, many things were written and published in those periodicals, implicating our character, impugning our motives, denouncing our doctrines and usages, and calculated to bring our institutions into contempt.

As Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary had obtained an extensive circulation, and Wesley's translation of the New Testament, accompanied with his notes, was also published and circulated by our Book Concern, an attempt was made by a writer in the west, and his efforts were seconded by several editors of the periodical press, to bring these two writers into disrepute, by endeavoring to prove that they had altered, with a view to sustain their peculiar tenets, the sacred text, and thereby corrupted the word of God. As this was a heavy charge, and, if sustained, must impeach their moral character and Christian integrity, it was

considered no more than a sacred duty we owed to their characters, and to the Church which delighted to honor them, to rescue their memories from this undeserved reproach. Indeed, we had reason to suspect that there was a combination among certain sects, if possible, to destroy our influence. This we inferred from the fact, that the presses under the control of Calvinistic editors, in different parts of the country, almost simultaneously uttered the same language against Methodism, without at all mitigating the severity of their censures by an acknowledgment of the good we had been instrumental in accomplishing. The *Christian Spectator*, a Quarterly Review conducted by an association of gentlemen connected with Yale College, in a "Review on the Economy of Methodism," commenced a rude and unprovoked attack upon our doctrine, discipline, and general economy, which was copied into other papers, accompanied with remarks as hostile to our Church, as they were untrue and unkind. This systematical and simultaneous attack upon us as a church was conducted with unsparing severity, and led us to conclude that a war was commenced upon our economy, as unjustifiable as it might be injurious in its results. Indeed, it was by no means confined to argumentative assaults upon our doctrines and usages, but the character of our ministers was assailed, their motives impugned, and they were represented as even hostile to the civil institutions of the country, and also of exercising a lordly despotism over the consciences of our own people.

Let us, however, classify these objections, and notice the answers to them.

- 1 Dr. Adam Clarke was accused of introducing into his Commentary unauthorized criticisms upon the original text.

To this it was answered, that he scrupulously followed, throughout, the present authorized version; and if at any time he dissented from it, he very modestly did it in his notes, assigning his reasons, and leaving every reader to judge for himself of the correctness of his opinions. But even allowing that he had altered the common English Version in some obscure places, with a view to render the text more intelligible, he did but follow the example of such men as Campbell, Houbigant, Macknight, and others, most of whom were Calvinistic commentators. This, therefore, was a groundless accusation, only calculated to raise the popular prejudice against Dr. Clarke, for the purpose of circumscribing his usefulness as a most able and pious commentator of the Holy Scriptures.

2. Wesley also was accused of mutilating the sacred text in such a glaring manner as to make "nonsense of some of the plainest texts in the Bible," and several instances were adduced to sustain this heavy charge. And as this controversy may be revived at some future time, or may be referred to in an unfavorable point of light, I think it proper to insert here the answer to these objections to Mr. Wesley's translation of the New Testament. It is as follows: — -

“The following texts are produced by the Religious Intelligencer, to show that Wesley ‘has made nonsense of some of the plainest texts in the Bible.’

JOHN 6:64

COMMON VERSION: — But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

WESLEY’S ALTERATION: — But there are some of you who believe not. (For Jesus had known from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who would not betray him.)

ACTS 4:27, 28

COMMON VERSION: — For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel. were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

WESLEY’S ALTERATION: — For of a truth both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel before determined to be done.

JUDE 4

COMMON VERSION: — For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and Our Lord Jesus Christ.

WESLEY’S ALTERATION: — For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were of old described before, with regard to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

REV. 22:19

COMMON VERSION: — And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

WESLEY’S ALTERATION: — And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part of the tree of life, and the holy city, which are written in this book.

1 PET. 1:19, 20

COMMON VERSION: — But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; who Verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

WESLEY'S ALTERATION: — But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreknown before the foundation of the world. but was made in the last times for you.

“Now whether Wesley's translation be more in accordance with the original or not, we believe it is at least equally plain, and easy to be understood.

“In respect to the first cited text, the chief difference is in the last clause, ‘and who would not betray him,’ though even this is very far from making ‘nonsense.’ Having never noticed this variation before we saw it produced in the *Charleston Observer*, we were not a little surprised that it should exist. To ascertain whether Mr. Wesley so translated the passage — knowing that the original would not admit of it — we searched the different editions of his Testament, with notes, and the result is that it is a mere typographical error. In the English edition, printed in London in the year 1795, the negative particle (not) is not found. Neither is it found in the American edition, containing his notes, which was printed in the year 1812 — three years before the Testament which contains the error was printed.

“In regard to the second and following passages, we wonder not that our Calvinistic friends are offended at the version made by Mr. Wesley, for some of them strike at the root of the peculiarities of their creed. To be satisfied whether Wesley can be justified in his translation, it is necessary to examine the original Greek text.

“In the first mentioned text, ‘For of a truth both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel before determined to be done,’ although the difference is very considerable, we think Mr. Wesley is fully sustained by the original text. The Greek verb “*poiasai*” is in the infinitive mood, and therefore may agree with either Herod, Pontius Pilate, &c., or with the singular, thy holy child Jesus. Allowing this to be correct, it does not follow that the inspired penman meant to say that those wicked people were gathered together to do what the hand and counsel of God before determined should be done; but that it was ‘the holy child Jesus whom God had anointed to do’ what he had before the foundation of the world determined he should do, for the redemption and salvation of mankind.

“The whole context requires this interpretation, we will not say to prevent its speaking ‘nonsense,’ but from speaking blasphemy. According to the present rendering and the Calvinistic interpretation of the text, it is brought to prove that Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the people of Israel who clamored for the life of Christ, in all their wicked and blasphemous conduct, did nothing more than fulfill the eternal and unalterable counsel and will of God! The reader may now see the reason why our Calvinistic friends are so exceedingly displeased with John Wesley, merely because he has so rendered this text that we need not necessarily infer that all this evil conduct of the persecutors and murderers of Jesus Christ was according to the predetermination of God — although in doing so he has only followed the Greek text,

by preserving the infinitive form of the verb “poiasai,” to do; — whereas had he done otherwise he might justly have been accused, as we shall presently see Beza may be, of corrupting the text. Although it does not appear from his comment on the passage that Wesley made the transposition from a conviction that it materially affected the sense, yet the zeal of his opposers seems to be kindled into a flame whenever such an interpretation is given, however fairly, which goes to question their favorite theory respecting God’s having determined, and as now influencing, men to all their sinful actions.

“We said that the context requires that the text should be so construed as to attribute the works which God had before determined should be done, to Jesus Christ, and not to Herod and his wicked associates. Those who ‘lifted up their voice’ on this occasion said, quoting from the second Psalm, ‘The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord.’ Now if those infatuated people were acting against the Lord, how could they at the same time be fulfilling his counsel and will? Do people fulfill the counsel of the Lord in acting against him? And must they be consigned to eternal burnings for thus acting? This would be a hard case indeed.

“Look also at the 29th and 30th verses, — ‘And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.’ The true state of the case appears to be this: God had ordained that when Jesus Christ should be manifested in the flesh, in addition to his dying for the sins of the world, ‘signs and wonders should be done’ by him; that he should ‘stretch forth his hand to heal’ the sick, to restore sight to the blind, raise the dead, &c; for this purpose he had been anointed, that he might do the things thus before determined in the eternal counsel should be done; and hence the apostles, after stating that Herod and his wicked associates had gathered together to oppose the Lord’s anointed, and to frustrate this gracious determination of God, pray that as their malevolent attempts had been so far defeated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that even now ‘signs and wonders’ may be done; that thus a full demonstration may be given to all that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah promised in the Old Testament. “It is probably on account of the manifest absurdities involved in the contrary supposition, that led Episcopius and many other commentators to adopt a similar construction to that of Wesley’s. And to show that Wesley is by no means singular in his translation, we may observe that the French version of the New Testament, ‘printed from the London stereotype edition, and according to the edition of Paris for the year 1805, said to be ‘reviewed and compared with the Hebrew and Greek texts,’ and ‘printed under the inspection of the New York Bible Society, renders this text precisely as Wesley has done. The following is the translation

“Car en effet Herode et Ponce Pilate, avec les Gentils et le peuple d’Israel, se sont assembles contre ton saint Fils Jesus, que tu as oint, Pour faire toutes les choses que ta main et ton

conseil avoient auparavant determine' devoir etre faites.' It will be perceived by those who understand the French, that the translators have transposed the sentences in the same manner that Wesley has done, preserved the infinitive form of the verb "ποιασαι," by rendering it 'pour faire,' to do, and connected it closely with the nonn, 'ton saint Fils Jesus,' "thy holy on Jesus," thereby allowing us to refer the works to be done to Jesus Christ, and not necessarily to his enemies who were gathered together against him.

"The Latin version of Montanus follows the common English version, and preserves the infinitive form of the verb, Facere quaecumque, "to do" whatsoever, &c.

"It is somewhat singular that Beza, to whom we referred in our former number as having been accused by the indefatigable Macknight of corrupting the sacred text to support his own contracted Calvinistic views, in the translation of the passage under consideration, has changed the form of the verb from the infinitive to the subjunctive plural, (facerent,) with a view to make it agree exclusively with Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the people of Israel!

"Beza also introduces a clause — which, to be sure, is not of much consequence, either way — into his version not found at all in the common Greek text, in hoc civitate, 'in this city.' The following is his translation of the two verses under consideration . —

"Coacti sunt enim in hac civitate vere adversus sanctum Filium tuum Jesum quem unxisti, Herodes et Pontius Pilatus cum Gentibus et populis Israelis, Ut facerent quaecumque manus tua et consilium tuum prius definierat ut fierent.' By thus rendering the verb in the plural number, making it to agree only with a plural nominative, Beza's translation amounts to a comment on the text, which, to those who understand no other language than the Latin, is a manifest deception. We grant, indeed, that the grammatical construction of the sentence, as the infinitive mood of the verb may agree with either a singular or plural noun, does not necessarily require our interpretation or the contrary, but leaves the reader to adopt that which from the context appears most agreeable to the analogy of faith; and this consideration makes the conduct of Beza the more censurable; it is the same as if any one on the opposite side should render the passage thus — Thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed that he might do the things thy hand and counsel before determined should be done; — and although we believe this is the genuine sense, we are far from thinking ourselves warranted in taking such liberties with the sacred text. However Calvinistically inclined our English translators may have been, they did not feel themselves authorized to follow Beza's translation, but have given a literal rendering of the verb "ποιασαι," to do.

"Now could Wesley be convicted of such rashness as Beza was guilty of, his enemies might well triumph. But Beza was a Calvinist. and therefore, in the estimation of his followers, who approve of his translation, he may be considered guiltless. Perhaps they may think that, being of the elect, God did not 'behold iniquity in' him; but poor John Wesley, being an Arminian reprobate, must have his name blotted from the book of life! For what, think you, gentle reader? For altering the sacred Scriptures? No, surely. This he never did; but for ab-

juring Calvinism — for taking off the mask by which its modest friends had endeavored to conceal its haggard visage. This is his sin — the offense for which he is now so severely castigated.

“But whatever corrections Mr. Wesley may have introduced in his version, we are persuaded that they do not affect, in the smallest degree, any fundamental doctrine of Christianity. To this sentiment we think all will subscribe except those who believe that the distinctive feature of Calvinism, namely, unconditional predestination, comprehending unconditional election and reprobation, is a fundamental doctrine.

“And although some have affirmed, in the heat of controversy, that unless we believe that doctrine according to the Calvinistic interpretation, we cannot be in a state of grace, yet we can scarcely persuade ourselves that any one, in his calm and sober moments, I say that all who demur at receiving this doctrine, thus explained, must inevitably be condemned at last. If any should assume such a position, we should despair of reasoning with him with any hope of success.

“When we speak of fundamental doctrines, we mean those by which the Christian system is eminently distinguished from all other systems of religion; but more especially the fall and depravity of man; the redemption of the world by the atoning merits of Jesus Christ; the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; holiness of heart and life, and all those collateral truths which are connected with or necessarily accompany these doctrines. Now if any man will show us a single text in Wesley’s translation which invalidates, or in the smallest degree weakens any one of these essential truths of Jesus Christ, or strikes at his real Godhead, or at the unity in trinity of the Deity, we will in that particular abandon him as our leader; we will believe in that instance he was under a mistake, and that he deserves the severe criticisms and censures of his adversaries.

“Believing that we shall not be called upon to controvert this point with our polemical friends, we proceed to notice the other texts which have been produced to prove that Wesley has made ‘nonsense of some of the plainest texts of the Bible.’ The first in order is,

Jude 4

COMMON VERSION — For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

WESLEY’S TRANSLATION — For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were of old described before, with regard to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

“Now we presume that the material words in Wesley’s translation to which our opponents in this controversy object, are, ‘of old described before,’ which Wesley has substituted for ‘of old ordained,’ in the common version; which is much nearer the original than the other.

The Greek text reads, “οἱ πύλαι προγεγραμμένοι,” the most literal translation of which would be, ‘of old before written;’ for the word “προγεγραμμένοι” is derived from “προ,” before, and “γραφο,” to write, or “γράμμα,” a letter or character of writing; though some have supposed that it means here, before proscribed, believing that the apostle meant to say that the ungodly characters he was about describing assimilated in their character and conduct to those ungodly persons who had long since, in the sacred writings, been proscribed and condemned. Whichever of these meanings may be put on the word here, it cannot be made to mean foreordained, as the word justly so translated has an entirely different meaning, and comes from a totally different root. The word which the lexicons and our translators have rendered foreordained, comes from “προπιζω,” and this from “προ,” before, and “οπιζω,” to bound, limit, or decree, and hence the compound word signifies to limit, bound, or decree beforehand, or, as very properly translated in the sacred Scriptures, to foreordain, or before appoint.

“Macknight, whom we have before quoted, and who was a professed Calvinistic minister in the Church of Scotland, gives the following translation of this passage: ‘Who long ago have been before written.’ His comment upon the passage is thus: ‘Jude means that those wicked people had their punishment before written, that is, foretold in what is written concerning the Sodomites and rebellions Israelites, whose crimes were the same as theirs, and whose punishment was not only a proof of God’s resolution to punish sinners, but an example of the punishment which he will inflict on them. According to some, the words have an allusion to the ancient custom of writing laws on tables, which were hung up in public places, that the people might know the punishment annexed to breaking the laws.’ “To this rendering of Macknight the French version agrees: ‘Dont la condamnation est écrite depuis longtems,’ — whose condemnation has been written a long time since.

“The Latin version of Montanus, which usually accompanies Leusden’s Greek Testament, translates — ‘Olim praescripti in hoc iudicium,’ the literal English of which is, “of old before written, or described,” which is a faithful translation of the Greek, and a justification of the version of Wesley.

“It is somewhat of a singular coincidence, that in this passage Wesley and Beza exactly agree in their translation; so that if Wesley has had his name blotted from the book of life for altering the sacred Scriptures in this place, he will be in the company of one of the leading champions of the Calvinistic forces. Beza translates, ‘prius jam olim descripti ad hanc damnationem,’ ‘before of old described to this damnation.’

“None of the versions, indeed, to which we have had access, except our English translation, have rendered the word in question ordained; and we may say with Dr. Adam Clarke, that it is as ridiculous as it is absurd to look into such words for a decree of eternal reprobation, &c., such a doctrine being as far from the apostle’s mind, as that of Him in whose name he wrote.’

“As to the text in [Rev. xxii, 19](#), the only material deviation from the common version is, that Wesley translates, ‘his part of the tree of life,’ and the common version, the ‘book of life;’ and how this can affect the meaning at all we are at a loss to see, as the person who has not his part in the tree of life, will hardly have his name in the book of life. Wesley, however, is sustained by Griesbach, who gives the word “ξύλον,” tree, as the true reading, referring to the margin for the word “βιβλον,” as being according to the commonly received text. We trust, therefore, that neither justice nor candor requires Wesley to be condemned for this emendation, especially as it does not at all affect the sense, and is justified by so high an authority as Griesbach.

“The only remaining text to be examined is 1 Peter i, 20, where Wesley translates the word “προεγνωσμενου,” foreknown, instead of foreordained, as it is in the common version. On this we need not say much, as the merest tyro [beginner, novice] in the Greek language knows that this is the literal, grammatical meaning of the word; and that there is no more authority for rendering it foreordained, than there is for saying that because I know that this rendering of Mr. Wesley is accurate, I therefore decreed it; for the radix [origin] for the above word, “γινωσκω,” signifies to know, and can never be made to mean to ordain, or decree.

Is it not a little strange, that those Calvinists who contend that there is so slight a difference between foreknowledge and decree, that the one necessarily implies the other, should so vehemently reprimand Wesley for giving the literal translation of this word? If there be no difference between knowledge and decree, as they contend, how has Wesley altered the meaning of Scripture, even allowing that the original word here had been “προοριζω”, which it is not, by translating it foreknown?”

3. Not only were the characters of Wesley and Clarke thus ungenerously assailed, but the integrity of our ministry also was called in question. The *Christian Spectator* had said, “Nor can we here so much as begin to speak of the misrepresentations, and the many cunningly devised artifices, by which the doctrine and discipline of Methodism are so assiduously propagated.” This, indeed, was a grievous accusation. But how did they attempt its support? How! Why, by merely vague conjectures. It was wittingly surmised that we had immense funds at our command, by which our ministry was supported independently of the people; that even these funds were so dexterously managed that our own people themselves did not know; being kept in ignorance by our “cunningly devised artifices,” either their extent or application. This unfounded and cruel charge was met, refuted, and fully put down, by an appeal to facts. It was demonstrated that the funds of the Church — derived, as was alleged, from the Book Concern and Chartered Fund — so far from being immense, did not yield over three dollars a year to each claimant; and that those supernumerary and superannuated preachers, widows, their children and orphans, who were the legal claimants upon these funds, did not receive, including what they derived from the voluntary contributions of the

people, over 25, 50, or seventy-five percent of that which was allowed them by the Discipline, which was one hundred dollars for such preacher or widow, and not over twenty-four dollars a year for each dependent child; and that, so far from concealing from the people either the amount of the revenues of the Church, or their application, the whole was annually published in the Minutes of our conferences.

This complete refutation of such a groundless charge seemed to silence our inconsiderate opponents, and to make their friends ashamed of their temerity in bringing it against us in so public a manner.

4. Another complaint was brought against the manner in which our Church property was held. It was alleged that it was deeded to the General Conference, and that therefore the people had neither a right in nor control over it. To this it was replied, that the statement was false in point of fact. Church property, instead of being secured to the conference, and therefore the property of the preachers, was held by trustees appointed by the people — where the laws of the states in which the property was located provided for that manner of their appointment, and in other places as the Discipline of the Church directs — in trust for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in that place. This, it was justly contended, placed the legal right of the property where it should be, in the hands of the people, and not in the conference, as our accusers had asserted.

5. Our mode of Church government was represented, not only as unscriptural, but as being set up and vindicated in “contempt of Scripture authority.” This led to a Scriptural defense of our Church government, of our itinerancy, and general method of conducting our affairs; and finally to a comparison between Methodist Episcopacy and Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, as well as a defense of our entire economy.²

6. Another subject of controversy arose out of the representations of the state of things in the valley of the Mississippi. We have before noticed the origin of the society for the education of pious young men for the gospel ministry. Out of this arose the “American Home Missionary Society,” which was organized in 1826. This society was composed of members and friends of the Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, and Congregational Churches, and as altogether a voluntary association; that is, it was not a church organization, not being recognized as the exclusive property of any particular denomination, nor under the control of its church judicatories. And as the missionaries who were in the employ of this society were taken from either or all of the above-mentioned denominations, they were instructed to form churches according to the principles of either the Presbyterian or Congregational plan of church government, as might best suit the people; and to give greater efficiency to their labors, and a wider range to their operations, a “Plan of Union” was formed between

² Those who wish full information on this subject may consult the “Defense of our Fathers,” “Reviewer Reviewed,” and “Original Church of Christ.”

these two denominations, so as to admit commissioners into the General Assembly from those churches which might be established on Congregational principles.

Comprehending these three large denominations in this society, under the name of American Home Missionary Society, its patrons gave it the name of a national institution, as though in it were represented the Christianity of America. To this assumption of a national society, we of course, entered our protest because it was calculated to mislead the public mind, especially in foreign countries. To say nothing of the Baptists, who were more numerous than either of the above denominations, the Protestant Episcopalians, the Lutherans, and numerous other sects, all of whom were exerting less or more influence in favor of Christianity, the Methodists were more numerous than either. It seemed, therefore, unjust to select a single society, made up of those three denominations, which represented not one fourth of the Christians in the United States, and call it a national society, thereby accounting all the others as nothing.

We had other objections. This society, by assuming a national character, was contrary to the genius of American institutions, which acknowledged no national religion. It seemed, therefore, like an effort to force public opinion to recognize the existence of a national church, in direct opposition to the declared intention of all our civil institutions.

This assumption of a national society, together with the avowed intentions of some of the reports of the American Sabbath School Union, respecting the circulation of their books, and the influence which it might have upon our state and general elections, excited an alarm in some minds, lest comprehensive plans were forming to secure the patronage of the state for the support of those denominations which were committed for the support of this society. And though this might have been a groundless alarm. it tended to awaken attention to the subject, and led other denominations to look about them, and watch over the welfare of their own institutions. And it is somewhat remarkable, that the very measures which were taken by this society to combine so many discordant materials in the range of their operations, and to make an impression abroad of the nationality of its character, should have led eventually to the dissolution of the union of the Presbyterian Church; for there can be no doubt that the Plan of Union," by which that church permitted Congregational principles to become incorporated into their judicatories, was the entering wedge which finally split that church asunder; so that the means adopted to make themselves great, and to impress upon the minds of others that they represented the religion of the nation, were the very means of lessening their number and influence, and of creating one other instead of combining three into one sect.

But the means used by those missionaries who were sent out by this society to enlist the sympathies of the church and the public mind in favor of their vast project gave great and very just offense. At the time of the organization of this society, a periodical was commenced, under its immediate patronage and control, called the "Home Missionary and Pastor's

Journal,” in which the reports of these missionaries were, from time to time, published. These reporters very often gave such a description of the moral wastes and religious destitution of the countries where they traveled, as was truly alarming to the real friends of the country and of Christianity. On examination, it was found that many of those places which were thus represented as entirely destitute of the gospel, had been regularly supplied for years by our ministry, and that there existed in them large and flourishing societies. The fact was, that our ministers had penetrated every part of that country, had kept pace with the progress of the new settlements, had gone to the Indian tribes, hundreds of whom had been converted to the Christian faith, and had carried the glad tidings of salvation to the black population of the south and southwest, entering every open door, and preaching the gospel to all to whom they could have access. Yet these were represented as being totally destitute of the gospel and of Christian ordinances. These things were thought to be unjust and unchristian, as well as unwise and impolitic. We therefore considered it a duty which we owed to ourselves to expose them, and to enter our protest against them. This was done, principally, through the columns of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, both by the editors, and those correspondents who were on the spot, and who therefore spoke from what they had seen and felt. And so palpable were the facts, that few undertook to justify the proceedings of these missionaries. Indeed, their own friends became convinced of the impolicy of such statements, and advised them to refrain; and hence, instead of saying that there were no ministers, they afterward reported that there were no Presbyterian ministers in such and such a place. To this manner of reporting there could be no objections.

The following extract from the *Christian Advocate and Journal* for this year will show how these objections were met and refuted: —

“Every year, from the time that Schemerhorn and Mills made their missionary tour to the west and south, and published their famous journal of observation, the thrilling note of complaint has been heard echoing from one end of the continent to another, about the paucity of ‘educated ministers,’ ‘competent ministers,’ &c., and the people have been called upon in no ordinary strains of mournful eloquence to exert themselves to replenish the funds of education societies, that the number of these ministers might be speedily increased; that the nation, to adopt the language of the Rev. Dr. Beecher, might ‘arise and save itself by its own energies.’ To keep up the stimulus thus excited, — to continue the language of the last cited author, — ‘the trumpet must sound long and press must groan,’ and utter in the ears of our countrymen the story of their miseries, or the ‘nation is undone.’ And from the time this note of alarm was sounded by Dr. Beecher, it has continued rolling through our country, until the doleful ditty of the ‘moral desolations of the vast valley of the Mississippi’ has reverberated from hill to valley, with a sickening repetition. Yes, this fertile numerous, valley, where, besides the Baptists, who are the Protestant Episcopalians, and other denominations, we have no less than seven annual conferences, composed, according to

the Minutes for 1829, of 516 traveling preachers, and probably more than twice that number of local preachers, and 128,316 church members, has been, and is still, represented as being in such a fearful state, that unless mighty exertions are made to replenish the funds of the national societies, it is apprehended that such a swelling tide of immorality will flow back, and cross the Alleghenies, as to sweep away pure religion from the Atlantic states and every succeeding year, from that time to this, our ears are stunned with the deafening cry, 'The treasury is empty!' 'the committee are in advance' for so many hundreds or thousands of dollars. To add energy to this voice of distress, all other ministers are deposed as 'incompetent,' 'uneducated,' 'inefficient.' To say nothing respecting the truth or falsity of these statements, we would ask whether it is becoming in gentlemen who utter this doleful cry of distress, with a view to replenish their exhausted treasuries, while it would seem that their funds are already so great that some think that the people ought to be warned against lavishing any more into their hands, to accuse us of accumulating funds dangerous to the state?"

It is by no means intended to say that there was no call for additional laborers either here or elsewhere. No doubt there were many moral wastes, both in the west and in the east, in the populous cities, in the villages, and country places, which needed the reforming influence of the gospel, and more active laborers to effect it. We could therefore have no objection to an increase of zealous and holy ministers. Our objections were to the unwillingness manifested to acknowledge the gospel character and labors of others, and to recognize the good which had been most evidently effected by them, and particularly by the self-denying exertions of our ministry in the western country. Indeed, in many of these reports there seemed to be a desire manifested to depreciate those who had long since planted the gospel in those very places now represented as destitute, and where our preachers had labored with great success, amid hardships and privations to which few were willing to submit; and these things are here recorded, that those who shall come after us may know to whom they are indebted for the first promulgation of the gospel in our western wilds.

It is believed that this discussion did good. At any rate, it tended to enlighten the public mind on these subjects, to make our doctrines, usages, labors, and success, more generally known and more justly appreciated, and thus strengthened the hands and cheered the hearts of the members and friends of our Church. It tended likewise to convince our opponents, that if they presumed to misrepresent or to slander us, we had the means of self-defense, and an ability and disposition to use them; and that when the facts were clearly stated, our doctrines and manner of propagating them fully explained, we should not be considered such dangerous heresiarchs as we had been represented to be. We are glad know, however, that these days of strife are past, and that a more friendly and amicable spirit prevails. We hope, therefore, that hereafter we may mutually strive only to provoke one another to love and good works."

Another subject was agitated about this time which gave no little uneasiness, and occasioned much discussion. I allude to the Temperance reformation. The American Temperance Society had commenced its powerful operations in 1826, and was now doing much good to the souls and bodies of men both in and out of the churches. A proposition had been submitted to us to unite with that society, and on such terms as we did not think it expedient to accept. It was proposed to raise a permanent fund of twenty thousand dollars for the support of an agent or agents, who should be exclusively devoted to the temperance cause. To this it was objected, because it was thought that a permanent fund was unnecessary for the success of the enterprise, as the money needed to carry it forward might be better raised as it should be wanted. It was moreover urged that we had always been a temperance society, having made abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a beverage a term of church communion and therefore to come into the measures of the American Society would be a virtual acknowledgment that we, as a church, needed such a reformation.

This occasioned no little discussion, and gave rise to some heart-burnings on both sides of the question. By some, whose zeal was not always tempered with knowledge, it was contended that, because we did not unite in the society, and co-operate with it in all its plans and movements, we were opposed to the cause of temperance itself, and therefore stood in the way of its success. To this it was replied, that being already the friends and advocates of temperance, having, as a church, recognized the practice of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a common drink, it was unjust to accuse us of a want of friendship for the men engaged in this enterprise of benevolence, or of zeal in promoting their objects.

This was the true state of the controversy; but the manner in which it was conducted elicited facts and brought forth light which had been dormant, or had not been perceived for though it had been made it a term of church communion by one of our general rules, it was found, on a closer inspection, that the rule itself had been softened down, and that in many instances even this had been suffered to remain as a dead letter. In consequence of these things, it was clearly discovered that members of our own Church were in the daily habit using intoxicating liquors, and that the Discipline, at best, had been but partially enforced. This discovery led to important results. For though our opinion remained unchanged respecting the inexpediency of some of the measures of the American Temperance Society, particularly as regarded raising a permanent fund, yet the necessity of the reformation, even in our own Church, notwithstanding our prohibitory rule, became very apparent. Hence temperance societies were formed, and our preachers and people very generally fell in with the temperance measures, greatly to the edification and benefit of the Church, and to the cause of God generally.

In noticing this subject, I am very desirous of correcting an error respecting the course taken by the official organ of the Church, the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, then under the editorial control of the writer of this History. It was alleged frequently, and is sometimes

even repeated now, that the paper opposed the cause of temperance. This was and is a sad mistake. It never, intentionally at least, opposed either the principles or practice of temperance. It did oppose some of the measures of the American Temperance Society, and advised our brethren and friends not to contribute their money to raise the contemplated fund; but its opposition was directed chiefly to the misrepresentations which were made of our real position, namely, that we were enemies to temperance, merely because we pleaded that our Church had favored the principles and practice of temperance from the beginning, and therefore had no motive to join the American Society.

This is the ground we took. And though afterward convinced we were in error in supposing that the strict principles of temperance were generally exemplified in practice by all the members of our Church, and therefore lent our aid to exterminate the evil from among us, yet we remain unchanged in our views respecting the impolicy of some of the measures of the American Temperance Society, while we hail with delight the onward march of the temperance reformation. And if any of our sayings or measures were construed into opposition to this reformation at the time, through misapprehension or otherwise, we think sufficient has been said and done since to convince all candid and unbiased minds of the rectitude and consistency of our course; and I here record my most solemn conviction that the temperance cause should be ranked among the most benevolent and efficient means now in use for the benefit of mankind. And this is recorded with the more pleasure from the fact that John Wesley was the first in modern days to proclaim a war of extermination upon the use of all intoxicating liquors, "except in cases of extreme necessity."

The Oneida mission was commenced this year. This tribe of Indians were settled on an Indian reservation in the western part of the state of New York. They had been partially civilized, and some of them were cultivators of the soil, and had adopted the habits of civilized life. Though the Protestant Episcopalians had had a mission among them for several years, they were in a deplorable state as to religion and morals. Like most of the semi-civilized barbarians who skirted our states and territories, they were deeply debased by habits of intoxication, and all those degrading vices, which connect themselves with a course of intemperance. By these means, instead of being in a thriving condition, they were diminishing in numbers, and deteriorating in property and morals.

In this state they were when visited by a young man of the Mohawks, of Upper Canada. This man had been converted in the revival which had taken place among that tribe of Indians, and was now impelled by his thirst for the salvation of others to make known the way of peace and reconciliation to these people. Being able to speak to them of the things of God in their own language, and from his own experience, they received the tidings with penitent and believing hearts, and a work of reformation commenced among them, which eventuated in the conversion of upward of one hundred. A school was also established for the education of the children, and those adult Indians who were desirous of learning. This good work has

steadily gone on to this day, and a number of the converted Indians have emigrated to Green Bay, who became the nucleus of a flourishing society in that place.

Through the example and teachings of these people, the Onondagas, a neighboring tribe, received the gospel, and twenty-four of them were converted to God and brought into church fellowship.

Several other missions were commenced this year in the new and destitute settlements in our western regions. St. Joseph's mission embraced a tract of country on the St. Joseph's river, which flows into Lake Michigan in Berrien county, Michigan. Among these new settlers the missionary found his way, and conveyed to them the glad tidings of salvation, and was instrumental in establishing several societies, which have continued to increase and flourish to this day.

In the frontier settlements of the states of Indiana and Illinois, on the waters of the Fox river, between that river and the lake Winnebago, the Rev. Jesse Walker, one of our old and experienced preachers, was sent as a missionary. Into this new and thinly settled country he penetrated, and succeeded in establishing several societies, and opening the way for the continued preaching of the gospel in that new country.

The country on the head waters of the Wabash was fast filling up with inhabitants from the older states, and therefore greatly needed the gospel. Hence a mission was commenced this year for the benefit of these people; and the missionary, the Rev. S. R. Beggs, so far succeeded, that through his and the labors of his successors, in 1831 there were returned one hundred and forty-six Church members.

Galena mission was begun this year. This was in the state of Illinois, on the banks of Fever or Bean river, upward of four hundred miles above St. Louis. Though Galena has since become a considerable town and a seat of justice, in the midst of the rich lead mines in that region, yet, at the time of which we now speak, it was but thinly settled, and its resources were just beginning to be known and appreciated. Though the people were generally so taken up in their speculating concerns — the mines presenting a fascinating temptation for obtaining wealth — as to manifest much indifference for religious things, yet a few were brought to the knowledge of the truth, and the cause has continued to advance steadily from that day to this.

Another mission, called Providence, was opened this year in the new settlements on both banks of the Mississippi river, from Vicksburgh to Lake Washington, and the adjacent settlement along the bayous and little lakes. The nature of the country and the condition of the settlers were such as to require great labor and many privations to carry the gospel to them. The self-denying exertions of God's servants, however, were owned and blessed, so that in 1832 there were returned on the Minutes one hundred and sixty-six members, sixty-seven of whom were colored, and the good work has prospered from that time onward.

We have already noticed the exertions that were making in behalf of seamen, and particularly the establishment of the Mariners' Church in the city of New York. The example thus set excited benevolent Christians to adopt similar plans in other places for the melioration and salvation of this class of our fellow-citizens. Accordingly, about this time, the "Boston Port Society" was organized, and the Rev. Edward T. Taylor — who, before his conversion to God, had followed the seas — a member of the New England conference, was employed to preach to seamen, in the city of Boston. He commenced his labors this year, under the patronage of this society, in the old Methodist meeting-house, the first built in Boston, and which was afterward purchased for the special use of seamen. Having been accustomed to the sea-faring life, and now thirsting for the salvation of seamen, Mr. Taylor was able to sympathize with them in a very peculiar manner, and to preach to them with energy and effect. And such has been the success of his labors, that a large and commodious house of worship has been erected, in which the word of God is preached to these sons of the ocean, a sailors' boarding-house established, on both of which floats the Bethel flag; — a clothing store and a school for the education of seamen's daughters, have also been opened, as most useful appendages to this institution of benevolence. A ladies' society has been organized for the purpose of aiding in this good work, by furnishing employment to the poorer class of females, wives and widows of seamen, and the garments thus made are deposited in the store, sold to those who are able to pay for them, or given away to such as are most indigent. This, altogether, is a noble charity; and the wealthy merchants of Boston know how to appreciate its worth. The manifest improvement, through the agency of the gospel, in the lives and general deportment of the seamen who attend the Bethel meeting, convinces all of the beneficial influence of the institution, and has prompted some individuals to give largely of their wealth for its support.

The spiritual interests of the congregation, and we may say its temporal interests too, are mainly intrusted to Mr. Taylor, and he has the satisfaction to see his house well filled, from sabbath to sabbath, with attentive hearers, who receive the word with joy; and the serious part of his hearers, as well as the sailors generally, look up to him with the utmost affection and confidence. In addition to administering to them the word and ordinances — for the ordinances of the Church are regularly attended to — Mr. Taylor is in the habit of visiting the ships in the harbor, and especially on their arrival, or on the eve of their departure on a voyage to a foreign port; of praying with them, and furnishing them with Bibles and tracts, and giving them words of admonition and encouragement. His congregation is indeed a floating one; and thus, while their pastor is stationary, they are the means of carrying the word of God to every port, and of exhibiting the blessed effects of experimental religion wherever their lot may be cast.

The sailors' boarding-house connected with the establishment is of great use, as it is kept on strictly religious and temperance principles, and is designed as a refuge for them, while

on land, from the temptations to those vicious indulgences so common to this class of men, as well as from the rapacious grasp of those who delight in cheating them out of their hard earnings when they come on shore. These "land sharks," as they have been not unaptly called, are ever ready to open their jaws whenever a ship arrives, that they may readily and remorselessly devour the earnings of the unsuspecting sailor, by presenting to him the intoxicating cup, and enticing him to haunts of gambling and licentiousness.

That these exertions in favor of seamen have done and are still doing much good, is evident to all who are acquainted with the extent and influence of their operations. Instances of most powerful conversions, both on the land and on the water, have been recorded, and since the temperance reformation has been pushed forward with so much energy and success, many merchants have banished the use of inebriating liquors from their ships, greatly to their own advantage, and to that of those who manage their affairs. By these means the word of God and religious tracts have been substituted for the gambling table and the sailor's grog, and the voice of prayer and thanksgiving has been heard instead of the voice of profane mirth and revelry, on board many of our merchant ships. And in some sense many of our seamen have become missionaries, by carrying the glad tidings of the gospel into the ports they have visited, thus teaching foreign nations that our God and his Christ are acknowledged and worshipped even by the hardy sons of the ocean. These floating Bethels, have therefore become, to some extent, itinerant ministers to foreign countries; and if the good work shall spread, as it may and will if suitable means are used, our sailors will become the connecting links between the several missionary stations in the different parts of the globe.

About this time the general work was much aided by means of what were first called "four days' meetings," and have since been known as "protracted meetings," because they were appointed to be held at first for four days, and afterward for an indefinite length of time, to be determined by the probabilities of effecting good to the souls of the people. Such meetings, to be sure, were not new among us. We have before recorded several instances, in seasons of great revivals, when meetings of this character were held from three to sixteen days, while the camp meetings were always continued from four to eight days in succession. But at this time they were introduced in a more formal manner, and instead of inviting people from abroad, they were held from one neighborhood to another, with a view to awaken a more general and individual attention to the concerns of eternity.

They were commenced by the Rev. John Lord, of the New England conference, in the month of September, in the year 1827; and such were their good effects, that they soon spread through the country, even among other denominations, particularly the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. They are generally conducted in the following manner: — Meetings are held morning, afternoon, and evening, opened with a sermon, and closed with a prayer meeting, during which penitent sinners are invited to come to the altar, to receive the benefit of prayer and exhortation; and they are continued from three to ten, and even

twenty days, according to the nature and strength of religious excitement which may be produced; though generally, when they are lengthened out beyond four days, the exercises are confined chiefly to the afternoon and evening. These meetings, in some places, have nearly superseded camp meetings, and probably will, if continued, in many other places. That in some instances they have run into excesses, is no more than what might be expected, constituted as human nature is; but this is no more an argument against their continuance, than it would be to infer that any other good thing should be laid aside because of its abuse. As a means of awakening sinners to a sense of their sinfulness, and leading them to Jesus Christ for life and salvation, they have been abundantly blessed and owned of God, and should therefore be kept up so long as they are productive of these results.

Forty-two preachers received a location, sixty-seven were returned supernumerary, and one hundred and twenty superannuated; seventeen had died, three had withdrawn, and four had been expelled.

Among those who had died this year, all of whom departed in peace, we may notice particularly Samuel Doughty, of the Philadelphia conference, who died in the thirty-fifth year of his age and the fifth of his itinerant ministry. Though young in the work of the ministry, he had established a character which, had it pleased God to lengthen out his life, would doubtless have shone forth with a peculiar brightness before the Church and the world. The following testimony to his worth is taken from the account of his death in the Minutes for this year: —

“Brother Doughty, as a preacher, was popular and useful. His discourses were frequently truly eloquent; and had his voice been equal to his other qualifications as a speaker, he would have attained much greater eminence. His literary and theological acquirements were highly respectable, of which his sermons in the *Methodist Magazine*, particularly that entitled ‘Instability in religion,’ afford satisfactory evidence.

“His zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of men appeared in the interest which he took in the success of benevolent institutions. He was their eloquent advocate, and was particularly active in the promotion of Sunday schools, both before and after he became a minister of the gospel. Just previous to his death he was engaged, with others, in organizing and bringing into operation a Conference Sunday School Union, auxiliary to the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which auxiliary he was corresponding secretary. In September, 1825, he was invited to assist in certain religious exercises at the enlargement of the church edifice in Wilmington, Delaware, and was there seized with the illness which terminated his life and labors on the seventeenth of that month, at the house of the Rev. Solomon Higgins. He died in great peace, rejoicing that death, to him, ‘had no terrors.’ He was highly respected and beloved, and the tribute of affection paid to his memory by the numerous and weeping members of his charge, who followed him to his grave, was gratifying to his brethren and to his surviving relatives.”

To those who knew him it is not necessary to add any thing more. Yet, having had the pleasure of his acquaintance, I cannot forbear saying that there always appeared in him a meekness of spirit and gentleness of deportment highly becoming the Christian minister, and which commended him to the affection and confidence of his brethren and friends. Though he possessed more than ordinary endowments as a preacher, and could convey his thoughts with a most graceful and easy elocution, yet he seemed unconscious of any superiority over others, and always put himself in the attitude of an humble learner, looking up to his seniors with diffidence, and to God by faith and prayer. He was therefore much beloved by his brethren, and hailed by the Church as a messenger of good tidings, and a willing and useful pastor to the flock of Jesus Christ.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 382,679; Last Year: 359,533; Increase: 23,146 — Colored This Year: 62,814; Last Year: 58,856; Increase: 3,958 — Indians This Year: 2,250; Last Year: 538; Increase: 1,712 — Total This Year: 447,743; Last Year: 418,927 — Increase: 28,816 — Preachers This Year: 1,817; Last Year: 1,642; Increase: 175.

1830

The reformation which had been effected among the aborigines of our country seemed to awaken a most lively interest in their behalf throughout every department of the Church, and no less so among those of the natives themselves who had been truly converted to the Christian faith. For these converts were not merely nominal believers in Christianity. They had felt its renovating and transforming power upon their hearts, and this had produced a correspondent change in their habits, civil, domestic, and religious. By this means they presented in their own lives a living, palpable, and irrefutable evidence to all who beheld them, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is even now the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. These, therefore, were living epistles, written, not with pen and ink, but by the finger of the living God, and sent unto the other tribes that they might read with their own eyes of the wonderful works of Almighty God, and be convinced that Christianity is “not a cunningly devised fable,” but that it is still “the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Acting under the sacred impulse thus produced, an effort was made this year to introduce the gospel among the Shawnee and Kansas Indians, and the Rev. Thomas Johnson was sent to the former, and the Rev. William Johnson to the latter tribe. These Indians inhabited the western part of the state of Missouri, and the missions were therefore undertaken by the Missouri conference. The Shawnees, especially, were found to be of a docile and tractable disposition, had commenced the cultivation of the soil, and manifested a great desire to be taught in religion, in literature, and the arts of civil and domestic life. Though the missionaries met with much difficulty, at first, for want of a qualified interpreter, yet a school was soon established for the education of the children, and a house erected for the accommodation of the mission. The commencement was small, and the progress slow, but success has atten-

ded the labors of God's servants, and the mission has continued to flourish and enlarge its dimensions to this day. Many, indeed, have been raised up among these natives of the forests, who are now ornaments to their profession, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God.

This year also several missions were commenced for the special benefit of the slave population in the states of South Carolina and Georgia. This class of people had been favored with the labors of the Methodist ministry from the beginning of its labors in this country, and there were at this time 62,814 of the colored population in the several states and territories in our Church fellowship, most of whom were slaves. It was found, however, on a closer inspection into their condition, that there were many who could not be reached by the ordinary means, and therefore preachers were selected who might devote themselves exclusively to their service. A catechism was prepared for their use, in which they might be taught the leading doctrines and duties of Christianity, and many of these slaves have been brought to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This year a mission was begun on the island of New York, called the Harlem mission. This embraced a population in the neighborhood of the city, many of whom were but transient residents, and generally destitute of the means of grace. It has been continued on the list of missions to the present time, always yielding, however, a partial support to the missionaries. In the bounds of the mission four houses of worship have been erected, and a good foundation is thus laid for the future salvation of the people who may inhabit that part of our city and its environs.

Some of the old towns on the eastern banks of the Connecticut river were as yet unvisited by our ministry, and this year a mission was undertaken for their benefit. It was so far blessed that it soon became adequate to its own support, and has since remained among our regular circuits.

In the northwestern parts of the state of Missouri, on the several branches of the Sak river, Gasconade, and southern waters of the Osage river, there were extensive tracts of country, fast filling up with emigrants from the older states and territories. These people were "as sheep without a shepherd," and therefore needed the gospel to bring them into the fold of Jesus Christ. Accordingly there were three missions commenced this year, namely, the Salt River, the Gasconade, and the West Prairie, for the benefit of these people. Notwithstanding the hardships and privations the missionaries had to endure in traversing this new country, they succeeded in raising up several societies and establishing regular circuits, which have continued to flourish to the present time, and are now aiding to send the gospel to other and more destitute place.

The Iroquois and Jonesborough missions, in the bounds of the Illinois conference, were likewise commenced this year. The former included the tribe of Kickapoo Indians, the condition of whom was somewhat singular. It seems that a prophet had risen up among

them, who acknowledged the true God, and was zealously engaged in instructing his people in religious things. Whether he had acquired his knowledge of God by intercourse either directly or indirectly with the white people, or had been conducted along by the secret whispers of that "Spirit which giveth understanding to man," it appears that, though mixed with many errors and superstitions, he had made considerable progress in divine things, and was piously engaged in his exertions for the temporal and spiritual benefit of his people. He was not averse to hearing the truths of the gospel, though it was some time before he fully gave up his peculiar notions, and came heartily to embrace Christianity in its fulness and power

The Jonesborough mission, which embraced a new country about one hundred and fifty miles from Vandalia, the capital of the state, was prosecuted with such success that it returned the next year two hundred and sixty-four Church members, and has since been numbered among the regular circuits.

Eleven preachers had died during the past year, and sixty-one had located; sixty-seven were returned supernumerary, and one hundred and twenty-two superannuated; four had been expelled, and four had withdrawn.

Among those who had taken their departure in peace was Henry Holmes, of the Virginia conference who died on the 27th of July, 1829, in the forty fourth year of his age, and the eighteenth of his itinerant ministry. The record of his death awards to him an eminent standing among his brethren in the ministry, as a man of deep piety, of unquestionable integrity and with rare qualifications as a minister of the sanctuary. In 1823 he was appointed to the office of presiding elder, which office he continued to fill with becoming dignity and great usefulness until he finished his work. He has therefore left a name behind him which will be remembered in connection with the progress of Methodism in that part of Virginia with pious gratitude by the people who were blessed under his ministrations. Though his death was sudden, it did not find him unprepared, for he met it with pious resignation and a joyful hope of future blessedness.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 402,561; Last Year: 382,679; Increase: 19,882 — Colored This Year: 69,383; Last Year: 62,814; Increase: 6,569 — Indians This Year: 4,209; Last Year: 2,250; Increase: 1,959 — Total This Year: 476,153; Last Year: 447,743 — Increase: 28,410 — Preachers This Year: 1900; Last Year: 1817; Increase: 83.

In consequence of the action of the General Conference of 1828, by which it was mutually agreed, that if the Canada brethren saw fit, they might form an independent conference in Upper Canada, of which they had availed themselves, the members belonging to the Church in that province are not included in the above enumeration. Had these been added, the actual increase would have been 37,935. This shows that, notwithstanding the secessions of the "Reformers," so called, and the agitations which followed, the labors of our ministry were still sanctioned by the Head of the Church. Indeed, greater peace and harmony pervaded

the ranks of our Israel than had been realized for many previous years, all being convinced that bold experimenters were not the most infallible leaders.

1831

From the movements already alluded to in Upper Canada, the Indian missions in that province, including no less than ten stations, and 1,850 adult Indians under religious instruction, most of whom were members of the Church, were taken from our superintendence and put under the care of the Wesleyan conference in England. These missions, which had become endeared to us by such associations as could not be easily dissolved, and for the benefit of which we had expended so much labor and money, still clung to our affections and could not therefore be surrendered, even in the amicable manner in which the arrangement for their future supply was made, without feelings of regret. Knowing, however, that they would be provided for by our brethren in England with the same assiduous care with which they had been from the beginning, we withdrew our pastoral oversight with the less sorrow, still praying almighty God to bless and prosper them.

Hitherto our Indian missions in the United States and territories had been attended with unparalleled success. About this time, however, the action of the general government of the United States on the Indian settlements began to exert an injurious influence upon some of these missions, and even to threaten them with destruction. In 1821 the Rev. Dr. Morse made an extensive tour of observation among the western tribes of Indians, under the patronage of the general government; and, in his published report, gave it as the result of his observations, that, could an amicable arrangement be made between the government and the aboriginal tribes, for their removal west of the Mississippi, where they could live under the protection of the United States, and be taught the arts of agriculture and domestic life, it would be mutually beneficial. This opinion, which seems to have been adopted by the government, and by the leading men of the nation, was manifestly founded on the presumption that the Indians, while they remain under their own laws and usages, cannot flourish in the vicinity of the white population, nor yet so amalgamate with the whites as to become identified with them. And does not the painful history of these people fully justify this opinion? From the first settlement of the country until now, notwithstanding all the efforts which have been made by philanthropists and Christians to civilize and Christianize these people, they have gradually receded on the advance of civilized society, or melted away and become extinct. Why is this? Is it because they have refused to obey the original command given to man, that he must “dress the garden “and keep it,” and “till the ground whence he was taken?” Whatever may have been the cause, such are the facts in relation to their history thus far; and whether the efforts recently put forth and now using to save them from barbarism and destruction shall prove ultimately successful, we must leave for other generations to testify.

But whatever may be their future destiny, the general government have adopted the policy already suggested, of removing them from their present residences to the regions west of the Mississippi, with the promise of protection from future aggressions upon their rights, and the hope of bettering their condition. To effect this object, treaty stipulations were entered into with some of the tribes to purchase their lands, to indemnify them for their losses, and to aid in transferring them to their new habitation. As these treaties were often concluded in opposition to large minorities of the natives, they became difficult of execution, produced much irritation, and in some instances the hazard and even the loss of life.

This policy operated most injuriously upon the Cherokees, who were settled principally in the state of Georgia. Over these people Georgia undertook to extend her laws, and thus force them either to sell their lands and remove west of the Mississippi, or be deprived of the privileges of living under their own laws, as members of a separate community. As the project was resisted by the most opulent part of the Cherokees, and a considerable portion of the nation, a division of sentiment was created among themselves in regard to their removal, which excited much irritation of feeling, and operated injuriously on the interests of the mission. At this time there were no less than seventeen missionaries, including interpreters, and eight hundred and fifty Church members, and the prospects of extensive good were brightening until they were overcast by these movements. This year, 1831, the troubles increased, and one of our missionaries, the Rev. Mr. Trott, for refusing to take the oath of allegiance required by the state of Georgia, was arrested, imprisoned, put in chains, and otherwise maltreated. On promising, however, to leave the territory, he was pardoned by the governor and set at liberty. These proceedings greatly harassed the Christian Indians who resided within the chartered limits of Georgia, while those without the state were in a more prosperous condition.

Similar results were produced by similar movements among the Choctaws. This mission had been remarkably owned of God, so much so that in 1830 there were reported not less than four thousand Church members, embracing all the principal men of the nation, their chief and captains, many of whom were eminently useful in instructing their brethren by exhortation and prayer. They were, however, less averse to being removed than the Cherokees, and finally, in a council which was held in March, 1830,³ they passed a resolution to sell

3 The following letter from an eye-witness of these things will show how matters were conducted: — “The Choctaw country is divided into three districts, called Lower towns, Six towns, and Upper towns. The Upper towns form the western district. Colonel Lefleur was formerly chief of the Upper towns, and Colonels Folsom and Garland were chiefs of the two eastern districts; until at a great council, held in March last, at which a majority of the warriors of the nation were present, Colonels Folsom and Garland [both Christians of the Presbyterian denominational resigned and Colonel Lefleur [a member of the Methodist Church] was chosen chief of the whole nation. This council, it will be recollected, also voted to offer their country for sale to the United States, on certain conditions, and to remove west of the Mississippi. “The vote to sell the country excited so much dis-

their lands to the United States and emigrate to the west. This resolution, however, gave offense to a part of the nation, and furnished a pretext to the pagans to plot the destruction of the missionaries and Christian Indians. The treaty, however, was finally consummated,

satisfaction, that Mushulatubee, [the leader of the pagan party,] who formerly been chief of the Lower towns district, but had been deposed, availed himself of it to recover his fortunes. He placed himself at the head of his friends, and with the aid of Netockache, the leader of the Kunshas, a little pagan clan in the Six towns district succeeded in obtaining a temporary ascendancy in the eastern part of the nation. The followers of Mushulatubee went through the form of appointing him chief of the Lower towns in the place of Folsom, and Netockache took the place of Garland as chief of the Six towns. They then combined their efforts tried all means in their power to put down religion, and becoming gradually more and more bold, at length threatened to drive out the missionaries out of the nation, and if they were compelled to emigrate west of the Mississippi, declared that not one should accompany them. They deposed the Christian captains throughout the two districts, and made use of threats, persuasions, and bribes, to induce those who had professed Christianity to cast off fear and live without God. It was now a time of great and almost constant alarm, and probably the only consideration which prevented the pagans from proceeding to extremities was the fear of Lefleur. At last, believing themselves sufficiently strong, they resolved 'to break him,' but in this they were disappointed, as will be seen in the sequel. "At the time of the distribution of the annuity for the two eastern districts at the factory, Mushulatubee and Netockache surrounded the building with their men, and resolved to prevent the Christian party from receiving any part of the goods. For this purpose they stationed guards along the road, and had collected a body of fifty or sixty armed men. But what was their surprise when Colonel Lefleur suddenly appeared before them, at the head of eight hundred armed warriors! The truth is, he left home with the determination of settling the controversy. He had, therefore, made ample preparation, and on his arrival near the factory he sent to the pagans 'a straight forward talk,' and it was also a 'hard talk,' — 'Mushulatubee must resign,' and must make his decision in fifteen minutes. At the end of this period, receiving no answer, Colonel Lefleur, at the head of his mounted men, proceeded toward Mushulatubee's quarters. It was now expected that there would be bloody work, but Mushulatubee had secreted himself; and Netockache, coming forward, offered his hand for peace and was accepted. Colonel Lefleur and Colonel Folsom, themselves unarmed, but at the head of their men, then pushed their way, in company with Netockache, through the guard, toward the body of the pagan party, who fled in all directions at their approach. Mushulatubee at length made his appearance, and, finding all resistance hopeless, consented to resign, and was told not to think of the office of chief for himself so long as Folsom or Lefleur lived. "Every thing," says the letter, "has turned out well. Lefleur has raised himself in the esteem of thousands. He was very prudent, but determined. His cause was good. Mushulatubee and Netockache were usurpers and bitter persecutors, but Mushulatubee has sunk, and although Netockache is at present acknowledged as chief of the Kunshas, he is 'to walk straight.' or he will himself sink. Another chief will soon be selected in Folsoms district. The United States commissioners will probably visit the nation to treat before long. What the Choctaws will finally do, I know not, or what troubles are before them. One thing is pretty certain, that they are threatened with a famine on account of the drought. Many will have no corn at all, and others only part of a crop."

though with much difficulty, and the missionaries determined to accompany the Christian Indians to their new habitation. It should be recorded that the general government did all it could to mitigate their sufferings, by affording provision and protection to the emigrants, and securing to them their lands in the west.

Yet, with all the precautions which were used by the government and the missionaries, they suffered much in their religious enjoyments, became divided, some were disheartened, and not a few apostatized from Christianity. For these sad disasters there seemed to be no adequate remedy. The decree was passed, and remove they must; and the Rev. Alexander Talley, who had devoted his best days and energies to this mission, and that too with a rare success, accompanied them to their new residence; and in a letter dated Sept. 5, 1831, he states that about five hundred had arrived, most of whom were members of the Church. These, with others that occasionally arrived at their new home, attended regularly to their Christian duties, and they have prospered more or less to the present time. These movements may account for the diminution in the number of Christian Indians on these missionary stations.

The Wyandott mission, which now included two hundred and twenty-three Church members, and had attached to it a flourishing school, was this year extended to the river Huron, where, through the labors of the missionaries and some native exhorters, there was a reformation effected among a few families of the Wyandotts and Shawnees, ten of whom became members of the Church.

The western country was almost daily presenting claims upon the bounty and labor of the Church to supply its spiritual wants. This year a mission was undertaken in Jackson county, Illinois, with the encouraging prospects of success. Another, called Deplain, was commenced, and has since been prosecuted with diligence and success.

The Lee mission, which embraced a tract of country in the counties of Lee and Marion, west of the Flint river, was commenced this year. This new country was now filling up rapidly with inhabitants and they were thus supplied with the word and ordinances of the gospel. The missionary formed a regular circuit, having no less than fifteen preaching places and in the course of the year received one hundred and twenty-five into the Church, besides erecting two houses of worship.

The cause of education was advancing steadily among us since its late revival, so that during the present year no less than three collegiate institutions had been founded, and had made a promising commencement. One of these was in Middletown, in the state of Connecticut. The buildings, which were of stone, and the land connected with them, estimated at from thirty to forty thousand dollars, were presented gratuitously to the New York and New England conferences by the Literary and Scientific Society of Middletown, on condition that forty thousand dollars more should be raised for the purpose of establishing a literary institution to be under the control of the two conferences above named, and any others that

might unite with them in the enterprise. These conditions being complied with, the premises were deeded to a board of trustees elected by said conferences, who have the sole management of the financial concerns of the institution; and it soon afterward received a charter from the legislature of the state of Connecticut, of a very liberal character.

The Wesleyan University, for this is its name, is located in a most delightful place, on an eminence in the western section of the city, having a commanding view of the Connecticut river, and the adjacent country east, north, and south, and is surrounded by a population noted for their steady, industrious, and religious habits, all zealous for the promotion of education, and most of whom take a deep interest in the university. The late Wilbur Fisk, D. D., was selected as its president, and, being aided by an able faculty, the university went into operation under favorable auspices, and has continued to meet the public expectation. Here, under the able guidance of its estimable president and his colleagues, many a youth has received his diploma in a manner alike creditable to himself and his instructors and what has tended to endear the institution to the Methodist Episcopal Church, a spirit of piety has pervaded its inmates, many of whom were born unto God during their sojourn in this young and rising nursery of learning and religion. It may be said in truth, that no place, in proportion to its numbers, has been more frequently or more generally blessed with revivals of religion than the Wesleyan University.

Another was established this year under the patronage of the Virginia and South Carolina conferences, in Boydston, Mecklenburgh county, Va., called the Randolph Macon College, under a charter from the state of Virginia. The Rev. Stephen Olin, favorably known to the public for his sound learning and deep piety, was elected its president, and he continued to discharge his duties with great satisfaction until his declining health obliged him to resign his station, for the purpose of making a voyage to Europe, in the hope of regaining his lost health.

This institution is also favorably located, and it went into operation under circumstances highly promising to its patrons and friends, having about sixty thousand dollars pledged to begin with. It has continued to fulfill public expectation, and, like the Wesleyan University, has been blessed with frequent revivals of religion, and has sent out sons imbued with sound learning and solid piety.

La Grange formed the third college which had been recently established under Methodist patronage. This was commenced under the patronage of the Tennessee and Alabama conferences, and was located in La Grange, in North Alabama, in a beautiful and healthy part of the country. Though its commencement was small, the whole property being estimated at only about twenty thousand dollars, yet it has gone on increasing in strength and patronage, commanding the public confidence and giving a useful education to its students. The Rev. Robert Paine was its first president, and he has proved his competency for the office by the satisfactory manner in which he has discharged its duties to this day. God has also smiled

upon this institution, by pouring out his Spirit from time to time upon the students, and bringing them to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

In addition to these collegiate institutions, the several academies heretofore mentioned were in successful operation, and were so many feeders to these higher and larger fountains of learning and science. It would seem, therefore, that the Methodist Episcopal Church was determined to redeem its character from the foul blot cast upon it, not without some reason, that it had been indifferent to the cause of literature and science. And the experiments which had been recently made had thus far succeeded so well, that many who had hesitated concerning the propriety and feasibility of the enterprise seemed to be convinced that the indications of divine Providence spoke so emphatically in its favor that they felt it their imperative duty to come up to its help. And all that is wanting to establish these institutions upon a permanent foundation, is more ample endowment from the wealthy and benevolent. If supported and conducted as they ought to be, and certainly may be, they will become the fruitful nurseries of learning and religion, and tend to add strength and beauty to that Church, under the patronize of which they have been founded and thus far sustained.

The work of God this year was generally prosperous, as may be seen by a reference to the increase of membership.

Seventy preacher had located, two withdrawn. two had been expelled, seventy-six returned supernumerary, and one hundred and thirty-four superannuated.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 437,024; Last Year: 402,561; Increase: — Colored This Year: 71,589; Last Year: 69,383; Increase: 2,206 — Indians This Year: 4,501; Last Year: 4,209; Increase: 292 — Total This Year: 513,114; Last Year: 476,153 — Increase: 36,961 — Preachers This Year: 2,010; Last Year: 1900; Increase: 110.

CHAPTER 11

The General Conference of 1832

This conference assembled in the city of Philadelphia on the first of May, 1832, and was composed of the following delegates:

New York Conference: Nathan Bangs, John Clark, Laban Clark, James Covell, John Emory, Samuel D. Ferguson, Buel Goodsell, Noah Levings, Samuel Merwin, Daniel Ostrander, Fitch Reed, Phineas Rice, Marvin Richardson, Peter P. Sandford, Robert Seney, Tobias Spicer, John B. Stratten, Nicholas White.

New England Conference: Daniel Fillmore, Wilbur Fisk, Benjamin F. Lambord, John Lindsey, A. D. Merrill, Timothy Merritt, B. Otheman, George Pickering, Orange Scott, J. Steele, J. Stoddard, F. Upham, Daniel Webb, Shipley Wilson.

Maine Conference: C. Baker, Oliver Beale, S. Bray, P. Burgess, W. H. Norris, D. Hutchinson, B. Jones, John Lord, W. Marsh, E. Robinson, J. Spalding.

New Hampshire and Vermont Conference: John Adams, C. D. Calhoun, John W. Hardy, Benjamin R. Hoyt, Samuel Norris, Jared Perkins, George Storrs, Eleazer Wells,

Oneida Conference: Elias Bowen, Joseph Castle, John Dempster, George Harmon, Josiah Kies, Zachariab Paddock, Nathaniel Salisbury.

Genesee Conference: Asa Abell, Robert Burch, Israel Chamberlayne, Abner Chase, John Copeland, Edmund O. Fling.

Pittsburgh Conference: Alfred Brunson, Ira Eddy, Charles Elliott, Robert Hopkins, Daniel Limerick, Wilder B. Mack, Joshua Munroe, Billings O. Plympton, David Sharp, William Stevens, John Waterman.

Ohio Conference: Russell Bigelow, W. B. Christie, John Collins, Zachariab Connell, A. W. Elliot, James Finley, Curtis Goddard, Charles Holliday, Greenbury Jones, James Quinn, W. H. Raper, L. Swormstedt, J. F. Wright, David Young.

Illinois Conference: James Armstrong, Thomas Hitt, G. Lock, Calvin W. Ruter, William Shanks, Samuel H. Thompson, Allen Wiley.

Holston Conference: John Bowman, W. G. Brownlow, J. K. Catlett, James Cumming, George Ekin, John Henninger, Samuel Patton, Thomas Springfield.

Kentucky Conference: William Adams, Peter Akers, Henry B. Bascom, Benjamin T. Crouch, H. H. Kavanaugh, Marcus Lindsay, George McNelly, Martin Ruter, Jonathan Stamper, G. W. Taylor, John Tevis, Joseph S. Tomlinson, Richard Tydings.

Missouri Conference: Joseph Edmundson, Jesse Green, Alexander McAllister.

Tennessee Conference: Thomas L. Douglass, Lewis Garrett, Alexander P. Green, G. W. D. Harris, Greenville T. Henderson, J. M. Holland, Wilson L. McAllister, James McFerrin, William McMahan, Lorenzo D. Overall Francis A. Owen, Robert Paine, Fountain E. Pitts.

Mississippi Conference: William M. Curtis, Thomas Griffin, Ebenezer Hearn, Joseph McDowell, Robert L. Walker, William Winans.

Georgia Conference: James O. Andrew, William Arnold, Ignatius A. Few, Andrew Hamil, Samuel K. Hodges, John Howard, William J. Parks, Benjanim Pope, Elijah Sinclair, Allen Turner.

South Carolina Conference: Charles Betts, William Capers, Samuel Dunwody, Bond English, William M. Kennedy, Malcom McPherson, Hartwell Spain, Nicholas Talley.

Virginia Conference: Bennet T. Blake, James Boyd, Moses Brock, Thomas Crowder, Benjamin Devany, Peter Doub, John Earley, William Hammett, Caleb Leach, Hezekiah G. Leigh, James Read, Lewis Skidmore, William A. Smith.

Baltimore Conference: John Bear, Robert Cadden, Charles A. Davis, John Davis, Henry Furlong, Alfred Griffith, William Hamilton, James M. Hanson, Andrew Hemphill, Gerard Morgan, S. G. Roszel, Henry Slicer, Henry Smith, David Steele, Charles B. Tippet, Norval Wilson.

Philadelphia Conference: George Banghart, Henry Boehm, Ezekiel Cooper, David Dailey, Manning Force, Solomon Higgins, John Kennaday, Joseph Lybrand, Lawrence McCombs, John Potts, William Torbert, Thomas Ware, Henry White.

Bishop McKendree, though in the city, not being able to attend the conference, and Bishop Roberts, the next in official seniority, not having arrived, the conference was opened by Bishop Soule, with reading the Holy Scriptures and prayer, Bishop Hedding being present. Thomas L. Douglass was elected secretary, and Charles A. Davis assistant secretary. After the conference was thus organized, the bishops delivered the following address: —

“To the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, assembled in Philadelphia. “Dear Brethren: — We have abundant cause of thankfulness to the Father of all mercies, for that gracious providence which has preserved us to assemble on this interesting and important occasion. And it becomes us to look up to him in humble prayer for his direction through the arduous business which may come before us.

Since the last meeting of this body, it has pleased the great Head of the church to pour out his Spirit upon us in an extraordinary manner. Our borders have been greatly enlarged, and the field of labor is continually extending with the advance of population. The increase of the membership for the four years ending last July has been one hundred and thirty-one thousand, one hundred and seventeen.

“The troubles and dangers which threatened us at our last session have nearly passed away. The secession from the Church, although embracing some valuable members, has been far less extensive than was feared; and the results, with regard to the general interests of the Church, it is presumed, have been widely different from the calculations of the principal agents in the schism.

“The measures which have been pursued by those who have been called ‘Reformers,’ have elicited a more careful examination of the principles of the government and economy of the Church, among our preachers and people, and through the community in general.

“This examination has resulted in a clearer conviction of the excellence of our system, and especially the efficacy of our itinerant plan; and consequently peace, harmony, and reciprocal confidence have been greatly increased and confirmed.

“To preserve such a happy state of things through that vast body of ministers and people to whom we are related in the strongest bonds of interest and affection, and to devise measures for the more extensive and efficient operation of that system which has already been so remarkably successful, is the chief business of your present deliberations and counsels.

“Whatever may be the present apparent condition of the great Christian community, spread over this vast country, whatever success may appear to attend the measures adopted for the extension of the cause of truth, it is believed, that there has been no period in the history of Methodism in this country which involved greater interests, or called more loudly for a constant, clear, and zealous exhibition of those evangelical doctrines contained in our form of Discipline and standard works.

“It may be the policy of others to suppress their articles or confessions of faith; to alter or change them to suit the condition of society; or to envelop them in the mists of metaphysical disquisitions and refinements; but with us it is very different. To circulate our articles of faith in the most extensive manner, to put our doctrine and discipline into as many houses and hands as possible, and to preach those doctrines everywhere, in the most plain and simple manner, especially holiness of heart and life, is our best policy.

“Our Missionary, Sunday School, Tract, and Bible Societies have been found most valuable and efficient auxiliaries to the grand itinerant system, in carrying on the blessed work of spreading Scriptural holiness over these lands. Already much has been accomplished by the operation of these institutions, although they are but in their infancy. And it is believed that with the proper attention of the annual conferences, and the efficient agency of the preachers in the districts, circuits, and stations, all the objects for which these associations have been formed may be fully realized. It has, however, been thought by many, that the Sunday school system might be improved and made more simple, and that the organization of a school and mode of instruction might be so embodied and simplified, in a book, as to render the formation and discipline of the schools much less difficult. We recommend this subject to your attention.

“The number of the annual conferences has considerably increased in the last four years, and in consequence of the enlargement of the work, it is probable others must shortly be organized. And as one of the superintendents has been removed from his labors and his sufferings to his eternal rest, we recommend to your attention the propriety of strengthening the general superintendency.

“The Book Concern, under a judicious management, in the hands of able agents, has so increased as to afford, as the report of the agents will show, an increased dividend to the annual conferences. It is believed to be in a prosperous state. This institution, both in regard to pecuniary means, and the spread of doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion, has a high claim to the patronage of the community at large, and to your attention as the guardians of its prosperity.

“The last General Conference authorized the superintendents, by and with the advice and consent of the annual conferences, to form several new conferences, which has accordingly been done. But we beg leave to suggest that this method of dividing conferences, and forming new ones, involves a responsibility which we desire may not rest on us in future.

“We would invite an inquiry whether the rule, (page eighty-six, compared with page thirty-eight,) which authorizes a preacher to exclude a member of our Church from love feast without a regular form of trial: and the rule, (page eighty-five,) which requires a member to be put back on trial for an improper marriage, are consistent with the right of our members of a trial by a committee, as provided in the restrictive articles. (See page twenty-one.)

“Some of the annual conferences have had doubts relative to the course proper to be pursued when a preacher on trial is accused of crime. We recommend an examination of this subject, with a view to the adoption of a rule, should it be thought expedient, which shall effect an identity in the administration in such cases.

“The rule relative to members who fail in business, or contract debts which they are not able to pay, has been ought defective in two points. First, It appears to limit the inquiries of the examining committee to the ‘accounts’ of the delinquent; and secondly, It is doubtful whether the ‘delinquent, if found guilty, is to be expelled on the decision of the first committee, or be tried before another committee in order to final expulsion. A difference of administration has resulted from this apparent defect in the rule. We recommend it to your deliberate consideration, together with the rule relative to cases where complaint is made for nonpayment of debts.

Most of the annual conferences have established literacy institutions. In some cases this has been done by a single conference, and in other cases by two or more conferences, united. Most of these institutions, though in an infant state, are flourishing and prosperous, and promise great usefulness to the community in general, and to the Methodist Church in particular. We cannot but regard this as a subject of vital interest to the connection at large. Your wisdom will determine whether any, and if any, what measures can be adopted by the General Conference at its present session for the support and advancement of this noble work.

“We have witnessed with deep regret the moral and religious condition of many of the children committed to our charge; children who have been consecrated to God, and brought into a special relation to his militant church by baptism. We would recommend a careful

review of the section on the instruction of children, with a design to determine whether any thing can be added to those most excellent directions, which may tend to confirm and reserve such children in this relation to the church of God.

“Notwithstanding our earnest desire to establish a mission at Liberia, in conformity with the request of the General Conference at its last session, circumstances which seemed extremely difficult, if not impossible, to control, have hitherto prevented the accomplishment of this desirable object. But at present we have an encouraging prospect of being able to embrace the first safe time and opportunity to send one or two missionaries to the coasts of Africa.

Permit us, dear brethren, in conclusion, to commend you and ourselves to God, and to the word of his grace, praying earnestly that he would direct you by the light of his holy Spirit, and comfort and Support you by the word of his grace. And that the whole Church may be preserved in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bond of peace.

“Yours, with much affection and esteem,

“W. McKendree, “Joshua Soule, “Elijah Hedding.

“Philadelphia, May 1, 1832.”

The following extracts from the several reports which were adopted by this General Conference will show its feelings and views in relation to the various subjects which came up for consideration.

The report on missions, which was adopted by the conference, after an approval of the general plan of operations, recommends again the establishment a mission in Liberia, the sending one person or more on a tour of observation to South America and Mexico, “with a view to ascertain the practicability of establishing missions in those countries,” and likewise the extension of the aboriginal missions on our western and northwestern frontiers, as well as the use of more energetic measures to fill up the waste places, whether in the older parts of our work or in the more recently settled territories.

The constitution of the society was, also, so amended as to make it the duty of the managers to make an estimate for the support of those aboriginal and foreign missions not connected with any particular annual conference, and authorizing the superintendent of such missions to draw on the treasurer of the society for the amount appropriated, in quarterly or half yearly installments.

The committee on education, after enumerating the several academical and collegiate institutions heretofore mentioned, and expressing their entire confidence in their character, and the manner in which they had been conducted, reported the following resolutions, which were concurred in by the conference.

“Resolved, That we have confidence in the above-named institutions, and that it be respectfully recommended to the annual conferences, and to our people and tends generally, to give their patronage and liberal support to these institutions as they may severally prefer.

“Resolved, That the above resolution is not to be so understood as to discourage the establishing of conference seminaries, as heretofore recommended by the General Conference, and that it is desirable that there should be, as far as possible, one first-rate institution of this class in each annual conference.

“Resolved, That self-supporting literary institutions re highly approved of by this conference, and the establishment of a department of industry in manual labor in our seminaries and colleges, where it is practicable, is — earnestly recommended.

“We deem it of great importance to the interests of our Church, that the colleges and academies which have been established under the direction of the annual conferences should be sustained and rendered permanent: and we invite our friends generally, as well as the members of our communion in particular, to bestow upon them a liberal patronage, and to assist in providing funds. To accomplish this it has been proposed to form societies for the purpose of raising moneys annually during a certain number of years, and the measure has been sanctioned by some of the annual conferences. The plan is evidently a judicious one, and we recommend it to our societies wherever it may be judged practicable, but particularly in those sections where it has been already introduced.”

The Bible, Sunday School, and Tract Societies were highly approved of; and recommended to the patronage and support of the members and friends of our Church, as may be seen in the pastoral and dress.

The following extracts from this address will show the views which were entertained on the several subjects therein named: —

- 1 **Holiness.** — “When we speak of holiness, we mean that state in which God is loved with all the heart, and served with all the power. This, as Methodists, we have said is the privilege of the Christian in this life; and, we have further said, that this privilege may be secured instantaneously, by an act of faith, as justification was. Why, then, have we so few living witnesses that ‘the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?’ Let us beware lest we satisfy ourselves with the correctness of our creed, while we neglect the momentous practical effects which that creed was intended to have upon us. Among primitive Methodists, the experience of this high attainment in religion may justly be said to have been common: now, a profession of it is rarely to be met with among us. Is it not time for us, in this matter at least, to return to first principles? Is it not time that we throw off the reproach of inconsistency with which we are charged in regard to this matter? Only let all who have been born of the Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God, seek, with the same ardor, to be made perfect in love as they sought for the pardon of their sins, and soon will our class meetings and love feasts be cheered by the relation of experiences of this higher character, as they now are with those which tell of justification and the new birth. And, when this shall come to be the case, we may expect a correspond-

ing increase in the amount of our Christian enjoyments, and in the force of the religious influence we shall exert over others.”

- 2 **Family religion.** — “Closely connected with personal holiness is family religion. Indeed, it may be considered as resulting from, and depending more or less upon it. He in whom the love of God is a paramount principle of action, will live in the bosom of his family as an instructing prophet, an interceding priest, and a leading example; and his influence will be felt. He will attend to the duties of family religion, not merely because they are prescribed, but because his heart is in them, and because he finds his greatest happiness in such attendance; and, wherever the heart prompts to a course of action that leads manifestly to happy consequences, the influence upon those who come within its range is great as well as certain.”
- 3 **Instruction of children.** — “The early instruction of our children in the knowledge of God, and of their duty to him, is a part of family religion which yields to none other in importance. Earliest impressions are usually the most lasting, and the most powerful in their influence upon the character of man. Hence it is, that so much emphasis is laid upon this duty in the sacred Scriptures. As a Church, we have admitted the high importance of an early religious education; but does our practice bear witness of the sincerity and practical influence of our convictions on this subject? Is it not a fact to be greatly deplored, that parents, religious, Methodist parents, too often act with no fixed plan in the education of their children? And where this is not the case, is not religion too often an object of; at most, secondary consequence in the arrangement of the plan adopted? Are we careful that not only our own instructions, but the books we place in the hands of our children, the company with which we encourage their association, the institutions in which we place them for education, and the instructors we provide for them, shall all, as far as possible, be such as shall contribute to the training of them up in the way in which they should go? Do we, when compelled to choose between them, prefer a course likely to make our children Christians, to one which will secure to them high standing in the world? If not, can we wonder if they shall choose the world rather than religion? We ourselves teach them that preference when we sacrifice their religious improvement to the acquisition of fashionable accomplishments. O, if parents would but consider how inconceivably important it is, that the minds of their children should be properly directed, they surely would shake off the indolence that prevents their own exertions for that purpose; and they would be careful that the influence exerted by others should, as far as possible, not only be innocent, but conducive to their forming an early religious character. When, as parents, we shall feel our weighty and fearful responsibility in this matter; when we shall properly appreciate the importance of an early religious education to the character and interests of our children, and when we shall act accord-

ingly, then may we expect to see them early disciples of Jesus, steadily walking in the way in which they should go, and joyful partakers with us of the consolations of the gospel. Then may we see wiped off the reproach of that too often pertinent interrogatory, 'In what are the children of Methodists better than those of others?' And who of us that has known the joy of God's salvation, that would not prefer that our children should be partakers in that joy, rather than that they should possess all that the world esteems good and great?"

- 4 **Sabbath Schools.** — "Among the most efficient auxiliaries in the religious instruction of our children, we may rank sabbath schools. The good that has been accomplished by these will never be fully known till that day arrives which shall reveal the secrets of all hearts, and the operation and tendency of the various influences which have acted upon the human character. Then it will be seen how many inexperienced feet have been prevented from wandering into the mazes of folly and sin how many thoughtless wanderers have been arrested in their course, and brought back to the ways of righteousness; and how many have been led to inquiry and to God by their instrumentality. Considering, then, the mighty and beneficial influence of sabbath Schools, allow us earnestly to recommend, that wherever it is possible, institutions of this kind shall be established, and zealously and perseveringly supported, by all who love the Lord Jesus, and care for the best interests of the rising generation.

For reasons which we think must be obvious on the slightest observation, we prefer the establishment and support of sabbath schools in connection with, and supplied with books from, our own Sunday School Union. Doctrines which we esteem of vital importance are not to be expected in the books or instructions of schools under any other patronage. We shall instance in only two particulars — the doctrine of Christian perfection, and that of the possibility of so falling from grace as to perish everlastingly. Now, believing these doctrines, and considering them as of immense practical importance, are we willing that our children should receive a course of religious instruction from which they are to be excluded? And yet in those schools which are under the patronage of the American Sunday School Union, these doctrines must not be taught because some of the parties to this Union do not receive them as doctrines of the gospel. There are other important discrepancies in the opinions of those who compose this Union and our Church; but these are mentioned, because they are familiar, and because no mode of reconciling them could be adopted.

Nearly allied to this recommendation of our own Sunday School Union and Sunday Schools, is that which we would now urge upon you in relation to our own Tract and Bible Societies — the former for the reasons already assigned, and both, because, in giving the preference to books issued from our own Book Concern, we afford support to that Concern, which is, in all its bearings, a very important part of that system by which Methodism has purposed

to spread vital holiness over these lands. We are not ignorant that we have been reproached with sectarian exclusiveness, in holding off from national religious charities; but we are little concerned at this. We are a sect of Christians, who honestly and conscientiously hold opinions, which we esteem of great importance, different from those which are held by most other Christian denominations; and we believe it to be our duty, not only not to disguise or to keep back these peculiar opinions, but to urge them constantly and emphatically upon all those, and especially the young, who are under our instruction. For these reasons, we would wish the liberty to conduct our religious charities on our own account, and in our own way.

Besides these, there are other reasons which have induced us not to connect ourselves with national religious charities. We believe that, in the arrangement of Providence, it is wisely permitted that the various sects of Christians should act upon their several views, the more extensively to spread the substantial truths of the gospel through the world, in order to check any aberrations, whether in doctrine or practice, to to which human infirmity renders the best and wisest of all sects liable, and in order to excite each other to activity and diligence. We, moreover, believe that a union of the various denominations of Christians, for the operation of religious charities, while they continue to differ in regard to important religious doctrines, would lessen the amount of these charities, and lead in the end to dissensions and animosities not otherwise to be apprehended. For these and other reasons, especially that we consider national religious societies incompatible with the safety of our free institutions, both civil and religious, we have long been known as in opposition to them.

And, as this has long been known, it is, to say the least of it, not a little surprising that agents of those societies have been found, who have confidently reported the Methodist Church as their supporters. It would be ridiculous, if not wicked, for these agents to excuse themselves, by saying that a few individuals of the Methodist Church are such supporters, when they cannot but know that, as a body, we are avowedly opposed to any such connection. But, not even this apology can be made by those who have continued, on the ground of unauthorized appointments, to represent our bishops and other ministers as officers in these societies, after they have, in the most unequivocal manner, declined the acceptance of such offices.”

5. **General Exhortation.** “And we earnestly recommend a strict observance of the requirements of our excellent form of Discipline, especially in what respects class meeting, conformity to the world, and the preservation of purity and peace in the members of a body associated for purposes of such mighty consequence, both to individual interest and the general good. If we would accomplish all the good contemplated in the formation of our society, we must strengthen and draw close the ties that bind us together; we must preserve the peculiar and distinctive features of our Christian character, and we must act with concentrated force.

“In conclusion, dear brethren, after earnestly entreating your prayers, that we may have hearts to labor for God, and that he may crown our labors with success, we commend you to him and to the word of his grace, praying that he may make all grace to abound to you, and that he may bring us together to his everlasting kingdom and glory, through Christ Jesus, to whom be glory, for ever. Amen.”

We have before noticed the movements in the Christian world on the subject of temperance. It came up for consideration before this conference, and resulted in the adoption of the following report, from the pen of the Rev. Henry B. Bascom, secretary of the committee to whom the subject was referred: —

The delegates from the several annual conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in General Conference assembled, at Philadelphia, May, 1832, after due inquiry and deliberation, have deemed it necessary to submit to the consideration of the ministry and membership of the Church, throughout the United States, the following remarks and advice on the subject of Temperance, the viewed as a question of intense and growing interest, now extensively occupying the attention of the religious public and the American people in general.

“The duty and necessity of strict and exemplary abstinence from indulgence in the use of ardent spirits and intoxicating liquors of every sort, will be found to have been a part of the moral discipline of our church from the earliest date of its existence and operations; and it is known to those who are at all familiar with our history, that we have accomplished much in preserving those immediately under our charge proverbially pure from the stain, and free from the curse of intemperance. Nevertheless, our success has not been entire, and much remains to be done before we can realize our wishes and the great object of our long-continued efforts in this very interesting department of Christian morals. And it is in order to effect this we now address you as the public servants of the Church, and officially intrusted with the administration of its discipline. We have too much confidence in the intelligence and piety of the persons addressed — the great body of our charge — to suppose for a moment that any apology is necessary for offering you the reflections and advice we propose, believing, as we do, that the intemperance we discourage, and would banish from the Church and the world, is alike unworthy and unbecoming all who bear the Christian name, or would be considered useful and reputable members of society in general. The vice of which we complain, and against indulgence in which we would urgently and affectionately remonstrate, is broadly and unsparingly condemned in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as directly inconsistent with Christian character, and fatally contravening in the hopes and claims of moral excellence. As Christians we bow to the authority of inspiration; and its language is too explicit and solemn on this subject to be misunderstood, or waived, by any who are not utterly reckless both of the welfare of this life and the more weighty interests of immortality in another.

In the language of the Bible on this subject there is nothing deficient or equivocal; and although we do not propose an enlarged discussion, yet we cannot refrain from asking your attention to its fearful and varied testimony against the sin of intemperance, the condemnation of which is uttered in every variety of form and phrase. 'Be not drunk with wine — wine and new wine take away the heart — wine is a mocker — strong drink is raging — he transgresseth by wine — they have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way — the priest and the people have erred through strong I drink — woe to them that rise up early to follow strong drink and continue till wine inflame them: therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure — woe to them that drink wine in bowls — be not among wine-bibbers — who hath woe, sorrow, contentions, and babbling? they that continue long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine — woe to them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink — he is a drunkard, and all the men of the city shall strike him with stones, that he die — it is not for kings to drink wine, nor princes strong drink — he who shall add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven — woe to the drunkards of Ephraim they shall be trodden under foot — while they are drunken they shall be destroyed as stubble full dry — blessed art thou, O land, when thy princes eat and drink for strength, and not for drunkenness — woe to him that giveth his neighbor drink, that putteth the bottle to his mouth, and maketh him drunken.' A statute of perpetual obligation, throughout all generations of the priesthood, was, that they were not to 'drink wine or strong drink' while engaged in the service of the tabernacle; and in another connection the obligation is made equally binding: 'Neither shall the priests drink wine when they enter into the inner court.' The drunkenness of Noah, Lot, Nadab, Abihu, and Nabat, incurred the displeasure of heaven; while the vow of the humble Rechabites, 'We will drink no wine;' is commemorated by the special and public approval of Jehovah; and to these we might add the examples of the wife of Manoah, Hannah, Samuel, and the Nazarites, as securing the sanction of divine commendation. We need scarcely add that these solemn and admonitory lessons of the Jewish Scriptures on the subject of intemperance are enforced in the language of persuasion, as well as the most fearful denunciation.

"And the language and warnings of the New Testament are equally decisive and uncompromising in the utter condemnation of the vice of intemperance in all its forms. 'Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' Drunkenness is ranked among 'the works of the flesh,' and is expressly said to exclude the delinquent from the kingdom of heaven. 'If any man be a drunkard, with such a one, no, not to eat.' Excess of wine is classed with the enormities of 'lasciviousness, revelings, and banquetings.' It is the offspring of darkness: 'They that are drunken are drunken in the night;' 'Take heed that your hearts be not overcharged with drunkenness;' 'Let us walk honestly, not in drunkenness — be not drunk with wine — the evil servant who drinks with the drunken shall be cut asunder, and have his portion with

hypocrites and unbelievers.' The Pharisees thought they could not more effectually reproach our Lord than to style him 'a wine-bibber!' St. Paul ranks it among the virtues of Christian bishops and deacons, that they 'be not given to wine.' Look also at the example of John the Baptist and a greater than he. The stern and unyielding purity of the former in this as well as in other particulars is held up to the notice and imitation of all 'who name the name of Christ.' And when the intoxicating cup usually tempered to suffering malefactors, to procure insensibility to pain and lessen the agony of death, was by the courtesy of Jewish and Roman cruelty tendered our Lord, the lustrous sufferer disdained the unholy succor, and trod the winepress of the wrath of his Father without the dishonorable resort of accepting unworthy means to sustain him in the conflict. Would to God that we, that all Christians in affliction and trial, might do as he did, in the hope of overcoming with him! And allow us to add here, that such are the terminal and fatal effects of this species of intemperance, thus forcibly portrayed and denounced in the Bible, that wine, used as a generic term, denoting strong intoxicating drinks of every kind, and confining the remarks to its abuse, is made to symbolize the wrath of God and the misery of the damned in a future state of retribution! It follows, therefore, that no person of ordinary intelligence can consult the pages of inspiration without perceiving at once that the common use of alcoholic intoxicating liquors, of whatever kind, is strictly and unequivocally forbidden in the Scriptures, as plainly and fatally injurious to the best interests of man, in time and in eternity; and as in other instances, so in this, the beneficent Author of our being has unnaturally conformed the constitution and laws of our nature to the pre-existing purpose of his will in relation to the immutable principles of right and wrong, and accordingly all our physical aptitudes and moral instincts resist the allurements and motives to a course of intemperate indulgence, until a series of vicious experiment and training, offering rebellion to the best feelings of our nature, and grossly violative of every principle of duty and moral obligation, shall have prepared the victims of intemperance for all that is monstrous in folly or hateful in crime.

God, who is the Author of nature, no less than of revelation, has abundantly provided for the essential happiness and relative usefulness of mankind but the experience of all ages and nations has furnished the most indubitable proof that the use of ardent spirits is totally inconsistent with either, and thus opposed to His benevolent intentions of heaven and provisions of nature, must be considered as a transgression of the will of God.

"And this view of the subject becomes the more convincing and striking when we attend to the peculiar nature and properties of all intoxicating drinks. In all these alcohol is the principle of all intoxication, and it has been clearly demonstrated by the researches and experiments of ministry and pharmacy, in connection with the structure and pathology of the human frame, that alcohol is an essentially active poison, and that the constant use of it, in any shape, must necessarily injure health, and finally destroy life itself.

The mischievous principle of inebriety, of which we now speak, cannot be made to nourish and invigorate the body. It is by the appointment of heaven and the constitution of our common nature rendered incapable of producing such a result. Its conversion into chyle, after being received into the stomach, and its subsequent appropriation by means of the blood vessels, for the purpose of renewing and invigorating the body, are known to be impossible. No alcoholic substance can be controlled, digested, or appropriated by the stomach. When received there it immediately diffuses itself throughout the whole system — it penetrates the very substance of the body, the brain, the nerves, and the blood vessels. All become excited and inflamed; the functions of the entire system become deranged; its action is irregular, and the well-adjusted play of its parts and mechanism disturbed and disordered; often deranging not only the functions of the body, but even its organic structure; and in whatever assignable measure alcohol, found in all spirituous liquors, and in most of our wines and malt drinks, may be drunk, these effects must necessarily follow, in a proportionate degree. And hence the wisdom and kindness of our Creator, manifestly shown in the fact that the appetite for this popular but mischievous poison is unnatural, artificially acquired, and a perversion of the dictates and provisions of nature. And in our judgment this view of the subject furnishes us with a strong additional argument in favor of the utter rejection of alcoholic drinks, except as a medicine, when the want of proper skill, or other adequate means, may authorize, in rare instances, an exception to the general rule of total abstinence.

We are the more disposed to press the necessity of entire abstinence, because there seems to be no safe line of distinction between the moderate and immoderate use of intoxicating drinks, — the transition from a temperate to an intemperate use of them is almost as certain as it is insensible; indeed, with us it is a question of great moral interest, whether a man can indulge in their use at all, and be considered temperate. We have seen that the natural, unperverted appetite of man does not ask for them, and the only motive that can possibly determine such an indulgence, is to obtain from them a vivid impression upon the nerves, more or less agreeable at the time, but utterly oblivious of better, because more salutary feelings. This result is unnatural, and of course it offers violence to the constitutional order and functionary uniformity of nature, and we respectfully submit, whether the means therefore must not be sinful.

“It has been already remarked, that the essential constituent in intoxicating liquors, producing inebriety, is alcohol, and that this is found, in large proportions, not only in the different kinds of distilled liquors, but also in most of the wines, and vinous, as well as malt preparations drunk in this country. Who is not alarmed, not to say confounded, when he reflects upon the amount of this bewitching poison which is found in all our fashionable drinks! How can a Christian account to his conscience and his God for swallowing daily an amount of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen, of which alcohol is compounded, and which, if taken separately from other neutralizing ingredients, would deprive him of life perhaps in a few

hours! In a bottle of brandy, for example, (we are guided in the estimate by Saussure and Brande,) there is more alcohol, by actual measurement, than water; — in our best wines, say Port and Madeira, as received and used in this country, nearly one half is alcohol; about six ounces of this poison will be found in a quart of strong cider, and little less than four in a bottle of porter or ale! In a brief address, however, we can only bring these facts into view in a summary way. We propose them for examination and reflection, and we implore the thousands under our charge to bestow upon the whole subject the attention it so obviously and pressingly deserves and demands.

“The great and increasing interest, the deep and lasting stake we must always have, as a Church, in preventing and curing the evils of intemperance, will furnish an obvious and commanding vindication of the course we have adopted, in making this appeal to the good sense and enlightened piety of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We consider all intemperance, whether in its incipient or more advanced stages, as an abuse of the physical force and vigor of man, and seriously deducting from the integrity of his mental powers and moral purposes; and we therefore invoke the aid of our people in an attempt to banish the evil from our Church altogether.

“We would remark here, also, that the immorality and curse of intemperance are most fearfully evinced, not only in its immediate and incipient, but in its final effects and relative bearings upon the confirmed intemperate, and others found in necessary connection or casual contact with them: impiety and worthlessness, disease and death, are its necessary attendants. God and nature have so disowned and frowned upon it, as to stamp it with the character of unmingled evil. The redeeming element or aspect about it. In its best and most imposing furnish it offers nothing but plague and pollution. God forbids it; it is the object of nature’s abhorrence, and its uniform effects demonstrate that to persist in its practice is to renounce the friendship of heaven and claim kindred, not with brutes, but infernals. All therefore, must look upon it as an evil unhallowed by any, the smallest good. We have seen that it invariably undermines health and leads to death, and, in most instances death untimely and disgraceful. However insidious in its progress, it is fatal in its issue. We need not ask you to look at the brutal, the polluted, and demoralizing victim himself, — a curse and a nuisance, whatever his name, or wherever found. We need not quote his beggared family and heart broken connections. We need not cite you to the wretched thousands found as criminals in your penitentiaries, patients in your hospitals, lunatics in your asylums, and vagabonds in your streets! Few, perhaps, are aware of the extent, the secret and insidious spread of the evil we would arrest. Its destructive influence is felt in every department of business, duty, and society: in our legislative halls; at the bar of justice; upon the judicial bench, and even in the pulpit. A large portion, we fear, of the most important and responsible business of the nation is often transacted under the influence, in a greater or less degree, of alcoholic excitement; and can those be innocent who contribute to secure such a result,

whether by the pestilential example of temperate drinking, as it is called, or the still more criminal means of furnishing the poisonous preparation by manufacture and traffic for the degradation and ruin of others?

The man who drinks intemperately ruins himself, and is the cause of much discomfort an inquietude, and perhaps actual misery, in the social scene in which he moves; but the manufacturer, and those who are engaged in the traffic of ardent spirits and other intoxicating liquors, do the work of death by wholesale; they are devoted by misguided enterprise to the ruin of human kind, and become directly accessory, although not intended by them, to the present shame and final destruction of hundreds and thousands. And we gravely ask, with no common solicitude, Can God, who is just, as well as good, hold that church innocent which is found cherishing in her bosom so awful and universal an evil? We have seen this evil broadly and unequivocally denounced in the Scriptures, as an utter curse, and big with ruin to the best hopes of man. Nature and Providence unite their testimony, and award to it the same condemnation. Our Church has long borne a similar testimony, and this is especially true of the father and founder of Methodism.

“He says of ardent spirits in general, ‘First of all, sacredly abstain from all spirituous liquors; touch them not on any pretense whatever.’ On their manufacture and sale he remarks, ‘It is amazing that the preparation or selling of this poison should be permitted, I will not say in any Christian country, but in any civilized state!’ He pronounces the gain of the trafficker in ardent spirits, ‘the price of blood,’ and adds, emphatically, ‘Let not any lover of virtue and truth say one word in favor of this monster. Let no lover of mankind open his mouth to extenuate the guilt of it. Oppose it as you would oppose the devil, whose offspring and likeness it is.’ Of grocers, in this traffic, he affirms, ‘They murder mankind by wholesale, and drive them to hell like sheep.’ He denounces both the manufacture and the sale of spirituous liquors, except for mechanical and medicinal purposes, as a gross immorality declaring, ‘None can gain in this way by swallowing up his neighbors substance, without gaining the damnation of hell!’ And hence one of the original rules of the Methodist societies, as drawn up by John and Charles Wesley, precluded ‘drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, except in cases of extreme necessity.’ And we cannot but fear that the alteration of this rule by the American Methodists, and the substitution of another less unequivocal in its character, since 1790, have been attended with but little good to any, and perhaps with direct injury to thousands. And now that the engrossing question of total abstinence is arresting the attention of most evangelical churches in the United States, and in many of them becoming a term of membership, we are fully convinced it would be criminal in us to remain silent, and not lend our aid and co-operation in purging the church and redeeming the nation from this insidious, yet alarming and desolating evil.

Finally, persuaded as we are that intemperance, in all its aspects and gradations, is a physical evil, unmitigated by any mixture of good, and also a moral offense against the laws of God,

and the claims of Christian piety, unmodified by any indemnifying consideration whatever, we would at all times, but at this time especially, when such combined and powerful efforts are making to arrest the evil, cast in our dividend of social and moral aid, and do all in our power to accomplish an object as every way momentous as it is desirable. And we close by remarking, that we look upon all as implicated in the duty and the interest, and we shall cheerfully and promptly concur with all in an effort to expel the demon of intemperance, not only from our churches, but from the nation, whose welfare and fortunes must be always viewed in intimate connection with its morals.”

With a view to secure the hearty co-operation of ministers and people in the cause of missions, sabbath schools, and the distribution of Bibles and tracts, a clause was incorporated in the discipline making it the special duty of all those who have the charge of circuits and stations to attend to these things regularly and to aid them in this good work, it was also made the duty of presiding elders “to promote, by all proper means, the cause of missions and Sunday schools, and the publication, at our own press, of Bibles, tracts, and Sunday school books.”

The American Colonization Society was now gauling more and more on the affection and confidence of the American people. To aid in its benevolent enterprise, this General Conference passed a resolution authorizing the bishops to appoint agents in behalf of that society. The affairs of our brethren in Canada were once more brought before the conference. By a reference to the proceedings of the General Conference of 1828, it will be perceived that a claim which they made upon a portion of the Book Concern was deferred for future adjustment. This claim was presented to this conference in a forcible appeal from their delegates, the Rev. Messrs. William Case and William Ryerson, who had been deputed by the Canada conference to urge it upon this General Conference. Though it was generally agreed by the members of the conference that the Canada brethren had a just claim upon a portion of the Book Concern, yet, after a full examination of the subject, the conclusion was drawn that the General Conference had no constitutional authority to make the apportionment without first obtaining the concurrence of the annual conferences. A resolution was therefore passed, referring the entire subject to the annual conferences, and authorizing the book agents at New York, whenever it should be certified to them by the secretaries of the annual conferences that “three-fourths of all the members of the several annual conferences, who shall be present and vote on the subject, shall to make a division of the stock of the Book Concern, in proportion to the number of traveling preachers, including those on trial and superannuated, in both connections. But as three-fourths of all the voters were never obtained, the settlement was not made, and therefore the whole subject was postponed for final adjustment to the General Conference of 1836.

As, however, the Canada conference had not yet fully organized itself according to its intention when it declared itself independent, in conformity to the stipulations between it and

the General Conference of 1828, the following resolutions were passed by this conference:

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- 1 That if the conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the province of Upper Canada shall, previously to the next General Conference, elect a bishop for said Church, and request any one or more of the bishops, together with any two or more of the elders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, to ordain him, such bishop or bishops shall be at liberty so to do, provided the expediency and propriety of a compliance with such request be in accordance with the judgment of such bishop or bishops: and, provided also, that nothing herein contained be contrary to, or inconsistent with any law or laws of said province.
- 2 That until a bishop shall have been elected and ordained for the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, any bishop or bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, on the request of the conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Upper Canada, shall be at liberty to ordain any elders or deacons for the said Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, subject to the provisions and limitations specified in the foregoing resolution.”

The following report of the committee on the episcopacy was concurred in by the conference:

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- 1 That they have examined the administration in the several annual conferences for the last four years, and find that it has been correct, and highly satisfactory, and therefore is entitled to the support and approbation of the General Conference.
- 2 In consequence of the lamented death of our beloved bishop George, the extension of the work under our care and oversight, and the increase of the annual conferences, it is recommended that we elect two additional bishops at the present conference.
- 3 As it is considered by the committee an evil of no small magnitude for the same preachers to be continued from year to year in town and city stations, the superintendents are respectfully requested to diversify appointments of this sort as much as possible among preachers deemed suitable for such appointments.
- 4 As our charitable institutions, colleges, and seminaries of learning are continually increasing, and as the American Colonization Society is rising in its claims on the American community, it is considered proper for our bishops, whenever in their judgment, and in the judgment of an annual conference, it shall be found expedient, to appoint any preacher as an agent to promote the interest of either or all of these institutions.

- 5 In consequence of the age and increased infirmities of our venerable and beloved bishop McKendree, it is recommended that his present relation be continued, and that the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars be allowed him annually for extra expenses, and to defray the expenses of a traveling companion, and one hundred dollars for the allowance of said traveling companion, and that he be authorized to draw this amount from the Book Concern.
- 6 It is recommended that the rule to estimate the allowance of the bishops, for family expenses, be so altered as to make it the duty of the annual conference, within whose bounds the family or families of the bishop or bishops may reside, to estimate the amount necessary to meet such expenses.
- 7 Considering the great extent of the work throughout this vast continent, committed to the oversight of the episcopacy, the committee deem it inexpedient to require each of our bishops to travel throughout the whole of their extensive charge during the recess of the General Conference, and therefore recommend to the episcopacy to make such an apportionment of the work among themselves as shall best suit their own convenience, and in their judgment most effectually promote the general good.”

Allusion is made in the above report to the enlargement of our work in connection with the death of Bishop George. The Illinois and New York conferences were divided, and three new ones were formed, namely, Troy, Indiana, and Alabama, making in all twenty-two. For these reasons, on the twenty-second day of the session, two additional bishops, namely, James Osgood Andrew, and John Emory, were elected, the former by a vote of one hundred and forty, out of two hundred and twenty-three, the whole number of voters, and the latter by a vote of one hundred and twenty-five. Both having a constitutional majority on the first balloting, they were declared duly elected, and on the 25th they were consecrated in the usual form, by prayer and imposition of the hands of Bishops McKendree, Roberts, Soule, and Hedding.

Another important regulation was made at this General Conference. When the delegated General Conference was created in 1808, the number of delegates was limited to not more than one to every five, nor less than one to every seven members, and according to the proviso, neither this nor any other restrictive regulation could be altered except “upon the joint recommendation of all the annual conferences,” and then by “a vote of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding.” As, however, the number of delegates had so increased that the General Conference of 1824 felt it to be burdensome both to themselves and others for so many to assemble together every fourth year, a recommendation had been sent the rounds of the annual conferences, requesting them to empower the General Conference of 1828 to diminish the number of delegates. This recommendation passed all the annual

conferences except the Philadelphia; and as it required all the conferences to concur before the alteration could be made by the General Conference, the measure was defeated by the nonoccurrence of this single annual conference. It was thus that we all began to feel the pressure of the yoke which had been imposed upon us by the General Conference of 1808, by which we were compelled to submit to the burden until permitted to relieve ourselves by the concurrence of all the conferences in the Union. This unwise provision put it completely in the power of a very small minority to rule the whole body, on any question arising out of the restrictive rules. From such a grievous yoke, "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear," the General Conference of 1828 made an effort to break loose by passing the following resolution: —

"Resolved, That this General Conference respectfully suggest to the several annual conferences the propriety of recommending to the next General Conference, so to alter and amend the rules of our Discipline by which the General Conference is restricted in its powers to make rules and regulations for the Church, commonly called the restrictive rules, as to make the proviso, at the close of the said restrictive rules, No. 6, read thus: —

"Provided, nevertheless, that upon the concurrent recommendation of three-fourths of all the annual conferences who shall be present and vote on such recommendation, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of such regulations, except the first. And, also,

"Whenever such alteration or alterations shall have first been recommended by two-thirds of the General Conference, so soon as three-fourths of the members of the annual conferences shall have concurred, as aforesaid, with such recommendation, such alteration or alterations shall take effect."

This recommendation had been submitted to the several annual conferences, and had obtained a constitutional majority of all the voters. Accordingly it came legitimately before this General Conference to alter the proviso, and then to recommend to the several annual conferences to authorize the lessening the number of delegates, and both of these powers were exercised. Without going into a detail of all the circumstances which led to the result, it is sufficient to say, that the proviso, which had held us at bay for so long a time, was so altered on the recommendation of the General Conference of 1832, and the constitutional vote of the annual conferences, subsequently, as to read as follows: —

"Provided, nevertheless, that upon the concurrent recommendation of three-fourths of all the members of the several annual conferences, who shall be present and vote on such recommendation, then a majority of two-thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions, excepting the first article and also, whenever such alteration or alterations shall have been first recommended by two-thirds of the General Conference, so soon as three-fourths of the members of all the annual conferences shall have concurred as aforesaid, such alteration or alterations shall take effect."

And then the number of delegates was to be graduated as follows: —

“They shall not allow of more than one representative for every fourteen members of the annual conference, nor allow of a less number than one for every thirty: provided, nevertheless, that when there shall be in any annual conference a fraction of two-thirds the number which shall be fixed for the ratio of representation, such annual conference shall be entitled to an additional delegate for such fraction; and provided, also, that no conference shall be denied the privilege of two delegates.”

It will be perceived that a motion may now be made by either the General Conference or the annual conferences, for an alteration in any of the restrictive regulations except the first, and that, as it requires to be seconded by the other, and concurred in by a majority of three-fourths of the voters in the annual conferences, or two-thirds of the General Conference, to make it obligatory, the rights of each are secured, and the voices of all are heard. And as this new regulation was made for the purpose of obviating the prohibitory character of the old proviso, which amounted in fact to almost a total and absolute withholding of all power from the General Conference ever to make any alteration, however imperative the necessity might appear, it seems preposterous to give such an interpretation to the language of the present proviso, as to involve us in the very same dilemma as that from which it was designed, and therefore made and adopted for the express purpose of delivering us! Such an interpretation involves the framers of this proviso in the most inexcusable of all blunders — a fault from which their acknowledged abilities and known integrity must for ever exempt them. We had been laboring under the galling yoke of this severe restriction for eight years, struggling the whole time to free ourselves from its iron bondage, and then securing our freedom, as we were simple enough to believe, by a substitute, when lo and behold, when we come to test it by actual experiment, it proves to be the same galling yoke still! An absurdity this too glaring to be admitted.

Notwithstanding all that had been done for the relief and support of our worn-out preachers, widows, and orphans, they were still but poorly provided for, and hence the following additional regulation was made respecting the manner in which their just and pressing claims might be met: —

“It shall be the duty of each annual conference to take measures, from year to year, to raise moneys in every circuit and station within its bounds, for the relief of its necessitous, superannuated, supernumerary ministers, widows, and orphans. And the conference shall appoint a committee to estimate the several sums necessary to be allowed for the extra expenses of such necessitous claimants, who shall be paid in proportion to the estimate made and the moneys received.”

The following was also enacted in reference to those therein mentioned, who reside beyond the bounds of their respective conferences: —

“Every superannuated preacher who may reside without the bounds of the conference of which he is a member; shall annually forward to his conference a certificate of his character and ministerial conduct, together with an account of the number and circumstances of his family, signed by the presiding elder of his district, or the preacher in charge of his circuit or station, within whose bounds he may reside, without which the conference shall not be required to allow his claim.”

Provision had already been made for the appointment of preachers as teachers, professors, or presidents of academies and colleges under our own control and patronage. This conference extended the authority to the bishops for other colleges, in the following language: — “Resolved, That the superintendents be authorized, whenever requested by an annual conference to do it, to appoint a preacher to a college not under our direction, and to continue him in the same manner as at the institutions which we patronize.

It seems that a practice had prevailed to some extent, whenever a preacher wished to attend to some temporal business for his own convenience, to be left, at his own request, without any regular appointment for a year, less or more. This had been found to be accompanied with so many difficulties, that the bishops felt it their duty to call the attention of the conference to the subject, and its consideration resulted in the adoption of the following: —

“Resolved, That it is inconsistent with the spirit and interest of the itinerancy system to leave effective men without appointments at their own request.”

The following was also passed, fixing the responsibility of those preachers who might be appointed traveling agents for any literary or other institution, as already authorized by existing regulations: —

“Resolved, That in all cases where agents are appointed, their names shall be attached to some district; and in case of any complaint, they shall be held responsible to the presiding elder of said district.”

It appears that a difference of opinion prevailed among the bishops respecting the meaning of the last resolution in the report of the committee on the episcopacy, which said, that it was considered “inexpedient to require each of the bishop’s to travel throughout the whole of their extensive charge, during the recess of the General Conference, and therefore recommend them to make such an apportionment of the work among themselves as shall best suit their own convenience, and in their judgment most effectually promote the general good.” It appears that some of the bishops were in favor of districting the work for the four years, and this was also the opinion of some of the delegates, each one confining his labors to his particular charge until the next General Conference, and so understood the above item in the report, while others contended that this matter was left to be regulated as the bishops themselves might judge proper. To settle this question, the bishops submitted to the conference the following queries: —

“The bishops, being desirous of understanding with clearness and certainty the resolution passed by the General Conference at its present session, in relation to the episcopal visitations of the annual conferences, in the course of the ensuing four years, beg the favor of a vote of the conference, without debate, in answer to the following question, viz. — Was it the intention of the General Conference, by the resolution above alluded to, simply to relieve the bishops from the influences of the resolution passed at the last General Conference on the same subject, and to leave them now at liberty, on their joint and several responsibility, to make such arrangements among themselves, for the entire administration, and for the visitations of the annual conferences, as they shall judge most conducive to the general good; and without designing to give direction or advice whether it be or be not expedient for each of the bishops in the course of the four years to visit each of the annual conferences, should they themselves find it convenient and practicable, and judge it for the general good so to do?”

And it is added in the journal, “The conference voted an answer to the above question in the affirmative.”

The following resolution in relation to preachers admitted into an annual conference, and not ordained at the time, was passed, and should, therefore, I think, be considered as a standing rule, though it was not incorporated in the Discipline: —

“Provided always, that when a preacher shall have passed his examination, and been admitted into full connection, and elected to deacon’s office, but fails of his ordination through the absence of the bishop, his eligibility to the office of an elder shall run from the time of his election to the office of a deacon.”

Having completed their work, read and improved of their journal, the conference was adjourned with singing and prayer, and the apostolic benediction, late on Monday evening, May 28th, 1832, to meet again in Cincinnati, May 1, 1836.

CHAPTER 12

From the close of the General Conference of 1832 to the beginning of the General Conference of 1836

We had now six bishops, and twenty-two annual conferences to be attended in the course of twelve months. But as the health of Bishop McKendree was fast declining, no dependence could be placed on him for effective service, and accordingly the General Conference, as we have seen, released him from that responsibility. The effective labor, therefore, devolved upon the remaining five bishops, who accordingly had each four conferences and a fraction to attend every year, besides the duty of ranging through their respective districts of labor — as far and as frequently as practicable.

The unanimity and energy with which the late General Conference entered into the missionary cause, gave it a new impulse, and inspired its friends with courage to persevere in their exertions to urge it forward.

Liberia had, for several years, been selected by the managers of our Missionary Society as a suitable place for missionary enterprise, and much had been said and written in favor of sending laborers into that distant and destitute field. Hitherto, however, the bishops had not been able to select such a man for the work as they considered suitable. Some had offered and been rejected, and those who were considered best qualified, were unwilling to go. At the late General Conference the subject was pressed upon its attention with renewed zeal, and the bishops were then, particularly by a committee from the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, who pledged money for its support., to use their influence to send one missionary or more to this inviting field of labor.

That the reader may understand the high demands which this place had upon the exertions and benevolence of our Church, for a supply of its spiritual wants, the following particulars respecting the settlement, and present state and prospects of Liberia are given.

Slavery in the United States may be considered the remote, and Christian philanthropy the proximate, cause of establishing the colony in Africa, now known as Liberia, under the auspices of the American Colonization Society. This society was formed in 1816, by some benevolent individuals, with a view to transport to Africa such free people of color from the United States as might consent to emigrate, and establish them as a colony, with all the rights and privileges of freemen. Though at first the society was viewed with suspicion by some, fearing it was designed chiefly to rivet the chains of slavery yet tighter on the slave, by removing the free colored people out of the land; yet as its character was gradually developed, the public confidence was acquired, and its friends and supporters were daily increased. The first experiment, however, to establish a colony on the coast of Africa proved unpropitious. The society was unfortunate in the selection of the site for this important colony. This was at the mouth of the Sherbro river, which separates the country of Sierra

Leone from the Grain coast, on the western shores of Africa, latitude seven north, in the province of Guiana. The country is generally flat, exposed to the most intense heat from October to March, when violent and almost uninterrupted rains descend until the month of June, when the heat again commences and continues until July, and this is followed by rain until October. An atmosphere created by such physical causes must be extremely unhealthy to either Europeans or Americans, and so it proved in the present instance.

In 1818, a number of emigrants sailed from the port of New York, in the ship *Elizabeth*, accompanied by that eminent philanthropist and Christian minister, the Rev. Mr. Bacon, whose commendable zeal in the cause of African colonization led him to embark in this hazardous undertaking, as the principal agent of the society. Many of these voluntary exiles from their country were truly pious, some of whom were members of our Church. The fate of this infant colony is well known. The place selected, as before said, for their residence proved insalubrious, and the poisonous malaria soon swept them from the face of the earth and among the dead was the pious and self sacrificing Bacon himself. This spread a temporary gloom over the prospects of this society, and furnished its enemies with renewed arguments against the enterprise. Opposition, however, awakened new energies in its behalf, and led to more vigorous measures to insure its success. New resources were called into existence, men and means were multiplied, and a more powerful pulsation was felt in the American community in favor of the sons and daughters of Africa.

To avoid the results of the former experiment, another and a more salubrious site was selected for the colony in contemplation. In 1821 the society purchased of the native chiefs a district of country on the western coast of Africa, two hundred and eighty miles in length, and from twenty to thirty miles in breadth, on the Grain coast, in about six degrees north latitude, including the cape of Montserado. A site for a town was laid out between the Mesurado and St. Paul's rivers, both of which empty into the Montserado bay, which opens into the Atlantic Ocean. Here a settlement was commenced under favorable circumstances, and the town was called, in honor of the popular chief magistrate who then occupied the presidential chair, Monrovia. These emigrants were accompanied and headed by the pious and lamented Ashman, who finally fell a victim to his zeal in striving to build up a colony in this place.

The prosperity which attended this second attempt at African colonization, strengthened and fortified the hearts of its friends and patrons, at the same time that it disarmed its opponents of many of their arguments against the enterprise. Hence it was patronized by some of the most benevolent spirits of the age, by most of the ecclesiastical bodies in the Union, and by many of the state legislatures, and therefore seemed to promise a most happy issue. The colonists were generally happy and contented, and invited their brethren in America to come over and join them. Hence many masters liberated their slaves on condition of their emigrating to Liberia, and others, already free, accompanied them to this home of their fathers.

Nor were the churches inattentive to these movements. Even foreigners were attracted by the spirit of Christian philanthropy to this place, and several Swiss missionaries had already laid their bones in the soil of Liberia, while attempting to convey to the inhabitants the glad tidings of salvation.

As before said, our Missionary Society had not been an indifferent spectator to the spiritual wants of these people. They had gone from our shores; many of them were members of our Church, some local preachers of reputable standing; and they all sent a cry to us for help. The subject had been before the General Conference from time to time, and the board of managers had passed resolutions at several different times in favor of establishing a mission in Liberia. At length our hopes were realized by the offering of the Rev. Melville B. Cox, at the late General Conference, as a missionary to Africa, and his services were accepted by the bishops. After making the needful preparation, on the 6th of October, 1832, Mr. Cox set sail in the ship *Jupiter*, from Norfolk, Va., and after a long and tedious voyage, in which he stopped at St. Jago, the Cape of Good hope, and at Sierra Leone, he arrived in Liberia on the 8th of March, 1833, and was most cordially received by the acting governor, Mr. Williams, who was a member of our Church, and a local preacher of reputable character in the colony. The heart of brother Cox seemed to be set upon Liberia from the hour of his appointment, and he accordingly records his great joy at finding himself safely landed upon its shores, and was much delighted at the prospect before him. But alas! he scarcely had time to mature his plans for future usefulness, before the fatal malaria of the place infused its poison into his system, and he soon fell a victim to the ravages of the African fever.

That he was eminently qualified for his station, so far as mental and spiritual attainments are concerned, is abundantly attested by his intimate friends, and by the monuments of his talents and piety which he has left behind. I say so far as mental and spiritual attainments are concerned, for his physical constitution had been much weakened by disease before he embarked on this mission, and he was, therefore, by no means able to withstand the shocks of an African climate.

But though he thus fell a martyr to the work of introducing the gospel into that part of Africa, yet he laid the foundation for a missionary establishment in Liberia, on which his successors have reared a noble superstructure, to the glory of the God of missions. The letters which he transmitted to the managers, describing the state and prospects of the colony, were of such an encouraging character, that a new impulse was given to the holy cause in which he had embarked, and inspired its friends with renewed zeal to prosecute it with more vigorous exertions. And the inspiring language of Cox to a friend on the eve of his departure for Liberia, operated as a charm upon the hearts of all who were engaged in this work. Being asked what should be written upon his tombstone, should he die in Africa, he replied, 'Let thousands fall before Africa be given up!' This noble declaration when repeated to the congregation at time his funeral discourse was preached in the John Street church thrilled

through every heart, and no doubt inspired others to enter the ranks which had been weakened by the death of Cox.

Though his death occurred in 1833, it may be as well to say all that is necessary of brother Cox in this place. On his arrival in Liberia, he set himself immediately at work, of preparing for preaching the gospel to the colonists, and establishing a church according to the regulations of the Methodist discipline. He was much aided and cheered in his work by the Rev. Mr. Pinney, a Presbyterian minister, who had preceded him in the service of the American Colonization Society, as the governor of the colony. Finding missionary premises at Monrovia, prepared by the Swiss missionaries before mentioned, but which were now vacated by their death, Mr. Cox made a purchase of them for five hundred dollars, which was afterward sanctioned by the board of managers. The house he occupied both for domestic purposes and for holding meetings.

It has been already remarked that there were in Liberia members of our Church, and others, who, though not of our communion, held to our doctrines, and dissented only on some points of Church polity. These were convened by Mr. Cox to when he presented his credentials, and he was nearly unanimously acknowledged in his proper character, and on the ninth day of April, 1833, the following articles of agreement were adopted as the basis of their future action: —

“Whereas the Methodist Church in Liberia, West Africa, is yet in its infancy, poor and in need of aid, inexperienced and in need of counsel; and whereas, by our direction a correspondence was opened with the Young Men’s Missionary Society of New York, and a missionary desired to be sent over to our help from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, which we ever wish to acknowledge as our parent church; — and whereas the said Methodist Episcopal Church has kindly sent to our aid a man whom they have adjudged to be fitted for the work, therefore: —

Resolved,

- 1 That we resign the superintendency of all our churches in Liberia to the care of the said missionary, and that we will do all in our power to aid him in promoting the work of God among ourselves, and in extending the interests of his mission among those around us.
- 2 That we will adopt the “Articles of Religion,” the “General Rules,” and the moral discipline in general of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America; and that we will follow its “spiritual” and “temporal economy,” both to the letter and the spirit, as far as our changed circumstances will possibly allow us so to do.
- 3 That, though we regret exceedingly that the said missionary has not come out properly authorized to ordain and set apart others to the office of deacons and elders in the church of God, we will nevertheless patiently wait until Providence shall bring us this great

blessing, and that hereafter none of us will administer the sacraments unless we have been, or until we shall have been properly authorized so to do by the regular episcopacy of the parent Church in America.

- 4 That we acknowledge the authority of the General Conference of the said Methodist Episcopal Church and that, considering our isolated situation, the wide distance between us and them, and the rapid accession that we confidently hope will attend the growth of our ministry here, we desire, as soon as may be, to be acknowledged by it as one of its annual conferences but that we will leave it entirely with the General Conference to say whether we shall be considered as a missionary station, as an annual conference, or as an independent Methodist Episcopal church in Africa.
- 5 That in view of the hazard of life which always must attend a change of our climate for another — of the mortality which has attended most of the white missionaries who have nobly come to our aid, and of the fact that we have not in our church a single regularly ordained colored elder in the colony, we earnestly request any one of our bishops, and they are hereby requested, to ordain to the offices of deacon and elder our brother, A. D. Williams; a man whom we judge to be well qualified for said offices, and who has been duly elected to these offices by our conference, and who, moreover, has been well acclimated and a long resident in the colony.
- 6 That, in view of the great responsibility of the ministerial office, and of the loud and increasing calls for constant labor in the churches and among the pagans around us, we will, as soon and as fast as the wants of our families will justify it, leave the service of tables, and give ourselves wholly to the work of the ministry.”

The reasons for the third article. In the above agreement are, that some of the colored preachers in Liberia had taken upon themselves the right of administering the ordinances without having been regularly ordained for that work. Unwilling at first to relinquish the exercise of this right, and Mr. Cox refusing to acknowledge it, or to recognize them as regularly ordained ministers, there was danger at the interest of unhappy collision among the few who were desirous of worshipping God in the spirit, and of building up a pure church in Liberia. This breach, however, was thus prevented, as all, both preachers and people, set their names to the above articles of agreement. On beholding this happy result of their proceedings, Mr. Cox exclaimed, with pious gratitude, “The Lord has done it — the Lord has done it — Satan is disappointed, and the church of God triumphs.”

Having thus arranged matters to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned, Mr. Cox set himself to work in the most ardent manner for the enlargement of the field of labor in different parts of the colony. On the 9th of March, he held at Caldwell the first camp meeting

ever attended on the continent of Africa; called the brethren together for mutual consultation and prayer; appointed days of fasting and thanksgiving, and planned several missions in other places contiguous to Monrovia and finally on the 6th of April he opened a sabbath school, consisting of seventy children.

These active labors, however, were destined soon to be interrupted, for on the 12th of April he was seized with the African fever, which raged to such a degree that he was soon so prostrated, that for twelve days he was confined to his bed. And, although he so far recovered from this severe attack as to be able to walk around his room, and to record in his journal his uninterrupted peace with God, and his firm hope of eternal life, yet he soon suffered a relapse, which, from the violence of its character, cut off all hopes of recovery. He lingered in great pain and weakness, sometimes reviving, and then again sinking, until the 21st of July, 1833, when he sunk into the arms of death, in the full hope of immortality, aged thirty-three years.

This sketch of his proceedings fully shows the predominant disposition of his mind, and evinces the most ardent spirit of devotion to the best of all causes. From the moment he had consecrated himself to this mission, his whole soul seemed to be absorbed in the contemplation of Africa, and he bent all his energies to make his mission prosperous. Aided as he was by the managers of the Missionary Society, and cheered on by the prayers and benedictions of the Church, he threw himself into the arms of divine Providence, determining to hazard all upon the altar of his God, whether for life or death, if he could only be the honored instrument of planting the gospel in the soil of Africa. At a missionary meeting held in the city of New York, on the eve of his departure, he remarked, in substance, that having embarked in this enterprise, the thought of treading upon the shores of Africa, even though it might be at the sacrifice of his life, was the most sweet and delightful of any thing else he could possibly contemplate. In this self-sacrificing spirit, he went — he fought — he sickened — he died. And in his death, so peaceful and triumphant, he reared a monument in Monrovia which has apprised all future travelers to that sacred spot, that the founder of the Methodist missions in Western Africa “counted all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ,” and for the rewards of a life devoted to so holy and glorious a cause.

In Melville B. Cox were united a firmness of purpose, with a meekness of disposition and amiability of manners. which at once endeared him to his friends, and commanded the respect and confidence of all who knew him. Nor were his talents small. “The Sketches of Western Africa,” which he wrote, show the pen of a ready writer, and a mind accustomed to close and accurate observation. These, united with genuine, deep piety, and a disposition naturally amiable, and rendered much more mild and meek by the refining influence of divine grace, qualified him to be eminently useful in that department of labor which he had chosen for himself, and which was evidently designated to him by the Head of the church.

While therefore his mortal remains repose upon the soil of Africa, his friends may comfort themselves with the reflection that his soul, purified by the fire of the Holy Spirit, is now reaping the ample reward of his labors and sacrifices in the paradise of God. And though he fell an early sacrifice to the cause of missions, his bones have but fattened the soil in which they were entombed, and animated many a weary missionary to diligence and perseverance in his work of faith and labor of love.

Through the influence of the Rev. Mr. Spaulding, who succeeded brother Cox as a missionary to Africa, some generous individuals in Boston contributed a sum for the purpose of erecting a monument over his grave. This was transported to Monrovia, and there it stands, with the following inscription engraven on three sides, in the words prepared by Mr. Spaulding:

—

To the Memory of the Rev. MELVILLE B. COX, the first Missionary from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States to Liberia, Western Africa. He arrived in Monrovia on the 9th of March, 1833, where, having organized a branch of the same Church, he died in the triumphs of the Christian faith on the 21st of July of the same year, aged 33 years. He was a truly amiable man, a devout Christian, and an able and successful minister of Jesus Christ.

Another important mission was established this year at Green Bay, about five hundred miles from the city of Detroit, in Brown county, in the state of Michigan. This spacious bay is on the west side of Lake Michigan, and the country was inhabited chiefly by Indians, though the United States had established here a military post, and an Indian agency. To this place a number of the converted Indians of the Oneida tribe had removed, and they were very desirous of having the gospel preached to them and to the neighboring tribes; the enterprise was also highly favored by the United States government, particularly by then agent, Mr. Schoolcraft, who resided there.

Good impressions had been already made upon the minds of some of the Indians through the labors of John Sunday, who had been raised up from Heathenism to a preacher of righteousness during the great revival of religion among the aborigines of Upper Canada. He, and some of his brethren, had traveled into the country bordering on Lake Huron, had visited Machinaw, and the neighboring villages, and preached to their native brethren with great power and success, and a considerable number of these degraded people had been brought to the knowledge of the truth. The good work thus begun, had attracted the attention of many of the Indians in that region of country, and as they were accustomed to wander about from place to place in their hunting excursions, those who embraced the gospel went from tribe to tribe, and told their brethren “what great things the Lord had done for them,” and they also believed unto eternal life. In this way the work of reformation spread among the several tribes; and though the Indians in the territory around Green Bay were separated some distance from the immediate scene of John Sunday’s labors, yet, by the means already

suggested, they had received the impressions of truth, and were in some measure prepared to welcome the missionary of the cross.

The Rev. John Clark, of the New York conference, was appointed a missionary to this region of country. He was received with much affection and respect by Mr. Schoolcraft, by the inhabitants generally, and more especially by those converted natives who had removed from the Oneida mission in the western part of the state of New York. he therefore entered upon his work with a fair prospect of success, and laid his plans for establishing schools by erecting houses, and employing teachers, as well as fixing regular appointments for preaching. And though the mission has not resulted in the conversion of many of the natives, it is to be hoped that a foundation has been laid, which, by addressing gospel truth directly to the understanding and heart, may be productive of their salvation.

Several other missions were commenced this year in the bounds of the Illinois conference, in the new settlements which were filling up with great rapidity. Among these were Rock Island, in Adams county, South Bend, Chicago, Fort Clark, Macoopin, and Fort Wayne. A mission was also established this year in the bounds of the Tennessee conference, in Madison and Limestone counties, for the special benefit of the people of color. All these new fields of labor were cultivated with success, however unpromising they might have been in the beginning.

Somerset and Port Carbon, in the bounds of the Philadelphia conference, embracing destitute settlements which could not be supplied in the ordinary way, were blessed with missionary labor, and supported by the Philadelphia C. M. Society. An effort was also made to establish preaching at West Point, where the military school is located, in the state of New York, and which is quite remote from any circuit, by means of missionary labor. It did not, however, prove successful.

The work in general throughout the bound of the several annual conferences, both on the older circuits and stations, and on the mission, was in a prosperous state, and the spirit of revival, and of liberality in support of our various institutions, was evidently rising and prevailing more and more.

For the last two years, through the instrumentality of protracted meetings, there had been a powerful revival in the city of New York. This work commenced in the Allen Street church, and spread more or less in the different congregations in the city; but its most powerful effects were felt and seen in the church in Allen Street, where the meetings were continued for upward of forty days, and in the evenings for nearly three months; so that the "revival in Allen Street" became notorious all over the country, and the increase during the two past years was not less than one thousand four hundred. This extension of the work created the necessity of having an additional number of churches, which eventuated, in the course of a few years, in the erection of seven, making in the whole twelve, in two of which the slips were rented, and three of the old ones were rebuilt.

Our preachers and people more generally began to feel the necessity of building larger and more commodious houses of worship, and of providing parsonages for the married preachers, as well as of contributing more liberally for the support of our infant colleges, missions, and Sunday schools. Indeed, such had been the hallowed and happy influence of these institutions thus far, that opposition to them was mainly disarmed of its power, and success spoke loudly in their behalf.

Thirteen preachers had died during the last year, one hundred and forty-three were returned superannuated, and seventy-eight supernumerary; sixty-three had located, two had withdrawn, and three been expelled.

Among those whose death are recorded, are two among the oldest preachers in the traveling ministry, namely, Lemuel Green, of the Philadelphia, and William Phoebus, of the New York conference.

The former, Lemuel Green, was born in Maryland, about fourteen miles from the city of Baltimore, in the year 1751. When about twenty-five years of age, in the year 1776, while war was raging in our country, he was made a partaker of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and immediately attached himself to a Methodist society. At that time the Methodists were but few, numbering only four thousand nine hundred and twenty-one, and there were but twenty-four preachers. At what time he commenced preaching we have no means of ascertaining; but in 1783 we find his name on the Minutes of conference, and he was stationed on the Yadkin circuit, and in 1785 we find him in the Allegheny circuit, at that time a new region of country, but rapidly filling up with inhabitants. he was, therefore, among the pioneers of Methodism in that new country, and he continued his labors in various places, sometimes filling the office of presiding elder, until 1800, when he located, and settled in the city of Philadelphia, and entered into mercantile business, by which means he acquired considerable wealth. While in this relation he continued to preach occasionally, generally every Sabbath, and by his example to aid the cause of religion. His heart and house were ever open to receive his brethren, and he always made them welcome to his hospitable table. In 1823 he was readmitted into the Philadelphia conference in the relation of a supernumerary, in which he continued until his death, which was peaceful and triumphant. His preaching is said to have been characterized by clearness and soundness, and attended with the energies of the holy Spirit. Had he continued exclusively devoted to the work of the ministry, instead of departing from it "to serve tables," he doubtless would have shone much brighter, and diffused his light much more extensively among his fellow-men. But having become the head of a family, and hence feeling the pressure so common to itinerant ministers in those days, arising from the scanty support afforded them, he thought it his duty to exchange a traveling for a located ministry; and though he acquired a competency for a season, yet, by adverse circumstances, he was, a few years before his death, reduced to poverty, so that his declining days were overcast with temporal affliction. But whether in prosperity or

adversity, he maintained his integrity, and bowed submissively to the will of his heavenly Father, exemplifying the virtues of humility and patience in an eminent degree.

This short record is made as a memento of that Christian friendship and fellowship which the writer enjoyed with his deceased brother, and in the hope of sharing with him in the blessedness of immortality and eternal life.

William Phoebus was also a native of Maryland, and was born in Somerset county, in the month of August, 1754. Though the exact time and means of his conversion are unknown to us, yet it appears from the record that he was brought to the knowledge of the truth in the early days of Methodism, became a member of its society and in 1783 he was admitted on trial in the traveling ministry. His first appointment was on Frederick circuit and in 1784 he attended the Christmas conference, when the Church was organized under the superintendence of Coke and Asbury, and the direction of Wesley.

After this he traveled in various places, sometimes contending with the hardships and difficulties of the new settlements in Green Briar, and other places no less rugged and destitute, where he accredited himself as a "good soldier of Jesus Christ," fighting the battles of the Lord, and conquering souls by the power of gospel truth. In this good work he continued until the year 1798, when he located, and entered upon the practice of physic, in the city of New York, preaching, in the mean time, generally every sabbath, in the pulpits, with good effect.

He continued in this local sphere of action until 1806, when he was readmitted into the New York conference, and was stationed in the city of Albany. Thence he was removed in 1808 to Charleston South Carolina, and in 1811 was returned to the city of New York. From that time he continued to fill various stations until the year 1821, when he was returned a supernumerary, and in 1824 a superannuated preacher, in which relation he continued until his death, which occurred at his residence, in the city of New York, November 9, 1831.

Though a man of great integrity of character, and strongly attached to the Church of his choice, and a lover of the itinerancy, he pleaded the necessity of the circumstances in which he was placed for his partial locations. Having entered into the marriage state about the year 1791, while traveling on Long Island, he soon found, as he thought, such difficulties besetting his path as an itinerant minister, as to justify him in restricting the sphere of his ministerial labors, that he might more effectually provide for himself and his own household." These difficulties arose out of a want of adequate means of support, the lack of parsonages to accommodate his family, and the being dissatisfied, whether with or without reason, as he frequently affirmed with the office of presiding elder. Though it is believed that most of those who took this step did it unadvisedly, yet it is manifest that they had many arguments in its justification, arising out of the causes already enumerated; and the Church by this neglect toward her servants, incurred a fearful responsibility from which, however, she has been for some time endeavoring to relieve herself by a more liberal course in this respect.

Dr. Phoebus, for so he was called from his having been in the practice of physic, had acquired a large stock of useful information from his various studies and general intercourse with mankind. He lacked, however, that systematic arrangement of knowledge, which characterizes a mind that has been more early imbued with classical studies, and was therefore distinguished by certain eccentricities in his public administrations, conveying instruction more by detached sentences than by a chain of consecutive reasoning, or discoursing in a regular didactic manner. His style, however, was plain and perspicuous, his manner solemn and impressive, and he evinced on all occasions a mind familiar with the holy Scriptures, and deeply devoted to his work. He delighted much in the study of old authors, in examining the primitive records of the church, in analyzing the different modern systems of church order and government, and comparing them one with another, and with the primitive model. Having formed some acquaintance with the original languages in which the Scriptures of truth were written, he was extremely fond of deciphering the radical import of the sacred text, and thence sifting out the exact scope and design of the writer.

His veneration for antiquity led him, we think, into the error of undervaluing the discoveries of modern days and of treating with too much neglect the improvements in the various departments of science and of theological knowledge. Hence a criticism by Clarke, or Benson, or even Wesley, whom he venerated as the greatest of modern divines, was not treated by Dr. Phoebus with half the deference as if it were made by some of the older divines, such as Poole, Henry, or Gill and the reasoning of a Reid or a Stewart would be rejected if contradicted by Locke. He never could pardon Dr. Adam Clarke for his ingenious speculations on the character of the serpent, or for his rejection of the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ and the antipathy he imbibed against this learned, pious, and useful commentator, seemed to unfit him for a due appreciation of his merits in other respects, as one of the most profound expositors of God's sacred word. He, indeed, claimed the liberty of thinking for himself on all subjects, and perhaps in the exercise of this noble independence of mind, the birthright of every intelligent being, he sometimes manifested too little deference to others for his own benefit. Hence an air of dogmatism obtruded itself in the social circle which wounded the feelings of others, without exalting, in their estimation, the value of his own aphorisms and opinions.

He was a great admirer of Baxter. From his voluminous and pious writings he had treasured up many sayings, with which he endeavored to fortify his own positions, whenever assailed by an opponent; while Wesley and Fletcher furnished him with argument, in time of need, to defend experimental, practical, and polemical divinity. Being thus furnished with knowledge from various sources, and having a fund of anecdote at command, which he had treasured up from various reading and extensive intercourse with mankind, his conversation was always instructive and lively, and his judgment on topics of importance was listened to with becoming deference, by his friends in the ministry, as well as by others who sought his

instructions. And those who were intimate with him were generally careful how they provoked a controversy on those subjects with which he was familiar, lest they might be reduced to a mortifying defeat in entering the lists with one who well understood how to foil an adversary, or who could not easily brook a contradiction.

He held in suitable contempt those artificial decorations with which some young men were wont to adorn themselves, and all those tricks of oratory by which they attempted to gain a momentary and popular applause. Being asked by a friend "how it was that some preachers who seemed to have not much weight of character, and but a slender title to the merits ascribed to them by their fond admirers, gained so much attention," he replied with an air of contempt not easily forgotten or imitated, "Pugh! If I were to pull off my old boot, and throw it up into the air, and cry, hurrah hurrah! I should soon collect around me a more numerous crowd than any man in the city."

He had a deep insight into the human character, and hence was not easily imposed upon by the artful and designing. This enabled him to manage difficulties which occurred between brethren in the Church to great advantage, and to bring them to an amicable adjustment. In regard to all such things he was "the wise man who keepeth the matter till afterward," never uttering his opinions to the disparagement of either party before the subject of dispute had been fully investigated.

It cannot be said that he was a popular preacher, in the common acceptance of that term, though he certainly commanded the respectful attention of the more weighty part of the community. A reason for his want of general popularity may be found rather in the dry and monotonous manner of his preaching than in the want of the depth and solidity of his matter. He often dealt, both in his private conversation and public addresses, in pointed apothegms [a terse saying or maxim] and short enigmas, not easily comprehended by the mass and often perplexing even those who were among the more thoughtful and deeply read.

As an instance of his enigmatical manner of speaking, the following may be mentioned: — At the conference of 1823, when addressing his brethren on the improbability of his being able to serve the Church much longer, he remarked, that the lease of his house had expired, and therefore he could not tell how soon he might be called to remove, as he was not certain that he could procure a renewal of his lease for any particular length of time; hence he could not pledge himself for any special service in the ministry."

On hearing this, an aged minister, and one by no means deficient in mental sagacity, said to the writer of this, I thought the doctor owned the house in which he lives but it seems he was under a mistake, as he says that the time of his lease is run out." To this it was replied, "You do not understand him. He speaks in parables. He is now threescore years and ten, the common age God has allotted to man, and, therefore, cannot calculate on living much longer at most, and even that little time must be considered as an act of God's grace, over

and above what he usually grants to men.” This, indeed, was his meaning from his own subsequent explanation.

These remarks apply to him more appropriately at an advanced stage of his ministry than in his younger days, as it is asserted by those who heard him at that period that he was ardent, vigorous and often very fluent in his addresses to the multitude, deep and searching in his appeals to the conscience. He was certainly successful in those days in enlarging the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He always manifested the deepest reverence whenever the name of the Supreme Being was introduced in conversation. At all times, when he had occasion to mention the name of the Saviour of the world, he would do it by a gentle inclination of the head, and if covered, by lifting the hat, and coupling with it the qualifying term, adorable thus, “the adorable” Saviour, or, “The adorable” Jesus — thereby acknowledging the divinity of his character, and his profound reverence for his supreme Godhead. Indeed, all his discourses were richly interlarded with the names, the offices, the atoning merits, and the interceding work of Jesus Christ making him, as he justly ought, the alpha and omega of all his sermons, and as the only foundation of man’s hope, and medium of access and reconciliation to God. He thus very properly considered the “adorable” Jesus as “the light of the world,” the divine “Sun” whose effulgence reflected light upon the types and shadows, the sacrifices and prophecies of the Old dispensation, and whose rays penetrated the gloom of moral darkness, and opened up to the sinner the only sure path to immortality and eternal life.

Though this certainly was not a peculiarity of Dr. Phoebus, as every true minister of the gospel must make “Jesus Christ and him crucified,” the beginning and ending of his discourses, and the only medium of reconciliation to God, yet in the doctor it seemed ever to be his peculiar delight and his studied aim to hold up Christ most prominently before his hearers, in all the glories of his character, and in all the endearing relations he held to God and man as the REDEEMER OF THE WORLD.

The position which he occupied sometimes exposed him to the shafts of enemies. His apparent eccentricities provoked the ridicule of some, while his good sense, varied knowledge, and equanimity of temper, enabled him to repel their assaults with good effect, and to bear the sneering scoffs of fools with exemplary patience. And though on some occasions he may have returned the repartee with an air of severity calculated to provoke the feeling of hostility, yet he knew well how to disarm an adversary by the gentler rebukes of love, and the blandishments of fraternal regards. In all these respects the fear and love of God were eminently exemplified, and the dignity of the Christian minister generally maintained.

Dr. Phoebus lived to a good old age. After having served the Church as a minister for about forty-eight years, eight of which as a located preacher, he fell asleep in Jesus, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, in the midst of his friends, and in the full hope of eternal life. He retained his mental faculties to the last, and on his dying bed discoursed in an edifying manner

upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and the prospect he had, through him, of everlasting life. Patience in suffering, and submission to the divine will, were remarkably exemplified in the midst of his bodily pains, while he gradually and peacefully sunk into the arms of death. A short time before he died, he quoted the words of St. James, "Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing," and commented upon them with much apparent pleasure, and with great clearness of apprehension, exhibiting, at the same time, a lively exposition of the meaning of those expressive words in his struggles with his last enemy.

Having thus filled up the measure of his days, "as a ripe shock of corn," he was gathered into the garner of God, to enjoy the rewards of his labors and sufferings in the world above. After recording the death of those two aged veterans of the cross of Christ, we may be allowed to add that of a young minister of the sanctuary, who, though less distinguished for his long services in the church militant, was still more eminently characterized by the brilliancy of his talents, and his attainments in literature and science, and equally so in the depth of his piety. I allude to Nathaniel Porter, a member of the Philadelphia conference.

He was a native of Worcester, Mass., and was born in the year 1800. When about nineteen years of age he was made a partaker of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, and became a member of our Church. The Wesleyan Seminary had just been established in the city of New York, and as one object of it was to give an education to pious young men whom we had reason to believe God had called to preach, brother Porter, soon after his conversion, entered as a student in this seminary, where he made rapid advancement in the knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and in mathematics, giving evidence, in the mean time, of his deep piety, and exercising his gifts occasionally in the pulpit, after having received license as a local preacher. In the spring of 1823 he was received on trial in the New York conference, and he soon gave satisfactory evidence of his call to the work of the ministry, and of his qualification for the faithful and successful discharge of its duties.

But as our brethren of the Genesee conference had resolved upon establishing an academy at Cazenovia, at the urgent request of the trustees of that infant institution, brother Porter was transferred to that conference, and appointed principal of the Cazenovia Academy. He entered upon his duties with great ardor and diligence, and succeeded to the satisfaction of all concerned, rising very high in the estimation of the people as an accomplished teacher, as an able minister of the New Testament, and as a deeply pious man. Such, however, was the character of the duties he had to perform, and the assiduous manner in which he applied himself to his vocation, that at the end of two years he found his health declining, and was obliged, with much reluctance to himself and the friends of the academy, to resign his office, and seek to reinvigorate his constitution by a cessation from labor, and a residence in a milder climate. He accordingly spent some time in the city of Baltimore, where he measurably regained his health, so that in 1828 he was transferred to the New York conference, and was

stationed in Poultney, in the state of Vermont. There his labors were highly appreciated and greatly blessed. This cold climate, however, not agreeing with his feeble constitution, he was, in 1829, removed to the Philadelphia conference, and stationed in Morristown, New Jersey. In this place there had been a remarkable revival of religion for the past year, and brother Porter entered upon his labors with all that ardor of soul for which he was eminently distinguished, and with an ability which the times peculiarly called for in the defense of Methodist doctrine and usages. Here he felt himself compelled, by the force of circumstances, to buckle on the armor of a polemic, for the peculiarities of Methodism were assailed with much ingenuity and force of argument by the Presbyterian minister of the place, the Rev. Mr. Barnes, who had espoused the New School divinity, and arrayed himself in this new armor with a view, apparently, to put down the Methodism which had made, and which was still making, such powerful inroads into his parish.

With a view to sustain himself in this spiritual warfare, and to defend the doctrines, discipline, and usages which he believed to be Scripture, brother Porter wrote and published a pamphlet, in which he showed himself to be “a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Through the influence of his labors, this revival, which had commenced under Methodist preaching, the Rev. Mr. Atwood being stationed there at the time, was kept up, and the cause amply defended against its assailants, and he had the happiness of rejoicing over the conversion of souls, and the building up of believers “in their most holy faith.”

The next year he was stationed in Newark, New Jersey, where he closed his labors and life in the peaceful triumph of faith, and the firm hope of an eternal inheritance. His death indeed had long been anticipated by his friend, as he had been gradually wasting away with lingering consumption, whose insidious attacks, though fatal in the estimation of all who saw him, flattered him with the deceptive hope of regaining his health. But when at length he was compelled to resign his hope as delusive, he calmly submitted to the mandate of his rightful Sovereign, and looked forward with a believing eye to the issue of his struggles, as an entrance, through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, into the everlasting kingdom of God.

Thus lived and thus died, Nathaniel Porter, a young minister of eminent endowments, whose piety and talents gave promising indications, had he lived to a mature age, of future usefulness to the Church of his choice. But,

Nipt by the wind's untimely blast, Parch'd by the sun's directer ray,
The momentary glories waste,
The short-lived beauties die away.”

So, indeed, died away the beauties, and faded the glories of our beloved brother ere he had attained that maturity of experience and usefulness in knowledge which might have exhibited him as a “master workman” in the “building of God.” And in his death we are called upon to adore in solemn submission, the inscrutable ways of divine knowledge, in thus taking from his Church one of its most promising sons in his youthful days and in the midst of his

usefulness, with high hopes of future eminence. But the wisdom of God shines not less conspicuously in its actings when the hopes of men are disappointed than it does in unfolding plans in conformity to their pious wishes and holy aspirations. Nor does the grace of God appear less powerful and energetic in ripening the early fruits of its creation, than in sustaining others for a series of years amid the toils, the sufferings, and useful pursuits of life.

Brother Porter was certainly a young man of more than ordinary talents and attainments. Though his early education was not thorough, yet his attainments in literature and general knowledge were rapid and constantly improving, and the more meritorious because they were chiefly the fruits of his own industry, after he was brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Feeling it to be his duty to devote himself to the work of the ministry, and trembling under an apprehension that he might enter upon this work without due preparation, he applied himself with all his might to the acquirement of useful knowledge, that he might be able to read, compare, and judge for himself in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And the short time he remained a student in the Wesleyan Seminary, under the tuition of the Rev. John M. Smith, by an assiduous attention to his studies, he laid the foundation for his future usefulness, as a sound scholar, and as an able minister of the New Testament. The manner, also, with which he afterward pursued his studies, in the midst of the active duties of his stations, as principal of the Cazenovia Academy, and then as an itinerant minister, evinced the unquenchable thirst of his soul for the acquisition of knowledge, and the practicability of attaining it even while discharging other indispensable duties. With a mind thus stored with various sorts of knowledge, and a heart deeply imbued with the Spirit of Christ, brother Porter went forth into the vineyard of his Lord, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Nor was he less distinguished for his meekness and humility than for his learning and science. This was manifest from the deference he had to his seniors in the ministry, from the trembling manner in which he arose to express his opinions and from the diffidence he manifested in the decision of his own mind yet he exemplified the perfect compatibility of uniting, in the same mind and heart, meekness and firmness, diffidence and decision; for no man was more determined in his purpose, or more persevering in his work, when convinced of truth and duty, than was Nathaniel Porter; nothing, indeed, could turn him aside from a straight forward course in the pursuit of good, when convinced of the right way and means to attain it. These commendable virtues shone out in his life, and exhibited him as a worthy by example for the imitation of those who may come after him.

In conducting the controversy which his situation called him to manage, he exhibited at once great clearness of perception, acuteness of intellect, and comprehensiveness of argument, united with an ardent love of the truth, and a firmness of purpose in its defense. But in all his actions, whether in the pulpit, the use of his pen, or in his more private intercourse in society, the love of God and man appeared to be the predominant principle of his heart,

and he breathed it out in accents of charity toward his fellow-men. If at any time there appeared a tartness in his expression, it was because he thought the honor of truth was insulted in a manner which fully justified the severity to which he reluctantly yielded. And though he exhibited evidences that he belonged to human beings, of whom it must be often said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," yet he has left behind him no less convincing proofs of his unreserved devotion to the best of all causes, and of his preparedness to "enter into the joy of his Lord."

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 472,364; Last Year: 437,024; Increase: 35,340 — Colored This Year: 73,817; Last Year: 71,589; Increase: 2,228 — Indians This Year: 2,412; Last Year: 4,501; Decrease: 2,089⁴ — Total This Year: 548,593; Last Year: 513,114 — Increase: 35,479 — Preachers This Year: 2,200; Last Year: 2,010; Increase: 190.

1833

The work of God this year was generally very prosperous. The agitations which resulted from the radical controversy had generally ceased, both institutions had been successfully defended against their rude assailants, and hence all went forward with alacrity and delight in the discharge of their respective duties. In addition to the ordinary means used for the promotion of the cause of Christ, the "protracted meetings" contributed much, for they were now very generally adopted throughout our bounds; and the circuits and stations, particularly in the older parts of our work, were brought into more compact order, so that pastoral duties could be more conveniently performed. But that which contributed still more to enlarge our borders, more especially in places before unoccupied by our ministry, and in the frontier settlements, was the energetic action of the Missionary Society.

A new mission was opened this year in the bounds of the Pittsburgh conference, called Braddock's Field, in consequence of its embracing a tract of country comprehending the place where Braddock suffered such a disastrous defeat from his own headstrong and imprudent valor, and the impetuous onset of his savage foes. A warfare of a different character was now commenced upon the people by the missionary of the cross, and so successfully was it prosecuted, that in 1834 not less than one hundred and fifty were returned as belonging to the Church, and the next year it was numbered with the regular circuits, supporting itself and contributing its quota for the support of others still more destitute.

Within the bounds of the Mississippi conference several new places were occupied as missionary ground, and they were generally cultivated with encouraging success. The La Fourche mission, in the neighborhood of New Orleans, was undertaken chiefly for the benefit of the slave population, though the whites shared in the labors of the missionary. In 1834 there were returned on this circuit sixty-two members, eleven whites, and fifty-one colored.

⁴ It will be perceived that there was [in 1832, not in 1835 shown above — DVM] a decrease among the Indians of 2,089. This was owing to the troubles, heretofore noticed, accompanying their removal west of the Mississippi.

There was an extensive tract of country, thinly populated, among the bayous and swamps bordering upon the banks of the Mississippi river, for whose spiritual benefit a mission was this year established. Into this unhealthy climate, the missionary, desirous only to save as many souls as possible, entered in the name of the Lord, and succeeded in calling the attention of the people to the things of eternity, and in forming several flourishing classes.

In the bounds of the Alabama conference the Taladega mission was commenced under favorable auspices, there being one hundred and fourteen members returned the first year, and the next two hundred and eighty-six. Noxabe, including a destitute population in the frontiers of Tuscaloosa district, was also brought under spiritual culture this year, with some degree of success.

In the state of Maine the Mattanawcook and Houlton mission, embracing a new and destitute population, was successfully established there being returned not less than seventy souls in Church membership in 1834.

The constant and rapid emigration to the west, as well as to the southwest rendered it indispensable, that the people might be supplied with the ordinances of religion, to enlarge the boundaries of our work in proportion to the increasing extent of our settlements. And the chief points of attraction in the west at this time were the states of Illinois and Michigan. Hence to supply them with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Peoria, Fort Edwards, Henderson, and Blue river missions were established this year and by an inspection of the Minutes for the subsequent years, it will be found that all these places have yielded a rich harvest of souls as the reward of our labors; that they have not only supported their own institutions, but have contributed to send the gospel still further into the more remote settlements of the far west.

The Upper Wabash, Kalamazoo, and La Porte missions, included within the bounds of the Indiana conference, and embracing the frontier settlements in the state of Indiana, had been, as before mentioned, also recently established, and the labor of those men of God to whom the oversight was committed were accompanied by the Spirit of God, as was manifested in the awakening and conversion of sinners. These, like the others before mentioned, have prospered abundantly, and are ministering to their own and the wants of others, regular circuits having been established, and churches erected to the honor and for the worship of Almighty God.

The encouraging success which had attended the labors of our preachers among the slave and free black population of the south, stimulated our brethren in the southwest to imitate their example by opening missions for the special benefit of this class of people. Hence, at the last session of the Tennessee conference, the African mission, embracing the colored population of Nashville and its vicinity, was commenced; a regular four weeks' circuit was formed, and the good work was prosecuted with such success, that in 1834 there were reported eight hundred and nineteen Church members.

It should be remarked that these domestic missions, as they have been called, to distinguish them from the aboriginal and foreign missions, differ in nothing from the ordinary new circuits, only in their receiving a support, whether in part or in whole, from the funds of the Missionary Society; for as soon as they become able to support themselves, they are struck from the list of missions, and supplied in the usual way. By this wise policy, we have been enabled continually and gradually to enlarge both our regular work and the number of missionary stations, with comparatively a small amount of money, considering the extent of our field of labor. And that this had a happy effect upon the missionary cause and religion generally, is manifest from the fact that this year the funds of the society had increased about seven thousand dollars over what they were last year, and that they have gone on increasing from that day to this.

This year two other colleges were founded under the patronage of our Church, the one in Carlisle, and the other in Meadville, in the state of Pennsylvania. For want of patronage they had both gone down in the hands of those who had established them at first, and were conveyed gratuitously to our Church, on condition that an attempt should be made to resuscitate them and give them a permanent existence.

The first, located in the town of Carlisle, Cumberland county, Pa., called Dickinson College, was founded by the Presbyterians, and was incorporated by the state in 1783. Its location is pleasant and healthy, and its property, at the time of its transfer to the present board of trustees, including the lot, buildings and apparatus, was estimated to be worth about \$40,000. The Baltimore and Philadelphia conferences took it under their patronage, appointed agents to collect funds for its endowment, and called the Rev. J P. Durbin, then editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, to its presidency. Having procured about \$45,000 in donations and subscriptions, the college was opened for students in the summer of 1834 under favorable circumstances. It has thus far continued to answer the expectations of its founders and patrons, not only by imparting sound learning to its pupils, but also in blessing its youth with the principles, experience, and practice of Christianity. It has a law and preparatory school attached to it, and is daily acquiring more and more the confidence of the public. It has a charter from the state, and an annuity of \$1,000.

The Allegheny College is located in Meadville, Crawford county, a very thriving village on French Creek, three hundred and thirty-four miles northwest of Philadelphia. This institution received its first charter from the state in 1815, but for want of adequate support, it was suffered to languish and die in the hands of its former patrons and supporters. With a view to its resuscitation, the entire premises were given to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Pittsburgh and Erie conferences took it under their patronage. The Rev. Dr. Ruter, who had retired from the presidency of Augusta College in Kentucky, was appointed the first president of this institution, and it went into operation this year under his direction, with promising hopes of success. It has continued, though sometimes embarrassed for want of

more ample funds, to bless the youth intrusted to its care with its wholesome instructions, and many of them have dated their conversion to God in this seat of learning and religion. It is said that its library is by far the largest and best of any in the western country, and its buildings were ample and in excellent order. Though Dr. Ruter retired from its presidency in 1836, it has gone on prosperously under his successor, the Rev. H. J. Clark.

Another academy had been established at Lima, Livingston county, N. Y., under the patronage of the Genesee conference, and Dr. Samuel Luckey was appointed the principal, and professor of moral science. It has prospered abundantly from that day to this, and exerted a most salutary influence upon the youth intrusted to its care, and upon the Methodists of the Church generally, in that region of the country.

Sixteen preachers had died in peace during the past year; seventy-two were located, eighty-nine returned supernumerary, one hundred and sixty-eight superannuated, four expelled, and two had withdrawn.

Much might be said in favor of all those whose deaths are recorded, as men of God, who had devoted themselves to his service, and ended their labors and days in the full assurance of hope. But as there was nothing special to distinguish them from others of a similar grade and character, it is thought not expedient to fill these pages with a mere repetition of what may be said of every good and evangelical minister. Of one, however, I feel it a duty to make honorable mention, because he was a young man possessed of some peculiar excellences and traits of character, worthy of remembering and imitating.

John M. Smith was the son of an old member of the Church in the city of New York, long distinguished as one of the most devoted and active trustees, class leaders, and sabbath school superintendents, as well as an indefatigable laborer at our camp meetings. Those who live in the city of New York, or its vicinity, will readily recognize, in this allusion to the father of John M. Smith, Joseph Smith, recently gone to his rest in heaven, whose active labors for the good of the Church will long be remembered by his surviving brethren with gratitude and fraternal affection.

His son John was born in the town of Brooklyn, N.Y., October 10, 1795, and in his fifteenth year was brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, while a student in Columbia College. Notwithstanding he was surrounded with all the gayeties of the city, and the daily temptations to vain amusements by his connection with thoughtless young men in the college, he maintained the purity of his Christian character through his college course, and graduated with honor to himself, and to the satisfaction of his friends. On leaving college he entered upon the study of physic, intending to devote himself to the practice of the healing art. Being, however, soon impressed that it was his duty to call sinners to repentance, he relinquished that design, and entered upon the duties of a traveling preacher in 1817, and was stationed on Jamaica circuit, on Long Island, as a helper to Dr. William Phoebus, an old and intimate friend of his father. He continued in the work of an itinerant preacher, in which he gave

evidence of deep piety, chastened zeal, and useful talents, until in the month of September, 1820, he was elected by the New York conference principal of the Wesleyan Seminary, in the city of New York, in which he continued until that institution was removed to White Plains, of which he also took the oversight. From this he was transferred, in May, 1832, to the Wesleyan University, as professor of languages. He entered upon the duties of his professorship with great ardor of mind, and promising hopes of distinguished usefulness; but alas! his days were soon cut off, for he died on the 27th day of the following December, aged thirty-seven years, two months, and seventeen days.

Mr. Smith was a diligent and successful student. In addition to the prescribed course of studies in the college, and this was by no means superficial, and the progress he made in the science of medicine, he acquired the knowledge of the Hebrew, French, and Spanish languages, was a proficient in botany, and other useful branches of polite literature. He appeared, indeed, to possess a peculiar aptitude of mind to acquire the knowledge of languages, both ancient and modern, of the dead and the living, for he studied them thoroughly, and could read and translate them with ease and accuracy.

As a preacher he was sound and systematical, arranging all his discourses with great accuracy and in regular order, this being characteristic of his mind. Habituated from his youth to pursuing all his studies in consecutive order, nothing was done slovenly or negligently, but every thing had its appropriate place, and was made to suit the place it was designed to occupy. When you heard him preach, you could hardly avoid the impression, that his sermons partook of the character of scientific arrangement, and were the result of much thought and previous preparation, and they were delivered in language plain, elegant, and energetic, without any superfluous ornament, or the artificial graces of oratory. In this respect he seems to have taken Wesley for a model, an exemplar worthy the imitation of all who wish simply to do good to their fellow-men, by preaching the gospel of the Son of God. Instead, therefore, of aping the foppery of those who seek to gain a temporary applause by the sparklings of wit, or the mere flights of oratory, he seemed to “study to show himself approved of God,” and to penetrate the heart by the plain truths of the gospel, expressed in language which the learned could not condemn, and which the illiterate common-sense hearer might understand, feel, and appreciate. For style and manner, therefore, brother Smith may be held up as an example for those who aim, as all should, to be useful, instead of affecting to be great.

His mind was enlightened with various sorts of knowledge, and his heart “seasoned with grace;” meek, modest, and diffident, he appeared in the circle of his friends to “take the lowest seat,” at the same time that others considered him as “worthy of double honor.” Here the grace of humility shone out in all his word and actions, and set off the other qualities of his mind to the greatest advantage.

But with all these qualifications, he was not considered a great preacher. Many who were far inferior to him in learning and science, who understood no other language than their

mother tongue, and who went out into the field of itinerancy from the common avocation of life, far outshone him as preachers of the gospel, and much exceeded him in winning souls to Christ. Though greatly beloved by all who knew him, for the urbanity of his manners, the meekness of his mind, the gentleness of his deportment, and highly esteemed by those who were acquainted with his attainments, with his worth of character as a man of learning and sound judgment, yet there were those, as before said, who could claim none of these literary advantages nor scientific attainments, who rose higher than he in popular favor, and were more eminently distinguished as able ministers of the New Testament.

May not this be accounted for from the diversity of his studies and duties? While the others we have alluded to were men of one work, and hence gave their individual attention to their high and holy calling, Mr. Smith's mind was occupied with a great variety of subjects, more especially after he commenced the duties of a teacher, and could not therefore give himself "wholly to these things." Hence, while some shine out brilliantly on one subject, or rise high above their fellows in the exhibition of some peculiar excellence, we behold the graces clustering around him in the sweetest harmony, balancing one another, and each lending to the other the benefit of its strength and beauty. Instead, therefore, of overwhelming you suddenly with the effulgence of light on a favorite topic, he gently enlightened your mind with the radiations of truth, which fell upon your understanding and heart like the orient beams from the morning sun, and softly insinuated themselves into your affections, drawing them almost imperceptibly toward Jesus Christ, as the source and center of all blessedness. These things gave a polish and a finish to his character, uniting those graces which eminently fitted him to act with becoming dignity and usefulness in the various walks of life in which he was called to move and to exercise his gifts.

He has left, therefore, a sweet odor behind him, which it is hoped will invite others to follow his track, and profit by the brightness of his example.

By one of those providences which it is more easy to acknowledge and adore than it is to comprehend, his father was much reduced in the decline of life in his worldly circumstances, and the son was called to share in the father's misfortunes. This compelled him to observe that rigid economy which induced some to suspect him of an unjustifiable penuriousness in his temporal matters, not duly considering that economy, in such a case, may become as much a duty as it is to be liberal in our gifts under more favorable circumstances. This affliction, however, he bore with Christian fortitude and submission and while it became a means of lessening his pecuniary resources, it no doubt tended to wean his affections from terrestrial, and to fix them more permanently on celestial objects.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 519,196; Last Year: 472,364; Increase: 46,832 — Colored This Year: 78,293; Last Year: 73,817; Increase: 4,476 — Indians This Year: 2,247;

Last Year: 2,412; Decrease: 165 — Total This Year: 599,736; Last Year: 548,593 — Increase: 51,143 — Preachers This Year: 2,400; Last Year: 2,200; Increase: 200.⁵

The reader will perceive that, while the aggregate increase this year is unusually large, the revivals having been very general and powerful during the past year, there was a decrease of one hundred and sixty five among the aboriginal converts. This was owing chiefly to the continual agitations and troubles arising out of their removal west of the Mississippi. For, though our missionaries did all in their power to keep them together, and to preserve them from backsliding from God, and even went with the immigrating parties to their new abodes, yet the distractions introduced into their councils, together with the embarrassments and such things attendant upon their removal, created a most deleterious influence upon their religious character and enjoyments.

1834

We have heretofore noticed the improvements that were gradually making in building churches and parsonages in many parts of our work. The enlargement of our borders on every hand, and the increase of membership in the other circuits and stations, generally created an ability in our brethren and friends to supply the means to furnish accommodations for the people and their preachers and the necessity for these things, together with the urgent calls from the pulpit and the press, particularly in the columns of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, excited them to activity in the discharge of these duties. Hence churches more commodious and central than heretofore were erected and erecting, parsonage homes built or rebuilt, and partially furnished; by which means the difficulties and expenses of removing were very much lessened, and the congregations became more numerous and permanent. It will be seen, therefore, that our increase this year and last was unusually large, and the missionary work went on most delightfully and prosperously, the whole being aided by protracted meetings, missionary anniversaries, and prayer meetings. These things, by diminishing the inducement to desist from traveling, lessened the number of locations.

We have already noticed the commencement of the Liberian mission, its incipient prospects, and its disastrous results upon the life of the missionary, the Rev. Melville B. Cox. but, though he had thus fallen a martyr to his work upon that distant and desolate shore, others were found to fill his place. At the call of brother Cox, and of the Missionary Society the Rev. Mssrs. Rufus Spaulding and Samuel O. Wright, with their wives, and Miss Sophronia Farrington, a female teacher, volunteered their services for this hazardous enterprise, and were accordingly appointed by the proper authorities of the society in 1833. While waiting for an opportunity to embark, the missionaries traveled as extensively as possible through different parts of the country, held missionary meetings, and thus contributed much to

⁵ There is an error of ten in the increase of preachers in the printed Minutes, occurring in the subtraction of the total number of superannuated preachers.

awaken and to diffuse the missionary spirit among the people. At length they set sail from Norfolk, Va., on the sixth day of November, 1833, and landed in Monrovia on the first day of January, 1834. They were received by the brethren with great cordiality, who hailed them welcome to their shores, bidding them "God speed" with all their hearts. They immediately entered upon their work with energy, and a most inviting prospect of success, the fields before them appearing already "ripe for the harvest." But alas! they, too, were destined soon to feel the corroding effects of an African climate; for amidst the plans of usefulness which they had in contemplation, and the active discharge of the arduous duties of their station, on the 9th of February brother Spaulding was seized violently with the fever, and the rest of the mission family were soon prostrated with the same disease, to some of whom it proved most fatal. On the first day of March, when so far recovered from his first attack as to be able to write, he says, "Sister Wright is dead! She left us on the morning of the fourth ultimo, and we have no doubt but that she is in heaven, while we are left to suffer yet longer on earth."

Brother Wright soon followed his beloved wife to the eternal world. He survived the first attack, and was so far restored as to be able to walk about, read, and write, and probably through premature exertion brought on a relapse, which soon terminated fatally, and his mortal remains sleep beside those of his wife on the shore of Africa; the bones of Cox having first sanctified the soil.

Nothing daunted, however, by these disasters with death thickening around them, and staring them in the face, the survivors persevered in their work believing that Africa would yet be redeemed. Miss Farrington especially, though much enfeebled by disease, manifested all the heroism of a martyr: having laid her soul upon the altar of her God, she seemed determined to brave every danger rather than relinquish the work in which she had engaged. But who can resist the course of events? Such were the corroding effects of the malarian fever, and so frequent and violent were its attacks, that brother Spaulding and his wife found themselves so much reduced, as to be unable to pursue their calling; and having but little prospect of regaining their health in Liberia, they resolved, as the only alternative left to their choice, to return to the United States. This they accordingly did, leaving, however, behind them evidences of their piety and zeal, and much to be hoped for as the result of future laborers. Under another date we shall endeavor to give a consecutive account of the progress of this mission, from the time it was committed to the oversight of brother Seys, the present superintendent of the mission.

Another very important mission was commenced about this time. This was the Flat Head, or Oregon mission.

That our readers may understand the character of this mission, it is necessary that they should know something of the situation and state of the country in which it was established.

The vast territory now known as the Oregon, in which the present mission is located, was but little known before it was visited by Lewis and Clarke in the year 1805, under a commission from the United States government. With immense labor and no little privation, they penetrated the wilderness west of the Missouri river, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and descended the Columbia river to its mouth, or where it discharges itself into the Pacific ocean, in about the forty-sixth degree of north latitude. It is true that the mouth of this noble river had been entered by Captain Gray, of Boston, Mass., in the ship *Columbus*. Having been the first modern navigator who entered the river, hitherto distinguished as the Oregon, or River of the West, Capt. Gray called it the Columbia, after the name of the ship in which he entered its mouth.

This extensive territory lies west of the Rocky mountains a high ridge stretching through the western part of North America, from the frozen ocean to Mexico, where it is connected with the Cordilleras, or Andes, which continue their course from the isthmus of Panama to the straits of Magellan. From its eastern boundaries on the Rocky mountains, the Oregon territory extends to the Pacific ocean west, and from the Russian and British dominions on the north to the northern line of Mexico and California, in about the forty-first degree of north latitude. This entire country is claimed by the United States, though its exact limits have not yet been ascertained and settled by the respective governments who claim jurisdiction over these western regions.

The Hudson Bay Company, incorporated in 1670 for the purpose of carrying on the fur trade at Hudson's Bay, had extended their trading posts to the Columbia river, and had established a depot at Fort Vancouver, which is about one hundred miles from the mouth of the Columbia, a very fertile region of country. Here the governor of the company resides, the public store is located, and it is the center of trade in all that region of country. A large farm, belonging to the company, is under cultivation, and they have plenty of horses and cattle for domestic uses, and every thing is in a nourishing condition. This company is supposed to be extremely rich, having accumulated their property by the immense profits accruing from the fur trade which is carried on extensively with the Indians.

The company, however, instead of improving the moral condition of the natives, have exerted an opposite influence, unless it may be indirectly, by opening the way for the introduction of the gospel, and the arts of civilized life. Many of the agents and clerks connected with this establishment have been in the habit of marrying, some of them but temporarily, with the native females, and at the termination of their service of leaving them and their children to all the miseries of a semi-barbarous state, and to the poverty and wretchedness consequent upon their want of industry, and their great aversion to agricultural pursuits. Hence, the vices of licentiousness, of intemperance, and domestic feuds and quarrels, superadded to their heathenish practices, had made their condition even worse than it was in their state

of entire barbarism; while most of the half-breeds grow up in a state of heathen ignorance, irreligion, and immorality.

In 1811 John Jacob Astor, Esq., of the city of New York, commenced a trading establishment near the mouth of the Columbia river, and the fort which was erected was called, in honor of its founder, Astoria. But the war between Great Britain and the United States commencing soon after, through the timidity or unfaithfulness of the agents employed by Mr. Astor, the entire establishment was sold for a trifling consideration to the Hudson Bay Company, and the project of the North American Fur Company was abandoned.

With the exception of a few white men introduced into the country by these trading establishments, the whole territory was in the occupancy of the native tribes, who roamed at large, living upon the fruits of hunting and fishing, and the trade they carried on with the Hudson Bay Company, and some few American traders, who casually visited these regions either for the sake of gain, or from a roving disposition. These consisted of a great number of small, insulated tribes, who, in addition to their sufferings from poverty and idleness, were almost perpetually annoying each other by war and bloodshedding. The whole number of the Indians inhabiting this dreary region has been variously estimated, from sixty to one hundred and fifty thousand; probably the latter is nearest the truth.

Those who live on the shore of the Pacific, and along the banks of the Columbia river know the great Falls, have become very much deteriorated in their physical and moral condition by their proximity to and intercourse with the trading establishment and other white people who have occasionally visited the country, more especially by the introduction of intoxicating liquors, and those evils growing out of a promiscuous intercourse of the sexes. These sad fruits of that state of civilization which is unaccompanied with the blessings of pure religion, fix a fearful responsibility upon the white population who have made inroads upon the Indian settlements, and they present one of the strongest barriers against the entrance of the gospel by the missionaries of Jesus Christ. We shall see, however, in the progress of this, as well as in the other aboriginal missions which have been conducted under the auspices of our Society, that this and other impediments have been overcome by the power of gospel truth, and even these heathen, debased and corrupted as they were, have been given to Christ for an inheritance. This seems, indeed to have been "the set time" for God to visit these outcasts of men with the renovating power his religion, by those means which, while they confound the wisdom of the wise, plainly show the wisdom of God, and the power of God. And although the consequences above mentioned followed the introduction of the trading establishments in Oregon, and the intermixture of white men among the natives, yet may we not trace the workings of benignant Providence in opening the way, that the voice of God's messengers might be heard in this wilderness, "crying, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, that he Himself may enter among them and make them a people for his glory! The perilous journey of McKenzie, from Montreal, and the subsequent one

of Lewis and Clarke, though undertaken under the patronage of their respective governments for political purposes, for enlarging the boundaries of geographical knowledge, and the benefits of trade, were no doubt rendered subservient to God's designs of mercy toward these wandering sons of the forest. Even the "axe and the saw," in the hands of men, may be so used as to answer the ends of divine wisdom and love toward the human race.

The truth of these remarks we may see exemplified in the events connected with the Oregon mission. These we shall now more particularly endeavor to present to the reader. Among the various tribes inhabiting this territory, one was distinguished by the name of "Flat Heads," because they flattened their heads in the manner presented in the following likeness. [graphic not included with the electronic edition — DVM]

The circumstances which led to the establishment of the Oregon, first called the Flat Head, mission, were as follows: It seems that two of the Indians belonging to the Flat Head tribe had received an education at a school in the city of Montreal, then elder the charge of Roman Catholic priests. After the return of these youths to their tribe, they endeavored, according to the dim light they had, to instruct their heathen brethren in the truths of Christianity. This imperfect instruction, mixed, as it was, with the superstitious notions of the Roman Catholic Church, awakened a spirit of inquiry among the Indians, and a great desire to know something more respecting the God of the Christians. This desire was afterward much increased by the conversation of a white man who had penetrated into their country, and was present at one of those religious ceremonies which they scrupulously perform at stated times and in which they exhibit no little of their heathenish folly and ignorance of spiritual and divine things. This man, after attentively observing their manner of worship, told them that they were wrong in their notions of the Supreme Being and of their modes of conducting religious services, — that there were a people who lived toward the "rising sun" who had the knowledge of the true God, which they received from a book he had given them.

On receiving this information, they convened a council to deliberate upon the propriety of sending a deputation to the people of whom they had heard, for the purpose of obtaining a more accurate knowledge of these things. This consultation resulted in dispatching four of their principal men on a journey over the Rocky mountains, to make the needful inquiries. After traveling about three thousand miles, they arrived at St. Louis, and were introduced to General Clarke, the Indian agent, and the colleague of Lewis in his tour of observation over the Rocky mountains to the north Pacific. They immediately unfolded to him the object of their mission, and he gave them such information as he was able respecting the birth, works, character, doctrine, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the objects he designed to accomplish by coming into the world, and other such Scriptural information as he thought might answer their inquiries.

The general facts being communicated to the world through the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, in the number for March 1, 1833, accompanied with a facsimile of the head of a

Flat Head Indian, a most lively sensation was produced in the Christian community, and a great interest excited in behalf of these wanderers of the desert, who had manifested such an eager desire to become acquainted with the God of the Christians as to travel through a wilderness of about three thousand miles for the sole purpose of realizing the object of their desire. And the interest became yet more intense when it was ascertained that two of these noble chiefs had fallen victims to death in St. Louis, in consequence, it was supposed, of the change of climate and mode of living to which they were subjected while they were upon the very threshold of obtaining the object of their pursuit.

Soon after the announcement of these facts to the public, the excitement was raised still higher by a most touching appeal, made through the columns of the *Advocate*, by the late Dr. Fisk, whose soul ever burned intensely in the cause of missions, and who exerted himself in every possible way to help it forward. In this spirited appeal he inquired whether there were any young ministers who were willing to devote themselves to this work — to brave the dangers of the wilderness — to submit to the privations and sacrifices of a missionary among those Indians, and at the same time to reap the rewards of such an undertaking! This call was soon answered by two young men, brought up in Lower Canada, one of whom had been partially educated at the Wilbraham Academy, and they had both recently entered the traveling ministry. Having been inured to hardships from their youth, and now giving evidence of their piety and call to the Christian ministry, their services were accepted by the proper authorities of the Church, and Jason and Daniel Lee, uncle and nephew, were appointed missionaries for the Oregon territory, and they immediately set about preparing themselves for their journey across the Rocky mountains. As it was desirous to have a school teacher accompany them on the mission, Cyrus Shepard, a young man of deep piety and competent talents, volunteered his services, and was accepted by the board of managers.

On the eve of the departure of Mr. Lee and his companions, it was ascertained that Captain Wythe, who had before visited that country on a trading expedition was about to return with a large company by the way of St. Louis, over land to the Columbia river. This seemed another providential indication in favor of the mission, and Mr. Lee, in conformity to the advice of the board of languages, embraced the earliest opportunity for an interview with Captain Wythe and it resulted in an arrangement to accompany him in his journey over the Rocky mountains; in the mean time sending his heavy baggage, consisting of some farming and domestic utensils, clothing, &c., by way of the Sandwich islands. [Hawaiian Islands — DVM]

The projection of this important mission had a most happy effect upon the missionary cause generally. As the entire funds of the society, up to this time, had not exceeded eighteen thousand dollars a year and as this mission must necessarily cost considerable, with a view to augment the pecuniary resources of the society, a loud and urgent call was made, through the columns of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, on the friends of missions to “come up

to the help of the Lord” in this emergency; and to assist in this benevolent work, the Messrs. Lees were instructed, while remaining in the civilized world, to travel as extensively as possible, hold missionary meetings, and take up collections; and the “Flat Head” mission, as it was then called, seemed to possess a charm, around which clustered the warm affections of all the friends of the missionary enterprise, and special donations for the “Flat Heads” were sent to the treasury with most cheering and delightful liberality and avidity. As an evidence of the beneficial result of these movements, the amount of available funds had risen, in 1834, from \$17,097.05, the sum raised in 1833, to \$35,700.15. So true is it that those who aim at great things, if they do not fully realize their hopes, will yet accomplish much.

Being thus cheered on by their friends, buoyed up by the prayers of God people, and animated by the prospect of speedily planting the standard of the cross for the first time in that distant and desolate part of our continent, the company left St. Louis, Missouri, on the 10th of April, on horse back intending to make their first stopping place for recruiting their stores, and taking their final leave of civilized society at Liberty, about three hundred miles from St. Louis. Here they were joined by Capt. Wythe and his company, whence they started for the wilderness about the first of May, 1834. In their company were two Indian youths, one of the Flat Head tribe, about thirteen years of age, and the other of the Pierced Nose Indians, about twenty-one years of age, both of whom were brought, at their request, from beyond the Rocky mountains, by Captain Wythe, in a former journey through their country. They had expressed a wish to be conducted to the abodes of white people, with a view to become instructed in their language and modes of living. While here they had made considerable progress in learning, and were now taken back by Captain Wythe to assist him as interpreters in his intercourse with the Indians.

The distance from St. Louis, by the most direct route, was estimated to be about two thousand three hundred miles; but in consequence of the zig-zag course they were obliged to make, to shun steep mountains, and to cross rivers, &c., it was not much short of three thousand miles, which, by traveling at the rate of twenty miles a day, would require one hundred and fifty days to reach the place of their destination.

In this tedious journey, after exhausting the stock of provisions they were enabled to carry with them on packhorses, they were obliged to live chiefly on buffalo meat, which they procured by hunting the buffalo on the extensive prairies east of the Rocky mountains, in which fatiguing work the missionaries had to share equally with the rest of the company. They, however finally arrived in safety, and without any serious accident, though not without much suffering from hunger, and other incidents of traversing a wilderness infested with ferocious savages, beasts of prey, and in many places, particularly on the treeless plains, from the scorching beams of a summer sun, to the place of their destination. On arriving at the country of the Flat heads, about which so much had been said and written, they found them to be few in number, and these few of such a migratory character that they concluded

it best to select some other place as the center of missionary operations. They therefore proceeded on to Fort Vancouver, the principal depot of the Hudson Bay Company, where they arrived in the month of September 1834. They were received and treated with great kindness and hospitality by Dr. McLaughlin, the company's agent, and governor of the colony. On sabbath, the 28th of September, brother Jason Lee preached the first sermon ever delivered in that part of the country, to a very attentive audience, composed of whites, half-breeds, and Indians, who listened with much apparent interest to the truths of the gospel.

With a view to recruit their exhausted strength after such a toilsome journey, and to collect all the information they could respecting the state of the country, and particularly the most eligible situation for commencing the mission, they remained at Fort Vancouver and its vicinity for several weeks, and on the 14th of December brother Lee preached a second time, after which he baptized four adults and fifteen children. This was a solemn and deeply interesting season, being the first time this holy ordinance was ever administered in the Oregon territory, and therefore seemed like the opening of their commission as Christian missionaries in heathen lands.

It was a high gratification to Mr. Lee and his worthy companions, to find themselves so hospitably entertained and respectfully treated by Dr. McLaughlin and his associates. And after collecting all the information they could from them and others respecting the state of the country, and particularly the aboriginal tribes by whom it was inhabited, they finally concluded it to be most advisable to locate the missionary establishment on the Willamette river, about twenty-five miles from its junction with the Columbia, and sixty from where the latter empties its waters into the Pacific ocean. Here they found a small settlement of white people, composed of French voyagers, who had been in the service of the Hudson Bay Company, and some Americans from the United States, who had wandered into that distant region. Many of them had married native females, and their children were growing up in heathenish ignorance and immorality, while the parents themselves were fast assimilating to a state of barbarism.

Being entirely dependent upon their own exertion for accommodations and a livelihood, the missionaries were compelled to go to work with their own hands, and fell the trees of the forest, and prepare the ground for cultivation, and they soon succeeded in erecting a log house thirty-two by eighteen feet, one story and a half in height. They then proceeded to the cultivation of a farm, plowing, and sowing grain and such vegetables as they could procure for culinary purposes. On examination they found that they had selected a healthy place, and fertile soil, which promised abundantly to reward the labor of their hands. Having procured these temporary accommodations, they commenced a course of religious instructions among the people and as soon as practicable opened a school for the instruction of the youth, and all things seemed to promise a happy result.

At the request of the head of department at Fort Vancouver, brother Shepard was left there in charge of a school which had been commenced two years before by a Mr. Ball, whose letters concerning the state of the country had been published and read with interest, but who had discontinued his services as a teacher of youth. The school consisted chiefly of half-breeds, collected from the vicinity of the fort, and the children of those belonging to the company. These, together with two Japanese youth to whom he imparted instruction in the evenings, soon made encouraging improvement in reading, writing, grammar and a few in geography and the first principles of mathematics. The labors of brother Shepard, therefore, were of the most useful character, and were highly appreciated by those concerned. The information contained in this sketch of the state of things in Oregon having been communicated to the Missionary Society, and the prospects arising from these incipient steps toward establishing the mission, and the crying wants of the many heathen in that wild region, induced the board of managers, and the bishops, to adopt measures to send, as speedily as possible, a reinforcement to the mission. Accordingly a physician and blacksmith, with their wives and children, a carpenter, a single man, and three female teachers, in all thirteen, including the children and domestics, were selected for the mission, and they sailed from Boston in the month of August, 1836, by the way of the Sandwich islands. With these was sent a quantity of household furniture, about twenty boxes of clothing of various sorts and sizes, valued at not less than two thousand dollars, and also agricultural, mechanical, and surgical instruments, as well as an ample supply of medicine.

This family arrived in June at the Sandwich islands, where they were treated with great kindness and hospitality by the missionaries of the American Board, and after waiting some time for a passage, they set sail, and finally arrived at the mission house on the Willamette about the last of May, 1837, where they were hailed with great delight by those already on the spot. They had the unspeakable satisfaction of finding the two Lees in health, and pursuing their work with unexampled diligence, and great success. They had succeeded in procuring the confidence and affection of the natives, and the other settlers in the neighborhood; had a large farm under cultivation, and in addition to the log house before mentioned, erected a convenient home for preaching and for teaching the school, consisting of three rooms, well arranged, though but indifferently furnished. To the superintendence of this school, Mr. Shepard had been removed from Fort Vancouver, that he might more properly fulfill the object of his appointment as a missionary teacher among the heathen of Oregon. And before the arrival of the last-mentioned family, having no females attached to the mission, the brethren were compelled not only to raise their own provisions by cultivating the ground, but also to work for themselves, to make and mend their own clothes, and for the children committed to their care, as well as to be their own doctors and nurses. From a part of these onerous duties they were glad to be relieved by the arrival and timely services of the females attached to the last family, to one of whom, Miss Maria Ann Pittman, of the city

of New York, a young lady of eminent piety and respectable attainments, Mr. Jason Lee was married soon after her arrival and she soon became no less useful to the mission generally than she was every way agreeable and happy in her conjugal relation, though she lived but a short time to adorn her profession, and to comfort her husband in his labors and sacrifices. Being convinced, from the representations made to the board by brother Lee, that more help was needed to carry on the mission with energy and success, measures were adopted to send two additional missionaries, and accordingly, on the 24th of January, 1837, the Rev. David Leslie, wife and three children, and the Rev. H. K. W. Perkins, accompanied by a pious young lady as a teacher, sailed from Boston, in the brig Peru, for the Sandwich islands, whence they found a passage in a short time to the mouth of the Columbia, where they arrived in safety after a voyage of about ten months. They immediately entered upon their work, and soon found the blessing of God upon their efforts.

Before their arrival, however, brother Lee, with a view to furnish the farm with stock, had sent, in conjunction with others who had united in the enterprise, to California, and purchased about six hundred head of domestic cattle, oxen and cows, about five hundred of which they had driven through a wilderness of nearly six hundred miles, the rest having perished or strayed away on the journey. This, though attended with great labor and hardships, enabled them to stock the farm with milk cows for the use of the missionary family, and with oxen for plowing, carting, etc., and to provide for replenishing themselves with all necessary food hereafter, as well as to keep up such an ample stock of cattle as their means of sustaining them and their accumulating wants might warrant and require.

But a more important achievement than even this had been effected. A project was formed by some individuals who had recently become domiciled in the settlement, to set up a distillery. Knowing that if this succeeded, all their efforts for the moral renovation and religious instruction of the people would be unavailing, Mr. Lee set himself to work to prevent the project from being carried into execution. He called the people together, and gave them an address on the evil effects of intemperance, and proposed the formation of a temperance society, under a pledge of total abstinence from all intoxicating liquors as a beverage, which the people almost unanimously signed and as the gentlemen concerned had already expended some money in preparing for their contemplated establishment, the same people who had joined the temperance society subscribed more than a sufficient amount to remunerate him for their pecuniary loss, at the same time presenting an earnest, but respectful remonstrance against their project, urging the mischief it must, if carried into operation, bring upon the infant settlement. This had the desired effect. The distillery was abandoned; and, greatly to their honor its projectors politely declined the proffered remuneration, and heartily united with the others in the cause of temperance.

By this means a foundation was laid for the future well-being and prosperity of this little colony, and very soon God bore testimony to the zealous efforts of his servants, by pouring

out his Spirit upon the people. The work commenced among the children in the school, and extended to the adults in the settlement, including some of the different nations, French, English, Americans, half-breeds, and Indians, who were grouped together in the village, molding their hearts into the image of Christ, and filling them with love to God and one another. Upward of forty were the subjects of this glorious work. This was most cheering to the missionaries, and as an evidence of their gratitude to God, they formed themselves into a missionary society and three hundred and forty-eight dollars were subscribed toward the support of the cause. This was a glorious beginning, being the "first-fruits" of a more plenteous harvest which they hoped yet to reap from among the heathen of that land of darkness and desolation.

Several other new places were occupied this year, chiefly west of the Allegheny mountains, under the auspices of the Missionary Society. Smethport and Sinnamahoning, in the bounds of the Pittsburgh conference, were successfully cultivated; and King's River, in the Missouri conference. In the northwestern section of the Indiana conference, the Tippecanoe and Eel River, the Mississinewa and Maumee missions were commenced among the scattered settlements in that new and thriving country. Point Rock, in the bounds of the Tennessee conference, and Yalo Bush and Tallahatche missions, in the Mississippi conference, were commenced this year, and prosecuted with success. Several additional missions were also begun for the special benefit of the slaves in the neighborhood of New Orleans, and on the cotton plantations in the bounds of the Georgia and South Carolina conferences, which have proved highly beneficial to that class of our population.

As the lands formerly occupied by the Cherokee Indians were filling up rapidly by white people, that they might not be allowed to grow into a community destitute of the gospel, four missions were established in this territory, and they returned the next year four hundred and seven members of the Church. Mattawoman mission, in the Baltimore conference, embraced a population not hitherto supplied in the regular way, and one hundred and fifty-four members were returned in 1835, one hundred and nine of whom were colored.

The Philadelphia Conference Missionary Society, in addition to assisting largely in support of the aboriginal missions by the appropriation of its funds, exerted itself efficiently to supply destitute places within its own bounds, and Southwark, in the vicinity of Philadelphia, was added to those heretofore undertaken and supported by this society, and one hundred and fifty-eight members were returned the next year as the fruit of the labor bestowed upon it by the missionary.

The successful manner in which these new fields of labor were cultivated, together with the prosperous state of the work generally, tended to enlarge the sphere of our usefulness, as well as to increase the number of preachers and members. It was evident, also, that the ministry was improving in learning and general knowledge, and consequently in usefulness

and respectability, while the continuance of the revivals was sure indication that they were not retrograding in piety and zeal.

Another college was founded this year in Lebanon, Illinois, under the patronage of the Illinois conference. It has gone on prosperously from that day to this, being under the presidency of a graduate of the Wesleyan University, a son of one of the old preachers of the New England conference, the Rev. Joseph A. Merrill. This institution is exerting an improving and hallowing influence on the present generation of that new and growing country, by calling into action their intellectual resources, and it promises stability and usefulness under the superintendence and patronage of its zealous friends and supporters.

The academies already established, now amounting to about twenty, were in successful operation, and becoming prolific feeders to the higher seminaries of learning. These all, no doubt, were exerting a most salutary influence upon our community, and tended to create among our people generally a more just appreciation of sanctified learning, and useful, scientific improvement.

A controversy had arisen in the course of this year respecting the collections which had been ordered by the General Conference, and were therefore recognized by the Discipline of the Church, which were made for specific purposes: such as for the support of the ministry, for missionary objects, etc. It seems, that some boards of trustees claimed the right, by virtue of their corporate powers, to take possession of all the moneys which might be collected in the churches, whether in the classes or otherwise, whether for specific objects or in the ordinary way, and appropriate them as they pleased. It was at once seen, that if this claim were yielded to the trustees, our discipline, providing for a board of stewards and their duties, would be rendered entirely nugatory, and the collections made for missionary or any other specific object, might be diverted from their original purposes, and applied as the common revenues of the Church.

In opposition to this claim, it was pleaded, —

- 1 That the constitution, both of the general and state governments, secured to religious denominations all their peculiar rights and privileges, both as it related to doctrine, rites, ceremonies, and practice, whether this practice relates to moral, religious, or pecuniary matters, provided only that they do not contravene any law of the state, or are not guilty of licentiousness. On this broad principle of constitutional right, it was contended that those peculiarities growing out of the Church economy were recognized by legal enactments, and we were therefore protected by the strong arm of law in the peaceable exercise of all our rights, privileges, and usages.
- 2 Hence it followed, that no board of trustees could be authorized, even were such a disposition manifested by any state legislature, to trample upon the discipline of their own Church, to nullify a regulation or usage peculiar to their own denomination, if for no

other reason than because it would be empowering trustees to defeat the object of their appointment, which was not to annihilate, but to support the institutions of their Church.

- 3 Inasmuch, therefore, as our Discipline had provided for the appointment of stewards, to whom all Class money and quarterly collections were to be intrusted, as well as the alms of the Church for the benefit of the poor, the trustees had no right of control over such collections, because they were made for specific objects, pointed out and prescribed by the Discipline, namely, the support of the ministry and the poor.
- 4 And as to moneys raised for missionary purposes, as it was always notified when collections or subscriptions were taken, that they were designed for that specific object, and the people gave accordingly, no board of trustees, nor any other person or persons had a right to appropriate them for any other than the objects for which they were given.
- 5 The duties of trustees were specific and well defined, and they did not, in either the Discipline or the law of the state, include the receiving or appropriating the moneys so collected, but they related altogether to the temporalities of the Church, the taking care of the real and personal estate by means of money raised for that object alone, and so specified in the Discipline of their Church, and the law of the land.

These plain, common-sense views, however did not satisfy those individuals who had set up the claim contended for; and to put the matter at rest, the questions were submitted to two eminent lawyers in the city of New York. Their opinion, given entirely independent of each other, the one not knowing that the other had been consulted, was as follows, which put an end to the controversy. Lawyer Jay, a son of the late eminent Governor Jay, after stating the questions at issue, and assigning sundry reasons for his opinions, decided as follows: —

“The stewards, after paying the allowance to the preachers, send the surplus to the annual conference. Other collections and subscriptions are directed or authorized, but in all cases the money raised is subject to one or other of the conferences, and generally is to pass through the hands of the stewards.

“Now, the moneys thus collected are not the property of the corporation in this city. The money, before it was contributed, certainly did not belong to that corporation, nor has it been given it.

“The corporation are trustees only for the congregations who meet in their churches. The money has been given for the use of all the congregations under the jurisdiction of the conference.

“The stewards who have received it are not officers of the corporation, which can neither appoint nor remove them, nor call them to account. But the trustees or corporation may,

if they please, solicit subscriptions or make collections for the purpose of defraying their debt or the interest due upon it.

“The money thus raised will be under their own exclusive management, and the clergy will have no control over it.

“The only question, then, which requires further consideration, is, whether the corporation can prohibit the collections directed by the book of Discipline from being made in their churches? I think they cannot.

“The act of 1784, under which the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city is incorporated, is its charter, which is not altered by the act of 1813. The eleventh section has been already explained. By the act of 1784, the trustees are authorized to take possession of all property already belonging to the society; to purchase and acquire other property; to lease and improve land; to erect meeting houses, parsonage houses, school houses, and other buildings for the use of the society; to make rules for managing the temporal concerns of the congregation; to have the sole ordering of payments of the moneys belonging to the congregation; to appoint a clerk, treasurer, and collector; to regulate the renting of pews, and the fees for burials, and all other matters touching the temporal concerns of the congregation.

“These temporal concerns relate only to the property vested in the corporation.

“The right of the incorporated trustees to forbid the collections (if they possess it) must be derived from the right of property. Being the owners of the meeting houses it may be thought that they are authorized to control the use of them, and either to prohibit the preachers from entering them, or to admit them under such conditions as the trustees shall see fit to prescribe. And it would be true if they held the meeting houses for their personal benefit but they hold them, as their name imports, as trustees. What, then, is the nature of the trust?

“In the first organization of the Methodist society by Mr. Wesley, he established it as a principle, that the preachers should be independent of the people; for that, as well as for other reasons, he permitted none of them to be stationary, or to derive their support from any contract made with particular congregations and he framed the system of collections to defray expenses. In this state Methodism was introduced into America, and at the time when the law of 1784 was passed, the ministers were appointed and paid as they are at present. The design of that act was, not to alter the doctrine, discipline, or worship of any denomination but, on the contrary, to sustain such doctrine, discipline, and worship, by enabling each congregation to manage its property through the agency of a corporation, instead of managing it as they had previously done, through the less convenient agency of private trustees.

“By the act of 1784, the incorporated trustees have certain powers granted to them — and these powers cannot be exercised by the conferences. But the trustees themselves must exercise them so as not to defeat the very end and purpose of their incorporation.

“They cannot exclude from their meeting houses the preachers appointed in the manner prescribed by the constitution of their Church, nor impose upon them conditions inconsistent with it.

“I do not mean to say that the conference have unlimited authority. But I am of opinion that, in directing their preachers to solicit from the liberality of their hearers the accustomed contributions, without which their system could not subsist, they have not exceeded their proper limits, and that the trustees ought not to resist them.

“My answers to the questions proposed to me are as follows: —

- 1 The religious societies incorporated under the law of 1784 are to be governed by that law, and not by the act of 1813.

“The eleventh section has been already explained.

- 1 The framers of the discipline of a church can make no rule contrary to the law of the land. Such a rule would be a dead letter. But I do not think that the rules in question concerning collections are of that nature.
- 2 With respect to the third question, I understand that previous to the year 1820 the trustees acted as stewards, and received and paid over the money raised by collections, in the manner prescribed in the book of Discipline, and that in 1820 they consented that other stewards might be appointed, which was done accordingly. This act of the trustees would not abridge the legal rights of their successors, and therefore has no influence on my opinion in relation to the other questions.
- 3 No law gives to the trustees the control of the collections made in the classes.

“Revenue is the produce of taxes, &c., or the rents and profits of real or personal estate. In a loose sense, it may denote income of any kind. But in no sense can the voluntary contributions of individuals for the general benefit of all the clergy and institutions of a church be considered as the revenue of any particular congregation or corporation.”

To the two following questions he says, “I answer in the negative, for reasons already sufficiently explained.” These are the questions: —

- 1 Does the law make it obligatory on the trustees to take the voluntary contributions made in the congregations and classes which the Discipline assigns to the stewards for specific purposes?

- 2 Can the trustees, by virtue of their corporate powers, compel the stewards to relinquish the voluntary contributions made in the congregations and classes in opposition to their official duties, as defined in the Discipline?"

The other attorney, no less eminent than Mr. Jay for his sound legal knowledge, David B. Ogden, returned the following answers: —

"My opinion has been requested by some of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in this city upon the following questions: —

"First. Are religious societies incorporated under the law of 1784 to be governed by that law, or by the act subsequently passed in 1813? If by the former, what construction is to be put upon the eleventh section of that act?

"Second. Have the framers of a discipline of a church the right to ordain provisions which are contrary to the laws of incorporation; and is the discipline in such a case a dead letter?

"Third. Does the fact that the society submitted to the appointment of stewards to take charge of part of its funds in 1820, prevent the present board of trustees from assuming the duties enjoined upon them by statute?

"Fourth. The funds collected in classes are devoted to the use of the ministry. Will the fourth section of the act of 1813, giving to the trustees the control of the temporal concerns and revenues of the Church, include such collections in the classes?

"Fifth. Are voluntary contributions to be considered as revenues of a church? And have the trustees the power to prevent collections in churches under their charge by others, without their consent?

"Sixth. Does the law make it obligatory on the trustees to take the voluntary contributions made in the congregations and classes which the discipline assigns to the stewards for specific purposes?

"Seventh. Can the trustees, by virtue of their corporate powers, compel the stewards to relinquish the voluntary contributions made in the congregations in opposition to their official duties, as defined in the Discipline?

"I give the answers to them, which are according to the best of my judgment.

"First. As to the first question there can be no doubt. The powers of this religious society as a corporation being derived wholly under the act of 1784, the corporate powers are under that act, and to be looked for in it only.

"The object of the incorporation is to enable the society to hold property, and to hold it down to their successors, to sue and be sued, and in effect to give it a personal power, or the power of holding property, of suing and being sued as if it was an individual. The law never intended further to interfere with the society, but to leave its doctrine, its discipline, and form of worship untouched. These are considered as matters with which the law has nothing to do. This is what the legislature intended to declare by the eleventh section of the act.

“Second. The framers of the discipline of a church certainly have no power to ordain provisions contrary to the law of the incorporation. They have no right to say that the property of the corporation shall not vest in the trustees under the law in whom the law has vested it, but shall vest in some other persons — any such ordinance would be absolutely void.

“Third. I think the trustees are bound to take charge of all the temporalities of the church, and if they have omitted to do so heretofore, they are bound to do it now.

“Fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh questions —

“The answer to these questions must depend upon one and the same principle.

“The trustees are to possess and enjoy all the temporalities of the society, by which I understand all its real and personal property: I do not think money raised in the congregations for special and particular purposes as forming any part of the property of the Church or society. Suppose a collection made for the use of the Orphan Asylum, for instance; it seems to me that the money raised by such a contribution is the property of the Orphan Asylum, and not of the trustees of the religious society by which it is raised.

“What collections are to be made in the churches, and for what purposes they may be made, seem to me to be matters with which trustees have nothing to do, but belong to those who manage what is called in these questions “the discipline” of the society. If moneys are raised by contribution, or in any other way, as part of the general property of the society, the trustees take them, as a matter of course, for the use of the society. But moneys raised for special purposes must be held for the use of those purposes by those in whose hands the discipline of the church chooses to place them. I do not think the act of incorporation intended or can in any way affect those moneys. This matter must depend upon those who manage and control the discipline of the Church.”

These decisions had a very happy influence upon the Church, as they tended to set the mooted question at rest, and to confine the litigating parties to their appropriate duties, without attempting any longer to interfere with each other.

Sixty-eight preachers had located the last year, seventy-five were returned supernumerary, one hundred and sixty-seven superannuated, and thirty-four had died.

Among those who exchanged the scenes of labor and employment in this world for the rest and pleasures of the next, were two of our eminent preachers, who had labored long with an unblemished reputation to build up the walls of our Zion.

Barnabas McHenry, of the Kentucky conference, entered the traveling ministry in 1787, only three years after the organization of our Church. He will be long remembered in the west, the scene of his youthful labors, as the pious and diligent servant of the people, to many of whom he was indeed a messenger of peace and good will. And though he was compelled, in consequence of debility brought on by excessive labors and sufferings, to intermit his itinerant ministry from 1796 to 1819, yet he again entered the work, to which he devoted himself as an effective preacher only two years, when he was returned superannuated.

It is said that he lived for several years in the enjoyment of “perfect love,” giving evidence of it by the tempers of his mind, and the deportment of his life. To the doctrines and discipline of the Church of his choice he adhered with a firm and commendable tenacity, making them the subjects of his private meditation and public advocacy, and, withal, feeling their solemn and saving efficacy upon his mind and heart.

He finally ended his days in peace, and, we trust, rests from his labors.”

Seely Bunn, of the Baltimore conference, was a native of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., and was born August 1, 1765. After the family settled in Henley county, Virginia, in the twenty-fourth year of his age, he was made a partaker of justifying grace, and in 1792 entered the field of itinerant preaching.

In these early days of Methodism in this county, he partook of his quota of obloquy and privations, more especially when engaged in carrying the gospel into the new settlements, where accommodations were coarse and poor, and the work of a traveling preacher laborious and fatiguing. In traversing the wildernesses of the west, from one new settlement to another he was often exposed to savage cruelty, had frequently to sleep in the woods, exposed to the pelting storms, to hunger and cold, and all those privations incident to the state of the country, and to the life of a Methodist itinerant. But in the midst of all, his soul was borne up by the promises and presence of God, and by seeing the fruit of his labors in the awakening and conversion of sinners.

In this good work he continued until 1814, when he was compelled, from debility, to take a superannuated relation. He bore his afflictions with exemplary patience, and finally departed in peace and triumph in the full prospect of entering into life eternal.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 553,134; Last Year: 519,196; Increase: 33,938 — Colored This Year: 83,156; Last Year: 78,293; Increase: 4,863 — Indians This Year: 2,494; Last Year: 2,247; Increase: 247 — Total This Year: 638,784; Last Year: 599,736 — Increase: 39,048 — Preachers This Year: 2,625; Last Year: 2,400; Increase: 225.

1835

The General Conference of 1832 recommended to the bishops and the managers of our Missionary Society South America as a proper field for missionary enterprise; and with a view to ascertain the state of things more accurately from personal observation, that some person should be sent to explore the accessible parts of the country, and report on the prospect and feasibility of establishing missions among the people in that populous region.

It is well known that from the time of the conquest of this country by the Portuguese and Spaniards, the Roman Catholic religion had been established by law, and had, therefore, incorporated itself into all the civil institutions and regulation of the country nor was it less intolerant toward Protestants than it was cruel toward the natives at the time of its conquest over their liberties and independence. After, however, the liberation of the provinces from the dominion of Spain and Portugal, a more tolerant spirit was gradually diffusing itself

through the community, and it was hoped that the time had arrived when, by the use of suitable means, an impression might be made, at least upon some minds, favorable to the propagation of a purer form of Christianity.

South America, at this time, was divided into no less than nine distinct governments, the largest of which is the empire of Brazil, belonging to the Portuguese; while Guiana belonged to the English, Dutch, and French; and Patagotna is possessed by the aborigines; the remaining republics though wrested from the domination of the kingdom of Spain, were under Spanish rule and government. But though the several colonies had succeeded, after various struggles and sanguinary conflicts, to emancipate themselves from foreign dominion, they were yet in an unsettled state, and much harassed with intestine divisions and civil commotions, one party succeeding another often after bloody contests, in supreme power and influence. Since their disenthralment, however, from the potentates of Europe, many foreigners from Great Britain, Germany, France, and the United States, had settled in some of the principal cities, for the purposes of trade and commerce, and were supposed to be accessible to Protestant ministers; and being near neighbors to us, inhabiting a part of the American continent, and assimilating their civil institutions, as nearly as their circumstances would seem to allow to those of the United States, it was thought to be our duty to make an effort to establish our religious institutions in that country.

To this were much encouraged soon after the adjournment of the last General Conference, by a letter received from a Christian gentleman, a member of our Church, who had resided for some time at Buenos Ayres, in which we were informed that he had succeeded in forming a small class, and that they were quite desirous of having a missionary of our denomination sent among them. His letter was submitted to the board of managers, and after due deliberation, it was most heartily recommended to the bishops to select some suitable person and send him on a missionary tour to South America, making Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Ayres the chief points of observation. Accordingly Bishop Andrew appointed the Rev. Fountain B. Pitts, of the Tennessee conference, for this important service, and after traveling through various parts of the country, holding missionary meetings and taking up collections, he set sail in the month of July, 1835, for his place of destination. He visited Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Ayres, Monte Video, and several other places, and was generally received, more particularly by the English and American residents, with great affection and respect, and the object of his mission was highly appreciated. Brother Pitts wrote that he found a few pious persons both in Rio do Janeiro and Buenos Ayres, to whom he preached with lively satisfaction, and was much encouraged with the prospect of establishing missions in both these cities, and probably also in other places of less note. These encouraging representations led to other measures of a more important and permanent character, which will be noticed hereafter. The unusual peace and harmony prevailing in our ranks for the five years past, and the zeal exemplified by ministers and people for the promotion of the cause of God by the ordinary

means of the gospel; as well as by institutions of learning, sabbath schools, and the distribution of Bibles and tracts building churches and parsonages seemed to awaken new energies, and to call forth the resources of the Church in a much more liberal manner than heretofore for the extension of the work on every hand, but more particularly by means of missionary labors. We did not know, indeed, how much could be done until the trial was made. And the several institutions above alluded to, instead of weakening one another, acted reciprocally upon each other; the one tending to excite the other to more vigorous action, and all uniting to produce the most salutary and happy results. This was seen in every department of our extended work, and the truth of the inspired declaration was exemplified by every days experience, "He that deviseth liberal things, by liberal things shall he stand," and "he that watereth shall be watered again."

In the same proportion that we enlarged the sphere of our operations for the conversion of the world, did the means accumulate for carrying on our work; and by inducing all to contribute something, none were oppressed, while each one felt that he had an interest in the general cause he was aiding to support. By means of these appliances the field of missionary labor especially, both in the new countries and the hitherto unoccupied places in the older settlements, were constantly supplied with gospel ordinances, the vigorous action of the heart of the Church sending out, through these main arteries, the life-blood to every limb and member of the spiritual body, and they in return, by a lively exercise of their functions, sending it back to the center, thus keeping up that constant circulation which is essentially the health and growth of the entire system.

Hence, while a number of the places heretofore supported by the Missionary Society had so far prospered as to be taken among the regular circuits, new ones were this year established and prosecuted with vigor and success. Brazderville, High's River, and Smithport, in the bounds of the Pittsburgh conference, and Ripley, Port Washington, Thenton, Calhoun, Cold Water, and Saganaw, under the patronage of the Ohio conference, were all established this year, and the men of God who were sent to these places had the happiness to rejoice over sinners converted to God. Highland, Litchfield, Mount Pleasant, Barbersville, Manchester, and Pikesville, within the bounds of the Kentucky conference embraced new tracts of country, hitherto unsupplied with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and they amply repaid the labor bestowed upon them.

But the most extensive field was spread out within the bound of the Illinois conference, as the streams of emigrants were flowing into that state about this time with great rapidity in addition to the missions before mentioned undertaken by the Rev. John Clark, the Menominee was opened for the benefit of a tribe of Indians in the neighborhood of Green Bay the Milwaukee and Rock River, both of which extended far into the northwestern boundaries of that conference, besides various others, as Alton, Flat Branch, Pecan, Quincy, Knoxville, Iowa, Peoria, Bureau, and Ottawa; all of which embraced newly settled territories, fast rising

in strength and importance, and the most of them have so prospered, that they have been taken into the regular work, are supporting their own institutions, and contributing to aid others.

But to carry the blessings of the gospel still further into the western regions, the Rev. Alfred Brunson was appointed to explore the country, and ascertain the feasibility of establishing missions among the Indian tribes on the upper waters of the Mississippi, and in the neighborhood of St. Peters, where the Sioux and Fox Indians have their habitations. Into these wild regions he penetrated, sometimes paddling his canoe over lakes and on the rivers, at other times wending his way through the trackless deserts or wide-spread prairies, on horseback, sleeping on the ground or in log cabins, with a view of conveying to these destitute people the blessings of salvation. He was generally received favorably by the few white people who had preceded him, by the agents of the government, and by the Indians, though he encountered some difficulties among the latter in consequence of wars which they were waging against each other. He finally settled at Prairie du Chien, at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers, making it the center of missionary operations in the various settlements just then forming in that new country, and among the Indian tribes in the neighborhood. Several missions were begun, and though they have not been attended with which immediate fruit, when compared with our other Indian missions, yet it is hoped that a foundation has been thus laid for the future salvation of these people, and that the ordinances of religion, and religion itself, shall grow up with the growth of the settlements. As a means of accomplishing this very desirable object, schools were opened for the instruction of youth, and the good will of several chiefs was conciliated, who manifested a disposition to cooperate with the missionaries in striving to improve the condition of their people.

In the bounds of the Holston conference a missionary district was formed called Newton, in which there were no less than eight missions, employing nine preachers, including an Indian interpreter by the name of J. Fields, who had been converted to the Christian faith, and was now engaged in promoting the cause among his brethren, the Cherokees, of whom seven hundred and fifty-two were members of the Church. These several missions, though spread over a thinly settled country, were greatly blessed of God, as they returned the next year six hundred and sixty-five Church members.

The Henpeth mission, for the benefit of the colored population, Mountain, Holly Fork, and Centreville missions, established by the Tennessee conference, were commenced this year, and prosecuted with vigor and success.

Several new missions were begun this year in the bounds of the Mississippi conference, mostly for the benefit of the colored people, and they have been a means of conferring invaluable blessings upon them. And in the new territories embraced in the Alabama conference, in addition to those heretofore mentioned, the Nanny Warrior, Canebrake, Clayton, Lime Creek, Uchee, and Will's Creek, were this year brought under spiritual culture by

means of missionary labor, and they have yielded an abundant harvest as the reward of our exertions.

The work was also enlarged in the same means, chiefly for the salvation of the slaves on the rice and cotton plantations, in the bounds of the Georgia and South Carolina conferences, much to the gratification of the masters, and to the joy of the slaves, who were brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Some others, in the older conferences, were undertaken, with various degrees of success and perhaps, in some instances, these domestic missions were increasing faster than our means would justify, though it as perfectly within the original scope and design of the Missionary Society to fill up, as far as practicable, every vacant place where the people were either too poor, or too indifferent to their spiritual interests, to provide for themselves. And that these exertions resulted highly favorable to the cause of Christ, has been abundantly manifested from the pleasing fact, that whole districts, and even annual conferences, have been raised up by means of these labors; and in the old and populous town of Worcester Mass., in which we had no standing until it was occupied as mission ground in the year 1831, we have now a society of upward of four hundred members and Worcester is the seat of the New England conference for 1841. Such results speak volumes in favor of the policy pursued by the Missionary Society. Indeed, nearly every new circuit was now formed under its auspices, by which the preacher was relieved from suffering, and the people from pecuniary burdens. Thus the more wealthy and older societies were blessed with the privilege of helping the poorer, and all in their men were contributing something for the general good.

Thirty-four preachers had died during the past year, eighty-nine located, one hundred and nineteen were returned supernumerary, one hundred and fifty superannuated, six had been expelled and two had withdrawn.

The Church was this year called to mourn over the death of two of her bishops, namely, William McKendree, the senior, and John Emory, the junior bishop, both of whom had filled their office with dignity and usefulness, the one for about twenty-seven years, and the other only about two years and six months.

Of the former, Bishop McKendree, we have already spoken when giving an account of his election in 1808. Of his early history, therefore, and of his labors in the ministry up to the time he entered upon the duties of the episcopal office, it is needless to say any thing here and nothing more than a sketch of his character and of his subsequent labors will now be attempted, nor indeed could more be accomplished, as the public have not yet been gratified with any published account of his life and death, except what is contained in his funeral sermon by Bishop Soule.

From the time of his entrance upon the arduous duties of his office until his death, he labored most assiduously to fulfill his high trust in such a manner as to preserve the unity, the purity, and integrity of the Church, and thereby to promote the cause of God among his fellow-

men. In some of the first years of his labors as an itinerating superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, he was in the habit of traveling from one end of the continent to the other on horseback, frequently exposed to the hardships and privations incident to the new countries, and to the fatigues of preaching every day, besides giving attention to the numerous calls arising out of his official relation to the Church. His perpetual labor so wore upon his constitution, which had indeed been severely tried by his great exertions in the western country previous to his election, that even at the end of four years, when he was deprived of the able counsel and services of Bishop Asbury, he was scarcely adequate to the duties of his station. He, however, so far recovered as to pursue his calling with his accustomed diligence and fervor until the General Conference of 1820, when he was released from the responsibility of discharging regularly the duties of a general superintendent; but only "so far as his health would prudently admit of it," he was affectionately requested to "exercise his episcopal functions and superintending care." In conformity with this request, he moved from one annual conference to another, as his strength would permit, presiding in the conferences occasionally, assisted in stationing the preachers, and gave his counsel on all matters pertaining to the welfare of the Church. Such, however, was the character of his complaints, a rheumatic affection, with frequent attacks of the asthma, attended with great prostration of strength, that he traveled often with great pain, passed sleepless nights and wearisome days; but he was borne up by a consciousness of the divine approbation, cheered by the affectionate greetings of his friends, and the prospect of that ample reward which awaited him in another world.

After the close of the General Conference of 1824, his constitution seemed to rally, and he went forward in the discharge of his duties with greater ease and cheerfulness, traveling extensively, preaching often at the conferences, attending camp and Quarterly meetings, and everywhere exhibiting an example of patience, diligence, and fortitude to all who beheld his perseverance in the work assigned him. To those unacquainted with the peculiar work of an itinerating superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it might seem strange that a man enfeebled by disease, oppressed by an accumulation of cares and labors, should, nevertheless, constantly move about from one part of the continent to another, cross and recross the Allegheny mountains, descend the valleys of the eastern rivers, preach to a few hearers in log cabins, to thousands under the foliage of the trees at camp meetings, and then visit the populous cities and villages, and make the pulpits sound with the voice of mercy and glad tidings. Yet such was the mode of life of Bishop McKendree. Habit had, indeed, rendered it necessary to life and comfort. So much so, that the very thought of being confined to one place was painful, and whenever such an event seemed inevitable, you might see the strugglings of a soul anxious to avert what he considered a calamity.

At the General Conference of 1828, which was held in Pittsburgh, Pa., though unable to preside, he was present in some of its sittings, and assisted by his counsel in those difficult

questions which were then agitated, and finally adjusted in the manner heretofore related. To a man ever active to the interests of the Church, and who had devoted more than forty years of his best energies to promote its welfare, sharing alike in its weal or woe, it must have been highly gratifying to behold the issue of that convulsive struggle which so long agitated our Zion, and which, at one time, threatened a dissolution of its union. Bishop McKendree lived to see the portentous storm, which had been gathering in the heavens for about eight years, pass off without material injury, and to behold peace and harmony serenely pervade the horizon, illuminated as it was by the mild beams from the "Sun of righteousness" which now shone out with renewed splendor upon the spacious fields which were whitening for the harvest.

From this time to the General Conference of 1832, which assembled that year in the city of Philadelphia, he continued his itinerary tours, often in the midst of such debility that he had to be assisted in and out of his carriage by his faithful traveling companion, through various parts of the continent, mostly in the south and west, enlivening the hearts of his friends by his cheerful submission to the divine will amidst the pains and afflictions of life, and receiving every favor showed him by the smile of gratitude and the embrace of paternal affection. At this conference he seemed to be tottering under the infirmities of age, and withering under the corroding influence of protracted disease, while his soul exerted its wonted energies in devising or approving of plans for the prosperity of the Church. Like a patriarch in the midst of his family, with his head silvered over by the frost of seventy-five winters and a countenance beaming with intelligence and good will, he delivered his valedictory remarks, which are remembered with lively emotions. Rising from his seat to take his departure from the conference the day before it adjourned he halted for a moment, leaning upon his staff; with faltering lips, but with eyes swimming in tears, he said, "My brethren and children, love one another. Let all things be done without strife or vainglory, and strive to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." He then spread forth his trembling hands, and lifting his eyes toward the heavens, pronounced with faltering and affectionate accents the apostolic benediction.

This was his last interview with the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, for at the next General Conference in 1836 his funeral sermon was preached by one of his surviving colleagues, Bishop Soule, who had attended him much for several of the last years of his life. He gives the following account of the last hours of Bishop McKendree: —

"In the spring of 1834 he returned to Nashville, visited and preached in different places through the summer, and in the fall attended the Tennessee conference. He preached for the last time in the new church in Nashville, on Sabbath, the 23d of November, 1834. Here ended the pulpit labors of this venerable minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who had traveled and preached for almost half a century. Here that penetrating, yet pleasant voice,

which had been heard with delight by listening thousands, in almost all the populous cities of these United States, and which had sounded forth the glad tidings of salvation in the cabins of the poor on the remote frontiers, or to numerous multitudes gathered together in the forests of the western territories, and which savage tribes had heard proclaiming to them the unsearchable riches of Christ, died away to be heard no more. Here he finished the ministration of the words of eternal life, and closed his public testimony for the truth of the revelation of God. In the latter part of December he removed from Nashville to his brother's, which was his last travel. From this time it was obvious that he was gradually sinking to the repose of the tomb. But he had one more conflict before the warfare was accomplished. From the time that Bishop McKendree became unable to perform the entire effective work of a general superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church, his mind was frequently deeply exercised with the apprehension that he might become unprofitable in the vineyard of his Lord. And it would seem as if he sometimes thought nothing was done, unless he could compass the whole work, as he had been accustomed to do in the days of his strength and vigor. He had for many years moved with the foremost in activity and perseverance, and the idea of following in the rear, and being left behind, was painful to him, and frequently drew tears from his eyes. And this sentiment often led him to exertions and labors far beyond his strength. This fear that he should outlive his usefulness in the Church of God, and become unprofitable to his fellow-creatures, was the last afflicting exercise of mind through which he passed; and from this he was speedily and happily delivered by the prayer of faith. He sunk patiently and sweetly into all his heavenly Father's will, and waited in lively hope and abiding peace for the hour of his departure. The inward conflict had ceased; his confidence in God was unshaken; faith, strong and unwavering stretched across the Jordan of death, and surveyed the heavenly country. With such sentiments, and in such a peaceful and happy frame of mind, the dying McKendree proclaimed in his last hours, 'All is Well.' In this emphatical sentence he comprehended what St. Paul expressed in view of his departure from the world and exaltation to an eternal inheritance: 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.' The last connected sentences which ever dropped from the lips of this aged and devoted servant of God, who for almost half a century had made Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever, the end of his conversation, were 'All is well for time, or for eternity. I live by faith in the Son of God. For me to live is Christ; to die is gain.

"Not a cloud doth arise to darken my skies, Or hide for a moment my Lord from my eyes."

In this calm and triumphant state of mind he continued till he sweetly 'slept in Jesus,' at 5 o'clock, P. M., March 5th, 1835, in the seventy-eight year of his age."

Thus closed the life and labors of this man of God. And though his death had been anticipated by his friends for some time, yet it seemed to create a vacancy in the Church not easily to be filled. He had gone in and out among us as a general superintendent for about twenty-seven years, as the immediate successor of the venerated Asbury, with whom he had labored as a colleague for about eight years, and from whose example of devotion and diligence he had learned the art of government, as well as the necessity of an active and vigilant oversight of the entire Church.

A brief sketch of his character will close what we have to say respecting him. And,

- 1 Bishop McKendree gave unequivocal evidence of deep piety, and of a mind and heart thoroughly imbued with gospel truth. This evidence is found in his entire life, in his words and actions.
- 2 Having devoted the early days of his ministry chiefly to the new countries west of the Alleghenies, he had neither the time nor the means of acquiring much information from the study of books, though it was evident that he had stored his understanding with a variety of the most useful branches of knowledge for a minister of Jesus Christ. Had he been favored with the opportunity of a thorough education in his youth, and pursued the path of science in after years, he might have shone in the galaxy of literature and science; for he had an understanding sufficiently strong and acute to enable him to grapple with any subject within the range of the human intellect, and equal to the acquirement of any branch of human knowledge.

This was evident to all who were intimate with him and could duly appreciate his worth. His mind, indeed, was capable of the nicest distinctions, of the most critical researches, and of the widest expansion. How often did he, by a well-timed and pointed remark, unravel the sophistry of the sciolist and confound the pedantic pretender to wisdom and science! As if by a sudden inspiration of thought, he could make a ray of light flash upon a subject, and then render that clear and intelligible which before was obscure and perplexed. It was once remarked by a preacher of no mean attainments, who was on intimate terms with the bishop, that he had often felt himself mortified and chagrined, when, endeavoring to let him into the secret of something of importance, he found that the bishop was already in possession of the facts in the case, and could therefore give more information than the other could impart.

His constant intercourse with all sorts of company in his various peregrinations through the country, enabled him to treasure up much useful knowledge from actual observation, and to suit himself, with an admirable adaptation, to the variety of classes and circumstances of the people with whom he came in contact. This also gave him a clear insight into the human character, and a comprehensive view of that character in all its variety of shades and

distinctions. And though he did not “affect the gentleman” by an apish imitation of the fopperies of fashion, he was easy and polite in his manners, while he at all times maintained the dignity and gravity of the Christian minister. His perfect knowledge of the human character enabled him to wield with good effect the weapon of truth, and to apply it with admirable facility and exactness to the various cases which came up for consideration.

3. As a preacher of the gospel he was plain and pointed, and his sermons consisted chiefly in explaining and enforcing experimental and practical godliness. Though possessed of a mind extremely acute, which, had he been trained to metaphysical researches, would have been competent to the most abstruse subjects, yet he seldom entertained an audience with dry and monotonous disquisitions, but entered directly into the heart, laid open the secret springs of human action, and applied the truths of God’s word to the understanding and conscience with powerful effect.

There was, indeed, great variety in the character of his sermons. Though he seldom failed to “make out what he took in hand,” yet he sometimes sunk rather below mediocrity, while at other times he soared, and expanded, and astonished you with irradiations of light, and with the power and eloquence with which he delivered the tremendous truths of God. On these occasions, assisted, as he most evidently was, by the Holy Spirit, he would carry you away with him on the eagle wings of truth, and then, having gently seated you on its firm foundation, melt you into the tenderest emotions by the sweet and gentle accents of affectionate entreaty, which poured from his lips in the most pathetic streams of gospel simplicity, truth, and love.

It was a sermon of this character which he preached before the General Conference in 1808, a few days previous to his election to the episcopal office, and which, no doubt, contributed much to his elevation to the station, more especially by securing the votes of those who were not personally acquainted with him. To give as fair a representation of this sermon and its effects as I am able, I will simply relate what passed in my own mind on that occasion.

It was the first General Conference I had ever attended, and the name of William McKendree was unknown to me, and I believe also to many other junior members of the conference. He was appointed to preach in the Light Street church on sabbath morning. The house was crowded with people in every part, above and below, eager to hear the stranger and among others most of the members of the General Conference were present, besides a number of colored people, who occupied a second gallery in the front end of the church. Bishop McKendree entered the pulpit at the hour for commencing the services, clothed in very coarse and homely garments, which he had worn in the woods of the west; and after singing, he kneeled in prayer. As was often the case with him when he commenced his prayer, he seemed to falter in his speech, clipping some of his words at the end, and hanging upon a syllable as if it were difficult for him to pronounce the word. I looked at him not without some feelings of distrust, thinking to myself, “I wonder what awkward backwoodsman they

have put into the pulpit this morning, to disgrace us with his mawkish manners and uncouth phraseology.” This feeling of distrust did not forsake me until some minutes after he had announced his text, which contained the following words: — “For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” [Jer. viii, 21, 22.](#)

His introduction appeared tame, his sentences broken and disjointed, and his elocution very defective. He at length introduced his main subject, which was to show the spiritual disease of the Jewish church, and of the human family generally; and then he entered upon his second proposition, which was to analyze the feelings which such a state of things awakened in the souls of God’s faithful ambassadors; but when he came to speak of the blessed effects, upon the heart, of the balm which God had provided for the “healing of the nations,” he seemed to enter fully into the element in which his soul delighted to move and have its being, and he soon carried the whole congregation away with him into the regions of experimental religion.

Remarking upon the objections which some would make to the expression of the feeling realized by a person fully restored to health by an application of the “sovereign balm for every wound,” he referred to the shouts of applause so often heard upon our national jubilee, in commemoration of our emancipation from political thralldom, and then said, “How much more cause has an immortal soul to rejoice and give glory to God for its spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin!” This was spoken with such an emphasis, with a soul overflowing with the most hallowed and exalted feelings, that it was like the sudden bursting of a cloud surcharged with water, and the congregation was instantly overwhelmed with a shower of divine grace from the upper world. At first sudden shrieks, as of persons in distress, were heard in different parts of the house; then shouts of praise, and in every direction sobs and groans, and eyes overflowing with tears, while many were prostrated upon the floor, or lay helpless upon the seats. A very large, athletic-looking preacher, who was sitting by my side, suddenly fell upon his seat as if pierced by a bullet; and I felt my heart melting under sensations which I could not well resist.

After this sudden shower the clouds were disparded, and the Sun of righteousness shone out most serenely and delightfully, producing upon all present a consciousness of the divine approbation; and when the preacher descended from the pulpit, all were filled with admiration of his talents, and were ready to “magnify the grace of God in him,” as a chosen messenger of good tidings to the lost, saying in their hearts, “This is the man whom God delights to honor.” “This sermon,” Bishop Asbury was heard to exclaim, “will make him a bishop.” This was a mighty effort, without any effort at all — for all seemed artless, simple, plain, and energetic, without any attempt at display or studied design to produce effect. An attempt, therefore, to imitate it would be a greater failure than has been my essay to describe it, and

it would unquestionably very much lower the man's character who should hazard the attempt, unless when under the influence of corresponding feelings and circumstances.

It has been already remarked, that sometimes he fell below himself, when his mind appeared to be barren and unfruitful. Though this was the case, yet he always exhibited the powers of a "master workman," even when these powers seemed to be cramped apparently for want of some internal energy to put them in vigorous motion, and make them play with ease and effect. But what added much to the force of the truths which he uttered, was his commanding appearance, the gravity of his demeanor, the sprightliness of his manner, the fire which shot from an eye which bespoke kindness and intelligence, and the natural gracefulness of his action in the pulpit. His voice was clear and musical, and the words which dropped from his lips fell upon the ear with delight, producing a harmony between the outward voice and the inward sensation.

His rhetoric was faulty. Either from an impediment in his speech, or from a habit induced from early usage, as before hinted, he would sometimes hang upon an unaccented syllable, as in the use of the word continually, on the penultima he would rest thus, al — ly, as if unable to add the final syllable to the word. At other times he would clip a word in the middle or end, and leave it half enounced probably from some imperfection in the organs of speech. These however, are little things, like black specks in a diamond, which set off its beauties by contrast and were lost sight of whenever he so entered into his subject as he generally did, as to make you forget every thing but the truth he uttered, and the God he proclaimed.

There was also, at times, the appearance of affectation in his manner, and the modulation of his voice, which detracted, so far as it was apparent, from the reverence one wishes to feel for an ambassador of the Most High. Those, however, who may have observed this defect, — and it is certainly a great defect wherever it is discovered, — may have misjudged and taken that for art which arose mostly from the variety of emotions produced by the ebbings and flowings of a full heart, and the several aspects of the subjects occupying the speakers mind and tongue.

But whatever defects the eye of candid criticism might detect in Bishop McKendree as a public speaker, or as a sermonizer, judging from the rules of strict propriety, take him all in all as a preacher of righteousness, sent of God to instruct mankind in the pure and sublime doctrines of the gospel, he was a star of the first magnitude, and as such he diffused the hallowing and mellowing light of divine truth all around him wherever he went, and whenever he preached. In the west especially, whence he returned surrounded with a halo of glory which had been gathering around his character for several years, in the midst of the shakings and tremblings produced by the camp and other meetings, thousands could say that his preaching was not with the enticing words of man's wisdom, "but in power, and in much assurance, and in the Holy Ghost." Nor were his labors in the pulpit unappreciated

in the Atlantic states, after he passed through them in the character of a general superintendent, and had an opportunity to show himself to his brethren “as a workman that needed not to be ashamed.” His zeal rose with the dignity of his subject, and his mind expanded as he ranged through the spacious and prolific field of theological truth, while he charmed and charmed his hearers with the melody of his voice, and penetrated their hearts by the energy with which he spoke in the name of God, and the directness of his appeals to the understanding and conscience. Such was Bishop McKendree in the pulpit.

4. He was an ardent friend and active promoter of all the institutions of the Church. When the Missionary Society was formed, he entered immediately into its spirit and design, gave it his hearty support, and defended its objects both by word of mouth and by his pen, as well as by liberal contributions. And after our aboriginal missions were begun with so much success, he visited them personally, preached to the natives, and held interviews with the chiefs and counselors with a view to obviate difficulties, and promote their welfare in every way within his power.

5. Let us now view him as a ruler in the Church. As has been already seen, he constantly set an example to his brethren in the ministry of unreserved devotion to the cause in which he was engaged, and of indefatigable labor, so long as his strength would sustain him, in the pursuit of good. This enabled him to silence the clamors of such as might be tempted to believe that in the exercise of his executive powers as the president of a conference, he was guilty of laying burdens upon others which he was unwilling to bear himself; and the writer of this article had frequent opportunities, during the five years in which he held the office of presiding elder under Bishop McKendree’s administration, as well as at other times, to watch his proceedings, and though sometimes so placed as to have strong temptations to find just cause of censure, yet truth compels me to say, that I believe he was always actuated by the purest motives, and an enlightened desire to act impartially in all cases which came before him for decision. Whatever partialities he might feel for one in preference to another, arising out of personal friendship or otherwise, there is good reason to believe that he never willingly allowed these things to bias his judgment in the execution of his trust, or in the distribution of the preachers to their several stations and tasks. And who that understands any thing of the complicated machinery of Methodism but must know the extreme delicacy and perplexing difficulty of fixing so many men, some old and infirm, some young and inexperienced, others of mature age, judgment, knowledge, and influence, in their several stations, so as to meet, as nearly and justly as may be, the claims of all, and not disappoint the expectations of any, either among preachers or people! Such a man must be more than mortal. And hence the assiduity with which a conscientious bishop must needs apply himself to this difficult task, even to satisfy the dictates of his own judgment.

During some periods of his administration, Bishop McKendree had to encounter no small amount of prejudice, — I trust honestly engendered — in arising out of the presiding elder

question, as he was strongly opposed to any innovation in this respect. On this account it was thought by some that he was actuated by a love of power, and that he sought to sustain himself in his position under the promptings of unjustifiable ambition. There was created for a time some uneasiness in my own breast, and dissatisfaction in the breasts of those who opposed him, which subjected his administration to a severe test, more especially in some of the northern conferences. Time, however, and more mature reflection, have softened whatever of asperities may have arisen out of these conflicting opinions, no doubt honestly entertained on both sides, and removed whatever erroneous views may have been imbibed regarding either the motives or conduct of Bishop McKendree. Indeed, even in the midst of the lengthened and sometimes wire-drawn discussions on the subject in controversy, most of those who stood opposed to the bishop's theory, whenever they spoke or wrote of him, such a strong hold had he upon their affections and veneration, that they called him the beloved, or the venerated bishop, for indeed he was affectionately loved and truly venerated by all who knew him, and by those most who knew him best. And there is little reason now to question that the present order of things is best adapted to preserve inviolate the unity, usefulness, and energy of the system, however heavily it may press upon either the episcopacy or the itinerancy to sustain and keep it in harmonious action.

As a general superintendent, therefore, Bishop McKendree was wise and discreet, pure and energetic, infusing into the general system of the itinerancy life and activity, and setting such an example to all, both preachers and people, as to acquire and maintain their affection and confidence.

6. Viewed as a man of God, he had many excellences and but few defects. He was naturally, as all men of genius are, of a warm temperament, his passions were easily moved, and he sometimes manifested a severity in his disposition and expressions which detracted from the general amiableness and dignity of his character, and sometimes wounded the feelings of his friends. Yet with these strong feelings to grapple with, self-knowledge was so deep, and grace predominated so powerfully, that he generally possessed his soul in patience, and even in the midst of conflicting sentiments and arguments, he had that perfect command of himself, or control over his feelings, that he seldom betrayed any thing inconsistent with the Christian bishop, evincing a philosophic gravity which indicated a soul calm and serene, while the storm might be raging around him. And with the exception of these slight aberrations from perfect equanimity of temperament, no one could exceed him in the kind and frank manner in which he treated his friends, "rendering to all their due," and making every one feel easy and at home in his presence.

In the social circle he was free and accessible, often enlivening conversation with instructive anecdotes illustrative of the topics under consideration. In these seasons of relaxation from the severe duties of his station, he appeared indeed "gentle and easy to be entreated," manifesting a suitable deference to others, frequently drawing out their opinions by respectful

inquiries, and modestly proposing his doubts, that they might be solved. And in all these movements he never forgot his obligations as a Christian bishop, often taking pains to distinguish between the respect paid to him because the Church had honored him with his high office, and what was due to him merely as a man, thus throwing upon others the honor which seemed to be given to himself. While religious conversations seasoned and sanctified these social interviews, they were generally concluded with a few words of advice suited to the occasion, and an invocation to God for his blessing upon all present.

7. When compared with Bishop Asbury, in the performance of his official duties in consecrating men to the work of the ministry, the contrast was obvious. Though equally fervent, and at times manifesting much more of the “unction of the Holy One,” yet he fell much below his venerable predecessor in the dignity and solemnity of his manner, and in the authoritative manner in which he administered the holy ordinance. Equally impressed, however, with the imposing obligations of the sacred office, and of its weighty responsibilities, he neglected no convenient opportunity to impress both the one and the other upon all who took upon themselves the vows of their God. And sometimes, under the impulse of a sudden inspiration, he would offer up to God a fervent intercession for blessings to rest upon them and their labors, and conclude with a short and pithy admonition or exhortation suited to the occasion.

8. In presiding in the conferences, impartiality guided his decisions, and he introduced a more orderly manner of doing business than had heretofore characterized their proceedings. Bishop Asbury used to say, as an apology for the desultory manner in which he sometimes allowed the affairs of a conference to be conducted, “I was with you in weakness, and at first I had to be president secretary, and almost every thing; but now the days of your childhood are passed; you have a president who has grown up in the midst of you, and who therefore, understands your wants; let him, then, lead you forth as men of mature age, under the dictation of those rules of order you may mutually devise for youth regulation.” In conformity with this patriarchal counsel, under the advisement of Bishop McKendree, a set of by-laws were introduced and adopted for the more orderly manner of conducting the business of an annual conference. This wise arrangement prevented the appearance of arbitrary power on the one hand, and the irregularities of independent action on the other.

In the exercise of his prerogatives as president of the conferences, he was sometimes called upon to check the forwardness of some, to correct the wanderings of others, as well as to encourage all to a just and diligent performance of their respective duties. In administering admonition or rebuke, he sometimes did it with the keenness of a razor, and yet seemingly with the mildness of the dove. I remember, on a certain occasion, a young preacher of more confidence than prudence, who had left some small business to become an itinerant, was boasting of the great sacrifices he had made for the cause, when Bishop McKendree checked him by asking, in his peculiarly soft and mild manner, “Brother, have you made greater

sacrifices than St. Paul resolved to do when he said, If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no more meat while the world standeth? Or than those which said, We have left all for thy sake?" I need not say, that a sense of shame sat on the countenance of this vain boaster.

But however mild and yielding he might appear in his general administration, there were times in which he thought the circumstances called for it when he could show all the firmness of a despot without any of his haughty and domineering feelings. A debate once arose in the New York conference respecting electing a man to elders orders, who had been a traveling deacon only one year, because he had traveled for several years in connection with the Wesleyan conference in England, and he was finally elected. In the course of the debate, one of the speakers averse to the proposed election pleaded, that if elected, the presiding bishop would be compelled to assume the character of a pope, and refuse to ordain him. After the question was decided, the bishop arose and informed the conference, in mild but firm tones, that with all his respect for the decision of conference, he must decline to ordain the brother; "But," said he, "in doing this I deny the imputation that I assume the character of the pope, for I act according to your laws, by which I am forbidden to consecrate a person to the office of an elder until he shall have traveled two years as a deacon, unless in case of missionaries, and this brother does not appear in the character of a missionary. Were I, therefore to ordain him according to your vote, I might be impeached at the next General Conference for an unconstitutional act, for which I could offer no reasonable excuse. Hence it is not an assumption of unauthorized power in imitation of the pope of Rome, in defiance of law and order, by which I refuse to comply with your request, but it is a deference I feel for constitutional law, made and sanctioned by yourselves, and from the infraction of which I am bound by my office, alike to protect both you and myself. Repeal your law, and make a different regulation, and I will bow to it with all readiness; but while the law exists I am bound to obey it, and to see that it is obeyed by others."

This sensible appeal induced the conference to reconsider its vote, and the motion to elect was withdrawn. Thus the good sense of the bishop, united with such a commendable firmness, saved both him and the conference from perpetrating an unconstitutional act.

9. He was extremely sensitive, and acutely felt the slightest insult, while he would bear it without resentment. His discriminating mind enabled him to detect the slightest impropriety in the words or conduct of others, whether manifested toward himself or another person; and nothing seemed to give him more pain of mind or severe mortification than the exhibition of those weaknesses of human nature growing out of an ignorance of the common civilities and proprieties of life. To these, in his intercourse with his fellow-men, he was strictly attentive, considering it as much his duty to treat every person according to the claims which age, station, or office might give him, as it was to exact similar treatment from others. He thus gave a practical comment upon the maxims, "Tribute to whom tribute

is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." And in the discharge of the relative duties of life, he set an example worthy the imitation of all, and rebuked especially those uninstructed and inexperienced youth, whose raw notions of independence led them to make no discrimination between the old and the young, the officer, the citizen, the minister and others.

10. I need hardly add, that all his actions were the result of a heart deeply experienced in the things of God. He lived, indeed, "as seeing him who is invisible," and he was most evidently moved forward in the discharge of his various duties, whether official or otherwise, under the dictation of that Spirit which "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." This directed and sanctified his labors in the best of all causes, and gave a beauty and finish to his work in general. Having been thus "created anew unto good works," and persevering under the influence of those holy feelings which were enlivened and purified by the blood of the covenant, he halted not in the day of trial, nor ceased his work until his divine Master said, "It is enough: come up higher."

John Emory, the junior bishop, had also taken his departure to another world during the year; and his death produced the greater sensation on account of the sudden and unexpected manner in which it was brought about.

He was born in the state of Maryland, in the year 1788. He was destined by his parents for the profession of the law, and received an education accordingly. But God had other work for him to do. At the age of seventeen he was made a partaker of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, and soon gave evidence of those talents by which he was afterward so eminently characterized. In the twenty-second year of his age, in the year 1810, he entered the traveling ministry in the Philadelphia conference, of which he became, in due course of trial, a distinguished member, filling the stations assigned him with ability and usefulness. Though but a junior member of the conference, in 1816 he was elected as a delegate of the General Conference of that year, and was an active and intelligent promoter of its measures and objects.

When it was resolved, at the General Conference of 1820, to open a more direct intercourse with the Wesleyan Methodist conference in England, by a personal interchange of delegates, Mr. Emory was chosen as our representative to that elder branch of the Methodist family, and he accordingly visited England in that capacity. By his Christian and gentlemanly deportment, and the ability with which he conducted the mission, he won the affection and esteem of all with whom he had intercourse, and brought to an amicable adjustment the perplexing difficulties which had arisen in Upper Canada between the two connections.

In 1824 he was elected assistant book agent, and in 1828 the principal. While in this station, though his physical strength would not allow him, during some portions of the time, to perform much active service, yet he was wise in counsel, judicious in his arrangements of plans for carrying on that extensive establishment with energy and system, and he applied

himself with diligence and success to accomplish its benevolent objects. But as all these things will doubtless be presented to the public in his biography now in press, I need not enter into particulars.

At the end of his term of service in this institution in 1832, he was, as has been intimated, elected a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He entered upon the labors of this station with an enlightened zeal, attending to its peculiar and onerous duties with diligence, with a sound judgment, and a discriminating mind; and had he lived to the common age of man, he might have infused into the system a spirit and energy highly beneficial to the present and future generations; for he was a warm friend and the advocate of all our institutions, those peculiarly Methodistic, as well as those relating to education, missionary, and Sunday school operations, likewise to the publication and circulation of books and general intelligence. But ere he had time fully to enter upon his high and holy duties, and to develop the energies of his mind upon these momentous subjects, he was suddenly called, by one of those mysterious providences not easily solved by human intellects, to give an account of his stewardship.

Early on the morning of Wednesday, December 16, 1835, he left home in a one horse carriage, for the purpose of visiting Baltimore on business connected with his episcopal office. His horse ran away with him, and he was violently thrown from the carriage, and received such a severe wound in the head, that he expired about seven o'clock of the same day. His death was the more melancholy to his friends because his fall, and the wound he received, deprived him of his senses, so that he was unable to converse with those who stood around his dying bed, though he was heard to respond an amen to one of the many prayers which were offered up in his behalf in this hour of trial and affliction. No one doubted, however, of his preparedness to meet his fate, and to enter into the joy of his Lord. He died in the forty-eighth year of his age.

Though the Church was thus deprived of the labors of him to whom she had awarded one of the highest offices in her gift, ere he had an opportunity of fully unfolding his capabilities to serve her interests in the capacity of a ruler, yet he had lived long enough to convince all with whom he had held intercourse, of the strength of his mind, the acuteness of his intellect, and of his ability to defend the doctrines and institutions of the Church of his choice. Hence the mournful tones of sorrow which were heard almost universally when the news of his sudden and unexpected death was announced, and the deep and heartfelt grief which was uttered by his surviving friends.

Bishop Emory possessed an acute and discriminating mind, a sound and comprehensive judgment. Having received a thorough education in his youth, and devoting some time of his more mature and vigorous days to the study of the law, his understanding had become accustomed to close thought and accurate research, and he could therefore quickly and

easily distinguish between truth and error, between right and wrong, while his heart forsook the one and cleaved to the other.

During his connection with the Book Concern he was frequently called upon to exert his intellectual powers in defense of what he considered to be truth and duty. After he became the principal, in 1828, he conducted the editorial department of the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, in doing which his abilities as a writer were fully tested, and the masterly manner in which he defended the doctrines, institutions, and usages of the Church against powerful, and, in some instances, malignant assailants, proved his competency to the task assigned him, as well as his love of the truth, as developed in the articles and General economy of the denomination to which he belonged. Though his writings are not numerous, yet they have reared for their author a lasting reputation for the accuracy of his researches, for his depth of thought, the soundness of his views, and for the conclusive manner in which he could wield an argument.

These same eminent qualities were equally displayed in the pulpit. Owing to physical debility, brought on perhaps by too much exertion in the early days of his ministry, at some periods of his public life he was compelled to remit the regular duties of an itinerant preacher; but whenever he did appear before the public as an ambassador of Christ, he always evinced a mind thoroughly imbued with his subject, familiar with the truth, and well trained to the exercise of its powers in weighing evidence and balancing the claims of the various subjects which might be presented for consideration. And the acuteness of his intellectual powers were in no instances more strikingly illustrated than in his capacity to distinguish the nicest shades of truth, to detect the smallest intrusions of error, and so to analyze a subject as to view it in all its parts, and then so to combine it as to grasp it in his mind as one undivided whole.

It is the easiest thing in the world to generalize, to dogmatize, and to denounce in strong terms of disapprobation any supposed error in theory and conduct; but it requires a well-informed and a well-balanced mind to enter into detail, to discriminate between one thing and another, to trace parallels, to mark contrasts or resemblances, and when a multitude of subjects come up for consideration, to select the best, the most fit, and then to follow out a thought by a regular induction of arguments from particular facts. Who may not say that truth is preferable to error? — that the righteous shall be rewarded and the wicked punished? All this is easy. But it requires a mind accustomed to close thought to ascertain where the truth lies, to disentangle it from the knotty threads of error in which it often lies concealed, and to place it so plainly, and pointedly, and perspicuously before the reader or hearer that it may be seen and felt. Nor does it require less assiduity of mind and quickness of perception to trace out the windings of the human heart, to detect the characteristics of the sinner, to prove him guilty, and then to urge home upon him the tremendous consequences of his criminal conduct: yet Bishop Emory was fully equal to this task, and much more. He could,

with all the ease imaginable, fix upon an antagonist the very point in which he erred, trace it in all its windings and shiftings, and then bring the whole weight of his powerful intellect to bear upon him with a force, collected by a regular course of argument, which he could not well resist.

But though thus furnished with material for a sound judgment, he was very far from possessing an overwhelming confidence in himself. He was in the habit of collecting information from every source within his reach, of consulting with his friends on all important occasions, and then following the best light afforded him. He did not, therefore, imitate those weak but self-confident persons who seem conscious that neither their productions nor opinions can bear the light of investigation, and therefore thrust that before thousands which they seem unwilling to submit to the inspection of a select few. Not so Bishop Emory. He generally strove either to strengthen his own opinions by the concurrence of others, or to have his errors corrected before they should be exposed to the multitude for indiscriminate condemnation. And such was his good sense, that he was always ready to hearken to all that could be said against as well as in favor of any of his positions, and it was by no means difficult to convince a man of his discernment of an error, should he have incidentally embraced one. His education, refined as it was by the fire of Christianity, taught him how to estimate the relative claims of his fellow-men, and to yield to each his due, whatever might be his station or character. Though he was extremely sensitive, and could quickly perceive the slightest aberrations from the rules of strict propriety, he knew equally well how to make due allowance for human frailties, and to apologize for these faults in others which seemed the unavoidable result of either ignorance or inattention. Nor could he retain a spirit of resentment toward any man after discovering the slightest emotion of repentance; and he was as ready to make atonement for an offense as he was to accept it.

For many years he was the intimate friend, and for some time the traveling companion of Bishop McKendree, and I believe one of his most confidential advisers. It so happened, however, that in the midst of the controversy respecting the appointment and powers of the presiding elders, I think in the year 1822, brother Emory felt it his duty to call in question some of the positions of the bishop, which he had submitted to the annual conferences, and he did it in such a way as to wound the delicate feelings of friendship, and for some time thereafter an estrangement took the place of their former familiar intercourse. This, however, though painful to both, did not destroy mutual confidence and respect, a proof that a long intimacy had not detected in either any want of Christian integrity; and it is mentioned here merely for the purpose of illustrating that trait of character now under consideration; for the course of events restored mutual affection and confidence long before death introduced the spirits, first of the senior, and then, in about nine months, of the junior bishop, to each other in that world of glory where all these imperfections are remembered only to heighten

the efficacy of that atoning blood which washes and fits the redeemed to “sing the song of Moses and the Lamb for ever and ever.”

The commanding talents of Bishop Emory, and his comprehensive judgment, gave him an influential position, more especially after his election to the episcopal office, which, had he lived in the faithful discharge of its duties, would have been extensively felt, and highly appreciated. But that God who “sees the end from the beginning,” saw fit to call him home ere he had time to immature his plans for future usefulness, and he no doubt “rests from his labors,” enjoying the rewards of his “work of faith and labor of love,” in the everlasting kingdom of God.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 566,957; Last Year: 553,134; Increase: 13,823 — Colored This Year: 83,135; Last Year: 83,156; Decrease: — Indians This Year: 2,436; Last Year: 2,494; Decrease: 58 — Total This Year: 652,528; Last Year: 638,784 — Increase: 13,744 — Preachers This Year: 2,758; Last Year: 2,625; Increase: 133.

CHAPTER 13

The General Conference of 1836

This conference assembled in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, on the first of May, 1836, and was composed of the following delegates: —

New York Conference: Nathan Bangs, Laban Clark, William Jewett, S. Martindale, Daniel Ostrander, Phinehas Rice, Marvin Richardson, Peter P. Sandford, John B. Stratten, Beverly Waugh.

New England Conference: Isaac Bonney, Phineas Crandall, Daniel Fillmore, Joseph A. Merrill, Orange Scott, Charles Virgin, Daniel Webb.

Maine Conference: Charles Baker, Moses Hill, John B. Husted, Heman Nickerson, William H. Norris, Ezekiel Robinson, George Webber.

New Hampshire Conference: John F. Adams, Charles D. Cahoon, Schuyler Chamberlain, Samuel Kelly, Samuel Norris, Jared Perkins, Elihu Scott, Elisha J. Scott, George Storrs.

Troy Conference: S. D. Ferguson, Buel Goodsell, Noah Levings, Sherman Minor, P. C. Oakley, Charles Sherman, Tobias Spicer.

Oneida Conference: Horace Agard, Elias Bowen, Silas Comfort, George Gary, George Lane, Zechariah Paddock, George Peck.

Genesee Conference: Asa Abel, Glezin Fillmore, Loring Grant, James Hemmingway, Wilbur Hoag, Samuel Luckey, Manley Tooker.

Pittsburgh Conference: Joshua S. Barris, Wesley Browning, Charles Elliott, Robert Hopkins, Thomas M. Hudson, Joshua Munroe, Martin Ruter.

Ohio Conference: William B. Christie, Augustus Eddy, John Ferree, James B. Finley, Thomas A. Morris, John F. Power, James Quinn, William H. Raper, Le Roy Swarmstedt, John F. Wright, David Young, Jacob Young.

Missouri Conference: Jesse Green Thomas Johnson, George C. Light, Andrew Munroe.

Kentucky Conference: Henry B. Bascom, Benjamin T. Crouch, H. H. Kavanaugh, Jonathan Stamper, Edward Stevenson, G. W. Taylor.

Illinois Conference: Peter Cartwright, Hooper Crews, Simon Peter.

Mississippi Conference: Benjamin M. Drake John Lane, William Winans.

Indiana Conference: James Havens, C. W. Ruter, James L. Thompson, Allen Wiley.

Holston Conference: Thomas K. Catlett, David Flemming, Samuel Patton, William Patton.

Tennessee Conference: T. L. Douglass, Alexander L. P. Green, G. W. D. Harris, G. T. Henderson, John M. Holland, John B. McFerrin, Robert Paine.

Alabama Conference: F. H. Jones, Robert L. Kinnon, W. Murrah, W. Wier,

Georgia Conference: Samuel K. Hodges, John Howard, Lovick Pearce, Elijah Sinclair,

South Carolina Conference: Charles Betts, William Capers, Samuel Dunwoody, William M. Kennedy, Malcolm M. McPherson, N. Tally.

Virginia Conference: Moses Brock, Thomas Crowder, John Early, H. G. Leigh, James McAden, Abram Penn, Lewis Skidmore, William A. Smith,

Baltimore Conference: John A. Collins, A. Griffith, D. Steele, N. Wilson, John Bear, Samuel Brison, Robert Cadden, John Davis, William Hamilton, William Prettyman, S. G. Roszel.

Philadelphia Conference: David Daily, Manning Force, Solomon Higgins, John Lybrand, R. W. Petherbridge, Charles Pitman, Levi Scott, James Smith, Jr. Matthew Sorin, Henry White, William A. Wiggins.

Bishops Roberts, Soule, Hedding, and Andrew were present, and the first named opened the conference by reading a portion of the Holy Scriptures, singing, and prayer. Thomas H. Douglass was appointed secretary, and Thomas F. Sargeant assistant secretary.

After the conference was organized, the president introduced the Rev. William Lord, as a representative from the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, and the Rev. William Case, as the representative from the Canada conference, when the former delivered the following address from the Wesleyan Methodist conference: —

“To the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Conferences of America.

“Very Dear Brethren, — The preachers of our connection, assembled in conference, however earnestly engaged in numerous and diversified affairs, requiring diligence, vatoloffulness, and prudence in council, cannot be so pre-occupied with their own most urgent interests as to forget that time approaches for the holding of your General Conference at we have a confidential agent in the western continent, in the person of of the beloved brother, the Rev. William Lord; and that an opportunity is thus presented for renewing the affectionate fraternal intercourse of the two great families of Wesleyan Methodism.

On former occasions, the conferences of both connections have alike acknowledged the beauty and utility of that unity of faith and love which has happily hitherto subsisted between them, and the value of reciprocal intercourse by epistles and deputations, as a means of cultivating and perpetuating the existing union and brotherhood. By taking knowledge of the steady improvement and resistless growth of our kindred communities, and giving exercise to the brotherly feelings with which we rejoice in each other’s welfare and success, we are stimulated to love and to good works, and confirmed in the principles and affections essential to a catholic spirit. We also perceive in the co-existence, the independence, and the kind and intimate correspondence of the two great confraternities of the Methodist body, a mutual check to evil change in doctrine, discipline, or practice.

“We sincerely congratulate you on your continued prosperity. The increase of your members, — the extension of your missions among the aborigines of the western continent, in regions where you have a whole and appropriate sphere of action, the establishment and progress of seminaries for your junior preachers, and all the auspicious circumstances of your great work, are highly interesting to us as partakers of your joy.

“In reference to the condition and prospects of British Methodism, notwithstanding some partial agitations in our societies, we have great cause, on the whole, to thank God and take courage. Our numbers in Great Britain are nearly the same as at the last conference; but our missionary department continues to afford us great encouragement, both by actual increase of converts from sin to God, and by openings for more extended operations. The experiment, commenced shortly after our last conference of a theological institution for the improvement of preachers admitted on our list of reserve, is proceeding in a manner which promises to exceed our best hopes. In the direction of this, as of all our institutions, it is the anxious wish of our body, inspired with one unanimous sentiment of conscientious solicitude, to preserve and perpetuate sound doctrine, and pure, experimental, and practical religion.

It has already come to your knowledge, as a matter of public notoriety, that by the blessing of God on the efforts and influence of our connection, and on the combined endeavors of the religious public of our beloved country, a great measure for the emancipation of the slaves in all the territories of Great Britain was eventually conducted to a successful issue in the imperial legislature; and has since been carried into practical effect in all the colonies of the empire, with various degrees of completeness, but universally with safety and advantage, and with results which mightily encourage us to go forward in our earnest attempts to enlighten and evangelize the whole population to which favorable access is thus freely opened.

“Our American brethren will doubtless allow us the fraternal liberty to express our conviction that great Scriptural principles are opposed to the continuance of slavery in a Christian state; that the permission of it is one of those deviations from natural equity and evangelical purity which call for further deviations to abet and maintain them; that it is contrary to the precepts of Christianity, and violates and counteracts the principles and obligations by which the gospel urges those precepts. We trust that your connection, having already begun to resist and condemn this baneful system, will, in its own way, be freely and providentially led to such practical steps as shall produce a consentaneous opinion, feeling, and purpose among your own people; and will then have the glory of leading the public opinion of your great and increasing population to such decided views as will result in a unanimous rejection of slavery and its social mischiefs, on the ground of its repugnancy to the laws of Christ.

“We rejoice to learn, from various quarters, that in your country, as in ours, Wesleyan Methodism is steadily and powerfully diffusing Christian knowledge; and this we trust it will still abundantly effect by advocating right principles in its periodical publications, as well as by the living ministry of the gospel. It will, we trust, be the sacred and unalterable purpose and aim of the Methodist societies, on both sides of the Atlantic, to maintain uncorruptness of doctrine and life, and to offer a free, a full, a present, and an everlasting salvation to all people, and to the end of time.

“Brother Lord is instructed to present to you our warmest Christian salutations: he will be able to communicate freely with you concerning our affairs; and, we trust, will be brought to you ‘in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace.’

“Of all that we have to express in our communications to you, the best is that he is graciously with us, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, and who is with his disciples always, even to the end of the world. We earnestly pray that his presence may go with you through the length and breadth of your States, and throughout your western wilderness, so that every class and race among your mingled tribes may specially know the truth as it is in Jesus. Signed, on behalf and order of the conference,

“Richard Reece, President “Robert Newton, Secretary. “Sheffield, August 18th, 1835.

To this address the conference returned the following answer, appointing the Rev. Dr. Fisk, who was then in Europe, our representative to the Wesleyan Methodist conference: —

“Honorable Fathers and Brethren, — We have had the pleasure of receiving, by the hands of your worthy representative, the Rev. William Lord, your kind and fraternal salutations, as expressed in the epistle with which he was charged, and which has been read n’ open conference. This, together with the friendly intercourse of brother Lord among us on the present interesting occasion, has brought to our recollection those hallowed associations by which we have been refreshed in former times, by similar tokens of brotherly love and Christian affection. Assembled as we are, in our General Conference, is the representatives of the twenty-two annual conferences, into which our work, for greater convenience and facility in carrying forward the sacred cause in which we he engaged, is divided, we embrace this opportunity of expressing our unfeigned gratitude to God for what he hath wrought on this vast continent by our instrumentality and of our firm and unwavering attachment to those doctrines and usages, and to that discipline, by which we have ever been distinguished, and which we have received in substance from the venerable founder of Methodism. But in the midst of these recollections, so holy and consolatory, we have the lament the loss by death, since we last assembled, of our senior superintendent, the Rev. William McKendree, the brightness of whose example, for the many years he went in and out among us shone with a steady and cheering light, and whose setting sun reflects upon those of us who survive his in the radiance of immortality; of our junior superintendent, the Rev. John Emory, whose commanding talents and fervent piety gave us reason to hope that he would be rendered a great blessing to the Church and the world, but whose sudden and unexpected death, while it has deprived us of his services, has doubtless transferred him to the brighter regions of eternal day; — and the loss of our excellent book establishment by fire in the city of New York, by which disastrous event we have lost about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars’ worth of stock, including printing and binding materials, building, etc. And to these losses, which we regard as the chastisements of our heavenly Father, we may add, a diminution in the number of our communicants, for the last year, of between two and three thousand.

But while these things call for mourning, for 'searchings of heart,' for humiliation and prayer, we are by no means discouraged; for though thus chastened, we are not in despair, — though cast down, not destroyed. We trust that the God of providence and grace will raise up others to fill the places of those who have gone to their reward; and furnish means to resume our wonted practice of diffusing abroad evangelical principles and holiness through the medium of the press; and also pour out his Spirit upon our heritage, and so prosper the labor of our hands, that we shall hereafter witness an increase of piety and of numbers to our Zion.

But while our domestic work has thus suffered from these and other causes, not necessary now to mention, we rejoice to witness the growing prosperity of our missions, both in our own borders, among the aborigines of our wildernesses, in the rising Colony of Liberia in Western Africa, and in some of the cities of South America. In the contemplation of these opening prospects for missionary enterprise, we rejoice in being able to record the encouraging fact, that our people are cheerfully and promptly pledging a portion of their substance to aid us in this great and good work. During the past year our missionary fund has been replenished by about twenty-two thousand dollars, over and above the amount collected in any one preceding year; and on our several missionary stations we have had an accession of upward of four thousand to the number of our church members. For these manifest tokens of divine approbation upon this department of our work, we desire to be thankful to him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, and to make them motives of renewed exertion and persevering efforts in the grand missionary cause.

"In common with sister denominations of Christians in our country, we have been less or more agitated with the perplexing question of Negro slavery. And, although we receive with respectful deference what you, as our elder brethren, have said to us in relation to this question, yet we are assured that, from the known prudence by which your body has ever been distinguished, had you been as well acquainted with this subject as we are — could you have viewed it in all its aspects, as it presents itself to us who are in the midst of it, interwoven as it is in many of the state constitutions, and left to their disposal by the civil compact which binds us together as a nation, and thus put beyond the power of legislation by the general government, as well as the control of ecclesiastical bodies, — could you have critically analyzed its various ramifications in our country, so as to have perceived all its delicate relations to the Church, to the several states, and to the government of the United States, — we cannot doubt that, while expressing your decided disapprobation of the system of slavery itself, your tone of sympathy for us would have been deeper and more pathetic. While on this subject, it may be pertinent to remark, that of the colored population in the southern and southwestern states, there are not less than seventy thousand in our Church membership; and that, in addition to those who are mingled with our white congregations, we have several prosperous missions exclusively for their spiritual benefit, which have been, and are

still, owned of God, to the conversion of many precious souls. On the plantations of the south and southwest our devoted missionaries are laboring for the salvation of the slaves, catechizing their children, and bringing all within their influence, as far as possible, to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and we need hardly add, that we shall most gladly avail ourselves, as we have ever done, of all the means in our power to promote their best interests. Having thus given a brief outline of our present state and future prospects, permit us, dear brethren, to congratulate you on the continued prosperity of your growing connection. We have witnessed with mingled emotions of pleasure and gratitude the extension of your work, both at home and abroad, particularly on your foreign missions. In this grand work we hope to imitate your pious zeal and, though it may be at a respectful distance, to follow your steps until we shall meet on some favored spot upon our globe, and salute each other face to face, as the servants of Him who claims the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

“Although we have no institution, as, you seem to have supposed we have, of the character you mention, as existing among yourselves, for the education of those of your junior preachers who are not actively engaged in the field of labor, yet we are endeavoring, by such means as are at our command, to improve our young ministers in the various branches of knowledge which are deemed requisite for a successful discharge of the functions of their office and we rejoice in being able to state, that the cause of general education, in its various branches, from the sabbath and common schools up through the academic to the collegiate course, has been, and is now, gradually demanding more and more of our attention; and hence we hope that our ministry, though none of them has been established for their exclusive benefit, will reap a proportionate share in the results of these institutions of learning.

“We have availed ourselves of this early period of our session to return to you our Christian salutations, and to bear testimony to the prudent and conciliatory manner in which your delegate has thus far discharged the trust committed to him, that we might not miss the favorable opportunity of employing the agency of our highly respected and beloved brother, the Rev. Dr. Fisk, who enjoys our confidence, to present to you in person these expressions of our affection and esteem. We have therefore requested him to convey to you an assurance of our undiminished attachment to the Wesleyan Methodist connection; and to ask that, at our next General Conference, we may be favored with a representative from your body, whose visit, should it take place, will, we doubt not, be reciprocated with the same feelings of brotherly affection by which this intercourse has heretofore been characterized.

“Earnestly praying that he ‘whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,’ may guide, sanctify, and ever be with both you and us, we subscribe ourselves, in behalf of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, your brethren and servants in our common Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

“R. R. Roberts, [Bishop] “Joshua Soule, [Bishop] “Elijah Hedding, [Bishop] “James O. Andrew, [Bishop] “Thomas L. Douglass, Secretary Cincinnati, Ohio, May 5th, 16.”

Friday the 6th was observed as a day of solemn fasting and prayer, and at eleven o'clock Bishops Roberts and Hedding addressed the conference very appropriately and feelingly on the general state of the work of God, and on the strict manner in which discipline should be administered in order to keep the Church pure from immoral members. There was one point especially on which Bishop Hedding insisted with emphasis, as devolving a high duty on those to whom the execution of discipline was intrusted. He remarked, in substance, that it was the practice of some preachers to wait for a formal complaint, containing charges and specifications, before they proceeded to the trial of a supposed delinquent member. This he considered a defective administration. As the minister was held responsible for the state and character of the Church, it became his imperative duty, whenever a report was in circulation against a member of the Church, to institute an inquiry respecting its truth, and if he found reason to believe there was just cause of complaint, he was bound to proceed to examine and try the case, as the discipline directs, without waiting for a formal accusation. Nor is it perceived how a minister can otherwise discharge his high trusts so as to give a joyful account to the Judge of all of his stewardship.

On the assembling of the conference a vacancy was perceived, accompanied with very mournful sensations, on the bench of bishops, by the absence of Bishops McKendree and Emory, whose deaths are recorded in the preceding chapter. By a vote of the conference, Bishop Soule was requested to preach the funeral discourse of the former, and Bishop Roberts of the latter, which, at a proper time, was done, greatly to the satisfaction of all who heard them.

Among other things which came up for consideration before the is conference, was the propriety of dissolving our Bible Society. The existence of this separate and denominative organization, though it answered its purpose for a season, was found not to work advantageously either to ourselves or others, and the question of its continuance had been mooted both, in and out of the board of managers for some time before the meeting of the conference. As, however, the constitution of this society was adopted by the General Conference, and was therefore considered as a Church institution, the managers thought it inadvisable to cease such operations without the recommendation of the conference. The conference, after due deliberation, recommended to the society a dissolution of its existence, and it was, soon after the adjournment of the conference, dissolved accordingly, and our brethren and friends were advised to unite in carrying forward the objects of the American Bible Society. Since that period a harmonious co-operation has been effected and carried on between us and the other friend and supporters of that great national institution, mutually satisfactory to all concerned.

Several alterations and amendments were made in the Discipline, the chief of which we shall mention.

The rule respecting “laying aside” persons for not meeting in class, which had been so interpreted as to allow the acting preachers to drop the delinquent without a trial, was so amended as to make it obligatory on the parties concerned to allow the accused to be heard in his defense before a committee, the same as in other cases of delinquency.

The correspondence of the Missionary Society had been hitherto carried on by one or the other of the brethren connected with the Book Concern; but the increase of the business, both of that Concern and of the Missionary Society, made the duties of each so onerous, that it was found impracticable to unite the two offices any longer without injury to one or both. Hence, on the recommendation of the board of managers, an article was introduced into the constitution of the Missionary Society creating a resident corresponding secretary, who should be devoted exclusively to the interests of the society, under the direction of the managers. His election was with the General Conference.

The Liberia mission was erected into an annual conference, “possessing all the rights, powers, and privileges of other and annual conferences, except that of sending delegates to the General Conference, and of drawing its annual dividend from the avails of the Book Concern and chartered fund.”

The following was added to the section on receiving preachers, and their duty: —

“Whenever a preacher on trial is selected by the bishop for a mission, he may, if elected by an annual conference, ordain him a deacon before his probation ends, and a missionary employed on a foreign mission may be admitted into full connection, if recommended by the superintendent of the mission where he labors, without being present at the annual conference for examination.

“At each annual conference, those who are received on trial, or are admitted into full connection, shall be asked whether they are willing to devote themselves to the missionary work; and a list of the names of all those who are willing to do so shall be taken and reported to the corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society; and all such shall be considered as ready and willing to be employed as missionaries whenever called for by either of the bishops.

“It shall be the duty of all our missionaries, except those who are appointed to labor for the benefit of the slaves, to form their circuits into auxiliary missionary societies, and to make regular quarterly and class collections wherever practicable, and report the amount collected every three months, either by indorsing it on their drafts, or by transmitting the money to the treasurer of the parent society.

“It shall be the duty of each annual conference to examine strictly into the state of the domestic missions within its bounds, and to allow none to remain on the list of its missions which, in the judgment of the conference, is able to support itself.”

Hoping that the time was not very distant when our missionaries, and those under the direction of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, by the continual enlargement of their respective fields of labor, would approximate and even meet each other in Africa, and also among the aborigines of America, where we both had missions established, and perhaps at no remote period in some portions of Europe and Asia, the following paragraph was added to the section on missions: —

“It shall be the duty of the bishops to instruct all our foreign missionaries that, whenever they come in contact with any of the missionaries belonging to the Wesleyan Methodist conference, they shall not interfere in their respective charges, any farther than to help them in their work when requested, but shall, on all occasions, cultivate a spirit of friendship and brotherly affection, as brethren engaged in the same common cause, namely, the salvation of the world by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

For the purpose of meeting the local wants of some sections of our country more perfectly by the introduction of periodical literature and general intelligence, two additional weekly papers were established, and the one which had been commenced at Cincinnati by the book agents, on the recommendation of several of the annual conferences, was sanctioned and continued, making in all four religious weekly papers, besides the Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review, now authorized by the General Conference; namely, one at New York, one at Cincinnati, another at Charleston, S. C., and another at Nashville, Tennessee: besides these there were published four others, under the patronage of annual conferences, namely, Zion’s Herald, in Boston, Mass., Maine Wesleyan Journal, in Portland, Maine, Virginia Conference Journal, in Richmond, Virginia, and the Auburn Banner, issued in Auburn, N. Y., making altogether eight weekly papers devoted to the interests of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The claims of the brethren in Canada upon a portion of the capital of our Book Concern, which had remained hitherto unsettled, were now amicably adjusted in accordance with the principles embraced in the following articles of agreement: —

“Whereas, the Canada conference, now in connection with the Wesleyan Methodists of Great Britain, was formerly united to, and formed part of; the M. E. Church; and whereas, the union which by mutual consent then subsisted, was dissolved at the earnest and repeated solicitations of the ministers and members of the Church in Canada, which was definitively determined upon by an act of the Canada conference, who thereupon and subsequently did form a union with, and become a part of the Wesleyan Methodist connection; and whereas, there has been a difference of opinion between the M. E. Church and the Canada conference in regard to the claim which has been urged by the Canada conference, of an interest in, and a portion of, the Methodist Book Concern; and whereas the decision of the several annual conferences, to whom the subject was referred by the General Conference of 1832, has been averse to the claim of the Canada conference, and has thereby precluded any further

action of the General Conference on the ground of claim, as made by the Canada conference; but whereas this General Conference cherishes an affectionate remembrance of the Canada brethren, and is desirous to manifest its fraternal regard in every suitable way; and whereas, the Canada conference did, at its last session, appoint its president, the Rev. William Lord, and the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, delegates to this General Conference to negotiate its claims on the Book Concern, and the Rev. William Case having been duly appointed to take the place of Rev. E. Ryerson in the negotiation; and whereas, the said Rev. William Lord, president of the Canada conference, and the Rev. William Case, have full powers to bring to an amicable termination the question pending between the two connections, therefore it is hereby declared to be mutually understood and agreed, that the following plan shall be considered as an arrangement for the full and final adjustment and settlement of the matter at issue between the Canada conference and the Methodist Episcopal Church; to wit, The agents of the Methodist Book Concern shall furnish to the book steward of the Canada conference any of the books which may be issued from its press at the following rates, subject to the conditions and provisions hereinafter named: —

- 1 The general alphabetical catalogue books, whether in sheets or bound, shall be sold at forty per cent discount from the retail prices, as long as the present discount of one-third shall be made to wholesale purchasers, but should the discount be hereafter changed to one-fourth, then, in that case, the books sold to the book steward of the Canada conference shall be charged at a discount of one-third from the retail prices which shall from time to time be affixed to them respectively. Provided, that this discount shall not apply to such books as may be reduced below the usual prices on account of rival publishers; and provided, also, that the Canada conference shall give satisfactory security in regard to the payment of any debt which may be contracted with the Methodist Book Concern, within one year from the time such debt may be created. And it is also expressly understood and agreed, that no interest shall be demanded or paid on any such debts, unless payment shall be delayed beyond the period of credit before named, in which event interest shall be charged and paid, from and after the expiration of said credit term. It is also further provided, that all books which may be ordered by the book steward of the Canada conference shall be at the risk and expense of the said conference from the time they shall be forwarded from the Methodist Book Concern.
- 2 Sunday school books and tracts shall be furnished to the book steward of the Canada conference at a premium of eighteen percent, to be paid in general catalogue books at retail prices; and it is hereby declared to be understood and agreed, that the same provisions and conditions are to be adjudged applicable to Sunday school books and tracts as have been specified above in regard to books generally.

- 3 It is understood and agreed, that the privileges herein secured to the Canada conference shall be binding on the Methodist Book Concern until the first day of May, 1852, next ensuing the present date; provided, also, that the said Canada conference shall regularly and truly make annual settlements to the satisfaction of the agents of the Methodist Book Concern, and not otherwise.
- 4 Finally, it is hereby mutually understood and agreed, that the foregoing arrangement is considered as a full, and definite, and satisfactory adjustment of the question which has arisen between the Canada conference and the Methodist Episcopal Church on the subject of the Methodist Book Concern.

“In testimony whereof; the agents of the Methodist Book Concern, and the delegates of the Canada conference, have mutually affixed their respective signatures, this 18th day of May, 1836, in the city of Cincinnati, Ohio. (signed)

“B. Waugh and T. Mason, Agents. “William Lord, and William Case, Delegates from Canada.” A resolution was then adopted giving discretionary power to the book agents and book committee in the city of New York to settle with the Canada conference, on such terms as might be mutually satisfactory, all debts which were due to the Book Concern by said conference, for books sold and unsold; which was, soon after the adjournment of conference, done accordingly. Thus was this long-pending question brought to an amicable termination, on such terms as to preserve and perpetuate the harmony and brotherly affection heretofore subsisting between the two connections.

The episcopal committee, after adverting in affecting terms to the death of Bishops McKendree and Emory, reported in favor of electing three additional bishops, which, after some debate, was concurred in by the conference. Accordingly, on the 23d of May, Beverly Waugh was elected on the first balloting by the votes of eighty-five out of one hundred and fifty-three, the whole number of votes taken; and Wilbur Fisk by a vote of seventy-eight; and, after several ballotings, Thomas A. Morris, by a vote of eighty-six.

On the 27th, Beverly Waugh and Thomas A. Morris were duly consecrated to their high and holy office. In the mean time, the bishops were requested to consecrate Dr. Wilbur Fisk, who was absent in Europe, as soon as practicable after his return, provided he should conclude to accept the appointment. He, however, soon after his return to the United States, declined the office, and before the next General Conference he was called to his reward in another world.

The action of this General Conference in favor of missions, education, and all those institutions designed to aid in the spread of Scriptural truth and holiness, exerted a salutary influence upon their respective interests, and tended to diffuse them more extensively through the community. The reports upon these several subjects were spread before the public through the columns of the several papers published under the patronage of the Church;

but as they recognized no new principle of action, it is considered not necessary to insert them here. They showed, however, that the conference was more and more earnest in its measures to promote sound learning and useful science among the rising generation, and to carry forward the work of God by means of missionary operations to the greatest possible extent.

The report of the committee on boundaries, as it was adopted by the conference, divided the general work into twenty-eight annual conferences, besides the Mission conference in Liberia.

There was one alteration made in the Discipline at this conference, which went to affect the administration very materially, as it lodged in an annual conference a tremendous power over its members for good or evil, according to the manner in which it might be exercised. For several successive General Conferences, the question had been mooted, whether an annual conference had legitimate authority to locate one of its members without his consent, and the predominant opinion seemed to be that no such power existed. The question came up for consideration at this time, and a rule was finally passed, giving to an annual conference the power to locate one of its members who has rendered himself "unacceptable as a traveling preacher," in their judgment, allowing him, however, the privilege of an appeal to the next General Conference.

This rule is founded on the presumption that whenever a member of an annual conference fails to fulfill the obligations of his trust, and which were the conditions on which he entered the fraternity, he forfeits his privileges and all the immunities of his official rank, and hence the conference has the right of dismissing him from their employment as an unfaithful servant. It is allowed, however, that this power ought to be exercised with great caution and moderation, lest it degenerate into tyranny and oppression.

A rule was also inserted for the trial of an accused superannuated preacher living out of the bounds of the conference of which he is a member, by a committee and the presiding elder of the district in which the delinquent may reside, the ultimate decision of the case being reserved for the conference of which he is a member.

But that which excited the deepest interest at thus General Conference was the subject of slavery and abolitionism.

That this subject may be clearly understood, and the controversy to which it gave birth duly appreciated, we must be allowed to enter into some historical details. That the Methodist Episcopal Church has always been opposed to slavery, and has accordingly adopted measures to do it away, and where this could not be done, to mitigate its evils, is a truth written upon all her institutions, and confirmed by various enactments of the General Conference; and she was going on in her steady career of doing good to the souls and bodies of both master and slave, to the white and colored population of our country, when she was suddenly arrested by a new species of measures to effect emancipation.

The success which had crowned the efforts of British philanthropists in bringing about emancipation in the West Indies, though it was effected by a compromise between the government and the owners of the slaves, by which the latter received a supposed equivalent for their legalized property, awakened a spirit of inquiry in our country respecting the practicability of emancipating the slaves in our southern and southwestern states, without waiting for the slow and more safe process of a gradual preparation for such an event. This spirit was powerfully excited by agents sent out from England, for the express purpose of lecturing us on the evils of slavery, and enlightening us on the duty and feasibility of immediate and unconditional emancipation, not indeed in imitation of the plan adopted by the legislature of their own country, which was to remunerate, in part at least, the owners of the slaves for their property; but they insisted upon a full, and free, and immediate surrender of the slaves, as a political and religious duty, alike demanded by the laws of God and of nature. These heedless and enthusiastic lecturers, not understanding the peculiar structure of our complicated governments, including the state and general governments, and not caring to distinguish between slavery as it existed here, and slavery as it had existed in the West Indies, loudly proclaimed a war against it, with such a flippancy of misguided zeal, that they soon goaded the public mind almost to madness, and thus aroused a spirit of resistance to their proceedings and measures which it was not easy to control. This interference of foreigners with our domestic relations was considered by the more judicious portions of the community as highly reprehensible, and worthy of severe rebuke and remonstrance. Accordingly, the newspapers soon became rife with discussions upon this topic. Criminations and recriminations followed each other, until the public mind became so excited as to be incapable of calm and sober investigation on either side of the question, so that, in some instances, mob violence was substituted for argument; and "lynch law" for Scriptural and rational defense. These violent measures were alike condemned by the more sober portion of both parties.

In this agitated state of things, it could hardly be expected that the Church should wholly escape the excitement or avoid participating in the discussions to which it gave rise. Accordingly, as our brethren in the eastern states entered more deeply into this subject than any others, and as they had a weekly paper under their control, its columns were opened to the discussion of slavery as it existed in the United States, and severe denunciations were uttered against all who held slaves, whether in or out of the Church. These denunciations were met and repelled with spirit by those more immediately implicated, as being incompatible with the spirit of brotherly love which ought to characterize all Christians, and more especially such as are members of the same communion.

These discussions had been conducted for two or three years previously to the session of this General Conference, and a weekly paper had been established in the city of New York for the vowed purpose of advocating immediate emancipation, irrespective of all con-

sequences. As the arguments and measures set forth in this and other periodicals of a kindred character were not fellowshipped by a great majority of our preachers and people even in the middle and northern conferences, nor by the official organ of the Church, the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, these were stigmatized by the immediate emancipationists as pro-slavery in their views and feelings, and, of course, as involved in the same guilt and condemnation with those who actually held their fellow-beings in bondage. These irritating charges were considered unjust, as the brethren implicated thought they could easily distinguish between arm approval of slavery as a system, and the apologizing for those who held slaves under certain peculiar circumstances. This clear distinction, however, was not admitted by the zealous advocates of immediate emancipation, and hence they poured forth their anathemas upon all indiscriminately who either held slaves or offered an apology for those that did, on account of their peculiar circumstances.

It was in this state of the public mind, and of the Church, that the General Conference came together in 1836. And though many of its oldest and most judicious members were very desirous of keeping the discussion of slavery from the deliberations of the conference, being convinced it could result in no good, yet several circumstances conduced to bring it in, and to make it the subject of much debate. In the first place, the allusion to the subject in the address of our Wesleyan brethren and in the address of their representative, the Rev. William Lord, made it necessary to advert to it in the answer of the General Conference, which, it will be perceived by those who will look at that answer, was done in a very brief and respectful manner. In the second place, not many days after the conference had assembled, it was ascertained that two of the abolition brethren from New England had attended and lectured at an abolition meeting in the city of Cincinnati; and as the agitation was very great upon that subject, it was feared by many that a popular excitement would be produced injurious to the character of the conference, and perhaps detrimental to the peace and harmony of the Church in Cincinnati. With a view to allay all such apprehension, the conference passed the following preamble and resolutions, by a vote of one hundred and twenty in favor and fourteen against them: —

“Whereas, great excitement has prevailed in this country on the subject of modern abolitionism, which is reported to have been increased in this city recently by the unjustifiable conduct of two members of the General Conference in lecturing upon and in favor of that agitating subject; and whereas, such a course on the part of any of its members is calculated to bring upon this body the suspicions and distrust of the community, and to misrepresent its sentiments in regard to the points at issue; and whereas, in this aspect of the case, a due regard for its own character, as well as a just concern for the interests of the Church confided to

its care, demand a full, decided, and unequivocal expression of the ideas of the General Conference in the premises: — Therefore,

- 1 Resolved, by the delegates of the annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That they disapprove, in the most unqualified sense, the conduct of two members of the General Conference, who are reported to have lectured in this city recently upon and in favor of modern abolitionism.
- 2 Resolved, That they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slave-holding states in this Union.
- 3 Resolved, That the foregoing preamble and resolutions be published in our periodicals.”

The consideration of these resolutions brought the entire subject of slavery and abolitionism before the conference, and elicited a very spirited and protracted debate, which finally ended in their adoption, as before mentioned. Many very able speeches were delivered on both sides of the question, and generally with good temper and much calmness of deliberation, though not without some appearance of asperity and warmth of feeling. The pith of the controversy, however, notwithstanding the whole field of argument and illustration was amply surveyed, may be comprehended in two of the speeches, both published at the time, that of the Rev. O. Scott in favor, and of the Rev. W. Winans against modern abolition. And even this argument itself may be brought into a very narrow compass.

The course pursued by the Methodist Episcopal Church, from the beginning of her existence, in reference and in opposition to slavery, as it has all along existed in the United States, proves that she has always considered it an evil not to be tolerated except under given circumstances; and that such circumstances exist in some portions of our Union, where severe penal laws have been enacted against emancipation, as to justify her in holding in her communion those who hold slaves, provided they are otherwise pious. That this was her doctrine is provable from her whole course of proceeding from the time of her organization in 1784. At this time were passed the severest laws against slavery which we find upon record at any time of her existence; but even these aimed at a gradual, and did not insist on an immediate emancipation; yet finding upon experiment that these severe rules could not be carried into execution without producing a greater evil than that which they were designed to remove, about six months after they were passed they were suspended, and have never been revived, nor were they ever inserted in her book of Discipline; and at almost every subsequent General Conference some enactment has been made for the purpose of regulating slavery, of modifying or mitigating its character, with a view ultimately, if practicable, to do it away. This has been the doctrine, and these have been the measures of our Church in

reference to this most difficult and perplexing subject. And they prove most incontestably that she does not, nor has at any time, considered slave holding, under all circumstances, of such a deadly character as to “exclude a man from the kingdom of grace and glory;” for it is manifest that the making rules for the regulation of a practice is, in some sense, to pronounce that the practice is not, in itself considered, independently of all concurring circumstances, a moral evil in the sight of God. To legislate for a thing is to sanction it, though the manner of holding the thing may be considered either unlawful or inexpedient.

This statement of the doctrine of the Church will enable us to perceive the force and scope of the argument now wielded by Mr. Scott against slavery in the Methodist Episcopal Church. In opposing the above resolutions, he laid down the following proposition: —

“That slavery is wrong in some circumstances, in no circumstance, or in all circumstances.”

In selecting from these positions the one which suited his views, he took this strong ground that slavery is wrong, morally wrong, under all possible circumstances; and in the course of his argument, contended that no circumstance whatever could alter or modify the sinful character of slavery; that it was wrong, or a sin not to be tolerated under any circumstance whatever, either in or out of the Church. By this comprehensive and sweeping proposition, all who held slaves, whatever might be the palliating circumstances, were, on that very account, sinners against God, and ought to be forthwith excommunicated from the communion of the Church, unless they repented, and “brought forth works meet for repentance,” by an immediate and unconditional surrender of their slaves, without any regard to the consequences of such a measure.

And yet, such was the light and force of truth upon this subject, that, almost in the next breath, Mr. Scott admitted that “God himself expressly permitted his people to enslave the Canaanites,” thus upsetting at a stroke the whole array of argument which he had brought to prove that slavery was a sin under all circumstances; for here was a circumstance in which God either permitted his people to commit sin, or which did away with the sinfulness of slavery: the first supposition is daringly impious; the second is fatal to the argument.

Of this concession, a concession which sacred history had forced from him, Mr. Winans took advantage, and built upon it the following impregnable argument: —

That according to this admission, taken in connection with the main proposition that no circumstance could alter the character of an action, as it was once right for God to permit slavery, it was therefore always right; is right now; and no possible circumstance could make it wrong.

This was the very gist of the argument. And the reader will observe, that in stating the argument thus, Mr. Winans did not attempt to prove that slavery, as it existed in the United States, is right, or not sinful; but simply to show, that on Mr. Scott’s concession, his major proposition, that slavery is a sin under all circumstances, could not be true.

I need not trace this controversy any further. The views of the General Conference in reference to this subject, as well as others which came up for consideration, may be seen in the following Pastoral Address, which was adopted near the close of the conference: —

“To the Members and Friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church

“Beloved Brethren and Friends: — The time has come, in the conclusion of the session of another General Conference, when it seems proper that we should address a few thoughts to you, for whom we labor, and for whose present and future happiness we desire to devote the remainder of our days. We think we can adopt, at least in some degree, the language of the great apostle to the Gentiles, ‘ow we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.’

“In taking a review of our work, we rejoice in being able to say that we are more and more convinced of the truth of those doctrines, and of the healthful influence of that moral discipline, by which we as a people have ever been distinguished. These, therefore, we hope, will ever remain the same, and be handed down to posterity unimpaired, that the generations following may be led by them into the path of peace and holiness here, and finally be conducted to eternal life hereafter. The few alterations which have been introduced into our prudential regulations, into our plan of missionary operations, and into some portions of our temporal economy, are such only as the lights of experience, the enlargement of our work, and the occurrence of new circumstances, have dictated to be expedient and necessary for carrying forward, to the greatest possible extent, the cause of reformation and salvation in which we are engaged. These, so far from impairing those cardinal principles of revealed truth and precepts of morality, which have been incorporated into our excellent Discipline, by which we have been guided thus far in peace and prosperity, are designed merely as helps to develop and apply these principles and precepts to experimental and practical purposes. Though we have been called upon to mourn over the loss of our venerated senior bishop, Rev. William McKendree, and of our junior bishop, the Rev. John Emory, as well as the destruction of our noble and useful book establishment at New York, yet we are by no means discouraged; but regarding these chastisements of our heavenly Father, who has thus corrected us for our good, that we may learn obedience by the things that we are called upon to suffer, we would endeavor to renew our diligence in the important work assigned us.

“Though we have had a very considerable increase during the four last years, yet for the one year past a diminution in the number of Church members appears on the Minutes of the conferences. Whatever may be the cause or causes of this decrease, so unusual in our history, it becomes us to humble ourselves before God, to apply the means at our command for the enlargement of his work, for the increase of holiness among our selves, as well as the conversion of sinners to God. Among the means to be used for this purpose, we may reckon,

—

- 1 A recurrence to first principles; a firm adherence to, and a faithful development and application of those doctrines of the gospel by which we, as a Church, have ever been

characterized; particularly the doctrine of holiness, a preached and enforced by him who, under God, laid the foundation of our spiritual edifice. His maxim was, 'When the work of sanctification goes on among believers, the work of God will prosper in all its branches.' It becomes, therefore, the imperious duty of all ministers of Jesus Christ, to explain and enforce the nature and necessity of this work in the hearts of all their hearers; and it is equally the duty of these to strive after it in the way of God's appointment, and to regulate their lives accordingly. We would, therefore, remind ourselves, as well as those whom we now address, of the great necessity of making this subject a cardinal point in all our ministrations, and in all our public and private duties.

- 2 The second thing which demands our most serious attention and constant vigilance, is the right enforcement of our Scriptural discipline. The history of the Church, from its commencement down to the present period, confirms the truth of the remark, that pure and undefiled religion has always prospered in promotion to the strictness with which discipline has been enforced. The pithy and wise caution of our founder in reference to this subject should ever be borne in mind, 'Be strict, but mild.' While it is our duty to use all Scriptural means to reclaim an offending brother, to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and, if possible, to restore such as may have been seduced by temptation into sin, in the spirit of meekness yet when these means have failed to effect the desired object, it is equally imperative for us to discharge the painful duty of severing from the body the corrupt member. Hence, we cannot guard with too scrupulous a care, nor watch with too much vigilance, that which hath been committed to our trust, with a view to the preservation of the Church in peace and purity, by an impartial administration of discipline. The accession of numbers to the list of Church members, unless accompanied with the witness and fruits of the Spirit, instead of adding strength to the Church, will tend only to introduce confusion and every evil work. We would, therefore, exhort all, both ministers and people, to a united exertion in all places, and at all times, to use every Scriptural and prudent means for the preservation of the members of the Church in purity, simplicity, and godly living. The several duties growing out of our relation to God, to each other, and to the world around us, are so very obvious, so clearly laid down in the sacred Scriptures, and so accurately defined in our general rules, as well as so often explained from the pulpit and the press, that we need not stop to enumerate them here, and will therefore only observe, that the faithful performance of these duties is the best evidence we can give to the world, and to each other, of the sincerity of our Christian profession, and of our devotedness to the cause of Jesus Christ.
- 3 The next thing to which we would call your attention, as connected with our prosperity, is the cause of education. We rejoice to witness the growing interest which has been felt and manifested in this branch of our work for a few years past. In the cause of education

we include sabbath and common schools, academies and colleges. Experience and observation, if not, indeed, the common sense every individual, demonstrate, that unless we provide the means of education for our children and youth, they will be led from us to other communities, where these means are more abundant, and are put within the reach of every one. Should this unhappily be the case, the consequence is inevitable, that the children and youth of our community will depart from us, and we shall be compelled to mourn over the melancholy fact, that they will have been brought under the influence of doctrines and usages which we honestly believe will be injurious to their present and future happiness. Such, indeed, is the eager desire for intellectual improvement, and the facilities for its attainment in other directions, that unless we furnish means to gratify this laudable desire, our children and youth will avail themselves of those thus offered them from other quarters, and be induced to throw the weight of their influence into an opposite scale. This consideration admonishes us of our duty in this respect, and, in a language which cannot be misunderstood, reminds us of our high obligations to enter more fully and unitedly into this field of labor.

“In many places we fear that sabbath schools are either entirely neglected, or but partially attended to; while in others these nurseries for juvenile improvement are suffered to languish for want of that attention to their interests which their importance demands. We would therefore urge upon all concerned a steady, active, and uniform attention to these appendages to the gospel ministry. Nor are we less solicitous that all our brethren and friends should be mindful of their duty in selecting such teachers for primary schools as shall secure to their children the double advantage of elementary instruction, and religious and moral improvement.

“But it is to the higher branches of education, such as are taught in academies and colleges, that we would especially call your attention. Of the former we have under our patronage upward of twenty-of the latter seven, and two others are in contemplation. Though the academics may be sustained without drawing largely upon the pecuniary resources of our people, and may therefore be safely multiplied to an indefinite extent, yet it is manifest that colleges, in order to answer the end of their institution, must be liberally endowed. And such is the condition of our country in respect to these institutions, that though some of the state legislatures have made small endowments for their support, we must depend chiefly upon our own resources for their continuance and prosperity. Hence, to increase their number without adequate funds in hand or in prospect for their support, is to weaken their influence, if not ultimately to endanger their existence.

“Such, however, is their importance to the interests of our community, so closely are they identified with our character as a Church, and so intimately connected with our other institutions which are deemed essential to our growth, and to that influence which we ought to

exert over the public mind, that we cannot but regard it as a sacred duty to nourish and sustain them by all the means at our command. If, indeed, at this crisis of our history, when these literary institutions have just begun to put forth their energies, and to exert their improving influence upon our youth, and upon the Church generally, they should be allowed to languish for want of pecuniary means, the effect would be to throw us back for years in this branch of intellectual and moral culture. This is an event, however, which we cannot allow ourselves to anticipate without very painful emotions, but which can only be prevented by a united and simultaneous action in their favor, by our wealthy and benevolent friends. That there is ability in the Church adequate to sustain a suitable number of these nurseries of learning and fountains of knowledge, were proper means adopted to call it into active exercise, we cannot doubt; and we therefore affectionately exhort all the annual conferences, within whose bounds colleges are established, or who have pledged themselves to aid in their support, to exert themselves in this laudable work, to make haste to redeem their solemn pledges; and we would also invite the attention of all our brethren and friends to a hearty co-operation in whatever measures may be devised by the conferences to establish these institutions upon safe and permanent foundations, not only by contributing of their substance for their support, but also by patronizing them as extensively as their means will allow, by sending their sons to be educated, as well as by offering their fervent prayers to God for his blessing to rest upon them.

4. The distribution of religious tracts is another mode of diffusing abroad a knowledge of the doctrines and duties of Christianity. In this department of our work we have reason to believe that there has been for some years past an unjustifiable neglect. Such is the cheapness of these silent messengers of truth, such the facilities for their circulation by an itinerant ministry, in co-operation with all those who are zealous for God, that no justifiable apology can be offered for the non-performance of this duty—for any one to say that he is not supplied with these means of spiritual improvement. We would therefore most affectionately invite all our brethren of the ministry, and of the laity, to use their diligence to form tract societies, and to engage as many as possible in the work of distribution in every place. Let there be no circuit or station unsupplied with these messengers of mercy, and no hand that can be called into action unemployed in aiding in this good work. Form your societies, collect your moneys, send to our depositories for tracts, and adopt, as far as practicable, a regular system of distribution, such a system as shall secure the co-operation of all concerned, both male and female, young and old. We need hardly say, that this method of circulating religious knowledge is adapted especially to the circumstances and wants of the poor, the illiterate, and the young, for whose present and eternal interest we are bound in a particular manner to labor.

“This branch of our duty is therefore submitted to your pious consideration, under a solemn conviction that, if attended to with zeal and discretion, it will aid us much in the work of saving souls.

5. The continual enlargement of our missionary field, and the increase of pecuniary means for its occupancy and cultivation, are matters of congratulation, and of unfeigned gratitude to God. On this subject we need only exhort you to go on as you have begun, and make the hearts of the heathen, and the poor of your own land, to rejoice by means of your liberality. We have adopted a revised constitution, recommended to us by the managers of our Missionary Society, which we hope will afford increased facilities for the progress of our missionary work, and enable us more effectually to cover the whole ground of this extensive and most interesting department of our labor.

“A field is spread open before us, sufficiently wide and extensive for the full display of all our liberality, and the exercise of all our energies.

“Such measures have been adopted at this conference in reference to this subject, as will tend, we humbly trust, to call forth and train up, more effectually, men for this important work. And surely there is a call — a most imperious call — for all the men and means, to enable us to fill up this extensive field with suitable laborers. In addition to those domestic missions which embrace the poorer settlements of our white population and the slaves of the south, we hear a voice from the distant tribes of our wilderness, all along our western and northwestern frontier, yea, even from the valley of the Columbia river, beyond the Rocky mountains, and on the very borders of the Pacific, which calls humbly for help. From South America, from the desolate shores of Africa, as well as from the vast interior of that mighty continent, a similar voice salutes our ears, and invites us, yea, commands us, in language which appears to be the echo of divine Providence to come over and help them. And shall we be deaf to these calls? We must not. And we are exceedingly happy to have it in our power to say, that you do not turn a deaf ear to them. You, beloved brethren and friends, have come up nobly, spiritually, liberally, and prayerfully to this work. In the name of our common Christianity, and on behalf of those heathen who, but for this timely aid, must have perished for lack of knowledge, we heartily thank you; and from having witnessed your past liberality, we take courage, folly believing that this same benevolent spirit will be continued, and even augmented in a ratio with the increasing wants of our Missionary Society. The whole world is indeed before us. Thousands, yea, millions of immortal beings are, at this moment, enveloped in all the darkness of pagan superstition, or led astray by the delusions of Mohammedan imposture, or buried beneath the rubbish of Roman Catholic mummeries and deceitful workings. Shall we — can we be either idle or indifferent while casting our eyes upon such a mass of moral corruption? No, indeed! Your full hearts respond, No, with an emphasis which shall be heard and felt throughout all the ranks of our Israel and the effects of which will yet be witnessed all along the line of our missionary operations,

and even far beyond, at no distant period, the places where the footsteps of the missionary have marked the soil.

“Relying, therefore, upon your hearty co-operation in the grand enterprise of submitting the world to the obedience of Christ, we confidently submit this item in the list of our duties to your pious consideration and benevolent feeling, fully believing that he who hath begun this good work, will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ.

6. We now approach a subject of no little delicacy and difficulty, and which we cannot but think has contributed its full proportion to that religious declension over which we mourn. It is not unknown to you, dear brethren and friends, that, in common with other denominations in our land, as well as our citizens generally, we have been much agitated in some portions of our work with the very excitable subject of what is called abolitionism. This subject has been brought before us at our present session — fully, and, we humbly trust, impartially discussed, and by almost a unanimous vote highly disapproved of; and while we would tenderly sympathize with those of our brethren who have, as we believe, been led astray by this agitating topic, we feel it our imperative duty to express our decided disapprobation of the measures they have pursued to accomplish their object. It cannot be unknown to you, that the question of slavery in these United States, by the constitutional compact which binds us together as a nation, is left to be regulated by the several state legislatures themselves; and thereby is put beyond the control of the general government, as well as that of all ecclesiastical bodies; it being manifest, that in the slave-holding states themselves the entire responsibility of its existence or non-existence rests with those state legislatures. And such is the aspect of affairs in reference to this question, that whatever else might tend to meliorate the condition of the slave, it is evident to us, from what we have witnessed of abolition movements, that these are the least likely to do him good. On the contrary, we have it in evidence before us, that the inflammatory speeches, writing and movements, have tended, in many instances, injuriously to affect his temporal and spiritual condition, by hedging up the way of the missionary who is sent to preach to him Jesus and the resurrection, and by making a more rigid supervision necessary on the part of his overseer, thereby abridging his civil and religious privileges.

“These facts, which are only mentioned here as a reason for the friendly admonition which we wish to give you, constrain us as your pastors, who are called to watch over your souls as they who must give an account, to exhort you to abstain from all abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronizing any of their publications; and especially from those of that inflammatory character which denounce in unmeasured terms those of their brethren who take the liberty to dissent from them. Those of you who may have honest scruples as to the lawfulness of slavery, considered as an abstract principle of moral right and wrong, if you must speak your sentiments, would do much better to express yourselves in those terms of respect and affection, which evince a sincere sympathy for those of your

brethren who are necessarily, and, in some instances, reluctantly associated with slavery in the states where it exists, than to indulge in harsh censures and denunciations, and in those fruitless efforts which, instead of lightening the burden of the slave, only tend to make his condition the more irksome and distressing.

“From every view of the subject which we have been able to take, and from the most calm and dispassionate survey of the whole ground, we have come to the solemn conviction, that the only safe, Scriptural, and prudent way for us, both as ministers and people, to take, is wholly to refrain from this agitating subject, which is now convulsing the country, and consequently the Church, from end to end, by calling forth inflammatory speeches, papers, and pamphlets. While we cheerfully accord to such all the sincerity they ask for their belief and motives, we cannot but disapprove of their measures, as alike destructive to the peace of the Church, and to the happiness of the slave himself. But while we thus express our disapprobation of these measures, we would, with equally strong and decided language, record our abhorrence of all unlawful and unscriptural means to check and to counteract them. All mobs, and violent movements of self-created tribunals, to inflict summary punishment upon those who may differ from them in opinion, are condemned alike by the laws of our land, and by every principle of Christianity. We should therefore be extremely pained and mortified to learn that any of you should have lent your influence to foment a spirit of insurrection, in any manner, or to have given sanction to such violent movements as have, in some instances and places, disturbed the peace of society, and forestalled the operation of the established tribunals of justice to protect the innocent and to punish the guilty. To be subject to the powers that be is a duty enjoined no less by Christianity, than it is a dictate of common prudence, necessary to be observed for the preservation of good order, and the support and perpetuation of those civil and religious institutions which we so highly and justly value as freemen, as Christians, and as Methodists. The exercise of mutual forbearance in matters of opinion, is essential in a community where freedom of speech is guaranteed to the citizens by the constitution which binds them together, and which defines and secures the rights and liberties of all.

“Finally, brethren and friends, we exhort you to unity and brotherly love, and to the practice of those things which make for peace. Instead of indulging in those irritating recriminations which tend to disturb the harmony of the body, and to prevent the exercise of mutual good will and fraternal feeling, let us follow after that charity which edifieth, and the cultivation of that love which endureth all things, hopeth all things, believeth all things.

7. Among other things which have tended not a little to check the progress of pure religion, may we not include that of political agitations? In a country where the constitution guaranties to every male citizen of full age the right of suffrage, where the freedom of speech and of the press is considered an inviolable right; where free discussion and debate on all civil as well as religious subjects are permitted unrestrainedly, there must be great danger

of these high privileges being abused by suffering calm and dispassionate discussion to degenerate into angry recrimination, until passion usurps a dominion over the judgment, and reason is dethroned to make way for the despotic reign of wild fanaticism.

“These remarks are not made with a view to abridge you of any of your civil or political privileges, nor yet to prevent the free exercise of your dearest rights as freemen and as citizens of this great republic, much less to bias your minds in favor of the one or the other of the political parties of our country. Into the party politics of the day we enter not. We leave every man — every Methodist and friend to Methodism — to act for himself in these respects. But what we wish is, as far as possible, to guard you against allowing yourselves to be drawn aside from paramount duties, to mix in that angry strife of political contests which tends to disturb the peace of society, to alienate the affections of brethren from each other, and to interrupt that harmony of feeling which is essential to our spiritual prosperity. While you cleave to the civil institutions of your country, by all due honor to magistrates, and freely exercise your rights in the choice of those who are to rule over you and protect you in the enjoyment of your privileges, we exhort you to peace, to harmony, to love as brethren, and not to allow the spirit of party to awaken animosity, nor zeal in the defense of political distinctions, to dampen your zeal in the cause of God. We wish that discussion of this sort may not be permitted to engender strife and envy, but that mutual good will may soften the asperities of political differences, and cement the hearts of Christian citizens together in love and brotherly kindness.

“And here we would bear our unequivocal testimony against that partisan warfare which leads to the detraction of individual character, and to slanderous representation of motive and conduct. Every man should be presumed to be innocent until proved guilty before some competent tribunal. That press, therefore, which drags before the community individual characters, dealing in personal abuse, and thus holding them up to public execration, on account merely of political differences, is to be condemned as a corrupter of public morals, and as tending to the prostration of our civil and religious liberties. Instead, therefore, of lending your influence to such a spirit of detraction, we would persuade you to raise your voice against it, and to let the law of truth and kindness at all times dwell upon your lips, and influence your conduct in civil as well as religious matters; and thus, as far as possible, to live in peace with all men.

8. While we wish to devote ourselves, and to beseech all our brethren in the ministry to devote themselves exclusively to our peculiar work, we beg leave to remind the membership of the Church of the necessity of providing a competent support for the ministry. On this subject, however, we need not enlarge, as you yourselves know perfectly, that he who ministereth at the altar must be partaker of the things of the altar, and he that ministereth to you in spiritual things must be partaker of your carnal things.

“In conclusion, we would say, that after a laborious session of twenty-six days, we separate for our respective fields of labor, and mingle again with our brethren, under a sense, in some degree at least, of our high responsibility to God and to his Church, and with a determination to devote ourselves, by his grace, to our vocation, with renewed diligence and perseverance; and by beseeching you, dear brethren and friends, to co-operate with us in the grand work of evangelizing the world. Under a consciousness of our continual dependence upon divine aid, we desire to look up to God for the assistance of his Spirit at all times; and to beg an interest in your prayers, that both we ourselves, and all those with whom we are connected in Church fellowship, may be preserved blameless until the day of Jesus Christ; and that by applying ourselves with all diligence in the use of those means which the God of providence and grace hath put within our reach, for the furtherance of his holy cause, we may hereafter be instrumental in reviving his work, and spreading among our fellow men the ‘savor of his name;’ we remain as ever your servants for Christ’s sake.

“Signed by order and in behalf of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Robert R. Roberts, “Joshua Soule, “Elijah Hedding, “James O. Andrew. “T. L. Douglass, Secretary. Cincinnati, Oh, May 26, 1836.”

As it is not my wish to advert to abolitionism again, I will remark here, that it has continued to agitate the Church from that time to this, much disturbing its peace, and, in some of the annual conferences, distracting its councils, producing finally the secession of a few individuals. Indeed, it was feared, for a time, that its disastrous results would be extensively felt, particularly in some of the eastern and northern conferences; but it has so far passed off in a much more quiet manner than was anticipated, and it is to be hoped that but few, comparatively, will be seriously and lastingly injured by these injudicious measures. Perhaps, however, a future day may disclose facts of a different character, and that a future historian may be called to bear his testimony to a different result. Though it is somewhat difficult to reconcile the conduct of some few leaders in the ranks of abolitionism with a sincere regard to the interests of truth and righteousness, yet we are willing to award to most of those who engaged in the controversy an honest desire to meliorate the condition of the slave, and to purify the Church from what they considered a sinful pollution; although we cannot but think that their measures were ill-chosen, their arguments in the main defective, and their severe denunciations and personal criminations wholly unjustifiable.

The following resolutions have an important bearing upon the itinerancy, and the necessity for them grew out of an increased disposition among some of our preachers to engage in agencies for societies with which we had no connection, and to some of which, as a Church, we were opposed: —

- 1 Resolved, That this conference deem it highly culpable for any member of an annual conference, especially for those sustaining supernumerary or effective relations, to engage in agencies not known or recognized in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

- 2 Resolved, That any presiding elder who consents for a preacher to leave the work assigned him to engage in agencies of any kind not recognized in the Methodist Episcopal Church, or to become an editor of a paper, is an aggressor in the sight of his brethren, and should be called to an account for his conduct.
- 3 Resolved, That there is no such relation provided for in our Discipline as that held by an individual who is left without an appointment at his own request, and that such relations are not promotive of the interests of Methodism.
- 4 Resolved, That it is highly improper for any member of an annual conference to engage in political strife, and to offer for a seat in the legislative councils, or Congress hall, or to engage in speculations of any kind that do not draw his earnest attention to the salvation of souls.”

These resolutions were not incorporated in the Discipline, but were ordered to be recorded in the journal of each annual conference, for the regulation of all concerned; and the two first have been of special use in restraining those who seemed much inclined to leave their appropriate work for the purpose of becoming itinerant lecturers in favor of abolitionism, which was then raging in some portions of our country, and which was threatening the peace and harmony of the Church and the nation. And it is believed that the measures of this General Conference, and the subsequent acts of the New York conference, founded upon the known and expressed will of the General Conference, tended very much to check the ebullition of that frenzy which had seized the minds of so many of our preachers and people.

Having finished its work, the conference adjourned late in the evening of May the 27th, to meet again in the city of Baltimore, Md., May 1, 1840.

CHAPTER 14

From the close of the General Conference of 1836 to the commencement of the General Conference of 1840

From the numbers taken at the several annual conferences, and published in Cincinnati, it was ascertained that there was a diminution in the aggregate number of Church members for this year, notwithstanding the zeal which had been displayed in some sections of the Church to purify it from the defilements of slavery. The disclosure of this fact, an event so unusual in our history, led to a serious inquiry into its causes, and various conjectures were put afloat, some of them chimerical enough, to account for it. Without attempting to decide dogmatically upon a question admitting of such a wide range of discussion, and which, after all, is not of so easy solution as some may imagine, the following are submitted as the most likely causes to tend to such a result.

- 1 The unusual excitement which had pervaded the country for a few past years, seemed to be followed by a sifting of the Church of many who, under that excitement, might have started in the Christian race without duly "counting the cost," and therefore in the "time of temptation fell away."
- 2 The revival of evangelical religion among other denominations might have contributed its full quota in lessening the number of accessions to our communion. Time was, in many places, when souls were truly awakened to a sense of their lost estate, that they came to our ministry as a matter of course, in order to get spiritual food suited to their wants, other denominations not insisting as they ought upon the evangelical doctrines of the Bible, such as the new birth, justification by faith, the witness and fruits of the Spirit. Now the times were greatly altered for the better in this respect. During the progress of the great revivals in our country, nearly all denominations were partakers "of the benefit," entered heartily into the work, and their ministers enforced upon the people the great truths of God our Saviour with powerful effect. The consequence was, many who otherwise would probably have come among us, connected themselves with other denominations.
- 3 In the western country especially, where the decrease was greatest, by neglecting to furnish convenient places of worship in the more populous villages, others came in and took possession of them, and thus drew the population around them before we were aware of it, and thus circumscribed the sphere of our influence in these particular places.
- 4 The agitations consequent upon the discussions respecting slavery and abolitionism, no doubt tended to distract the minds of many, and to prevent the growth of experimental and practical religion.

But whatever may have been the causes of this diminution in numbers, the fact awakened a spirit of inquiry, highly beneficial in its results. It led to self-examination, to self-abasement, humiliation, and prayer, that God might again visit his heritage with the outpouring of his Spirit, and a revival of his work.

Notwithstanding this apparent declension in the general work, there was a gradual enlargement of the field of missionary labor, the particulars of which will be mentioned hereafter. The deaths of thirty-five preachers are recorded this year; one hundred and thirty-six had located, one hundred and sixteen were returned supernumerary, one hundred and sixty-five superannuated, four had withdrawn, and four were expelled.

Among those whose deaths are recorded this year, we find the name of Philip Gatch, who joined the traveling ministry in 1773, under the superintendence of Thomas Rankin, when there were but ten traveling preachers in America. He outlived all his contemporaries, and maintained an unblemished reputation to the last, though he desisted from the labors of an itinerant preacher from the year 1787 until toward the close of his life, when he was readmitted in the relation of a superannuated preacher. In this relation he died on Sabbath evening, the twenty-eighth day of December, 1835, in the eighty-fifth year of his age. On the day of his eighty-fourth year he preached his last sermon, and finally closed his life in great peace of mind, and no doubt rests from his labors.

In the early days of his ministry he endured sometimes "a great fight of affliction," having to contend with the common prejudices of the day against Methodist preachers, and with the troubles originating from the war of the Revolution. He, however, kept "his soul in patience," and manfully buffeted the waves of persecution which sometimes raged around him, though he did not wholly escape their fury. At one time he fell into the hands of a mob, who, while endeavoring to cover him with tar, cruelly drew some of it across his naked eyeball, which came near destroying the use of his eye; but he still persevered in his work, "as seeing Him who is invisible," and who upholds and rewards his faithful servants in the midst of their labors and sufferings. Want of health compelled him to desist from the work of a traveling preacher, and in 1798 he removed into the Northwestern territory, now state of Ohio, and settled on the Little Miami, a few miles from Cincinnati. The country was then new, Cincinnati being only an inconsiderable village, and Methodism scarcely known to its inhabitants. Here he became actively and usefully engaged as a local preacher, and was much respected as a citizen, contributing greatly, by his active exertions and example of piety and diligence, to advance the cause of religion and morals.

Not willing that he should die in obscurity, unwept and forgotten, his brethren of the Ohio conference readmitted him into their fellowship as a worn-out veteran of the cross, and he ended his days in the sight of his brethren, beloved and respected as "an old disciple" of his Lord and Master.

Christopher Fry, of the Baltimore conference, was a minister of considerable age and standing, having joined the traveling connection in 1802.

Though not possessed of brilliant talents as a preacher, he was among the most useful, being deeply read in the Holy Scriptures, and always enforcing the truths which he uttered by the fervency of his piety, and the godliness of his example. Apt to teach, and wise to govern, he was selected to fill the office of presiding elder, and he much endeared himself to his brethren by the gentleness of his manners, by his diligence in his calling, and his strict regard to the discipline of his Church.

Though his death was sudden and unexpected to his friends, it did not find him unprepared. On the sabbath before his death, in an address which he delivered to the people, he dwelt, with great fervor of spirit and solemnity of manner, upon Christian experience, and then adverting to his own, he testified to the knowledge he had of the love of God in his heart, and the many years he had enjoyed the witness of his acceptance in the sight of God. "For this faith," he remarked with emphasis, "I would be willing to burn at the stake." Two days after this, while attending to the operations of a threshing machine, it caught his leg, and ere he could be extricated from his perilous condition, his thigh bone was broken, his knee crushed, and nearly the entire limb severely injured. He survived these injuries only about three hours. In the midst of his exquisite sufferings he said, in answer to a question by his beloved and weeping wife, "My whole body is in tumult, but my soul is calm and stayed on God." After a short interval, in answer to a friend who inquired the state of his mind, he said, "My body is in an agony of pain, but my soul is happy, happy, happy!" With these words faltering upon his lips, he ceased to suffer and to breathe, and no doubt went to Abraham's bosom.

Of the others who had taken their departure, excellent things are said both of their life and death; and their reward is doubtless with their God.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 564,974; Last Year: 566,957; Decrease: 1,983 — Colored This Year: 82,661; Last Year: 83,135; Decrease: 474 — Indians This Year: 3,033; Last Year: 2,436; Increase: 597 — Total This Year: 650,668; Last Year: 652,528 — Decrease: 1,860 — Preachers This Year: 2,929; Last Year: 2,758; Increase: 171.

1837

This decrease in the number of Church members has already been accounted for, and, as might be supposed, the fact led to "great searchings of heart" among those who felt as they ought for the prosperity of the Church, and to an application of those means which were necessary for a revival of the work of God.

Among the means used for the revival and spread of the work of God, was that of adding strength to the missionary work.

We have already seen that efforts had been made to establish missions in South America. On the 22d of March, 1836, the Rev. Justin Spaulding, of the New England conference, sailed

from the port of New York for Rio de Janeiro, the capital of the Brazilian empire. This magnificent city contains many residents from different parts of Europe and the United States, and being a place of considerable trade, a number of English and American sailors are constantly in the port. By these foreigners brother Spaulding was affectionately received, and the letters received from him, after his arrival, gave us reason to hope for a favorable issue of his labors.

Since the change in the political affairs of the country, though the Roman Catholic religion is still the religion of the empire, and is supported by the law of the land, a much more liberal spirit prevails among the higher orders of society, and their confidence in the infallibility of the priesthood, and those superstitions by which that church is distinguished, is much weakened; it is, therefore, hoped that the time is not distant when the "blindness which has happened" to that branch of the Christian church shall be removed, and a way opened for a free and unrestrained promulgation of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ in the empire of Brazil.

In the present state of things, however, brother Spaulding could have access only to the English and American portion of the population. To as many of these as would attend his meeting he preached in a private room, prepared for the purpose, and he had the happiness of finding a few who were willing to unite with him in his pious endeavors to spread Scriptural truth and holiness among the people. He was much aided in this good work by distributing among the people the holy Scriptures in the Portuguese language, with which he was generously furnished gratuitously by the American Bible Society. Indeed, he found the people, even the natives of the country, eager to read the word of God in their own language, notwithstanding the prejudices which had been excited against it by their early education. Such were the encouraging prospects before him, that on the recommendation of brother Spaulding, an additional missionary, the Rev. Daniel P. Kidder, of the Genesee conference, and a male and female teacher, were selected and sent to this field of labor. They sailed from the port of Boston on the 12th of November, 1837, and arrived in safety to their place of destination. They immediately entered upon their work with a fair prospect of success; but the school, though prosperous for a season, did not answer our expectations, and was therefore abandoned in despair. Brother Kidder, after mastering the Portuguese language, traveled extensively from one city and village to another, distributing Bibles and tracts, and was generally received with affection and treated with respect, though the civil regulations of the country would not allow him to preach to the natives in their own language.

In Rio de Janeiro brother Spaulding had formed a small class, had established a sabbath school, and he occasionally preached to the sailors on board of the American vessels which were in the port. In this good work he was much encouraged by Commodore Nicholson, the United States naval officer, to whom he was favorably known as a minister of the gospel, and who gave countenance to his efforts. Yet with all these labors and hopeful prospects,

Rio de Janeiro is a hard place for the gospel to operate upon, and has yielded but little fruit of our labor. The strong prejudices of the Catholic population, the indifference of most of those who call themselves Protestants, and the want of full toleration for the exercise of religious worship, present almost insuperable barriers in the way of planting the seeds of divine truth in that rugged soil. It is hoped, however, that a steady perseverance "in well doing" will eventually overcome opposition, and that we shall yet see South America delivered from the shackles of Romanism, and brought into the glorious "liberty of the sons of God."

On the 14th of October, 1836, the Rev. John Dempster, of the Oneida conference, sailed from New York, as a missionary for Buenos Ayres, the capital of the Argentine republic, in South America. In this delightful city, which takes its name (good air) from the salubrity of the climate, there were supposed to be about five thousand foreigners, English, Scotch, and Americans, to whom brother Dempster, on his arrival, made known the objects of his visit. He was cordially received, and he soon opened his mission under favorable auspices, by preaching to a large and attentive congregation assembled in a room which he had hired for that purpose. His preaching soon made a most favorable impression upon the minds of the people, and his congregation increased to that degree, that he found it necessary to enlarge his place of worship, and he was, the next year, authorized by the board of managers to purchase a lot of ground, and proceed to the erection of a house of worship, about fifteen hundred dollars being subscribed by the people in Buenos Ayres, and ten thousand dollars more appropriated by the managers, to meet the expenses.

These bright prospects were, however, soon eclipsed in some measure by a rigid blockade established by the government of France, so that all ingress and egress for foreign vessels, except ships of war belonging to neutral nations, were prevented. This measure of seeking national redress for supposed wrongs very soon brought much distress upon the people, cut off all intercourse by merchantmen, and drove many of the foreign residents to seek an asylum in Monte Video and other places, as might best suit their convenience. But though brother Dempster, in consequence of these things, was very reluctantly compelled to remit his endeavors to build a church, and though his congregation was somewhat diminished in numbers, yet he persevered in his work, acquired more and more of the public confidence, and even succeeded in establishing a flourishing school. In this last work he was aided by the arrival of a teacher, Mr. Hiram A. Wilson, a graduate of the Wesleyan University, who was sent by the managers, in September of 1838. He soon commenced a school in Buenos Ayres, and it has so prospered, that in 1840 another male and a female teacher were sent to aid him in this good work. There is therefore every reason to believe that the issue of this mission will be prosperous.

Among the most important missions on our list is Liberia, an account of which, until the deaths of Cox and Wright, has already been given. In 1835 the Rev. John Seys of the Oneida conference, was appointed by Bishop Hedding the superintendent of this mission. He entered

upon this hazardous enterprise with an enlightened zeal, and soon succeeded in establishing preaching, and forming societies in nearly all the settlements in Liberia. The next year he was joined by the Rev. J. B. Barton, of the Georgia conference, and they strengthened each other's hands in the work of the Lord. Though a war commenced upon the colonists by one of the native chiefs, which spread death in the colony, and sickness had deprived brother Seys of a promising son, and prostrated himself wife, and brother Barton, for a season, yet he and they persevered in faith and hope, and they reported for the year 1836 three hundred and seventy-five members of the Church, and one hundred and twenty-eight children in the schools.

We have already seen that there were in Liberia several colored local preachers, most of whom had emigrated to that country for the purpose of enjoying the blessings of civil and religious liberty in their "fatherland." These were called into the active service of the ministry, and were eminently useful in building up the cause of God. One of them, brother Williams, formerly lieutenant-governor of the colony, volunteered his services to penetrate into the Congo country, for the purpose of ascertaining the probability of establishing a mission and school in king Boatswain's dominions the king having manifested much friendship for the colonists and the mission. He was kindly received, and obtained from this friendly chief a promise of patronage and assistance. And though the good design was not carried into effect immediately, on account of a war which commenced about that time between the king and the Golah tribe yet the attempt led to important results; for soon after brother Seys was waited upon by a messenger from Boatswain, escorted by no less than two hundred men, among whom were some of his principal generals, requesting that a teacher might be speedily sent among them. After much prayer and consultation, a young colonist of good education and deep piety, by the name of Jacobs, was appointed for that station, at which the natives who had been sent on this errand of mercy expressed great satisfaction and joy.

By means of these additional laborers, they enlarged the sphere of their operations, established a new mission at Bushrod island, commenced a new stone house for divine worship in Monrovia, and a manual labor school at Millsburgh, called the Whiteplains Manual Labor school, both of which have been since completed; the former is filled from one sabbath to another with attentive hearers, and the latter is in successful operation, imparting the blessings of education and religion to the rising generation.

In the month of September, 1836, brother Seys, with a view to recruit his health, which had been much impaired by the corroding influence of the climate, and his excessive labors, visited the United States, and traveled extensively, holding missionary meetings, giving information to the people respecting the state of things in Africa, and taking up collections in behalf of the mission. This movement had a most happy effect in awakening a spirit of prayer, of liberality, and of active exertions in the cause of missions. In the following October he returned, taking in company with him, as his colleagues in labor and suffering, the Rev.

Squire Chase, of the Oneida conference, and the Rev. George Brown, a colored local preacher of piety and talents, who, upon his arrival in Liberia, entered the traveling ministry, and has been very useful.

As the General Conference of 1836 had constituted the Liberia mission into a mission annual conference, brother Seys, as its superintendent, had called the preachers together, organized them into a conference, and nearly all the colored local preachers had become its members, and were therefore not considered in the character of traveling preachers. His gave a systematic energy to their operations, which added much to their strength and efficiency, and extended their influence more powerfully throughout the colony.

As the members of the mission family, as well as the colonists, had suffered, and were still suffering much for want of a competent physician, the board adopted measures for furnishing them with one, and also with no more female teachers. Accordingly, in the month of June of this year, Dr. S. M. E. Goheen, a young physician of piety and talent, embarked in company with the teachers for Liberia. They arrived in safety, and entered upon their work with energy and success. Dr. Goheen has been eminently useful as a physician, having succeeded admirably in checking and controlling the disease of the country, which has proved fatal to so many white people, as well as to many of the colonists, more especially soon after their landing while undergoing their acclimation. The teachers also have so far filled their stations to general acceptance, and they still continue their work for the benefit of the children and youth of their own sex.

The mission was greatly owned of God this year. In nearly all the stations, now employing no less than fifteen missionaries, white and colored, God poured out his Spirit, so that there were added to the Methodist Episcopal Church no less than one hundred and sixty members, twenty of whom were natives. In addition to the above-mentioned missionaries, and the physician, who aided the mission much by his active endeavors to promote the general cause, there were seven school teachers, having charge of two hundred and twenty-one pupils; and also three hundred children were taught in the sabbath schools. A temperance society was formed, with auxiliaries, on the pledge of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors as a beverage; and all things seemed to be going on prosperously. Brother Chase, however, soon fell sick of the African fever, and he was so prostrated as to abandon all hopes of recovery there; accordingly he returned to the United States, where he has since been restored to his usual health.

From this prosperous state of things in Liberia, the board of managers determined, on the pressing representation of brother Seys, to establish a classical school. A teacher, the Rev. J. Burton, a local preacher, and a graduate of Allegheny College, was accordingly engaged, and funds appropriated for erecting a suitable building, and furnishing the needful books, apparatus, etc. A printer was also appointed, who was furnished with a press and materials for printing, and brother Seys was authorized to issue a semimonthly paper, to be called

“Africa’s Luminary,” of which he was appointed editor. In 1839 the academy went into operation; and the first number of Africa’s Luminary was issued on the fifteenth of March, 1839. Both its contents and mechanical execution reflect honor upon its editor and printer. An additional missionary was also sent out by the same expedition, the Rev. W. Stocker. He did not, however, long survive. Soon after his arrival, he was seized with the fever of the climate, and after lingering for a while, alternately reviving and sinking, he finally fell asleep in Jesus, in the hope of everlasting life.

In the same year the mission was destined to suffer another loss by the death of one of its most devoted missionaries, the Rev. J. B. Barton. He had labored for the benefit of Africa nearly four years, with great zeal and usefulness, and, to all human appearance, had become so acclimated as to be able to resist the inroads of the fever for many years. The year before his death he visited the land of his birth, married him a pious wife, and returned to Liberia with a view to devote the residue of his days to the salvation of Africa; but not long after his return, his young wife, with her infant child, was called to mourn over the sudden death of a pious and devoted husband, in a strange and foreign land. As, however, he lived to the Lord, so he died in the Lord, and is enjoying the reward of his sacrifices and labors in the world of glory.

It had been the earnest desire of the board of managers and of the bishops, that, in addition to supplying the colonists with the word and ordinances of the gospel, the native population should not be neglected. Accordingly, efforts had been made, hitherto with but little immediate success, to penetrate into the interior, and call the attention of the native Africans to the blessings of Christianity. Some few, who had occasionally mingled with the colonists, and attended our places of worship, had tasted “that the Lord is good,” and twenty of these had become members of the Church. Still, however, but a feeble impression had been made upon the minds of the “heathen round about,” and the efforts to reach them more effectually with gospel truth were renewed with great ardor in 1838. At length, a building was erected and a school opened in a place bordering on heathen territory, called, in honor of the bishop who had interested himself much in behalf of the Liberia mission, Heddington, for the special benefit of native children and youth, and the charge of it was given to brother George Brown. Here he commenced operations, uniting manual labor with mental training. God honored the enterprise. In a short time the house was filled, and the divine Spirit was poured out upon its inmates, and how between seventy and eighty have professed a “knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.”

There are now, 1840, employed in this interesting mission, fourteen missionaries, six teachers, and one physician. In the several stations there are seven hundred and twenty-eight Church members, and about four hundred pupils in the several schools. The mission is, indeed, exerting a hallowing influence upon almost the entire population of the colony, and gradually extending its influence among the native Africans themselves. If, therefore,

no untoward circumstance shall supervene to interrupt its progress, but it shall go on in its career of usefulness as it has been begun, and thus far advanced, increasing in power and influence in a ratio already seen, who can calculate the benefits it shall confer upon the benighted sons and daughters of Africa! May God ever have it under his holy protection.

In the western parts of our country, new fields for missionary enterprise were daily opening, for which the Missionary Society was affording supplies; but as they differ nothing materially from ordinary new circuits, it is considered inexpedient to swell this History in naming them more particularly than to say, that they were the means of giving to these new and destitute places increased facilities for securing gospel privileges, and the surest means of temporal and spiritual prosperity.

The aboriginal missions, heretofore particularly noticed, were generally prosperous, though some of them were still suffering from the removal of the Indians to their new homes west of the Mississippi.

Thirty-two preachers had died during the past year; one hundred and thirty-five located, one hundred were returned supernumerary, and two hundred and fourteen superannuated; four had been expelled, and three had withdrawn.

An effort had been made to ascertain the number of local preachers, and this year I find the number returned on the Minutes to be 4,954. As, however, all the conferences had not sent in their reports, the enumeration must have been incomplete.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 570,123; Last Year: 564,974; Increase: 5,149 — Colored This Year: 76,657; Last Year: 82,296; Decrease: 5,639 — Indians This Year: 2,695; Last Year: 2,833; Decrease: 138 — Total This Year: 658,574;⁶ Last Year: 653,032 — Increase: 5,542 — Preachers This Year: 3,147; Last Year: 2,929; Increase: 218.

1838

The work of God in the conversion of souls, judging from accessions which were made to the Church, was much more prosperous than it had been for the two past years. Revivals were prevalent, and the spirit of missions and the cause of education were advancing more and more.

In the northwestern part of the Illinois conference, efforts had been made to introduce the gospel among the Winnebago, Sioux, and Crow Indians, with some degree of success, and a few schools had been established for the education of their children. This year they were more regularly supplied with laborers, and with a better prospect of success, though the good work by no means prospered as it had done among the other tribes for whose salvation we had labored. But among the Potawattomies about one hundred were added to the Church.

⁶ This result, which is taken from the Minutes, is produced by adding the number of traveling and local preachers to the private and official members, a practice not hitherto pursued, but followed hereafter.

In the summer of 1837 a spirited effort was made to establish missions in the republic of Texas. This extensive and fertile country, first visited by La Salle in 1685, lying south of the state of Arkansas and west of Louisiana, formed a part of the Mexican republic, and contains not less than 193,000 square miles. Its climate is remarkably mild and healthy, the soil rich and productive, bringing forth an abundance of cotton, sugar-cane, corn, and other staples common to the southern states and to Mexico. Into this fertile region many of the citizens of the United States had removed, being invited by the beauty and fertility of the country, and the favorable terms on which grants of land had been made to actual settlers by the Mexican government. Hence large settlements had been formed along the Rio Colorado and Rio Brasos, and some towns had become places of considerable trade, and were fast rising into importance. The eastern part of Texas, more especially, was settled principally by emigrants from the United States.

These, together with those Mexicans who took the liberty of thinking for themselves, became very restless under the oppressive government of Mexico, the intolerant spirit of which proscribed all religious sects except the Roman Catholic, and otherwise exacted obedience to laws which pressed heavily upon those who had been accustomed to breathe the free air, and to enjoy the immunities of citizens of the United States. Hence an insurrectionary movement commenced, which eventuated in the severance of the union of Texas with Mexico, and the establishment of an independent government. The battle of San Jacinto, in which the American arms triumphed over the prowess of Santa Anna, the Mexican general, decided the fate of Texas, and left the inhabitants at liberty to establish a government according to their own choice; and they proceeded to frame one after the model of the United States, in which civil and religious rights and privileges were secured alike to all sects and parties. This opened the way for the missionary of the cross to enter and proclaim salvation unto the people.

Among those who removed into Texas, there were several members of our own Church, some of whom were local preachers; and with a view to preserve their piety, they assembled together for mutual edification and comfort, sending, in the mean time, a loud and urgent call to their brethren in the United States for help. The Missionary Society responded to this call, and accepted of the services of the Rev. Dr. Ruter, a member of the Pittsburgh conference, and president of the Allegheny College, who resigned his presidency, and offered himself as a missionary for Texas. Accordingly, in the summer of 1837, accompanied by two young preachers, Dr. Ruter entered upon his work in this young republic. They found the people ripe for the gospel. Though vice and ignorance of spiritual things prevailed to an alarming extent, yet the missionaries were received with great respect and affection, and they soon succeeded in forming circuits, and establishing preaching in different parts of the country. In St. Augustine, Nacogdoches, Houston, and Washington, they commenced

building houses of worship, the people subscribing liberally toward the expense, besides contributing about \$1000 toward the support of their preacher.

This promising state of things induced the proper authorities of the Church to send the next year additional laborers into that fruitful field, and they have been gradually increased until, at the last General Conference, the Texas annual conference was organized, and they have now nineteen preachers, and about one thousand Church members, nearly as many as there were in the United States at the first conference in 1773.

Soon after the arrival of Dr. Ruter in Texas, he adopted measures, being encouraged by the liberal offers of the government and the people, for establishing a college. And though he did not live to realize the object of his wishes in this respect, being cut off in the midst of his usefulness, yet the enterprise has been prosecuted by his successors in the work, and the college has been erected and gone into operation under the most favorable circumstances. The government appropriated eight thousand eight hundred and eighty-three acres of land for its endowment, granted a liberal charter, and "Rutersville," the name of the township in which the college is located, commemorates the talents and zeal with which its founder prosecuted the noble enterprise, and the veneration which is felt for his memory by his survivors. It is pleasantly situated, in a healthy and delightful part of the country, and promises much usefulness to the rising population of that growing republic.

This, therefore, is a most promising field of missionary labor, giving sure indications of an ample harvest of souls to its enterprising cultivators.

The constant influx of Germans into our country, especially into some of the cities and villages of the west, suggested the necessity of establishing missions for their special benefit. Accordingly, in 1836, a mission was commenced in Cincinnati, and it was given in charge of the Rev. William Nast, a young German preacher of sound education and deep piety, who could preach and write both in the German and English languages. He entered upon his work with an enlightened zeal, and was successful in making good and lasting impressions upon the minds and hearts of many of his countrymen. The work has gone on steadily from that day to this, spreading in various directions in the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, in Wheeling, Pittsburgh, and a number of other places, so that there are now (1840) six German missionaries employed, and there are on the several circuits upward of four hundred members of the Church.

These missions have been much aided by the American Bible and Tract Societies, which have made liberal donations of German Bibles and tracts for gratuitous distribution among the people.

In the city of New York a mission was commenced this year for the benefit of the French population who were resident here. A young Frenchman by the name of Williamson had recently been made a partaker of pardoning mercy, had become a member of our Church, and he felt a great concern of mind for the salvation of his countrymen, many of whom were

“as sheep without a shepherd.” There had, indeed, been a society of French people attached to our Church in the city of New York for a number of years, the germ of which was imported here from the island of Guernsey, where our British brethren had labored with success for a series of years.

Mr. Williamson hired a room for preaching, and has continued his labors with diligence to the present time; but such are the prejudices of the greater proportion of the French population, that his congregation has been but small, and the prospects of success are rather gloomy. A few, however, have been brought from darkness to light, who, it is hoped, may “be faithful until death.”

These, together with the constant enlargement of our work in the new countries, and the more vigorous action generally throughout our borders, gave us an increase to our membership this year of upward of forty thousand.

The Georgia conference, stimulated by the example of their brethren in other places, had made, and were now making, spirited and successful efforts in the cause of education. In 1835 they had commenced a classical and manual labor school in Covington, Ga., which was soon in successful operation, exerting an enlightening and hallowing influence upon the youth intrusted to its tuition and care. A literary institution was also established for the education of females, which bids fair to confer substantial blessings upon that class of the population. In 1836 the Emory College was founded, and it has since gone into operation under the presidency of the Rev. Ignatius A. Few, whose classical learning and deep piety eminently qualify him for his station. These institutions are gathering around them the youth of the country, of both sexes, and prove the’ capabilities of our people to educate their own sons and daughters, provided suitable means are used to call them into action.

Ninety-eight preachers were located this year, six expelled, two had withdrawn, one hundred and six returned supernumerary, two hundred and sixteen superannuated, and seventeen had died.

We have already seen that the Texas mission was placed under the superintendence of Dr. Martin Ruter. Here he ended his days. He commenced his itinerant career in the early days of Methodism in New England, when he was only sixteen years of age, and was admitted on trial in the New York conference in 1801. In 1804 he went as a missionary to Montreal, in Lower Canada, where he gave great satisfaction to the people by the diligence and ability with which he discharged his duties. Though young in the ministry, he evinced a thorough acquaintance with the truths of the gospel, having applied himself with great assiduity to study, and particularly to the study of the Bible.

After filling some of the most important stations in the bounds of the New England conference, after that conference was formed, when a branch of the Book Concern was established in Cincinnati, in 1820, brother Ruter was appointed by the General Conference to the charge

of that institution. In this station he continued, by a re-election in 1824, eight years, discharging its duties with great fidelity.

Before the expiration of his term as book agent, he was elected president of the Augusta College, and entered upon its duties in 1828, where he continued for about four years, when, on resigning his office, he was transferred to the Pittsburgh conference. Soon after his transfer he was called to preside over the Allegheny College, an institution which he was chiefly instrumental in establishing and putting into successful operation. This office he filled for about three years, when he resigned his station for the purpose of embarking in the more laborious and hazardous enterprise of carrying the gospel and establishing Methodism in the republic of Texas. He entered upon his work in the month of October, 1837, and soon laid plans for systematizing the labor and enlarging the boundaries of that extensive vineyard of the Lord, so as to comprehend as much as practicable within the several circuits which were formed by him and his colleagues in the missionary work.

Not content with the simple routine of labor appertaining to a Methodist preacher, being encouraged by the leading men of the republic, he devised a plan for establishing a college and other seminaries of learning; for he was always an ardent friend of literature and science. In these various labors he was incessantly engaged from the time he entered Texas until sickness compelled him to desist. His sufferings were somewhat protracted and severe. He bore them, however, with patience and submission to the divine will, and finally ended his days upon earth in peace, and the hope of eternal life.

Dr. Ruter deserves great credit for his attainments in literature and science. Born in humble circumstances, receiving nothing more than a common school education, and then entering the itinerancy at the early age of sixteen — an example not to be imitated if it can be consistently avoided—he was deprived of those literary advantages in his youth, which are generally considered essential to eminence at a more mature time of life. Yet he surmounted the difficulties of his situation, and astonished both himself and his friends by his literary and scientific attainments. To the study of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, as well as the French, he applied himself with successful diligence, and gave evidence of how much may be accomplished by a constant application of our powers, and an assiduous improvement of our time and opportunities, even in the midst of discouraging obstacles, and the want of the most appropriate means of instruction.

It is not, indeed, pretended that his mind was of the first order. For strength of intellectual powers, and for depth and variety of learning, many others stood far in advance of Dr. Ruter. But, possessed of a good understanding, and being impelled by an ardent thirst for knowledge, he “sowed beside all waters,” and in due time reaped a plentiful harvest. It would, indeed, be a reflection upon the discernment of those who awarded to him the honors of a college twice, by conferring first the degree of A. M., and secondly of B. D., to suppose that his literary and theological attainments were not respectable, and his deportment irreproachable

Equally strong in his favor is the fact of his having been elected to the presidency of the Augusta and Allegheny Colleges, and of their having prospered under his oversight though it may be admitted that in these stations he did not shine with a brilliancy equal to general expectation.

Divine grace had done much for him. Having been made a partaker of justification by faith in Jesus Christ in the days of his youth, and having entered upon the duties of an itinerant minister ere he had attained maturity of age and experience, he won for himself, by the blessing of God on his exertions, the character of a faithful servant of God, living and dying in the confidence and affection of his brethren. As a preacher of righteousness he was “in doctrine uncorrupt,” “in labors abundant,” and in success considerable. His forsaking the inviting fields of literature and science, in which he had moved with so much ease to himself and satisfaction to his friends, to encounter the hardships and privations of a missionary of the cross in the wilds of Texas, evinces at once the strength of his faith, and of his sincere devotion to the cause of Christ. He was now about fifty-two years of age, was surrounded with domestic comforts, lived in the midst of his friends, and might therefore have spent the remainder of his days in comparative ease and comfort; but the wants of the sons and daughters of Texas came up before him, accompanied with those impressive motives which, to a heart like his, were irresistible; and he obeyed the call and ran to the rescue of those who were ready to “perish for lack of knowledge.” He went; and before he fell, he had established a reputation among the people of Texas as imperishable as the town of “Rutersville,” which name was designed to perpetuate the memory of the man who sacrificed his life for their salvation.

Others might be mentioned, no less eminent for their Christian virtues and ministerial usefulness, “whose praise is in all the Churches” where they were known and their worth duly appreciated. But their “record is on high,” and their reward is with their God, in the midst of those who “turned many to righteousness. Such were John A. Waterman, of the Pittsburgh conference, and Robert L. Kennon, of the Alabama conference, who, by their early piety and great assiduity in their calling, rose to eminence among their brethren, and died equally honored and lamented. Andrew Hemphill also, of Irish extraction, gave evidence of that unreserved devotion to God which distinguished most of the early Methodist preachers, and who, for about thirty-five years, maintained the purity and dignity of the Christian ministry.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 615,212; Last Year: 575,077; Increase: 40,135 — Colored This Year: 79,236; Last Year: 76,240; Increase: 2,996 — Indians This Year: 2,101; Last Year: 2,695; Decrease: 594 — Local Preachers This Year: 5,792; Last Year: 4,954; Increase: 838 — Traveling Preachers This Year: 3,332; Last Year: 3,147; Increase: 185 — Total This Year: 705,673; Last Year: 662,113 — Increase: 43,560

1839

The general interests of the Church were this year promoted by the simultaneous and energetic action of the different branches of ecclesiastical regulations, all of which were brought to bear upon the understandings and hearts of the people under our influence. But the most important accession which was made to the work was the reinforcement sent to the Oregon mission. After the arrival of the last-mentioned family, and holding a general consultation, it was finally agreed that brother Jason Lee should return to the United States, with a view to strengthen the mission by procuring the aid of additional missionaries, farmers, mechanics, etc. Being remote from all civilized society, except the small settlement at Willamette, and the members of the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Vancouver, it seemed essential to the prosperity of the mission, that it should be furnished with means to itself with food, buildings, and all necessary apparatus for carrying on farming, and the needful mechanic arts. Accordingly, arrangements were made for sending an additional family; and, on the 9th of October of this year, a company, consisting of fifty persons, including six missionaries, with their wives and children, a physician, wife and child, a missionary steward, wife and two children, two farmers, wives and children, two carpenters, a cabinet-maker, and a blacksmith, their wives and children, together with five female teachers, sailed from the port of New York for the Oregon territory, by way of the Sandwich islands. They all arrived in safety, after a voyage of about ten months.

But, what was most cheering to the friends of missions, before the arrival of this company a most glorious work of religion had commenced among the Indians of Oregon, which terminated in the conversion of not less than one thousand of these degraded natives to the Christian faith. A reformation so sudden, deep, and wide, among such a people, had not been known in modern days, and it tended mightily to revive the missionary spirit among us, which had, indeed, begun to languish in many places.

A short account of the manner in which this marvelous work commenced and spread among the people will naturally be expected.

It had been adopted as a maxim from the beginning of our Indian missions, that Christianity must precede civilization. Hence our missionaries among the aborigines of our country were always instructed, first of all, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to them with all simplicity and plainness. This was especially charged upon the missionaries who went to Oregon. And though the circumstances with which they found themselves surrounded compelled the Lees to attend so much to secular things as to engross most of their time for the first year, so that they could give but a very small portion of their attention to religious instruction, yet, on the arrival of additional laborers, they applied themselves to the work with great assiduity, and soon saw the fruit of their labors in the conversion and salvation of souls.

The manner in which this work commenced evinces the truth of our remark, namely, that the Indians must be reformed in heart and life by the gospel of Jesus Christ, before we can hope to reclaim them from barbarism to the practice and blessings of civilized life. How could it be otherwise? Ministers of the gospel are not sent primarily to teach human science, or to train people in domestic and political economy. Their message is of a different character. It is to inform the understanding and reform the heart and life, by the application of divine truth to the conscience and to the judgment. When this reformation is effected, the rest follows as a consequence. Their minds become flexible, their hearts tender, and they may then easily be led on to perceive and to appreciate the blessings of civil and domestic economy, and finally to attend to farming and mechanical pursuits. The experience of more than twenty years, among a variety of Indian tribes, has demonstrated the truth of these remarks.

So it was in Oregon in the present revival. The missionaries became convinced that they must be more holy in order to be more useful. That they might become so they set apart seasons for prayer and mutual edification. First one Indian and then another, beholding the fervency and frequency of their devotions, requested to be instructed in the nature of these things. Their request was granted. Convictions followed in the same manner, attended with the same circumstances of spiritual distress, and earnest prayer for deliverance, as are seen among civilized people who are impressed with gospel truth. When one and then another were delivered, their joyful hearts led them to say to their heathen brethren, "Come and hear, and I will declare what God hath done for my soul." Their words, uttered from the fulness of their hearts, took effect: others were brought under conviction for sin, sought by faith and prayer, and found "redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." In this way the work begun, and in this way it went on and spread, and is still spreading, so that, as before said, not less than one thousand of these people have been "brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." And by the use of the same means we have no doubt that it will continue its saving and hallowing influence until all the hills and valleys of Oregon shall echo with the songs of redeeming love.

The other missions upon our western frontiers were this year prosecuted with vigor and perseverance, and with various degrees of success.

Another occurrence of this year exerted very general interest, and was attended with many blessings: — I allude to the Centenary of Methodism. As the first Methodist society was formed in London in the month of November, 1739, so 1839 became properly the one hundredth year of Methodism. Accordingly, our brethren in Europe and America prepared to celebrate the event with all due solemnity and religious fervor. The 25th of November was fixed upon as the day for this religious celebration. That it might be made a season of spiritual improvement, and at the same time yield an increase of means for extending the work of God on every hand, it was determined to blend together, as far as might be, religious

exercises and the making collections for missionary and educational purposes, and for the support of the worn-out preachers, and the widows, children and orphans of preachers. A very general pulsation was felt throughout the entire Methodist community in favor of the celebration, and the several annual conferences adopted measures for its observance on the day appointed. As nearly as can be ascertained, the amount collected was divided as follows: About one half was to be devoted for the benefit of superannuated preachers, the widows, children, and orphans of preachers, two-tenths for the support of missions, and the remainder for the promotion of education.

The manner in which the celebration was conducted had a hallowing influence upon the Church generally, and tended very much to increase the spirit of devotion, to give more enlarged views of the divine goodness in raising up such a man as John Wesley, and in blessing the world with such a system as Methodism. Sermons were preached, and addresses delivered in almost every society throughout the connection, both on the 25th of November, the day on which the foundation of Methodism was laid by forming the first class, and on previous days for the purpose of taking up collections for the objects specified. The exact amount subscribed I have not been able to ascertain, but it must have been in the neighborhood of \$600,000, though it is not likely that the whole will be collected.

It was indeed a sublime spectacle to contemplate the assemblage of more than one million of people, joined by perhaps three times that number of friends, uniting to offer up thanksgiving to God for his boundless mercy to a lost world, manifested in the gift of his Son! And as one of the many rivulets which flow from that exhaustless fountain of eternal love ran through the channel opened by Wesley, it seemed right and proper for his numerous sons in the gospel to commemorate the day which gave the first impetus to this flowing stream of grace and mercy. Some, indeed, affected to call it a species of idolatry. But why is it any more an act of idolatry to praise God for raising up, and blessing the world with such men as John Wesley, than it is to praise him for any other blessings, whether temporal or spiritual? We praise God for the heavens and the earth, with all their much and varied productions. We praise him for the gospel, and all its attendant blessings. Why should we not also praise and adore him for those human instrumentalities by which the world has been enlightened and reformed? It is indeed marvelous that many of those whose tender consciences will not permit them to render honor to whom honor is due, do not scruple to defame the character of those men, who, like John Wesley, have rendered the most important services to mankind, merely because they have dissented from them in opinion on some unimportant points!

Did we ascribe that glory to man which is due to God alone, and detract from the merits of Jesus Christ by ascribing the glory of our salvation to human wisdom and righteousness, we might well be accused of idolatry. But we do no such thing. We honor John Wesley be-

cause God honored him, and because he, by his preaching and his whole life, reflected the honor and glory of God on his fellow-men.

By thus distinguishing between God and his servant, making the one dependent on the other, and yet so connecting them that the servant cannot act and move, nor bring any thing good to pass without the direction and aid of the Master, we secure the glory which is due to God alone, while we permit his servant to shine in those borrowed rays reflected upon him from the "Sun of righteousness."

Nor do we fear any thing from the pride of sect. It is not sectarianism which mars the beauty of gospel holiness. A man may be as proud, as vainglorious, and as much sectarian in his feelings, while pleading against all sectarianism, as if he were the most bigoted sectarist in the universe. All these things are mere accidents of the Christian character. They may or may not exist injuriously. It depends altogether upon the state of the heart. If the heart be humbled and purified by grace, by the energetic working of the Holy Spirit, pride of all sorts is expelled, and love to universal man takes its place. This alone is destructive of that exceptionable sectarian spirit by which the religious bigot is actuated.

We humbly trust that this love was excited and diffused by this centennial celebration. It gave us an opportunity of reviewing first principles, of estimating anew the numberless blessings bestowed upon us as a people, of praising God for the past, and of clustering together motives for future trust and diligence.

Nor is it doubted but that the thank offerings which were poured out upon the altar of God, from so many pure hearts, had a tendency to enkindle and increase the gratitude of thousands of devoted souls, as well as to nourish the spirit of pure benevolence and charity. With these views and feelings, the event was commemorated, and so long as they are cherished, so long shall we continue to bless God for giving to the world such a man as John Wesley.

The Indiana conference had taken measures for the establishment of a literary institution within its bounds as early as 1837, by the appointment of agents to solicit funds for its endowment, and for erecting suitable buildings, etc. In 1838 it went into operation by the appointment of professors, and receiving students. This year, the Indiana Asbury University, as it was called, received its president and faculty, and has taken its place and rank among the rising stars of literature and science, which were appearing in our hemisphere, to enlighten the rising generation.

Two colleges had been commenced under the patronage of the Holston conference, and were now in successful operation. And St. Charles College was rising into being, under the patronage of the Missouri conference.

Besides the Emory College in the bounds of the Georgia conference, there were under its auspices the Georgia Female College, the Georgia Conference Manual Labor School, Collingworth Institute, and the Wesley Manual Labor School, all of which are exerting an enlightening influence upon those portions of the population for whose benefit they were

especially established. The Cokesbury Manual Labor School was founded by the South Carolina conference, and was now beginning to shed its light upon the rising population of that region of country.

The New Jersey conference also had succeeded in establishing two academies within its bounds, one for male, and the other for female students. They both promise usefulness. Two academics had been recently commenced in the bounds of the New Hampshire conference, called the Newbury Seminary, and South New Market Seminary.

From these facts it would appear that the Methodist Episcopal Church was determined to redeem her character from the imputation thrown upon it from time to time, not without some show of reason, that she was indifferent to the cause of learning. If her liberality in collecting funds for the purpose of endowing and sustaining her literary institutions shall be in proportion to her zeal in founding and getting them into operation, she will deserve the thanks of the community, and will confer untold blessings upon her sons and daughters. Otherwise, however, these institutions will but linger out a sickly existence, and perhaps perish for want of that nursing care which she is abundantly able to afford them.

Ninety-eight preachers were this year returned on the Minutes supernumerary, — two hundred and sixty-one superannuated, one hundred and ten located, thirty-two had died, eight withdrawn, and six had been expelled.

Death had this year thinned our ranks, by taking away some of our oldest and most useful ministers, without, at the same time, sparing some of the younger class.

Among the most aged, and by no means the least able who had gone to their reward, was Thomas Morrell, of the New Jersey conference. He was born in November, 1747, and during the revolutionary war served in the continental army in the capacity of a captain, under the command of Washington. In this service his patriotism and courage were equally manifested, in encountering the difficulties and sharing the dangers of that protracted struggle for our national independence. In the battle on Long Island, which terminated so disastrously to the continental troops, Captain Morrell fell under a severe wound he received from the shot of the enemy, and was taken a prisoner. On being exchanged, and recovering from his wound, he resumed his place in the army, and continued to render important services to his country during the remainder of the war. At its termination, however, like most of his fellow-soldiers, through the poverty of his country, he was thrown upon his own resources for a livelihood, but he succeeded in procuring a competency for himself and family, and at his death bequeathed a valuable legacy to his widow and orphan children.

In 1783, the year in which the war ended, and the independence of the United States was acknowledged, Mr. Morrell was brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, through the instrumentality of the Rev. John Haggerty, a Methodist preacher. In 1787 he was admitted into the traveling ministry, and he soon gave evidence of those eminent talents which distinguished him as an “able minister of the New Testament.”

On the death of Washington, in 1799, Mr. Morrell was one among the many who paid their respects to that illustrious chief by preaching a funeral discourse on the occasion. In this he gave vent to his own feelings of veneration for the general who had led the armies of America to victory, while he commemorated the virtues which adorned his character, and the valorous deeds by which he achieved the liberty and independence of his country.

After filling some of the most important stations, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, where he acquitted himself alike honorably to himself and us fully to the people, in 1803, on account of physical debility, he was compelled to restrict his ministerial labors; he accordingly located, and settled in Elizabethtown, in the state of New Jersey, where he continued to reside, respected and beloved, until his death. Some years before his death, at the request of those brethren who loved and honored him as a fellow-laborer who had once "borne the heat and burden of the day," he was readmitted into the Philadelphia conference in the relation of a superannuated preacher, his income being amply sufficient for his support without drawing upon the funds of the conference.

It is no small evidence of his uniform piety, of his integrity, and of his talents as a preacher of righteousness, that the people of Elizabethtown always heard him with pleasure and profit, and looked up to him as a counselor in whose wisdom they reposed entire confidence. Here, therefore, he continued his ministrations with edifying delight, and his sermons were always characterized by accurate arrangement, by deep thought, and minute analysis, bearing equally upon the understanding and affections of his hearers. Equally removed from fanaticism on the one hand, and a cold, lifeless formality on the other, his sermons partook neither of passionate exclamations nor of dull metaphysical speculations, but of a happy mixture of sound argument and moving appeals, addressed alternately to the judgment and to the passions. Temperate in all things, and equally removed from idleness and excessive labor, he preserved the vigor of his constitution to a good old age, being, at the time of his death, ninety-one years old. Such was the strength of his intellectual and physical powers, that he continued to occupy the pulpit generally once every sabbath, until within about three years of his death, when the feebleness of age obliged him to desist. To this, however, he submitted with the same cheerful acquiescence which he had exemplified in the more active duties of life. During three years of passive submission to the divine will, he bore the marks of the mature Christian, waiting patiently until his allotted time came, and finally glided peacefully into the ocean of eternity, where he no doubt drinks from its perennial waters with unceasing delight.

He was only partially known to the writer, and then mostly near the close of his life. But he appeared to unite in himself those graces, and those moral and intellectual qualities, which rendered him every way companionable, fitted him for usefulness in the sphere in which he moved, and enabled him to derive enjoyment from every lawful source, whether purely religious, or from those creatures of God which are sanctified by the word of God and

prayer. His good common sense, sound understanding, fervent piety, and a zeal characterized and guided by discretion, enabled him to meet in a becoming manner the various exigencies of human life, and to dispose of the subjects which came up for consideration in an intelligent and satisfactory manner.

In the latter years of his life he delighted in reviewing past events, in recounting incidents which had come under his own knowledge, and in magnifying the grace of God in Christ Jesus as exemplified in his own personal experience. In these social interviews there was "cheerfulness without sadness," and a due mixture of the gravity of the Christian minister with the vivacity and buoyancy of a mind cheerful and happy in a consciousness of its own innocence. These things, together with that spirit of hospitality which was displayed under his roof rendered him an agreeable and edifying companion in those social interviews which he enjoyed with his friends. Indeed, it might be said of him that he was a cheerful old man, cheerful without levity, and grave without sadness, giving a practical illustration of the ministerial, social, and domestic virtues, worthy the imitation of all. And joining a prudent economy with industry, neatness, and plainness, he exhibited altogether the picture of an upright and perfect man in his day and generation, equally distant from ostentatious show on the one hand, and a vulgar meanness on the other. Whatever infirmities, therefore, may have oppressed him, grace enabled him to bear them with becoming patience, and the natural wanderings of an imperfect judgment were corrected by "the wisdom which cometh from above," while his involuntary transgressions were atoned for by the same blood through which he was at "first accepted in the Beloved."

Samuel Merwin, of the New York conference, had also exchanged labor for rest during the past year. He was a descendant of one of the New England pilgrims, and was born in Durham, Connecticut, September 13, 1777. While quite young his father and family removed and settled in New Durham, in the state of New York, then a wilderness country. Like young Timothy, he was taught, by his pious father and mother, the Holy Scriptures and to fear the Lord from his youth, the good effects of which appeared in his after life. His father's house being the resort of Methodist preachers, who, in those days, were penetrating every nook and corner in "search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel," when but a lad he became, through their instrumentality, a subject of awakening and justifying grace, and was received into the Church. The ardor of his love and fervency of his zeal soon led him forth in prayer and exhortation, more especially in beseeching the youth of his acquaintance "to be reconciled to God." Giving satisfactory evidence of his capacity and zeal in the cause of God, when about twenty years of age he was, by the presiding elder, employed on a circuit. In the year 1800 he was admitted on trial in the New York conference as an itinerant preacher; and it is greatly to his credit to be able to say in truth, that from that day to his death he never halted or turned aside from his vocation as a traveling preacher in the Methodist connection.

Soon after he entered upon his itinerant career, namely, in the year 1803, he was sent as a missionary to Lower Canada, and took his first station in Quebec, a place almost wholly given to the idolatry of Roman Catholicism, and where Protestantism had little more than a "name to live." Such were the discouraging circumstances attending this first effort to plant Methodism in that strong-hold of iniquity, that brother Merwin continued his ministrations only about six weeks, when he left for Montreal. During this short stay, however, he made a favorable impression on some hearts, which opened the way for future efforts with greater promise of success.

In Montreal he continued to preach, with great acceptance and some success, the remainder of the year; when he was removed to the city of New York, where he rendered himself respected and beloved for his devotion to the came of Jesus Christ.

It is not compatible with this brief memoir to follow our beloved brother through the various stations he filled from year to year, and from place to place. His talents as a preacher, and his skill as a ruler, made it expedient to give him some of the most commanding stations in the bounds of the New England, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore conferences, to which he was alternately removed, and stationed in Boston, Providence, New York, Albany, Troy, Brooklyn, the Rhinebeck and New York districts, and in the cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore. In all these places he so acquitted himself as to leave the savor of a good name behind him.

For several years before his death he was much oppressed with bodily infirmities. These were of such a character as often to threaten him with a premature death, and hence deprived the Church, at times, of his valuable services. A burning fever at one time, a paralysis at another, and constant soreness in one or the other, and sometimes both of his legs, so severe as almost to deprive him of their use, constituted a complication of diseases which called forth the exercise of much patience to enable him to bear them without murmuring. Yet such was his flaming zeal in the cause of God, that even in the midst of these infirmities he persevered in his work with his accustomed diligence, without any other abatement than what stern necessity imposed upon him from actual prostration of physical strength. Ann perhaps he may be included among the most punctual of our preachers — not only in attending to every thing at the time, but also in scrupulously observing every part of his duty as a preacher, both as a presiding and ruling elder in the Church of God.

But the time at length came when he must resign up his stewardship to Him from whom he had received it. It was no doubt a source of severe affliction to him, as it was of grief to his friends, that, after having filled so many important stations with so much distinction and success, a remonstrance was made against his being stationed among them from a people who had formerly profited by his labors; but it is a consolation to know that it originated from a supposition that his bodily infirmities only disqualified him from discharging his duties with success; and also that the people to whom he was sent received him with

open arms, and treated him with the tenderness and respect which were due to his character. His last station was Rhinebeck, N. Y., the residence of the late venerated Garrettson, and the scene of much of his active labors. Here, during the second year of his labors, he sickened and died. The last time he entered the pulpit he was assisted to the church, being too feeble to sustain himself, when he delivered his last, solemn message to the people of his charge. After this he gradually sunk away into the arms of death, leaving behind him a consoling testimony of his faith in Jesus Christ, and of his preparedness, through the atoning merits, to meet his Judge and Redeemer. He left a widow, with two daughters and four sons, to mourn their loss, one of whom is in the itinerant ministry, and, it is hoped, may yet fill the vacuum occasioned by the death of his lamented father.

There were many excellences which clustered around the character of our beloved brother Merwin; and the high estimation in which he was held by the Church may be inferred from the important stations which he filled, as before enumerated. In the sacred Scriptures he was deeply read, and familiarly acquainted with their contents. At an early period of his ministry he adopted the method of consulting these records of our salvation in consecutive order, and continued the practice so long as he was able, reading two chapters, one in the Old and one in the New Testament, every morning before breakfast. By this commendable practice the words of the Holy Ghost were ever fresh in his memory, and hence his judgment was constantly tinder the clear light of those luminous pages, and his sermons interlarded with quotations in Scripture language. He did not, therefore, imitate the injudicious practice of those who substitute "profane babblings," or the aphorisms of heathenism, for the words of inspiration, nor the dry metaphysics of the schools of human philosophy for the lofty and energetic language of inspired prophets and apostles.

As a preacher he was sometimes highly eloquent. His personal appearance was commanding, his voice clear and musical, his enunciation full and distinct, and with these qualifications; when fully inspired with his subject, he commanded profound attention, while he poured forth, in accents strong and persuasive, the streams of gospel truth with great power and effect. We cannot say that his sermons were characterized by that systematic arrangement and minute analysis, nor that profoundness of thought by which some others have been distinguished; but there as generally a glow of warmth which indicated a heart filled with the fire of divine love, and they were then delivered with a pathos and fluency with which none but Samuel Merwin could have delivered them under the same circumstances.

Sometimes, indeed, he failed. In this, however, he was by no means singular. For who that has had any experience in public speaking, especially in extemporaneous addresses, has not felt his mind at times barren, his utterance almost choked, as if it were next to impossible to make either the understanding, heart, or tongue play and perform its part? Whenever, however, he felt these embarrassments, he generally had a method of helping himself out of his difficulty by some innocent sally of wit, or by adverting incidentally to a topic somewhat

foreign to the one under immediate consideration. At these times his ready wit betrayed him into eccentricities which seemed to detract a little from the dignity of the pulpit, while it relieved himself and his audience from an ennui [boredom — DVM] which they mutually felt coming over them.

An instance of this sort occurred once while he was preaching a missionary sermon in the Allen Street church, in the city of New York. Feeling somewhat embarrassed in his mind, and perceiving that his congregation were inclining to a listlessness of spirit, he suddenly paused, and, calling to a preacher who was sitting in a slip in the body of the church, he said, "Brother B____, you must come up here and help me, for I cannot get along with this great subject." The preacher replied, with the same freedom with which he had been addressed, "It is in good hands — therefore go on and you will conquer." This innocent artifice brought him out of the whirling eddies into which he had been carried, and, unfurling his sails, he gently glided off upon the sea of gospel truth, much to the satisfaction of all present. To those who heard him often there appeared a sameness in some parts of his discourses, and more especially in his addresses, as if he had treasured up in his memory a set of phrases which he considered peculiarly adapted to the subject, and might therefore be often repeated, not only without weariness, but with good effect. The lively and energetic manner, however, in which he generally delivered himself, intermixed with sudden thoughts of inspiration, and all poured forth from a full heart in strains of gospel truth and persuasive eloquence, made ample amends for any defects arising from a repetition of the same thoughts, and sent the hearer home pleased with the speaker, and in love with his theme. I remember well that, when stationed in the city of New York, in 1830, he was called upon to preach a sermon in the Forsyth Street church, on the 4th of July, and a proposition to take up a collection in favor of the American Colonization Society had been declined by the trustees; — on this occasion brother Merwin, warming with his subject, rising with the importance and grandeur of his theme, now soared away into the regions of bold thought and vivid imagination, and then melting into the tenderest strains of pathetic and impassioned eloquence, his hearers were alternately raised with expanded and elevated views of truth and duty, and overwhelmed with deep and softened emotions of joy, love, and gratitude. Such, indeed, was the power which he exerted over his audience, that he had them under complete command, and taking advantage of this state of feeling, he suddenly turned from his subject, and asked, "Shall we take a collection for the American Colonization Society?" The appeal was irresistible. "Yes! yes!" responded from every part of the house, and the trustees were compelled to reverse their own decision, and present the plates to receive the free-will offerings of the people, whose hearts had been made generous by the powerful appeals of the orator of the day. An acquaintance of mine, not a member of the Church, who was present, came to me and asked me to lend him a dollar; as he had no money with him, that he might put it in the plate. All

were filled with rapture, and the more pleased for having an opportunity to let their alms accompany their prayers and praises. The amount of the collection told the rest.

Brother Merwin was a great friend and powerful advocate of all our institutions, such as missionary, Sunday school, and other charitable societies; and, while filling the office of a presiding elder on the New York district, exerted an effective influence in their favor by attending their respective boards of management, and otherwise promoting their benevolent objects. At their anniversaries he was often called to speak in their behalf, and he pleaded their cause with most powerful effect, and was always successful; by the playful manner in which he did it, in drawing money from the pockets of the people in their support.

I remember on one occasion, at an anniversary of the Missionary Society within the bounds of the Philadelphia conference, held in the city of Philadelphia during the session of the General Conference of 1832, he delivered an address, after two or three others had spoken, which electrified the congregation by one of those sudden bursts of eloquence for which he was famous, accompanied with a humorous allusion to the collection which was about to be made, and which might have been more highly appreciated had it been a little more grave. These sallies of wit, however, suited him better than they would others of a different turn of mind, because they seemed to come unsought, as the spontaneous effusions of a heart overflowing with feelings of kindness and brotherly affection.

The manner in which he deported himself toward some of his younger and less-informed brethren sometimes gave them offense. It had the appearance, as they thought, of a cold and haughty reserve, as if he thought them beneath his notice. A nearer approach, however, and a more intimate acquaintance, removed the unfavorable impression, and let him into your heart as a brother beloved. And to those who shared his confidence and won his affection, he unfolded himself with the utmost freedom and familiarity, making himself agreeable and edifying by humorous anecdotes and edifying incidents, which he delighted to detail. Of these he possessed a fund, and could easily make them contribute to the entertainment of a company by the lively manner in which he recited them. Such, indeed, were his imitative powers, that he could assume the voice and gestures, and mimic the tone and accent of any person with whom he had been conversant; be grave or comical to suit the nonce, or to give a true representation of the facts and incidents he wished to rehearse. And though he might have indulged his natural propensity too freely for his own and the good of others, yet he succeeded to admiration in rendering vice odious, in making folly appear ridiculous, and in exposing absurdity to its merited contempt; while at other times he clothed the excellences of the Christian character in those attractive charms which were calculated to with the affection of all who beheld them with a believing and impartial mind.

He has left a large circle of friends and acquaintances behind in the various places where he was stationed, who will no doubt readily recognize these traits in the character of Samuel Merwin; the mention of whose name revives those recollections of past days which the writer

of this sketch enjoyed in common with many others, in the society of the friend of his youth, the companion of his riper years, and with whom he has often wept and rejoiced during the vicissitudes of an acquaintance in the ministry of nearly forty years. And this record is made with the more pleasure, because during that time nothing worth naming ever occurred to interrupt or mar for an hour a friendship begun in and cemented by Christian love, and kept up by mutual exchanges of fraternal regard and ministerial labors and sympathies. May this friendship be matured and perpetuated in heaven! So he it, O Lord, for Christ's sake! "Death loves a shining mark." This is poetry; and it may be true in its application to many individuals, and the more true in the imagination of those who mourn under the bereavement of near and valued friends; but we have a more infallible authority for saying that "the wicked shall not live out half their days." The fact is, that death makes no distinction in its victims in respect to age, rank, sex, merit or demerit. All — all are alike exposed to his ravages, and must, therefore, sooner or later, yield, however reluctantly, to his despotic sway.

But whatever may be the truth in this respect, death had hit a shining mark during the past year by shooting his deadly weapon into the heart of Wilbur Fisk, president of the Wesleyan University, and bishop elect of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He was born in Brattleboro, in the state of Vermont, August 31, 1792. His juvenile days, after arriving at a suitable age, were spent at school, and he soon evinced an aptitude of mind to learn, by the progress he made in his elementary lessons of instruction. Though at the early age of twelve he gave evidence of a pious heart, yet while at the preparatory school, in which he was fitting for college, he gradually lost his serious impressions, and mingled with other thoughtless youth in the gayeties and amusements of the world. At the proper time he entered as a student in Burlington College, Vermont; but that institution being closed for a season while the late war was raging between this country and Great Britain, he was sent to Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island, where he graduated, with equal honor to himself and satisfaction to his friends. He then commenced the study of law, under the instruction of a distinguished attorney; but the next year, 1816, he went to the city of Baltimore, and was employed as a private tutor in the family of a gentleman in that city, continuing, in the mean time, the study of the law. He was soon interrupted in these pursuits by a violent attack of a pulmonary disease, which so prostrated his physical powers that, under medical advice, he relinquished, for the time, all thought of any profession which would require any unusual exercise of his lungs.

Not being able to pursue his studies, nor to attend the duties of his vocation as tutor, as soon as his slowly returning health would permit he left Baltimore, and returned to the scenes of his early studies in Burlington, Vermont. But here he relapsed into his former disease, which for a while threatened his life. This sickness, however, by the mercy of God, was made subservient to his spiritual salvation, by reviving in his mind those religious impressions which had been effaced; and during a powerful awakening then spreading in Lyndon, Vermont,

he was made a partaker of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. This great change opened, not only new sources of enjoyment, but also new and enlarged subjects of contemplation, and finally led him into a field of labor for which he seemed designated by the divine Head of the Church. It was not long, therefore, before he began to exercise his gifts as a minister of Jesus Christ, and to give that evidence of his call to and qualification for the work, that led, in 1818, to his admission on trial in the New England conference. He commenced his itinerant labors among his own native hills in Vermont, inhaling the pure atmosphere, drinking the wholesome water, and enjoying the society of his Christian friends of his native state; in doing which, though often preaching, he measurably regained his health, and manifested great vigor of intellect and decision of character. From this place he was removed to Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Suffering a partial relapse into his former complaint, as might have been anticipated from his being confined in the station of Charlestown, at the close of his work in that place, in 1820, he was compelled to take a supernumerary relation. In 1823, however, he had so far recovered as to be able to resume his itinerant career, in the office of presiding elder over the Vermont district. Here, amidst the scenes of an itinerant life, traversing the hills and valleys of his native state again, deriving benefits from traveling constantly from place to place, and exercising his lungs in preaching as his strength would permit, he gradually regained his health, and was finally able to discharge the duties of his station with efficiency and success, to the great satisfaction of both preachers and people.

On the establishment of the Wilbraham Academy he was elected its principal, and was therefore compelled to remit the more healthy exercise of a traveling preacher; for the labor of superintending a school for the education and training of youth, preparatory to their entrance either upon the active duties of life; or as students into the higher seminaries of learning. Here he began more especially to unfold those moral and intellectual powers for which he was distinguished, and which he applied so usefully to his fellow-men the remaining days of his life. In this employment he continued, attending, in, the mean time, as a delegate, the General Conference of 1824 and 1828, until he was transferred to the presidency of the Wesleyan University, in 1831. Upon the duties of this station he entered with great ardor and intelligence, and succeeded in gaining for it a character which commanded the public confidence and affection.

Partly for the benefit of his health, and partly for the benefit of the university, in 1835 and 1836 he made the tour of Europe, an account of which he afterward published in a large octavo volume. Its merits may be estimated from the fact that it has run through several editions, has been read with great avidity by all classes of people, and is highly appreciated by the most intelligent portion of the community. While in Europe he was appointed, by the General Conference of 1836, its delegate to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference; which office he filled with honor to himself, and greatly to the satisfaction of his brethren on both

sides of the Atlantic. At the same conference he was also elected a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church; but on his return to the United States he declined accepting the appointment, believing, in accordance with the views of many of his brethren, that the interests of the university had a more imperative claim upon his services, and that he could, therefore, more effectually promote the cause of God here than in the other high office to which he had been elected.

Very soon, however, the hopes of all were disappointed, in respect to his further usefulness to the Church militant, by his sickness and death. The pulmonary disease with which he had been afflicted, with less or more severity, now for about nineteen years, began to make rapid inroads upon his constitution, and he was compelled, in the winter of 1838, to remit his active duties and take to his bed, which proved, alas! his dying bed. His bodily sufferings were very severe and protracted. He bore them, however, with patience and fortitude, making them subservient to his more perfect ripeness for heavenly glory. His countenance, his words, and all his actions, on the bed of death, bespoke a soul full of glory and of God; and he left the most consoling evidence behind him of having finished his course with joy, and of having entered at last into the everlasting kingdom of his God.

Thus ended the days of Wilbur Fisk, D. D., and president of the Wesleyan University. His name will long be held in grateful and affectionate remembrance by those who had the happiness of his personal acquaintance, and by those who were benefited by his ministry and instructions.

The following sketch of the character of Dr. Fisk is taken from a funeral discourse which was delivered by the present writer, on the occasion of his death, and which was published at the request of those who heard it. After giving a short account of his life and death, the remarks which follow were added: —

- 1 His learning, though, perhaps, not so deep and thorough as that of some others, was nevertheless sound, various, and of the most useful character. He graduated with honor to himself in the Brown University, and was highly respected by his fellow-students and the faculty under whom he studied. And such was his love of letters in subsequent life that he held a distinguished rank among the literati of his country, and filled with high reputation the stations he occupied at the head of literary institutions.
- 2 His religious experience was deep and genuine. This was fully evinced by the uniformity of his piety, the humility of his mind, and his ardent devotion to the cause of his divine Master. It was this also which created that inextinguishable thirst for the salvation of a lost world, which led him forth as a preacher of the gospel of Christ, as a powerful and fearless advocate of the cause of missions, temperance, and all those institutions of benevolence which aim at human melioration, or look to the universal spread of the gospel of the Son of God.

Though at an early period of his ministry he was called to preside over Institutions of learning, which officially confined him to a more limited sphere of action than that which was marked out by an itinerant ministry, yet he by no means circumscribed his labors to these narrow limits, but as opportunities presented, extended the sphere of his labors, in the pulpit and on the platform, wherever and whenever, so far as his time and strength would allow, calls were made for his services. And in these labors he was eminently useful, and his service were highly appreciated by all lovers of human improvement. He was therefore never "straitened in his own bowels," but stretched the line of his labors in every direction, making his voice to be heard in favor of the cause of Christ, in all those diversities of operations by which the present age is distinguished for the diffusion of gospel light and love. In this work that fountain of divine grace which can be opened in the human heart only by a deep and genuine experience of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, gushed out in the purest streams of the most charming eloquence, distilling "as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."

His efforts to do good were limited only by his means. On a certain occasion he was heard to say, "As I have no children of my own to provide for,⁷ I feel it my duty to do all I can for the benefit of others." Acting on this principle, he devoted all his energies of soul and body to the best interests of his fellow-men.

3. Though deeply interested in the cause of education, yet he considered it only so far important as it was made subservient to the spiritual and eternal welfare of men. Having suffered much in his religious enjoyments while at the preparatory school and at college, on account of the irreligion which prevailed at these institutions at the time he was there, he was, when he came to feel the responsibility of his station, exceedingly solicitous to see seminaries of learning established and conducted strictly according to the principles of the gospel. Hence, when placed at the head of the university, as well as while principal of the Wilbraham Academy, he exerted all his powers to banish immorality and irreligion from their precincts, and bring the influence of Christianity, in its experimental and practical parts, to bear upon the students, and upon all concerned. And in this he succeeded even beyond what might have been expected.

The holy influence which was collected around the Wesleyan University, by the power of his precept and example, seconded as he was by his associates and the official board, was extensively felt on the surrounding population, and gave it a commanding character in the community, exempting it from these exceptions which have frequently been made, with too much truth, against literary institutions. The frequent revivals of religion, which were witnessed among the students, furnished an evidence to its friends that a college may be so conducted as to insure the blessings of God on its labors, and tended powerfully to impress

⁷ Dr. Fisk, though married, died without issue.

upon the minds of all, the spiritual as well as literary benefit to be derived from placing their sons under the wing of the Wesleyan University. I may say indeed, with confidence, that on no department of God's vineyard has his Spirit been poured out more copiously, and the number of genuine converts been more numerous, in proportion to the population, than in this nursery of learning and religion.

How much the labors and example of its venerated president contributed to this happy result, those can testify who have borne witness to his assiduous attention to these things. The wisdom and fidelity with which he inculcated the truths of the gospel upon the minds of the students, and the fatherly manner in which he led the inquiring soul to Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation, and likewise rejoiced over the happy believer, attest the interest which he took in the spiritual as well as literary welfare of those intrusted to his care.

His invariable maxim was, that sanctified learning only can be useful to mankind. And acting on this maxim, he diffused through every circle in which he moved the hallowing influences of Christianity, exhibiting in his own temper and spirit the superior excellence and claim it has upon the hearts and homage of mankind.

4. His talents as a preacher of the gospel were of a high order. He entered deeply and systematically into theological truth, and was thoroughly Wesleyan in his views of the gospel, and the methods of diffusing its blessings among mankind. Though never boisterous in his manner, but calm and collected, he was energetic, plain, and pointed, and evinced that he spoke from the fullness of his heart — a heart thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his divine Master.

He was an original thinker. Though the field of theological truth has been so frequently surveyed, that little seems to be left for us to do but to follow on in the beaten track, yet it was evident that when Wilbur Fisk "occupied that holy place, the pulpit," he thought and arranged for himself, and clothed his thoughts in language of his own selection, which, by its appropriateness, expressed what he wished to communicate in words plain, chaste, and classical. In him there was no ostentatious show of learning, though it was evident to all who heard him, with attention, that he was no stranger to literature and science.

His sermons were generally of a didactic character, and on this account might have appeared to those who did not fully enter into his views, and follow his chain of reasoning, somewhat dry and dull. His discourses, however, were far from being dull and monotonous. Though much accustomed to consecutive reasoning, to sustaining his propositions by logical deductions, yet his intimate appeal was to the Holy Scriptures; and often his addresses to the conscience were of that pungent character, and delivered with that flow of eloquence which made the sinner tremble, while he saw swept away all "his refuges of lies." On one of these occasions, I remember to have heard him in this city, in the Forsyth Street church, when, after I having substantiated the truth of his doctrine by apposite texts of Scripture, and a close chain of reasoning, he suddenly turned upon his audience, and commenced one of

those eloquent and pathetic appeals, which poured upon them like a resistless torrent, and bore them away upon the stream of truth almost whether they would or not. A minister, sitting within the railing of the altar, found himself unconsciously extending his arms to snatch the sinner from his impending ruin, and to carry him to the Lord Jesus for salvation. His manner in the pulpit was solemn, graceful, and dignified; his enunciation clear and impressive; and all his gesticulations corresponded to the purity and importance of the cause in which he was engaged. Perhaps, when unembarrassed, he came as near to the perfection of a Christian pulpit orator, as any that can be found among the ministers of the sanctuary. He never demeaned himself nor degraded the dignity of the place and the subject, by descending to quirks and witty sayings to tickle the fancy of the facetious, nor spoke with a view to produce a momentary effect, or to elicit the shout of applause. To this disgraceful finesse, so unbecoming the time, the place, the subject, and the end of preaching, Dr. Fisk never stooped; but his air was solemn, his attitude grave, his words sober, his arguments sound, and his entire object seemed to be to bring sinners to God, and to build believers up in all holy living.

5. Dr. Fisk wielded a powerful pen. The few printed sermons he has left behind him bespeak for him the sound divine, the able advocate of revealed truth, and the fearless defender of experimental and practical religion.

In his controversial writings and who can avoid controversy — while he manfully combated error and defended what he considered the truth in a style of independence becoming the ambassador of Jesus Christ, he was respectful and courteous toward his antagonists.

Though it may be admitted that in some instances he was careless in stating his arguments, and not sufficiently guarded against the insidious attacks of some with whom he was called to contend, yet the acuteness of his intellect and the force of his genius were never more eminently displayed than in his Calvinistic Controversy, and in his Address to the Members of the New England Conference. He wrote, indeed, as one who believed what he put to paper, breathing into his sentences the inspiration of truth and sincerity, and pouring forth the streams of argument and illustration with that earnestness and logical precision which cannot but enlighten and convince the judgment.

Toward the close of his life he was engaged in a very delicate controversy, in conducting which he sometimes suffered no little reproach. Though Dr. Fisk was the last man who should have provoked reproachful language, yet he bore it with that meekness and submission which become the Christian minister, and finally testified on his dying bed, that, though he may have erred in some of his expressions, he was fully confirmed in the truth of his doctrines, as it was principle, not victory, for which he had contended.

We may therefore safely commend him as a writer for an example to others, and his writings as worthy of being read and had in remembrance.

6. Instead of towering above his fellows by an exhibition of any one talent of superior strength and brilliancy, in him were concentrated that cluster of excellences which constituted a nicely balanced mind, admirably adapted to the variety of calls which were made upon his time and abilities. This concentration of excellences created that symmetry of character which so beautifully displayed itself on all occasions, and so eminently fitted him to move in the various circles of usefulness in which he was called to exercise his gifts.

Though he may not have been so thoroughly versed as some others, who had devoted themselves more exclusively to any one department of literature, in metaphysics, in a knowledge of the languages, or in mathematical science yet he was sufficiently acquainted with these branches of knowledge to enable him to unravel the sophistry of error, to detect the fallacies of subtle antagonists, and to state and defend the truth with clearness and precision. With this well-balanced and well-disciplined mind, was combined that moral worth of character which at all times commanded respect and inspired confidence, and that fitted him for the various fields of usefulness in which he was called to labor. And in the exercise of these gifts, it was evident that he studied to be useful rather than great, though it is equally manifest that his greatness of character resulted from the usefulness of his life and labors.

7. But that which characterized Dr. Fisk among his fellows, and rendered him so eminently useful, was the deep vein of evangelical piety which ran through all his performances, and exerted a hallowing influence over his own mind and the minds of others. This, as I have before remarked, blended itself in his private studies, mingled in his social intercourse, graced and sanctified all his public administrations, whether in the pulpit, on the platform, or in the discharge of his duties as president of the university. And though no stranger to the weapon of satire, which he wielded sometimes with tremendous effect, yet it was manifest that the same hallowed end was had in view in the use of this sharp and dangerous weapon, as when he dealt in the more sober and dignified accents of direct truth and argument.

8. In his social intercourse he sweetly blended the meekness of the Christian and the gravity of the minister with the urbanity of the gentleman and the graces of the scholar. Though too conscientious and independent to compromise the truth from deference to the opinions of others, yet he always treated their judgment with becoming respect, and uttered his dissent with that modesty and diffidence which indicated a sense of his fallibility and sincere desire to know the right. To the common courtesies of life he was never inattentive, well knowing that Christianity distinguishes her children no less by the "gentleness" of their manners, and the delicate attentions to the niceties of relative duties, than she does by the sternness of her requirements in favor of purity of motive and conduct. He was therefore equally removed from that vulgar rudeness which marks the clown, and that disgusting familiarity which obtrudes itself, unasked and undesired, into the privacies of others. In him were united the delicacies of refined life, with the strong and unyielding principles of Christian integrity and ministerial gravity.

9. Though inspired with that spirit of Catholicism which embraces all denominations as constituting one Christian brotherhood, he was, nevertheless, cordially attached from principle to the doctrine, discipline, and usages of the Church to which he belonged, and of which he was such a distinguished ornament. Wesley he venerated as the first man of his age, as the greatest of modern reformers, as a sound divine, and as one of the most evangelical, laborious, and successful ministers of Jesus Christ. He fully believed that the doctrine and discipline of the Church Wesley was instrumental in founding in America were orthodox and Scriptural, and therefore admirably calculated to spread holiness and happiness through the land. Hence he labored indefatigably to promulgate its doctrine, to establish its government, and to extend its influence.

He loved the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church. No more conclusive proof could he have given of this than he did, by adhering to it "through good and evil report," so long as the Church called him to labor in that field; and when called by his brethren to a more restricted sphere of action, his official duties by no means deprived him of the privilege he prized so highly, of going forth as an itinerant minister in quest of the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." He who might have commanded thousands of dollars, had he chosen to attach himself to another ministry, "chose rather to suffer affliction" with these comparatively poor "people of God," "esteeming the reproach of Christ," as borne by a Methodist itinerant, "greater riches than the treasures" he might have secured to himself in another department of ministerial labor. And though, after he accepted of the presidency of the Wesleyan University, he had a most luring offer, so far as pecuniary consideration was concerned, to take charge of another literary institution, yet he declined the honor because he loved that which bore the name of Wesley, from a hope that he could there more effectually build up Wesleyan Methodism, by training its sons in the principles and practice of that apostolic man, and because he had already pledged his best endeavors to promote its literary and religious interests. While therefore he gave the right hand of fellowship to ail, of every name, who "loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," he manifested his preference for the ministry and doctrines of his own Church, by cleaving to them to the end of his life.

10. It remains only that we look at him as the head of the Wesleyan University. Here he seemed to be the center of attraction to all connected with the institution, whether as professors, directors, or as students. His counsel was respected, his precepts observed, and his example considered worthy of the imitation of all. He ruled more from the love and respect which were felt and entertained for his character, than from a fear of his frown, though the latter was dreaded in exact proportion to the esteem felt for his exalted worth.

His inaugural address developed the principles on which the government of the university would be conducted; and the paternal manner in which these principles were practically in illustrated gave a character to the institution which secured the affection and commanded the respect of all interested in its prosperity; and perhaps no student ever left his Alma Mater

without being impressed with a deep sense of his obligations to its president for the fatherly solicitude he had manifested in his literary, intellectual, and religious welfare.

Placed thus at the head of an institution which must tell for good or in on the destinies of so many immortal beings, he felt the responsibility of his station, and acted in view of that day when he must render an "account of his stewardship." And such was the success with which he presided over the literary and religious interests of those committed to his oversight, and discharged the duties of the high trusts confided to him, that he inspired the respect and confidence, not only of those immediately connected with the university, but of the public at large, as well as those who held a kindred relation to similar institutions.

Hence his death is considered a loss to the entire community. The impression he was making upon the public mind generally was of the most favorable character; and the lamentations made on hearing the news of his death, and the tones of sympathy expressed by others than those connected with him in church fellowship, show that the community generally felt a lively interest in his welfare, and therefore sorrowed "most of all that they should see his face no more."

Finally, we may say, that "whatsoever things were lovely, pure, and of good report," in religion and morals, in learning and science, in spirit and conduct, were, in an eminent degree, concentrated in him, and, sweetly and harmoniously blending their united influence in his heart and life, gave a symmetry, a finish and polish to his character, worthy of love and admiration; and although as a human being he must have felt and exhibited the common infirmities of our nature, yet, having been disciplined by education, refined by grace, and improved by reading and extensive observation, he may be safely held up as an exemplar for the imitation of the Christian, and the minister of Jesus Christ, as well as those to whom are committed the interests of the youth of our land.

There are two other names I wish to mention before I close this volume; one because he was among the older class of Methodist preachers, and the other because he ranked among the younger; and also because they were both worthy of remembrance.

Smith Arnold was born in Middlebury, Conn., March 31, 1766, the year in which Methodism commenced its leavening influence in the city of New York, under the preaching of Embury, and the prayers of the few who accompanied him to this country. After his marriage and subsequent settlement in Herkimer county, N. Y., he was made a partaker of the grace of life, and commenced his itinerant career by joining the New York conference in the year 1800. The first year of his ministry he spent in the western part of New York state, then a new country, but rapidly filling with inhabitants. Here he had the happiness of seeing the blessed fruit of his labors in the awakening and conversion of souls. For twenty-one years he continued his efficient services in the itinerant field, often exposed to privations and hardships in the new and poorer settlements of western New York, and as often cheered by

the manifestations of the power and goodness of God on his sincere endeavors to advance the cause of Christ.

At the end of this term he found himself so worn down by excessive labor, that he was obliged to take a supernumerary relation, and then a superannuated, in which he continued until his death, which happened on the 16th of March, 1839. His end was peace and assurance for ever.

Brother Arnold was a man of great simplicity of manners, a Methodist preacher of the old stamp, plain and pointed in his appeals to the conscience, though sometimes eccentric in some of his movements and phrases. His talents as a preacher were respectable, and he generally commanded the confidence and affection of the people among whom he labored; and when his death was announced, none doubted but that he had exchanged this for a better world.

Who is exempt from the ravages of death? Among those who had been taken from the walls of our Zion to the "Jerusalem which is above," was John D. Bangs, son of the Rev. John Bangs, of the New York conference. Young, vigorous, pious, and amiable, he promised great usefulness to the Church, and much satisfaction to his numerous friends, had God seen fit to spare his life, and bless his endeavors.

He was born in the town of Kortwright, Delaware county, N. Y., May 7, 1813, and at the early age of fourteen was converted to God, and became a member of the Church. Growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, and exhibiting a talent for preaching, he was duly authorized, according to the usages of the Church, and went on a circuit in 1835. His first labors were in a part of the country where his father and uncles were born, in the state of Connecticut, and he soon gave evidence of that devotion to the cause of God, and capacity to instruct others in the way of salvation, which won for him the confidence and the affection of his seniors in the ministry, and the people among whom he labored. Accordingly, in the spring of 1836 he was admitted on trial in the New York conference, and graduated in regular course to elder's orders.

But his race was short, and his death sudden and unexpected. On the 15th of July, 1838, his wife, with whom he had been united only about one year, but whose amiable virtues fitted her for a useful companion in adversity or prosperity, sickened and died. While attending at her grave, greatly exhausted with watching and anxiety, he was seized with the same disease, the scarlet fever, which had so recently deprived him of a beloved wife. Six days only after her death he was called to resign up his breath to God who gave it, and in whose praise it was employed while at his command. Thus, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, this young minister of Jesus Christ bid adieu to all earthly enjoyments, in sure and certain hope of everlasting life; and while his dust reposes by the side of his wife's, in the town of Yonkers, their spirits are doubtless rejoicing together before the throne of God in heaven.

John D. Bangs was characterized by deep humility, genuine piety, and amiability of manners, as well as thirst for the salvation of souls, which greatly endeared him to his friends and acquaintances, and made the pang of separation the more severe in some respects, and the more joyful in others, to his bereaved parents and circle of relatives.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 650,357; Last Year: 615,212; Increase: 35,145 — Colored This Year: 89,197; Last Year: 79,236; Increase: 7,961 — Indians This Year: 2,249; Last Year: 2,101; Increase: 148 — Local Preachers This Year: 5,856; Last Year: 5,792; Increase: 64 — Traveling Preachers This Year: 3,557; Last Year: 3,332; Increase: 235 — Total This Year: 749,216; Last Year: 705,673 — Increase: 43,553.

CHAPTER 15

The General Conference of 1840

This conference assembled in the city of Baltimore May 1, and was opened by Bishop Roberts by reading a portion of the Holy Scriptures and prayer. John A. Collins, of the Baltimore conference, was appointed secretary, and James B. Houghtaling, of the Troy, and Thomas B. Sargent, of the Baltimore conferences, assistant secretaries. The following is a list of the delegates who were present: —

New York Conference: Nathan Bangs, C. W. Carpenter, Joshua Holdich Samuel Luckey, Daniel Ostrander, Fitch Reed, Phineas Rice, Marvin Richardson, Peter P. Sandford, Nicholas White.

New England Conference: Phineas Crandall, Jotham Horton, A. D. Merrill, Joshua A. Merrill, Orange Scott, E. W. Stickney, Fred Upham.

Main Conference: Moses Hill, B. Jones, W. C. Larrabee, D. B. Randall, Ezekiel Robinson.

New Hampshire Conference: John F. Adams, Charles D. Cahoon, Schuyler Chamberlain, Jared Perkins, Elihu Scott, James Templeton.

Troy Conference: J. B. Houghtaling, Noah Levings, Sherman Minor, Truman Seymour, Charles Sherman, Tobias Spicer.

Pittsburgh Conference: C. Cook, George S. Holmes, Robert Hopkins, Thomas M. Hudson, J. G. Sansom.

Erie Conference: John C. Ayers, John Chandler, H. Kingsley, B. O. Plimpton, David Preston.

Black River Conference: G. Baker, S. Chase, John Dempster, George Gary.

Oneida Conference: Elias Bowen, George Harman Zechariah Paddock, George Peck, D. A. Shephard.

Michigan Conference: Henry Colclazer, E. H. Pilcher, A. Poe, John H. Power.

Genesee Conference: Asa Abel, Jonas Dodge, A. N. Filmore, Glezin Filmore, J. Parker, Manley Tooker.

Ohio Conference: William B. Christie, S. Hamilton, L. L. Hamline, William H. Raper, R. O. Spencer, John F. Wright, Jacob Young.

Missouri Conference: Andrew Munroe, Thomas Johnson.

Illinois Conference: P. Aker, Peter Cartwright, John Clarke, Hooper Crews, J. T. Mitchell, S. H. Thompson.

Kentucky Conference: Henry B. Bascom, Thomas N. Ralston, Jonathan Stamper, George W. Taylor, J. S. Tomlinson.

Indiana Conference: E. R. Ames, A. Eddy, C. W. Ruter, Allen Wiley, A. Wood.

Holson Conference: Samuel Patton.

Tennessee Conference: A. T. Driskill, John B. McFerrin, S. S. Moody, Robert Paine, F. E. Pitts.

Arkansas Conference: John Harrell, John C. Parker.

Mississippi Conference: Benjamin M. Drake, William Winans.

Alabama Conference: E. Callaway, E. V. Ivert, William Murrah.

Georgia Conference: Ignatius A. Few, Samuel K. Hodges, William J. Parks, Lovick Pearce.

South Carolina Conference: Charles Betts, Bond English, Hugh A. C. Walker, William M. Wightman.

North Carolina Conference: Moses Brock, J. Jameson.

Virginia Conference: Thomas Crowder, John Early, William A. Smith.

Baltimore Conference: Samuel Brison, John A. Collins, J. A. Gere, John Miller, S. G. Roszel, H. Slicer, N. Wilson.

Philadelphia Conference: Solomon Higgins, Joshua Lybrand, Levi Scott, Matthew Sorin, Henry White.

New Jersey Conference: Manning Force, R. W. Petherbridge, C. Pitman, John S. Porter, Isaac Wilmer.

This conference was favored with the presence of the Rev. Robert Newton, as a representative from the Wesleyan Methodist conference, and the brethren Joseph Stinson, president of the Canada conference, John and Egerton Ryerson, members of said conference, John Harvard, chairman of the Lower Canada district, and Matthew Richie, principal of the Upper Canada Conference Academy.

These were severally introduced to the conference, and were recognized as brethren beloved, and worthy representatives of Wesleyan Methodism, both in Europe and British America. Owing to the indisposition of Bishop Soule, who, in consequence thereof, was not present until some days after the conference opened, the address of the bishops was not presented until about a week after the conference commenced its sessions. Though long, yet as it presents the particular views of the episcopacy on several important points, the reader will, no doubt, be pleased to have it preserved in this permanent form. It is as follows: —

“Address of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the General Conference, held in Baltimore, May, 1840

“Dear Brethren, — The meeting of this solemn and constitutional body, just at the opening of the second century of Wesleyan Methodism, is a peculiarly appropriate occasion for reviewing the rise and progress of that great and blessed revival of pure Christianity, which, commencing with the labors of that eminent man of God, the Rev. John Wesley, has, during the last centennial period, spread over large portions of our globe, conveying the blessings of the gospel salvation to millions of the human race. It is highly proper for us, at such a period, and under such circumstances, to direct our careful attention to the measures and means which, under God, have been accompanied with such auspicious results. It will appear, it is presumed, upon such an examination, that human policy has had less to do in the origin, progress, and final accomplishment of this great work, than in any other important and

extensive enterprise since the days of the apostles. The rise, and progress, and ultimate success of Methodism are marked with the special openings and interpositions of the providence of Almighty God. And although we are a hundred years removed from that era of precious memory when this great light first shone forth from Oxford, we look back through every successive period of its advancement, deeply impressed with this sentiment, 'Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us, but unto thy name give glory!' We have stood still to see the salvation of God, or moved forward as his providence opened the way.

"In the progress of this great work on both sides of the Atlantic many instruments have been successfully employed, who would never have been engaged in the enterprise had their selection depended merely on the wisdom of men.

"In England, while a Wesley and Fletcher, with a few kindred spirits, were wielding the mighty artillery of gospel truth, with all the panoply of various and profound science and literature, made mighty by the arm of God to the pulling down of the strongholds of error and infidelity, a considerable number of unlettered men, taken from ordinary occupations, and with no pretensions to any extraordinary human qualifications, with such weapons as the Holy Spirit had supplied, were marching through the kingdom, attacking the citadel of the heart, and bringing thousands into a happy allegiance to the Captain of their salvation. The same order of things is observable from the commencement till the present time. It has pleased God, from time to time, to raise up men, in different parts of these States, who were endued with extraordinary intellectual powers, and those powers disciplined to sound argument by a thorough education. In these men the Church has found able defenders of her doctrines and order; and although some of them have fallen asleep, they still speak — while others, in the order of Providence, have been raised up in their stead. Thus we have a host of the venerable dead, united with a succession of living witnesses, and all set for the defense of the gospel of Christ.

"But had only such distinguished instruments been employed in preaching the gospel on this continent since the first Wesleyan missionaries crossed the Atlantic, and commenced their labors in the colonies, what, in all human probability, would have been the state of the church in these lands at the present day?

"How many thousands and tens of thousands have been converted to God by the instrumentality of the preaching of men who have never explored the regions of science and literature—and who, having 'fought their way through,' are now resting in Abraham's bosom! And what living multitudes bear witness to the efficiency of the same means, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, in bringing them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God! Indeed, if we carefully examine the history of the church, from the days of the apostles to the present time, at what period of her progress shall we find her amply supplied with ministers combining in themselves a profound knowledge of science and literature,

and genuine piety, and giving proof, by the sanctity of their lives, and the fruits of their labors, that they were truly called of God to the work of the ministry?

“The probability is, that one chief cause of the great deficiency of evangelical ministers in the Church of Christ is the neglect of that solemn command, ‘Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth more laborers.’

“Our venerable Wesley was fully convinced that the supreme authority to constitute and perpetuate the gospel ministry belonged only to the Author of salvation; and that those who gave the Scriptural evidence of being moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the work of the ministry were not to be rejected on account of a supposed deficiency in human acquirements.

“This truly evangelical sentiment, so strikingly illustrated in the history of the last century, should deeply impress us on the present occasion; and we should continue to adhere to it as one of the first principles in that system which is destined to evangelize the world. Our blessed Redeemer, after he had settled the constitution of his kingdom among men, — after he had accomplished the work of human redemption, — after he had risen from the dead in confirmation of his divine commission and authority, — and in his last interview with his disciples, just before his ascension into heaven-said, ‘All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations.’ All the attending circumstances conspire to render this one of the most solemn and important declarations ever made to the world. It asserts the exclusive authority of Jesus Christ to select, and commission, and send forth the ministers of his gospel; an authority which, by right of office and government, he carried with him to the right hand of the Father, to be possessed and exercised till the final issue of his mediatorial kingdom. In strict conformity with this declaration of their divine Master, the apostolic college claimed no right to constitute ministers in succession; but sought, with earnest prayer and diligent examination of spiritual gifts, connected with holiness of life and usefulness in labor, whom God had called to this sacred employment; and in this is involved, as we believe, the true doctrine of apostolic succession.

“Keeping steadily in view this fundamental principle in the constitution and perpetuity of the Christian ministry, and in connection with it the unity of the church of Christ, we, as your general superintendents, have thought it proper to invite your deliberate attention to several subjects which, in our opinion, have a special claim to your consideration-earnestly praying that all things may be done, whether in word or deed, as in the immediate presence of God, and with an eye single to his glory.

“To preserve and strengthen the unity and peace of that great and increasing body of Christians and Christian ministers which you represent in this General Conference, and to devise and adopt measures for the more extensive and efficient promotion of the work of God in these lands and in foreign countries, are the primary and very important objects of the institution of this body; and in these objects your counsel, your acts, and your prayers

should concentrate. The connection of Wesleyan Methodists in all parts of the world should remain one united household, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. One in doctrine, and in all the essential points of discipline, they should remain undivided in affection; and no minor considerations, growing out of difference of country, civil government, or other circumstances, should ever separate us, or interrupt our Christian fellowship. Laborers together with our brethren in Europe, and in the provinces, in the same vineyard of our common Lord, we should avail ourselves of every favorable opportunity, and especially of the occasion of the meeting of this body, to convey to them our Christian salutations, and the expressions of our undiminished affection and esteem.

“Although it may be safely admitted that every system, except that which has a just claim to inspiration, is capable of improvement, it is a wise and prudent maxim, as well in ecclesiastical as in civil jurisprudence, that principles and measures which have been long established and generally successful in their operations, should be changed or modified with the utmost caution. The history of communities sufficiently proves that innovations upon such a settled order of things are very liable to result in consequences unfavorable to the peace and well-being of society. This being the case, no ordinary considerations should induce us to ‘remove the ancient land-marks which our fathers have set up.’

“In a body so numerous as the Methodist connection, embracing twenty-eight annual conferences, extended over these United States and territories, and connected with different civil and domestic institutions, it is hardly expected that all should see ‘eye to eye’ relative to the meaning and administration of the discipline of the Church, or the fitness and expediency of measures which may be adopted in conformity to such a state of things.

“It has been the constant aim and united endeavor of your general superintendents to preserve uniformity and harmony in these respects; and, as far as practicable, prevent conflicting action in all the official bodies in the Church. But, although we record, with unfeigned gratitude to the God of all grace and consolation, the general peace, and harmony, and prosperity of the body, since your last session, it becomes our painful duty to lay before you some exceptions to this happy and prosperous condition.

“At the last session of the General Conference the subject of slavery and its abolition was extensively discussed, and vigorous exertions made to effect new legislation upon it. But, after a careful examination of the whole ground, aided by the light of past experience, it was the solemn conviction of the conference that the interests of religion would not be advanced by any additional enactments in regard to it.

“In your pastoral address to the ministers and people, at your last session, with great unanimity, and, as we believe, in the true spirit of the ministers of the peaceful gospel of Christ, you solemnly advised the whole body to abstain from all abolition movements, and from agitating the exciting subject in the Church. This advice was in perfect agreement with the individual as well as associated views of your superintendents. But had we differed from

you in opinion, in consideration of the age, wisdom, experience, and official authority of the General Conference, we should have felt ourselves under a solemn obligation to be governed by your counsel. We have endeavored, both in our official administration, and in our private intercourse with the preachers and members, to inculcate the sound policy and Christian spirit of your pastoral address. And it affords us great pleasure to be able to assure you, that our efforts in this respect have been very generally approved, and your advice cordially received and practically observed in a very large majority of the annual conferences, as will more fully appear to you on the careful examination of the journals of those bodies for the last four years. But we regret that we are compelled to say, that in some of the northern and eastern conferences, in contravention of your Christian and pastoral counsel, and of your best efforts to carry it into effect, the subject has been agitated in such forms, and in such a spirit, as to disturb the peace of the Church. This unhappy agitation has not been confined to the annual conferences, but has been introduced into quarterly conferences, and made the absorbing business of self-created bodies in the bosom of our beloved Zion. The professed object of all these operations is to free the Methodist Episcopal Church from the "great moral evil of slavery," and to secure to the enslaved the rights and privileges of free citizens of these United States. How far the measures adopted, and the manner of applying those measures, are calculated to accomplish such an issue, even if it could be effected by any action of ecclesiastical bodies, your united wisdom will enable you to judge.

"We cannot, however, but regard it as of unhappy tendency, that either individual members, or official bodies in the Church, should employ terms and pass resolutions of censure and condemnation on their brethren, and on public officers and official bodies over whose actions they have no legitimate jurisdiction. It requires un very extensive knowledge of human nature to be convinced that if we would convert our fellow-men from the error of their ways, we must address them, not in terms of crimination and reproach, but in the milder language of respect, persuasion, and kindness.

"It is justly due to a number of the annual conferences in which a majority, or a very respectable minority of the members are professedly abolitionists, to say, that they occupy a very different ground and pursue a very different course from those of their brethren who have adopted ultra principles and measures in this unfortunate, and, we think unprofitable controversy. The result of action had in such conferences on the resolution of the New England conference, recommending a very important change in our general rule on slavery, is satisfactory proof of this fact, and affords us strong and increasing confidence that the unity and peace of the Church are not to be materially affected by this exciting subject. Many of the preachers who were favorably disposed to the cause of abolition, when they saw the extent to which it was designed to carry these measures, and the inevitable consequences of their prosecution, came to a pause, reflected, and declined their cooperation. They clearly perceived that the success of the measures would result in the division of the Church; and for such an

event they were not prepared. They have no disposition to criminate their brethren in the south, who are unavoidably connected with the institution of slavery, or to separate from them on that account. It is believed that men of ardent temperament, whose zeal may have been somewhat in advance of their knowledge and discretion, have made such advances in the abolition enterprise as to produce a reaction. A few preachers and members, disappointed in their expectations, and despairing of the success of their cause in the Methodist Church, have withdrawn from our fellowship, and connected themselves with associations more congenial with their views and feelings; and others, in similar circumstances, may probably follow their example. But we rejoice in believing that these secessions will be very limited, and that the great body of Methodists in these states will continue, as they have been, one and inseparable. The uniformity and stability of our course should be such, as to let all candid and thinking men see that the cause of secessions from us is not a change of our doctrine or moral discipline — no imposition of new terms of communion — no violation of covenant engagements on the part of the Church. It is a matter worthy of particular notice, that these who have departed from us do not pretend that any material change in our system, with respect either to doctrine, discipline, or government, has taken place since they voluntarily united themselves with us. And it is ardently to be desired that no such innovation may be effected, as to furnish any just ground for such a pretension.

“The experience of more than half a century, since the organization of our ecclesiastical body, will afford us many important lights and landmarks, pointing out what is the safest and most prudent policy to be pursued in our onward course as regards African slavery in these States; and especially in our own religious community. This very interesting period of our history is distinguished by several characteristic features having a special claim to our consideration at the present time, particularly in view of the unusual excitement which now prevails on the subject, not only in the different Christian churches, but also in the civil body. And, first, our general rule on slavery, which forms a part of the constitution of the Church, has stood from the beginning unchanged, as testamentary of our sentiments on the principle of slavery and the slave trade. And in this we differ in no respect from the sentiments of our venerable founder, or from those of the wisest and most distinguished statesmen and civilians of our own, and other enlightened and Christian countries. Secondly, In all the enactments of the Church relating to slavery, a due and respectful regard has been had to the laws of the states, never requiring emancipation in contravention of the civil authority, or where the laws of the states would not allow the liberated slave to enjoy his freedom. Thirdly, The simply holding or owning slaves, without regard to circumstances, has at no period of the existence of the Church subjected the master to excommunication. Fourthly, Rules have been made from time to time, regulating the sale and purchase and holding of slaves, with reference to the different laws of the states where slavery is tolerated; which, upon the experience of the great difficulties of administering them, and the unhappy

consequences both to masters and servants, have been as often changed or repealed. These important facts, which form prominent features of our past history as a Church, may very properly lead us to inquire for that course of action in future which may be best calculated to preserve the peace and unity of the whole body, promote the greatest happiness of the slave population, and advance generally, in the slave-holding community of our country, the humane and hallowing influence of our holy religion. We cannot withhold from you, at this eventful period, the solemn conviction of our minds, that no new ecclesiastical legislation on the subject of slavery at this time will have a tendency to accomplish these most desirable objects. And we are fully persuaded, that, as a body of Christian ministers, we shall accomplish the greatest good by directing our individual and united efforts, in the spirit of the first teachers of Christianity, to bring both master and servant under the sanctifying influence of the principles of that gospel which teaches the duties of every relation, and enforces the faithful discharge of them by the strongest conceivable motives. Do we aim at the amelioration of the condition of the slave? How can we so effectually accomplish this, in our calling as ministers of the gospel of Christ, as by employing our whole influence to bring both him and his master to a saving knowledge of the grace of God, and to a practical observance of those relative duties so clearly prescribed in the writings of the inspired apostles? Permit us to add, that, although we enter not into the political contentions of the day, neither interfere with civil legislation, nor with the administration of the laws, we cannot but feel a deep interest in whatever affects the peace, prosperity, and happiness of our beloved country. The union of these States, the perpetuity of the bonds of our national confederation, the reciprocal confidence of the different members of the great civil compact; in a word, the well-being of the community of which we are members, should never cease to be near our hearts, and for which we should offer up our sincere and most ardent prayers to the almighty Ruler of the universe. But can we, as ministers of the gospel, and servants of a Master 'whose kingdom is not of this world,' promote these important objects in any way so truly and permanently as by pursuing the course just pointed out? Can we, at this eventful crisis, render a better service to our country than by laying aside all interference with relations authorized and established by the civil laws, and applying ourselves wholly and faithfully to what specially appertains to our 'high and holy calling;' to teach and enforce the moral obligations of the gospel, in application to all the duties growing out of the different relations in society? By a diligent devotion to this evangelical employment, with an humble and steadfast reliance upon the aid of divine influence, the number of 'believing masters' and servants may be constantly increased, the kindest sentiments and affections cultivated, domestic burdens lightened, mutual confidence cherished, and the peace and happiness of society be promoted. While on the other hand, if past history affords us any correct rules of judgment, there is much cause to fear that the influence of our sacred office, if employed

in interfering with the relation itself, and consequently with the civil institutions of the country, will rather tend to prevent than to accomplish these desirable ends.

“But while we sincerely and most affectionately, and, we humbly trust, in the spirit of the gospel of Christ, recommend to you, and to all the ministers and members you represent in the body, to pursue such a course in regard to this deeply exciting subject, we think it proper to invite your attention in particular to one point, intimately connected with it, and, as we conceive, of primary importance. It is in regard to the true import and application of the general rule on slavery. The different constructions to which it has been subjected, and the variety of opinions entertained upon it, together with the conflicting acts of some of the annual conferences of the north and south, seem to require that a body, having legitimate jurisdiction, should express a clear and definite opinion, as a uniform guide to those to whom the administration of the discipline is committed.

Another subject of vital importance, as we apprehend, to the unity and peace of the Church, and not unconnected with the foregoing, is the constitutional powers of the general superintendents, in such relations to the annual conferences, and in their general executive administration of the government; and the rights of annual and quarterly conferences, in their official capacities. In the prosecution of our superintending agency, we have been compelled to differ in opinion from many of our brethren composing these official bodies; and this difference of opinion, connected with a conviction of our high responsibility, has, in a few cases, resulted in action which has been judged, by those specially concerned, to be high-handed, unconstitutional, tyrannical, and oppressive. In all such cases, we have given the most unequivocal assurances that we should, with unfeigned satisfaction and the kindest feelings, submit the whole matter in controversy, with all our official acts in the premises, to the enlightened deliberation and final judgment of this constitutional tribunal. And we cannot but indulge the hope that those who have differed from us will cordially abide the decision of such a judicatory, should it not accord with their views. We have no disposition to enter into an extensive examination of the merits of the case, which, we regret to say, has been a matter of prolonged discussion in self-created conventions, and in some of the religious periodicals of the day. But our object is to lay before you the simple points involved, and leave the issue to be settled as your united wisdom shall determine, requesting liberty, at the proper time, if occasion should require, to correct erroneous statements, and remove improper impressions, having reference to both course of action. In presenting this subject to your consideration, it is due to a very large majority of all the annual conferences, and to the members composing them, individually, to say that the utmost harmony, and confidence, and affection exist between them and the general superintendents. The geographical bounds of the controversy are very limited.

The whole subject may be presented to you in the following simple questions: When any business comes up for action in our annual or quarterly conferences, involving a difficulty

on a question of law, so as to produce the inquiry, What is the law in the case? does the constitutional power to decide the question belong to the president, or the conference? Have the annual conferences a constitutional right to do any other business than what is specifically prescribed, or, by fair construction, provided for in the form of Discipline? Has the president of an annual conference, by virtue of his office, a right to decline putting a motion or resolution to vote, on business other than that thus prescribed or provided for?

“These questions are proposed with exclusive reference to the principle of constitutional right. The principles of courtesy and expediency are very different things.

“As far as we have been able to ascertain the views of those who entertain opinions opposite to our own on these points, they may be summed up as follows: —

“They maintain that all questions of law arising out of the business of our annual or quarterly conferences are to be, of right, settled by the decision of those bodies, either primarily by resolution, or finally by an appeal from the decision of the president: ‘that it is the prerogative of an annual conference to decide what business they will do, and when they will do it.’ that they have a constitutional right ‘to discuss, in their official capacity, all moral subjects:’ to investigate the official acts of other annual conferences — of the General Conference, and of the general superintendents, so far as to pass resolutions of disapprobation or approval on those acts. They maintain that the president of an annual conference is to be regarded in the same relation to the conference that a chairman or speaker sustains to a civil legislative assembly: that it is his duty to preserve order in the conference, to determine questions of order, subject to appeal, and put to vote all motions and resolutions, when called for according to the rules of the body: that these are the settled landmarks of his official prerogatives, as president of the conference, beyond which he has no right to go: that although it belongs to his office, as general superintendent, to appoint the time for holding the several annual conferences, he has no discretionary authority to adjourn them, whatever length of time they may have continued their session, or whatever business they may think proper to transact. From these doctrines we have felt it our solemn duty to dissent. And we will not withhold from you our deliberate and abiding conviction, that if they should be sustained by the General Conference, the uniform and efficient administration of the government would be rendered impracticable.

“The government of the Methodist Episcopal Church is peculiarly constructed. It is widely different from our civil organization. The General Conference is the only legislative body recognized in our ecclesiastical system, and from it originates the authority of the entire executive administration. The exclusive power to create annual conferences, and to increase or diminish their number, rests with this body. No annual conference has authority or right to make any rule of discipline for the Church, either within its own bounds or elsewhere. No one has the power to elect its own president, except in a special case, pointed out, and provided for, by the General Conference. Whatever may be the number of the annual con-

ferences, they are all organized on the same plan, are all governed by the same laws, and all have identically the same rights, powers, and privileges. These powers, and rights, and privileges are not derived from themselves, but from the body which originated them. And the book of Discipline, containing the rules of the General Conference, is the only charter of their rights, and directory of their duties, as official bodies. The general superintendents are elected by the General Conference, and responsible to it for the discharge of the duties of their office. They are constituted, by virtue of their office, president of the annual conferences, with authority to appoint the time of holding them; with a prudential provision that they shall allow each conference to sit at least one week, that the important business prescribed in the form of Discipline may not be hurried through in such a manner as to affect injuriously the interests of the Church. The primary objects of their official department in the Church were, as we believe, to preserve, in the most effectual manner, an itinerant ministry; to maintain a uniformity in the administration of the government and discipline in every department, and that the unity of the whole body might be preserved. But how, we would ask, can these important ends be accomplished, if each annual conference possesses the rights and powers set forth in the foregoing summary? Is it to be supposed, that twenty-eight constitutional judges of ecclesiastical law, and these, too, not individuals of age and experience, who have had time and means to thoroughly investigate, and analyze, and collate the system; but official bodies, many members of which are young and inexperienced, and without the opportunity or necessary helps for such researches, and without consultation with each other on the points to be decided, will settle different questions of law with such agreement as to have no material conflict between their legal decisions. Is it not greatly to be feared, that, with such a system of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, what might be law in Georgia might be no law in New England? that what might be orthodoxy in one conference might be heresy in another? Where, then, would be the identity of the law, the uniformity of its administration, or the unity and peace of the Church?

“A well-digested system of collegiate education, under the direction and control of the General Conference, is, in our opinion, loudly called for by the present state of the Church, and by our widely extended and extending influence, as a religious denomination. Such a system is of such vast importance, in connection with the general principles and designs of Methodism, as to render the policy of submitting its direction and superintendence to sectional control, to say the least, very doubtful. For many years, the state of the Church was such in these States as to render it impracticable to accomplish much in the cause of education, any further than as we were associated with other bodies, or were connected with the institutions of the country. And it is not to be denied that there existed among us, to a considerable extent, even down to a recent date, strong opposition to commencing this important enterprise among ourselves. But during the last twenty years, the spirit of inquiry has been awakened up, and a very general interest excited on this subject; and the energies and means

of our preachers and people have been employed to a very considerable extent in the promotion of such a worthy and noble object. What appears to be especially necessary at the present crisis is a well-organized system which shall give the best direction to those energies and means. It will not be at all surprising to men who have made themselves acquainted with the former and present condition of the Methodist Church, relative to the promotion of literature, that there should be at the present time a spirit of zeal and enterprise in operation, which, if not guided by the soundest principles of wisdom and policy, and concentrated in a general and harmonious system, may fail to accomplish the desirable and important object, and ultimately result in injurious reaction. This can hardly fail to be the case, if colleges, or other high institutions of learning, which must depend upon other means of support than the revenues arising from tuition, are multiplied beyond the available means necessary for their adequate and permanent endowment. And it is to be feared that in this respect we are not entirely free from error and danger. We scarcely need to say to this enlightened and experienced body of ministers, many of whom are familiar with the polity and fiscal concerns of literary institutions, that such of them as we have just named cannot be considered in a safe and sound condition in regard to their efficiency and perpetuity, until they realize a revenue from permanent endowment entirely sufficient to support their faculties, leaving the fund arising from tuition to meet contingent expenses. If this is a correct rule of calculation in regard to the safety of collegiate institutions, it is very doubtful whether any of our colleges or universities can be considered permanently secure. It appears to us that the time has arrived for the General Conference to take this subject into their deliberate consideration, and adopt such measures as, in their wisdom, may the most effectually secure our colleges already in operation from liability to failure, and guard against the erection of others till sufficient available means are secured to place them on a firm foundation. The circumstance that there are members of the faculties or boards of trustees of nearly, if not quite all our colleges, present as representatives in this body, is, in our opinion, peculiarly favorable to such a design. We cannot too deeply impress upon your minds the importance of preserving in our own power the direction and control of the system of collegiate and theological education in the Church. Perhaps a more favorable opportunity than your present session will seldom, if ever, occur, for devising and adopting a judicious and uniform course of literary and moral discipline in all the collegiate institutions under our superintendence. And we will not withhold our solemn conviction, that any course of study in a Methodist college or university would be essentially defective if it did not embrace the Bible — the most ancient, the most learned, and the most important book in the world. As a Christian community, all our institutions of learning should be sanctuaries of theological science. Do we send our sons to explore the regions of science and literature, merely, as did idolatrous Greece and Rome, to prepare them for the senate, the forum, or the field? Do we not rather desire that they may be qualified by mental and moral improvement, to diffuse, in every circle of society

in which they may move, the influence of the enlightening, peaceful, and benevolent principles of our holy religion? Do we intend them for professional life? In what profession can they be employed in a Christian country in which the Bible is not a most important text book? Are not the civil governments of Christendom based upon it? Is it not the fountain of law, and the charter of rights? When do you see the statesman, the judge, or the advocate, more clear, convincing, authoritative, or sublime, than when he appeals to its doctrines, morals, or sanctions? Do we desire our sons to practice the healing art? Would we send them forth to mingle in scenes of wretchedness and suffering without the knowledge of those divine truths taught by Him who went about doing good, and healing all manner of diseases? In a word, we cannot but believe that the doctrines, history, evidences, and morals of revelation, should be regarded as forming one of the most important departments in our system of collegiate education. We are aware that such a feature in the course of study in our colleges would subject them to the too common objection of being theological seminaries. This objection would certainly come with more grace from the lips of infidels than from the tongues or pens of professed believers in the divine authenticity of the Christian revelation. While, in our opinion, the science of the word of God should be a paramount branch of instruction in our literary institutions, we desire not to be understood as recommending the establishment of 'Theological Seminaries,' in the common acceptance of the term; that is, for the special purpose of educating men for the work of the gospel ministry. We feel, with many enlightened Christians and able ministers, both in our own and other religious denominations, the importance of an able and efficient ministry. Nor are we unapprised of the great advantages of a thorough education to those whose business it is to preach 'Christ and him crucified.' But we are free to acknowledge that the policy of establishing schools of divinity for the exclusive purpose of preparing young men for the sacred office, as for a profession, is, in our opinion, to say the least, of doubtful authority and expedience. The history of such institutions, from their earliest establishment, admonishes us, that the speculators of human science have but too frequently obscured and adulterated the doctrines of the revelation of God; and that, in many cases, where they have been commenced on evangelical ground, in their onward course they have wandered into the wilderness of metaphysical disquisitions, or been lost in the still darker regions of 'rational Christianity.' When the history, doctrines, evidences, and duties of the revelation of God shall form a distinct and primary department of study in our institutions of learning our children be dedicated to God, and trained up in his knowledge and fear, and the whole Church united in devout and fervent prayer that God would raise up, and send forth into his vineyard, men of his own selection, and Scriptural proofs be required of those who profess to be called to preach the gospel, it is believed that human agency will have reached its legitimate bounds in the premises, and that this great concern will be perfectly secure with the supreme Head of the church, to whom alone belongs the authority to perpetuate the ministry of his gospel

to the end of the world. But should this body differ from us with regard to the expediency of establishing institutions for theological education separate from our literary establishments, and for the exclusive purpose of preparing the students for the work of the ministry, we cannot too strongly recommend to you the propriety and importance of having the whole subject under the direction and control of the General Conference. We are well persuaded that your wisdom and experience will lead you to apprehend the great impropriety of sectional institutions in the Church for such a purpose. To intrust a matter of such vast moment to a self-organized association, or to an annual conference, or

“A regular and uniform course of study for the under graduates in the ministry has, in our judgment, a special claim to your attention at your present session. At a former session it was made the duty of the general superintendents to point out a course of study for the candidates, preparatory to their admission into full connection, with discretionary privilege of appointing a committee for that purpose. By this rule, no provision is made for a course of study for preachers, for the two years previous to their induction to the office of elders. This has been thought to be a defect in the system, and at the request of many of the annual conferences, an advisory course has been prepared, embracing these two years. The result, as far as we have knowledge, has been very advantageous in the improvement of the ministry. And we recommend to the General Conference to extend the course so as to embrace the whole period from the time of admission on trial, until the full powers of the ministry are conferred. The situation of the superintendents is such, in visiting all parts of the work, extending over all the states and territories, as to render it extremely difficult, and for the most part impracticable, without great labor and expense, to meet for consultation with each other on this, or any other, important interest of the church; and their duties are so various and weighty as to incline them to the opinion, that the great object contemplated in this provision would be better accomplished by a uniform course of study prepared by this body, and published in our form of Discipline. The local ministry is to be regarded as forming an important department in our system. They are truly helpers in the work of the Lord. As such we should always esteem them. And nothing should be neglected which has a tendency to preserve and strengthen the bonds of affection and confidence between them and the itinerant connection. Many of this useful class of ministers have deeply felt the necessity of a regular system of study, adapted, as far as practicable, to the condition and circumstances of local preachers, embracing studies preparatory to their receiving license, and extending to the time of their graduating to the office of elders. Many and great advantages might doubtless be derived from such a course, judiciously formed in adaptation to the circumstances of our local brethren, whose time must necessarily be employed, to a greater or less extent, in secular avocations. We recommend the subject to your deliberate consideration. “We invite your particular attention to a review of the process prescribed in the Discipline in the provision for locating a preacher without his consent. The course directed in case of

the trial of a superannuated preacher, residing without the bounds of the annual conference of which he is a member, is found to be attended with great inconvenience, and is liable to result in injustice to the accused, or injury to the church. A considerable number of superannuated preachers (and the number is constantly increasing) have their residence many hundred miles from the bounds of the conferences where they hold their membership. The consequence is, that it repeatedly occurs, that the communications which the Discipline requires them to make to their own conference fail to be received, in which cases the passage of their characters may be involved, and they are liable to be deprived of their regular allowance, even when they sustain the fairest reputation, and when they are in real need of the amount to which they have a lawful claim. But these points are far from being the most important, though they are certainly entitled to consideration. The subject embraces deeper interests, both to the individuals and to the church. In case of the trial of a superannuated preacher, within the bounds of a conference remote from his own, as provided for in the Discipline, there are several difficulties which experiment can hardly fail to make obvious. It is provided that the presiding elder, in whose district the accused may reside, shall bring him to trial, and in case of suspension, shall forward to the annual conference of which the accused is a member, exact minutes of the charges, testimony, and decision of the committee in the ease, and on the testimony thus furnished, the conference must decide. The great difficulty of deciding important cases equitably, from minutes of testimony thus taken, is well known. This difficulty is increased in proportion to the complexity of the ease, and the conflicting character of the testimony. Add to this, that it will rarely be practicable in such cases for the accuser and accused to be brought face to face, or for either to be present to plead in the premises. Distance of place, length of time required, and the labor and expense involved, would, in most eases, form an insurmountable obstacle to the parties being heard before the tribunal where judgment must finally be given. And, further, in cases of this kind it must frequently happen that the testimony will be voluminous, and the difficulty and expense of its transmission very considerable. And finally, documents forwarded a great distance are very liable to fail of reaching their place of destination, in which case the administration of justice might be delayed, if not finally defeated, and the church suffer reproach. Besides, the present provision in our Discipline is, in our opinion, too liable to abuse. Should any one of the annual conferences think it proper to enter upon any favorite enterprise, for the success of which they might conceive it necessary to have agents operating without their own bounds, it would be no difficult matter to place such brethren as would very well serve their case in a superannuated relation. And if the object to be accomplished was of very deep interest, the liability of their agents to trial and suspension by a committee would hardly form an obstacle, especially as the final decision of the case would be in their own power. In view of all the difficulties to which the present provision is liable, we are inclined to the opinion that a different course might be devised, by which the ends of justice might

be obtained more readily, and with greater certainty, and in perfect accordance with our system of government. As the trial and expulsion of a preacher is not to be regarded simply as a process affecting only his relation to the conference where he belongs, but is to all intents and purposes an expulsion from the itinerant connection, and from the Church; and as the same rules for the trial of preachers must govern the action of all the annual conferences, and the same rights and privileges are secured to all by the constitution and Discipline of the Church, we are not apprised of any valid objection to the trial of traveling preachers by the annual conferences in which they may reside at the time of the occurrence of the offense of which they are accused. Indeed, it would seem that the principle of constitutionality in such a course is fully recognized by the General Conference in the present provision: — For if a presiding elder may have jurisdiction over a superannuated preacher, residing within his district, and out of the bounds of his own conference, so as to suspend him from all official acts and privileges, which is the utmost extent of his authority in regard to the preachers stationed in his district, it will be difficult, it is presumed, to raise valid constitutional objections to the jurisdiction of an annual conference to prosecute such cases to a final issue. And it can hardly be doubted that these two great advantages would be secured by such a process — it would secure a more ready and easy access to testimony, especially such as might be presumptive and circumstantial, on which, it is well known, the final issue may materially depend, and afford the accuser and accused the opportunity of appearing face to face, to plead their own cause. And we respectfully suggest whether a provision, in some respects similar, might not be made for the trial of local preachers in the circuits where they are charged with committing offenses. With these views we submit the subject to your consideration. Since the General Conference provided for the appointment of preachers to the charge of seminaries of learning, many institutions for the education of youth of both sexes have sprung up, preferring their claims to such appointments. Most of these schools have been originated by individuals, or associations of individuals, having no other connection with an annual conference than such as consists in the courtesy of patronage, connected with the annual visits of a committee appointed for the purpose of attending their examinations, and reporting the results.

“In discharging the important and responsible duties of their office, your superintendents have not been so happy as to avoid difficulty from this department; and in some cases their convictions of the limits of their authority, in connection with their judgment of expediency, have compelled them, though with the most friendly reciprocal feelings, to differ from the views, and decline to meet the express wishes of annual conferences. And it is with the most sincere satisfaction that they refer their opinions and acts to this body, that if in error, as they are certainly liable to be, they may be corrected, and the whole body harmonized on all material points. There are two distinct cases in which the superintendents are authorized to appoint preachers to institutions of learning. The one respects such institutions as are or

may be under our superintendence, and the other, such as are not. Out of these cases several important questions have originated, which have been the ground of the difference of opinion of which we have just spoken. These questions may be stated as follows: 1. What is necessary to constitute a seminary of learning so far under our superintendence as to bring it fairly within the rule of the General Conference authorizing the appointment of a preacher to it? 2. What classes of literary institutions was it the intention of the General Conference to embrace in this provision? 3. In providing for the appointment of preachers to 'seminaries of learning' not under our superintendence, was it the intention of the General Conference to include all classes of literary institutions, if the appointment was requested by an annual conference, or to limit the appointment to seminaries of collegiate literature? 4. Is an appointment under this provision discretionary with the superintendent, or does the request of an annual conference create an obligation as a matter of duty, as in the case of appointments in the districts and circuits? There are principles and interests, in our opinion, involved in these questions which have a special claim to the deliberate consideration of this body. From the numerous applications which are made for the appointment of preachers, to be school teachers and agents for various institutions, it is to be feared that unless the subject be clearly defined, and carefully guarded by suitable limitations and restrictions, our grand itinerant system may be impaired by a virtual location of many valuable ministers, and the Church suffer in spiritual interests from the loss of useful labors. There are at this time about seventy of the effective traveling preachers employed as presidents, professors, principals, and teachers in literary institutions, and as agents devoted to their interests. These ministers are selected from the several annual conferences with reference to their qualifications for the duties of their station. They are men of talent, science, and learning, and many of them ministers of age and experience. And the calls for such appointments are constantly multiplying on our hands. While we readily and thankfully acknowledge the usefulness of brethren employed in this important department of our great work, we must be permitted to doubt whether the cause of God might not be more effectually and extensively promoted, if, to say the least, a very large proportion of these able ministers of Christ were exclusively devoted to the work of the gospel ministry. And we respectfully suggest the inquiry, whether pious and learned men may not be obtained from the local ministry, or from the official or private membership, well qualified as teachers to advance the cause of education, and by this means bring into the regular field of itinerant labor a great weight of talent and influence now almost confined to the precincts of academies and colleges.

“At the last session of this body the publication of three religious periodicals was provided for, in addition to those previously established. They have now, it is presumed, been before the religious community a sufficient time to enable you to form an opinion of their intrinsic merits as official papers, going forth to an enlightened and reading people, under the author-

ity and patronage of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and of their usefulness in promoting the great enterprise in which we are engaged, by spreading abroad the light of gospel truth, advancing the interests of our important institutions, and strengthening the bonds of peace and harmony in the Church. The influence of the periodical press, either for weal or woe, is too well ascertained to render it necessary for this body to be reminded of the importance of throwing around it, so far as it is under their direction and patronage, those safeguards which shall preserve its unity, and render it subservient to the promotion of intellectual, moral, and religious improvement. We have no doubt but you will agree with us in sentiment, that our religious papers should take no part in the political warfare of the day — that they should never interfere with the civil institutions of the country that they should promote, as far as practicable, quietness, peace; and love, among all Christian people, and especially in the Church by whose authority and patronage they exist, and whose interests they are particularly designed to serve. Whatever might have been the views of the General Conference at the time of the establishment of these papers, it did not occur to the superintendents that they were to be mediums of mercantile or professional advertisements; and we respectfully submit it to your enlightened judgment, whether it is consistent with the character of the Church, and the grand designs of her religious institutions, among which the periodical press is one of the most efficient, to make them such. We are not apprised whether recourse has been had to this measure from courtesy to friends in secular occupations, or for the purpose of realizing funds sufficient to meet the expenses of publication. But with due deference, we must be permitted to doubt whether the credit or the general interests of the Methodist Church will be promoted by the publication of a paper under the official sanction of the General Conference, which cannot obtain a patronage sufficient to meet its expenses without devoting its columns to business advertisements. Your timely and judicious advice to the annual conferences, not to establish any more conference papers, has been respectfully regarded, so that no new paper has been published by any conference for the last four years, except one, which has since been discontinued, and it is believed there is an increasing conviction in the conferences generally, that it is inexpedient to publish such papers. Several papers, however, are published, assuming to be in the interests of the Methodist Church, and edited by Methodist preachers, and which are patronized to a considerable extent by many members of several annual conferences. We are already admonished by the history of the past, how easy it is, under the popular pretext of the right of free discussion, to disturb the harmony and peace of the Church, stir up strife and contention, alienate the affection of brethren from each other, and finally injure the cause of Christ.

“Applications from members and ministers of other churches, with whom we are in Christian fellowship, are becoming more frequent, and a variety of opinions being entertained by preachers of age and experience, with regard to the manner of receiving them among us,

the Discipline making no special provision in the case, we have thought it advisable to bring the subject before you, with a view to the adopting a course which may harmonize the views and official action of all concerned, and manifest that spirit of Christian charity which should always abound in the church of Christ. It is only necessary for us to lay before you the different opinions entertained on the subject, which, from the character and number of those who hold them, are certainly entitled to respectful attention. With regard to private members of other churches who make application for membership with us, it has been maintained on the one hand, that they should be admitted and remain on trial for six months, as the Discipline provides, before they are received into the Church; and on the other, that the circumstance of their being regular and approved members of other churches, with which we are in Christian fellowship, virtually answers the essential ends of the provision for a probationer, and consequently that they should be received into the Church without requiring such trial. The views which are entertained with respect to receiving ministers from other churches are not capable of so simple a definition. But they may be summed up as follows: — Many are of the opinion, that, in common with all other persons, they should be admitted on trial, and pass a probation of six months, before they are received as members of the Church. That, being received as such, they should obtain recommendation and license and graduate in the ministry, in strict conformity to the letter of the Discipline, without regard to their ordination by the constitutional authorities of the churches from which they came. Others are of the opinion that, coming to us with accredited testimonials of their Christian piety and official standing, and giving satisfaction, on examination as the Discipline directs, with respect to their belief in our doctrine, and approval of our discipline, they should be immediately received and accredited as ministers among us. And that on answering the questions, and taking upon them, the solemn obligations of our ordination service, they should receive credentials of authority to administer the holy sacraments without the imposition of hands repeated by us, unless they themselves should incline to it. These conflicting opinions, in connection with the fact that a number of ministers have been received among us in conformity to the latter view, seem to require that the General Conference take such order upon it as in their wisdom may be best calculated to produce unanimity of sentiment and action, and promote Christian confidence and affection between ourselves and other religious denominations, without impairing any fundamental principle of our order and government

“Of your general superintendents, six in number, three are enfeebled by labor, age, and infirmity. We are of one heart and one mind, acknowledging our obligation according to our ability, and to the utmost extent of it, to serve the Church of God in that highly responsible office which you have committed to us; but, in view of our own weakness and the arduous work intrusted to us, with fear and much trembling, we have cause to exclaim, ‘Who is sufficient for these things?’ There are now twenty-eight annual conferences represented in this

body, and in all probability the number will be considerably increased during your present session. These embrace a country extending from New Brunswick to Texas on the Atlantic coast and Gulf of Mexico, and from the sea-board to the vast northern lakes, and to the territories on the upper Mississippi and Missouri. The general superintendents sustain the same relation to all these conferences; and our system requires that we should be annually visited. Between three and four thousand traveling preachers are to be appointed every year to their fields of ministerial labor. These appointments must be made with due regard to the qualifications, age, infirmities, and domestic circumstances of this vast body of ministers, and with the same regard to the condition and wants of the millions of people to whom they are sent. To minds capable of grasping this vast machinery of our itinerant system, it will readily appear that an effective itinerant superintendency is indispensably necessary to keep it in regular, energetic, and successful operation. It must be effective, not imbecile; general, not sectional; itinerant, not local. Destitute of either of these prerequisites, the probable result would be a disorganization of the system, and weakness and inefficiency in all its parts. In the relation we sustain to you as the highest judicatory of the Church, and to the whole itinerant connection, it becomes us to be cautious and unassuming in presenting you with our sentiments on a subject like this, in which it may be supposed we have a special individual interest. We will only suggest two points for your consideration, which we are confident will appear to you in the same light in which we view them. 'The first is to preserve a sufficient number of effective superintendents to secure to the conferences their regular annual visits, taking into view the number of conferences, and their relative locations. And, second, that there be no greater number than is strictly necessary to accomplish this work, carefully guarding against the increase of the numbers of laborers beyond the proportionate increase of the work, bearing in mind that, if we would have laboring preachers, we must have laboring superintendents. As the number of annual conferences increases, and the work extends in the states and territories, it becomes necessary to strengthen the general superintendency in due proportion. But, as you will doubtless have an able committee to examine and report on this important subject, we forbear any further remarks in relation to it.

"Our missionary operations among the Indians, and in foreign countries, especially on the continent of Africa, are recommended to your special attention. The condition of the Indian tribes located on the western boundary line of Arkansas and Missouri, and the territories on the upper Mississippi and Missouri rivers, calls aloud for united and vigorous efforts to disperse among them the light of the gospel, and the blessings of civilization. We are encouraged to such effort by the circumstance that there is an increasing disposition among most of the tribes to encourage the labors of our missionaries, and improve their condition by the establishment of schools for the instruction of their children in the knowledge of our language, and in agriculture and mechanical arts.

“Since your last session, a plan has been devised, with the approbation of the officers and board of managers of the Parent Missionary Society, to establish a central Indian manual labor school, with the design of collecting and teaching the native children of the several adjacent tribes. The plan has been submitted to the executive department of the national government having the superintendence of Indian affairs, and has met with a favorable and encouraging consideration; and we are much indebted to officers and agents of the civil government in, and adjacent to, the Indian country, for the extensive aid they have given in the establishment of the institution, both by employing their influence in recommending it to the Indians, and advising in its structure and organization. This school is already, to a considerable extent, in successful operation. Native children, from five different tribes, are collected; and men from these tribes have visited the institution, and have very generally been satisfied with its government and objects. We cannot but regard this establishment as full of promise of lasting benefits to the Indian race. But as a detailed report of its organization, designs, and prospects, will come before you, we will only add our earnest recommendation of the plan to your deliberate consideration, with regard to the present condition and wants of the Indians, and its adaptation to the great objects it is designed to accomplish — the conversion of the Indians to the Christian faith, and their improvement in all the arts and habits of civilized life. And we would further recommend an inquiry into the expediency of establishing one or more institutions, at suitable locations in the Indian country, on the same plan, and for the same purposes.

To Africa we look with the deepest solicitude. Our sympathies, prayers, and efforts mingle on her coasts. In our missionary enterprise commenced at Liberia, we aim at the conversion of a continent to God. The handful of precious seed which has been sown in that infant colony, and watered by the tears and prayers of the missionaries and the Church, shall spring up and ripen to be sown again with a hundred-fold increase, till Africa shall become one fruitful field, cultivated in righteousness. Although a number of faithful and devoted missionaries have fallen in that field of labors we should by no means be discouraged in the prosecution of so great a work. They have fallen asleep, but they sleep in the Lord. And being dead they still speak; and the voice from their tombs is a call to the church of Christ on the American continent to emulate their holy zeal, and fill up the ranks from which they have been removed. We have no doubt but you will be disposed to take some efficient measures for the constitutional organization of the Liberia annual conference, and to provide for the ordination of ministers in their own country, that the infant African church may be duly and regularly supplied, not only with the ministry of the word, but also with the holy sacraments.

“The character which the Oregon mission has recently assumed, is well calculated to invite your particular attention to that extensive and important field of missionary enterprise. We can have little doubt that, with the blessing of God attending our efforts, the time will arrive,

when the interests of the missionary colony, and the success of the work among the aboriginal tribes, will call for the organization of an annual conference in that vast territory. And our grand object should be to preserve one harmonious compact, in the unity of the Spirit, and the bonds of peace, and that Methodism may be one on either side of the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and on all the islands of the sea;

‘And mountains rise and oceans roll To sever us in vain.’

“It was doubtless a wise and safe provision, that copies of the records of the proceedings of the annual conferences should be forwarded to the General Conference for examination. By this means the General Conference may obtain the knowledge of the official acts of those bodies, from evidence which cannot be disputed or contravened, and consequently they may correct errors in their proceedings, if found to exist, on the simple authority of official records. We regret to say that, in our opinion, this judicious provision has not been sufficiently regarded, either on the part of the annual conferences, in forwarding copies of these records, or on the part of the General Conference in a careful inspection of them. As these records contain, not only the official transactions of the conferences, having an important connection with the government and general interests of the Church, but also frequently embrace the opinions of the superintendents on questions of law, and the administration of discipline; and as it is the constitutional prerogative of this body to correct what is erroneous in these transactions and opinions, with an earnest desire that all things may be done in every official department of the Church in strict conformity to her constitution and Discipline, we recommend a careful examination of these records at your present session.

“Finally, brethren, we commend you and ourselves, and the ministers and people connected with us in the bonds of the gospel of Christ, to the guidance and protection of the great Head of the church, whose we are and whom we serve; sincerely and ardently praying that your deliberations, with all their results, may be under the influence of that wisdom which is from above; which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality or hypocrisy.

“We are, dear brethren, sincerely and affectionately yours, in the unity and fellowship of the gospel of Christ,

“R. R. Roberts, “Joshua Soule, “Elijah Hedding, “James O. Andrew, “B. Waugh, “Thomas A. Morris, “Baltimore, May 4, 1840.”

The several subjects adverted to in this very able address were referred to appropriate committees; and so far as their reports were adopted by the conference, they will be noticed in the proper places. After the address of the bishops was received and disposed of, Mr. Newton presented the following address from the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, which was read by the seminary, and referred to a committee of three to consider and report thereon:

“Address of the British Conference to the Bishops and Members of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America

“Very Dear Brethren, — We gratefully avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew the tokens of our fraternal intercourse with you; and, while we unfeignedly rejoice in all the blessings with which it has pleased Almighty God to accompany your cares and labors, we devoutly pray that ‘mercy unto you, and peace, and love’ may be yet more abundantly ‘multiplied, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.’

“It has afforded us great satisfaction to hear from different quarters of your continued prosperity, and especially to receive the personal communications which have been made to us at this conference by the Rev. Dr. Olin. We are thankful that, notwithstanding the languor of indisposition, this esteemed minister in your Church, and our beloved brother, has been able to attend several of the sittings of the conference, and to address us, at considerable length, on topics which are more than usually gratifying to our best affections. Most sincerely do we hope that God will, in his goodness, more fully restore his health, and prepare him, by an increase of vigor, and of every spiritual gift, long to occupy the important station which, to speak according to the views and feelings of frail mortality, has been so prematurely left vacant by the decease of the excellent and lamented Dr. Fisk.

From a wish to perpetuate a free and familiar interchange of kindly offices with you, in the way which we doubt not is most agreeable to you as well as to ourselves, we have requested our dear friend and brother, the Rev. Robert Newton, to visit you at your next General Conference. To enlarge on the high regard which we entertain for our honored messenger — a regard which he has justly merited by his unweariable and faithful services in every province of our work, and by the exemplary manner in which he has, at two different times, sustained the most momentous office in our body — would be a welcome task to us; for it is pleasant to speak of those whom we love but it is, on the present occasion, perfectly unnecessary. You are not unacquainted with the character which he bears in this country; and you will receive him as a chosen representative of the British Conference, and as one in whose views and principles we repose entire confidence.

The subject which has this year engrossed no small portion of our attention, cannot fail to awaken the deepest interest in every part of the Wesleyan community throughout the globe. You will anticipate our reference to the close of the first century of our existence as an organized religious society. On a review of the hundred years which have now reached their termination, we humbly acknowledge and adore the mercy of God, who marvelously raised up our ever-revered fathers as the instruments, in his hands, of so extensive a revival of primitive Christianity; who has preserved us, as a connection, in the midst of many conflicts and changes; and who has granted us, at this time, so cordial a sense of attachment, which we trust that nothing shall ever be permitted to abate, to the doctrines, spirit; and usages of those venerated men who now rest in eternal peace. May the Lord God of our fore-elders,

and of all who fear his most holy name, bestow upon us a larger measure of his Spirit's grace, and grant that the second century of the Wesleyan Society may be marked by still more illustrious displays of his power and love in the church universal, and in the world!

"But while we freely indulge in sentiments such as these, we cannot forget that on one subject especially — the subject of American slavery — you, our beloved brethren, are placed in circumstances of painful trial and perplexity. We enter, with brotherly sympathy, into the peculiar situation which you are now called to occupy. But, on this question, we beg to refer you to what occurs in our address to you from the conference of 1836, a proper copy of which will be handed to you by our representative as also to the contents of our preceding letter of 1835. To the principles which we have affectionately but honestly declared in these two documents we still adhere, with a full conviction of their Christian truth and justice.

"The time which has elapsed, and the events which have taken place, since the preparation of the above-mentioned papers, serve only to confirm us yet more in our views of the moral evil of slavery. Far be it from us to advocate violent and ill-considered measures. We are, however, strongly and unequivocally of opinion that it is, at this time, the paramount Christian duty of the ministers of our most merciful Lord in your country to maintain the principle of opposition to slavery with earnest zeal, and unflinching firmness. May we not also be allowed, with the heart-felt solicitude of fraternal love, to entreat that you will not omit or qualify the noble testimony which we have extracted, in a note to our address, from your Book of Discipline, but that you will continue to insert it there in its primitive and unimpaired integrity.

And now, very dear brethren, we commend you to the protection and mercies of the 'only wise God, our Saviour,' with united prayers that you, and all who labor with you in the word and doctrine, with the multitudes who are happily brought to share in your Christian fellowship, may enjoy a richer effusion of the Holy Spirit's promised unction, and may at last be 'presented faultless before the presence of our common Saviour's glory.' To Him be 'glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.'

Signed, by order of the conference,

"Theophilus Lessey, President. "Liverpool August 16, 1839."

The following is the answer which the conference returned to the above address of the Wesleyan Conference: —

"Answer of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church — To the Reverend the President and Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in Great Britain

"Honored and Very Dear Brethren, — We acknowledge with grateful emotions the reception of your letters at the hand of your excellent representative, our honored and esteemed brother, the Rev. Robert Newton, whose visit, as your messenger, we esteem the best and kindest proof you could have given of your love for us, and desire to promote our blessed unity. His bright example of love and courtesy, simplicity and dignity in conference, and of

pure essential Methodism, full of faith and charity, abounding in hope, rejoicing only in Christ Jesus, and knowing no respite from labor, in his public ministry, has been alike edifying and refreshing to us; while also, we have felt our hearts warmed thereby, and drawn closely to you in affection, partakers of the same spirit with you, walking by the same rule, minding the same thing, one people, and our name one in the Lord Jesus.

“And it will not be unwelcome to you that we add, further, an expression of the gratification it has afforded us to be favored with the presence of our beloved and endeared brother Mr. Harvard, and our friend Mr. Richie, of the district of Lower Canada, and of Mr. President Stinson, and the excellent brethren, John and Edgerton Ryerson, representatives of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Upper Canada. May the God of our common fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are, and bless you, that from you the word of the Lord may sound out unto all people as unto us at the beginning, and the fruits of your labors be multiplied in all the earth, to the glory of God, by the power of the holy Ghost, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

“We fully unite with you, dear brethren, in the expression you give of your cordial and even jealous attachment to the principles, doctrines, and usages of Methodism, as established under the heaven-directed ministry of our venerated fathers. Those principles, doctrines, and usages we have especially felt that we were called to review, (and reviewing them, have taken, we trust, still closer to our hearts,) on the great occasion of our first centennial jubilee. This has been a joyful time with us, even as with you, our whole communion joining in extraordinary acts of devotion and offerings to the Lord, giving grateful evidence of our common character the world over, and covenanting to keep Methodism still unworldly and spiritual, abounding in charity, a work of righteousness and peace, rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.

“We greatly rejoice, and give thanks unto the Lord for all your prosperity, brethren, and especially for your peaceful state, and the success of your missions. Missionary zeal, founded in love, is the vital pulse of Methodism, the purity and fruitfulness of which, in its home department, depend on the active sympathy there with the work abroad. Methodism, indeed, might not so much as exist in a narrower parish than the world, nor act on any other than her own gospel principle of equal duty to all tongues and kindreds. Actuated by this principle, we have labored to carry the gospel into every part of our great country; and now into Texas, the territory of Oregon, South America, and Africa at the entrance of Liberia on the western coast. But, alas, how feeble and insufficient are our efforts to accomplish, to any considerable degree, the great work of evangelizing mankind! We long for the salvation of God to become universal.

“The unusual and unwelcome fact of a decrease in our numbers the year previous to our last General Conference, and to which you so kindly and piously allude in your letter of August following, induced much searching of heart, both among our preachers and people;

and through God's abounding grace, we have not been afflicted since on a like account. At that time our numbers were — of traveling preachers, 2,781, and of members, 650,678. And in September last they were, of traveling preachers 3,296, and members 740,459; showing an increase of 515 traveling preachers, and 89,781 members since our last General Conference. We record it with thanksgiving, though we reckon not our strength by numbers.

“We have considered, with affectionate respect and confidence, your brotherly suggestions concerning slavery, and most cheerfully return an unreserved answer to them. And we do so the rather, brethren, because of the numerous prejudicial statements which have been put forth in certain quarters to the wounding of the Church. We assure you then, brethren, that we have adopted no new principle or rule of discipline respecting slavery since the time of our apostolic Asbury; neither do we mean to adopt any. In our General Rules, (called the ‘General Rules of the United Societies,’ and which are of constitutional authority in our Church,) ‘the buying and selling of men, women, and children, with an intention to enslave them,’ is expressly prohibited; and in the same words, substantially, which have been used for the rule since 1792. And the extract of part ii, section 10, of our Book of Discipline, which you quote with approbation, and denominate ‘a noble testimony,’ is still of force to the same extent that it has been for many years; nor do we entertain any purpose to omit or qualify this section, or any part thereof. For while we should regard it a sore evil to divert Methodism from her proper work of ‘spreading Scripture holiness over these lands,’ to questions of temporal import, involving the rights of Caesar, yet are we not the less minded on that account to promote and set forward all humane and generous actions, or to prevent, to the utmost of our power, such as are evil and unchristian. It is our first desire, after piety toward God, to be merciful after our power; as we have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men, ‘to their bodies,’ but especially, and above all, ‘to their souls.’

“Of these United States, (to the government and laws of which, ‘according to the division of power made to them by the constitution of the Union, and the constitutions of the several states,’ we owe, and delight to render, a sincere and patriotic loyalty,) there are several which do not allow of slavery. There are others in which it is allowed, and there are slaves; but the tendency of the laws, and the minds of the majority of the people, are in favor of emancipation. But there are others in which slavery exists so universally, and is so closely interwoven with their civil institutions, that both do the laws disallow of emancipation, and the great body of the people (the source of laws with us) hold it to be treasonable to set forth any thing, by word or deed, tending that way. Each one of all these states is independent of the rest and sovereign, with respect to its internal government, (as much so as if there existed no confederation among them for ends of common interest,) and therefore it is impossible to frame a rule on slavery proper for our people in all the states alike. But our march is extended through all the states, and as it would be wrong and unscriptural to enact a rule of

discipline in opposition to the constitution and laws of the state on this subject, so also would it not be equitable or Scriptural to confound the positions of our ministers and people (so different as they are in different states) with respect to the moral question which slavery involves.

“Under the administration of the venerated Dr. Coke, this plain distinction was once overlooked, and it was attempted to urge emancipation in all the states; but the attempt proved almost ruinous, and was soon abandoned by the doctor himself. While, therefore, the Church has encouraged emancipation in those states where the laws permit it, and allowed the freedman to enjoy freedom, we have refrained, for conscience’ sake, from all intermeddling with the subject in those other states where the laws make it criminal. And such a course we think agreeable to the Scriptures, and indicated by St. Paul’s inspired instruction to servants in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. vii, ver. 20,21. For if servants were not to care for their servitude when they might not be free, though if they might be free they should use it rather; so, neither should masters be condemned for not setting them free when they might not do so, though if they might they should do so rather. The question of the evil of slavery, abstractedly considered, you will readily perceive, brethren, is a very different matter from a principle or rule of Church discipline to be executed contrary to, and in defiance of, the law of the land. Methodism has always been (except perhaps in the single instance above) eminently loyal and promotive of good order; and so we desire it may ever continue to be, both in Europe and America. With this sentiment we confide the subject, adding only the corroborating language of your noble Missionary Society, by the revered and lamented Watson, in their instructions to missionaries, published in the report of 1833, as follows: — “As in the colonies in which you are called to labor a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, the committee most strongly call to your remembrance what was so fully stated to you when you were accepted as a missionary to the West Indies, that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree, in public or private, interfering with their civil condition.’

“We have judged it necessary, for the preservation of the children of our people from irreligious or unMethodistical principles while pursuing their education at a distance from home, and for the maintenance of a due proportion of influence in this great country, to encourage the establishment of schools and colleges under the control of our annual conferences, at which a liberal education should be afforded in intimate and graceful connection with Christian training. Accordingly we have now twelve collegiate and twenty-one academic institutions thus established, which, though not as amply endowed as they require to be, are doing well, and we hope will continue to do well.

Permit us, reverend and dear brethren, to refer you to our most honored and beloved brother, Mr. Newton, for any further information you may desire on the above subject, or

the present state of our affairs in general. And again we thank you for having sent him to us, whose name had long been known as that of one whose noble efforts in the cause of Christ had placed him with our Bensons, Watsons, Clarkes, and Buntings, men who have lived for the whole world, and for Methodism in all the world. And we pray for his safe return to you, and that it may please God our heavenly Father to make him more and more useful among you, even to old age. If it shall please God that our venerated and beloved Bishop Some shall be in health to do so, and the work can possibly allow it, we expect him to make it convenient to visit your conference two years hence; and we have appointed one of our body to accompany him to you, or if the bishop cannot go, to represent us fully at that time. And we solicit, brethren, a continuation of this so pleasant and profitable interchange, at our next General Conference.

“Finally, brethren, we commend you to God’s most gracious blessing, praying for you in the love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (as you also do for us,) that you may be enriched with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and abound in good works, to the glory of God, among all people, and for evermore.

“Signed in behalf of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Baltimore, Md., May, 1840.

“R. R. Roberts, “Joshua Soule, “Elijah Hedding, “James O. Andrew, “Beverly Waugh, “Thomas A. Morris “John A. Collins, Secretary.”

An address was also received from the Canada Conference, full of tender expressions of fraternal regard, and of a determination to maintain with us an indissoluble union in doctrine, moral discipline, and brotherly affection. This was referred to the same committee, and an answer was returned reciprocating the same sentiments and feelings, and pledging the conference to the inviolate preservation of the doctrines and usages of Methodism.

The managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church presented the following, expressive of their feelings and views in relation to the great cause in which they were engaged.

“Address of the Managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church to the General Conference, to be held in Baltimore, May 1, 1840

“Dear Fathers and Brethren, — We gladly embrace the present opportunity to present for your consideration and adoption, if you shall concur with us in their propriety, some amendments to the constitution of our society, which have been suggested by the experience and practice of another four years. The most important of these relate to the appointment of an assistant corresponding secretary; the enabling the managers to provide for those superannuated missionaries, their wives, widows, and children, who, being on foreign missions, are not provided for by the ordinary funds of the annual conferences; and that which was recommended by the last General Conference, to empower the society to make any alterations in the constitution in future which may be recommended by the General Conference. Should

therefore your experience of the practical workings of the system enable you to detect any defect in the provisions of the constitution, or perceive the necessity of any amendment by which its objects may be more readily accomplished, by pointing them out they will be considered, it is hoped, with that calmness and respectful deference which is due to the collected wisdom and long experience of Your venerable body.

As to the other amendments which are proposed, they appear to us so obviously necessary for the more perfect and equitable operation of the principles of the society as to need no special arguments to enforce them. Leaving them therefore to be explained by those of our brethren who compose a part of your body, and who fully comprehend our views, and the reasons on which they are founded, we will only say that we shall cheerfully acquiesce in whatever disposition you may be pleased to make of them, believing, as we do, that the General Conference is equally interested with us in preserving the integrity and promoting the prosperity of the society.

There is another subject connected with the interests of this society which we beg permission to present to your consideration. We have been much gratified to find that all the annual conferences, in making provision for a suitable celebration of the centenary of Methodism, have devoted a portion of the money which shall be realized on that occasion to the cause of missions, most of whom, we believe, leaving the final disposition of it to the General Conference. That this celebration has had a most happy effect upon the cause of Methodism, we have abundant reason to believe not only in raising money for the various objects specified, but also and more especially in reviving true religion among us.

“For some time past we have felt the need, for the prosecution of our great and benevolent objects, of having mission premises procured, and suitable buildings erected, for the accommodation of our local offices, and the meetings of the managers, &c. An estimate of the expense is herewith presented. Should your venerable body concur with us on the propriety of securing such premises, it would not only accommodate the society, and be a saving of expense, but would stand as a lasting monument of the liberality of the donors, and tell to posterity what was done on the one hundredth year of Methodism in behalf of missions. We therefore confidently rely on the approbation of the General Conference of this measure, and the more so as it was fully understood at the time the division of the avails of the centenary collections was made that this object was in contemplation by the managers of the Missionary Society.

“The following statement will exhibit, at one view, the amount received and expended during the past four years; for the particulars of which we refer to the treasurer’s account, as published in the annual reports, herewith presented: —

1837: Received \$62,749.01; Expended 66,536.85
1838: Received \$90,105.36; Expended \$95,110.75
1839: Received \$135,521.94; Expended \$103,664.58

1840: Received \$116,941.90; Expended \$146,498.58.

From this it will be seen that there has been a rapid increase to the resources of the society from one year to another, thereby enabling us to meet the enlarged demands upon our treasury created by the extension of the fields of missionary labors. We only add, that, relying upon the good providence of God for direction and aid in urging the important trusts committed to our charge, and upon the wisdom and integrity of the General Conference for devising the most efficient means for carrying into practical effect the general and benevolent objects of the society, we once more pledge ourselves to the faithful performance of our duties, according to the light and ability which God may be graciously pleased to vouchsafe unto us.”

The following was also read and referred: —

“Report of the Committee on the Journal of the Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church

“The committee to whom was referred the subject of the office of the corresponding secretary, his journal, &c., respectfully report:

“That it appears by the records submitted to their examination, that the duties of the corresponding secretary have been extensive and arduous both at home and abroad, demonstrating the necessity of having such an officer, as represented by the board to the last General Conference. In addition to the preparation of the annual reports and other documentary manuscripts, the correspondence of the society exhibits more than five hundred official letters to missionaries, &c.; and during the last four years, we learn from the journal kept by the present officer, that besides the duties of corresponding secretary in the office at home, and the preparation of multiplied reports for publication in the Advocate, he has traveled in the service of the society more than eleven thousand miles, in visiting ten annual conferences, some of them twice and thrice, and in holding missionary meetings in ten different states in the Union. “It also appears that he has delivered one hundred and thirty-four missionary sermons and addresses, in various parts of the country, and been directly instrumental in this way of bringing into the treasury the amount of \$13,427. How far his labors and writings have been further tributary to the increase of our funds, we have no data upon which to make the estimate. We invite attention, however, to the increased contributions to our treasury since his appointment, as affording evidence that the cause is improving annually under the present system of operations. During the first year of his appointment, the receipts were \$62,749 — the second, \$90,105.36 — the third, \$135,521.94 — and this, too, notwithstanding the unprecedented prostration of the times. The amount of the fourth and last year is not yet ascertained, but will be found comparatively large, though less than the previous year, because of the special efforts made for the centenary fund, a portion of which is destined to our treasury.

“From a review of the whole subject, your committee respectfully submit the following resolutions to be communicated to the next General Conference: —

“Resolved, That the experience of the last four years has amply confirmed the propriety of the appointment of a corresponding secretary devoted to the interests of this society, as prayed for at the last General Conference.

“Resolved, That this board bear their united testimony to the diligent, faithful, and successful performance of the duties of the office by the present incumbent; and in view of his long experience in the service of the board, we shall rejoice at his reappointment by the next General Conference.”

A number of petitions and memorials were received on a variety of subjects, particularly in reference to slavery and abolitionism, all of which were referred to appropriate committees. It seems that among these, some of the petitioners were not content with asking simply for the abolition of slavery instantly and unconditionally, but they also coupled with it a desire for an alteration in some important features of our Church organization. This latter subject was referred to the committee on the itinerancy, who presented the following report, which was concurred in by the conference:

“The committee to whom were referred the petitions and memorials on the subjects of a moderate episcopacy, the election of presiding elders by the annual conferences, and a lay delegation in the General Conference, have bestowed upon the matters submitted to them the attention which they were conceived to merit, and submit the following report:

“It appears the petitions and memorials on these subjects have been obtained by a concerted operation, under the direction of some single intellect, inasmuch as nearly every petition on any one of these subjects is not only substantially, but literally the same — most of them being printed slips, cut from some newspaper, and where they are written, literal copies of such as are printed. This fact induced a conviction in the minds of the committee that these petitions and memorials are the result of agitation, and not of original dissatisfaction on the part of most of the persons signing those petitions and memorials; and, therefore, by no means deserving the same consideration as if they were the spontaneous expression of the dissatisfaction of the petitioners and memorialists. But if it were otherwise, the number of petitioners is so very small in proportion to the entire membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, that, in the opinion of the committee, these memorials and petitions, regarding not individual grievances, but general interests, are entitled to no other consideration than that to which they are entitled as mere arguments in favor of the courses indicated. And as the committee have not seen reason to attach much importance to them in this light, they are not prepared to recommend the measures which are called for by these petitions and memorials.

“Moreover, the committee, having witnessed the operation of the present system of Methodist Episcopal Church government, and being persuaded that its operation has been emin-

ently useful, would require the most cogent reasons to induce them to recommend changes so important and so fundamental; especially as two, at least, of these changes have been, after long, grave, and deliberate consideration, recently declined by the Methodist Episcopal Church. The committee refer to the proceedings of the General Conference of 1828, for the light in which the election of presiding elders by the annual conferences, and a lay delegation in the General Conference, was then viewed; and the decision which was made by the Church on these subjects.

“With the views above presented, the committee can do no other than present the following resolution, viz.: —

“Resolved, That it is not expedient to change the form of our Church government in any of the matters suggested in the petitions and memorials which have been under the consideration of the committee.”

While this report was under consideration, the following conversation took place between some members of the conference and the Rev. Mr. Newton, the respected representative from England.

Having expressed his willingness to answer any questions which might be put to him in reference to the subjects then under discussion, he was asked,

“Whether there was any authority among them equal in extent of power to our superintendency?”

“Rev. Mr. Newton. — We have the thing without the name. The president of our conference exercises more authority than your venerable bishops. He can, at any time, arrest debate by his decision; and, although Mr. Wesley did not assume the title, he claimed and exercised the prerogatives of a Christian bishop. Our chairmen of districts are, in their sphere, also representatives of the president.

“Rev. Mr. Horton asked, whether the presidents were not elected annually?”

“Rev. Mr. Newton. — Unquestionably they are; but the president never dies.

“Is not the chairman of the district also elected annually?” asked Rev. Mr. Horton.

“Unquestionably he is, but he never dies, replied Rev. Mr. Newton.

“The chair also inquired of Rev. Mr. Newton, whether the president of the British Conference did not decide many questions which we decide by the vote of the conference; to which he received an affirmative response.

“Rev. Mr. Horton also asked, how long the chairman of the district might retain his office? to which he received the reply, that it depended on circumstances. He always deferred to seniority in case of the presence of a more aged minister. This was generally, if not invariably and universally done.”

It is due, perhaps, to the interests of truth, as well as to the character of our people, to say, that the dissatisfaction evinced by these memorials restricted to comparatively few, the great majority of our preachers and people being entirely satisfied with our general economy, and

in love with our peculiar doctrines and features of Church government, and were therefore heartily sickened with the perpetual complainings of a few restless individuals respecting tyranny and oppression.

On the subject of education the committee reported as follows on those parts of the bishops' address which referred to an increase in the number of literary institutions a general course of instruction, and to Biblical knowledge and ecclesiastical history, the episcopal power of stationing preachers in seminaries of learning, and the zealous of their support: —

“Your committee believe that the advantages of education are most widely diffused and certainly secured, by multiplying institutions of learning within proper limits, but it is obvious enough that if their number is too great to admit of their being competently endowed, the ends of their creation must be defeated; it is certainly wise policy, therefore, for the different annual conferences to secure the permanence of those already established, before they attempt to found others.

“In regard to the course of studies to be pursued in our literary institutions, to which the attention of the committee has been called in the address of the bishops, and by a resolution of the Baltimore conference, they believe that it would be inexpedient to lay down a course which should be pursued in all cases. The board of trustees and faculties will desire to exercise some control in this matter, and it seems to your committee proper that they should. There is a wide and allowable difference of opinion upon the subject, and an attempt to produce uniformity would be most likely to cause dissatisfaction, without accomplishing the object; but your committee do not hesitate to recommend that the commonly received English version of the Bible should be introduced into every school and college, and that it should be studied according to some system which may be adopted by the different boards of instruction in their several institutions, and in those institutions which embrace the ancient languages, they recommend that the Old and New Testaments be studied in the originals critically; they also recommend that the ‘Evidences of Christianity,’ and ‘Ecclesiastical history,’ constitute a part of the regular course in all our colleges and universities. When it is remembered that heathen mythology, Roman and Grecian archeology, and profane history, enter into the regular course of most literary institutions, and are believed to be essential to the education of an accomplished scholar, it can need but little argument to prove that knowledge, so much more important, should be imparted to the student.

“Your committee recommend that in all the universities and colleges under the control of the Church, the instruction given in every department of science and literature, in their broadest sense, be full and thorough. Some arguments may be urged in favor of a limited education, none can have weight in favor of a superficial one; a limited education is better than none, and one who cannot take a full course may be greatly profited by a partial one, provided it is thorough; but those who are superficially taught, have lost their time and money, and at the close of their collegiate education are helpless in themselves, and useless

to the community. It is a happy omen to the world, that the Church generally is awaking to the sense of its responsibility in providing for, sustaining, and directing public education. It must not shrink from this responsibility; it cannot without hazarding the most fatal consequences. Mind, energized by its own exertions, and furnished from the armories of science, unless controlled by the restraints, and guided by the counsels of religion, becomes the most powerful auxiliary which infidelity and vice ever won over to their cause; while on the other hand, the intellect, 'brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' august in the integrity of its object, and the directness of its means, vigorous from the concentration of power to one end, and invigorated by the special blessing of God, given to those who seek to honor him, when supplied with the argument which the learning of this age furnishes, becomes a champion for Christianity, before whom infidelity, superstition, and bigotry must cower and fall. It is readily conceded that principles of morality should be taught as soon as they can be understood. It inevitably follows that religion, which furnishes the only incontrovertible arguments to prove the obligations of morality, and the only sanction which can enforce its precepts, should be taught still earlier; and that all knowledge which is afterward imparted should be harmonized with it. The neglect of this obvious duty has caused the strange result that education fostered infidelity. It first grew out of the efforts made to improve the gross absurdities and foul deformities of a godless and miscalled Christianity upon the mind; and, unhappily, has been suffered to continue after the cause ceased to exist. It should be so no longer. Science, in its conventional sense, is a knowledge of the works of God, the laws which govern them, their relations to each other, and their combination into one harmonious whole. Its discoveries demonstrate the existence of a God; and learning, in its widest sense, arranging and concentrating the facts, proves, by a circumstantiality of evidence and a directness of inference which are irresistible, that this God is the God of the Bible, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and the time has come when, if the Church is true to her trust, learning will be the great agent in promoting religion, by every one of her ten thousand instrumentalities, and over all the face of this earth. In view of the premises, your committee believe that no jealousy should be felt in relation to the calls which our schools and colleges are making upon the ministry for teachers and professors. The number required will be necessarily small in proportion to the whole number of ministers, and when they are otherwise properly qualified, they are undoubtedly the most suitable persons to be employed in the business of education. No fear need be entertained lest their labor should be too light, or that they should become effeminate and self-indulgent; a little experience would soon remove such apprehensions. Your committee can see no good reason why preachers on trial should not be appointed to schools and colleges.

“Your committee do not believe that the conference should make any regulation controlling or limiting the episcopal power of stationing the preachers, and in answer, therefore, to the question asked by the superintendents in their address, whether an appointment to semin-

aries of learning, when an annual conference requests such a one to be made, renders it obligatory upon the bishop to comply with the request? would recommend that it be answered in the negative.

“In conclusion, your committee, in view of the vast importance of this great trust committed to the Church, for the purpose of making a permanent provision for sustaining our literary institutions, recommend the adoption of the following resolution, viz.: —

“Resolved, That any annual conference may direct public collections to be taken up by the preachers in charge of circuits and stations, in each society, once in each year, for the purpose of sustaining the literary institutions ‘under its control or patronage, if it should judge it expedient so to do, or may adopt such other measure for that end, as may seem to the members thereof most advisable.”

As this report was very unanimously adopted by the conference, we may consider the present policy in respect to establishing colleges and academies as settled, and that it is highly proper that Biblical instruction should be adopted in all our seminaries of learning.

Questions of administration had been mooted in some of the annual conferences, on which the bishops and many members of these conferences had disagreed respecting the power of the episcopacy to decide points of law, to refuse putting certain questions to vote which the presiding officer might consider unconstitutional. To settle these questions, the subject had been submitted to the conference, and the following was the result of its deliberations in reference to it:

- 1 That it is the province of the bishop “to decide all questions of law in an annual conference, subject to an appeal to the General Conference; but in all cases the application of law is with the conference.”
- 2 That it belongs to the president of a quarterly meeting “to decide all questions of law in the quarterly meeting conference, subject to an appeal to the president of the next annual conference; but in all cases the application of the law shall be with the conference.”

These words, “application of the law,” appeared involved in obscurity to some. The meaning is, I apprehend, that the conference, after the law has been explained, is to judge of its applicability to the particular case under consideration. Suppose a man is accused of an act of immorality; the president of a conference explains the law, its nature and penalty in reference to the particular act of immorality of which the person is accused; the members of the conference then, as the judges or jurors in the case, examine into the facts, hear witnesses, decide upon the guilt or innocence of the accused; and then apply the law to that particular case, and if found guilty, bring in their verdict accordingly, while the presiding judge passes the sentence of condemnation. Here the law is applied to, or brought to bear on that particular

person, according to its legitimate intent and meaning, the presiding officer being responsible for the interpretation, and the conference for the application of the law to the case in hand. The conference also decided that the president of an annual or a quarterly meeting conference had a right to decline putting a motion or resolution to vote, if he considered it foreign to the proper business of a conference, or inconsistent with constitutional provisions; and also to adjourn a conference without a formal vote.

In respect to slavery and abolitionism, though these subjects were much discussed, referred to a committee, and reported on, there was no final action of the conference on either of them, but all things remain as they were, both in the Discipline and the resolutions of the conference.

There was one other subject which excited a deep interest. An appeal had come up from a member of the Missouri conference, appealing from a decision of said conference condemning him for admitting colored testimony against a white person. The appeal was sustained, and the decision of the Missouri conference reversed. As this reversal was considered as sanctioning the practice of admitting colored testimony against the character of a white person, the following resolution, offered by Dr. Few, of the Georgia conference, after a strong and protracted debate, was adopted: —

“That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons, in any state where they are denied that privilege in trials of law.”

“The passage of this resolution gave great dissatisfaction to many members of the conference; and after a variety of expedients had been resorted to, in vain, to obviate the difficulties which seemed to grow out of it, Bishop Soule offered the following resolutions, which were adopted by a great majority, ninety-seven voting in the affirmative and twenty-seven in the negative: —

- 1 Resolved, That in the decision of this conference in the case of the appeal of Rev. Silas Comfort, it is not intended to express or imply that the testimony of colored persons against white persons, in Church trials, is either expedient or justifiable in any of the slave-holding states or territories where the civil laws prohibit such testimony in trials at law.
- 2 Resolved, That it is not the intention of this conference, in the adoption of the resolution of Rev. Ignatius A. Few, of Georgia, in regard to the admission of the testimony of colored people, to prohibit such testimony in Church trials in any of the states or territories where it is the established usage of the Church to admit, and when, in the judgment of the constitutional judicatories of the Church, such testimony may be admitted with safety to the peace of society, and the best interests of all concerned.

- 3 Resolved, That it is not the intention of this conference, in either of the above cases, or in any action had by this body, to express or imply any distrust, or want of confidence in the Christian piety and integrity of the numerous body of colored members under our pastoral care, to whom we are bound by the bonds of the gospel of Christ, and for whose spiritual and eternal interests, together with all our fellow-men of every color, and in every relation and condition in life, we will never cease to labor.”

The subject of temperance was again discussed, at great length and with lively interest; and although a memorial had been sent the rounds of the several annual conferences, praying for the substitution of Mr. Wesley's rule in the place of the one now in the Discipline; and although, out of the two thousand and eighty who were present and voted on the resolutions praying for and authorizing the General Conference to make the alteration, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four voted in the affirmative, and only three hundred and six in the negative; yet the committee to whom the subject had been submitted reported against the change, because they thought that the “true grammatical construction of the language of the Discipline implies that there must be three-fourths of the members of every annual conference in favor of the contemplated measure, in order that it may be lawfully carried into effect.” This novel interpretation of the law, though I believe it was not by any means sanctioned by a majority of the conference, tended much to defeat the measure so earnestly recommended and desired by such a large majority of both preachers and people; for when the vote was taken there were seventy-five for and thirty-eight against it, and these not being a majority of two-thirds of the whole number of delegates, the motion was declared lost. I have already expressed my opinion freely upon the inconclusiveness of the reasoning of this report. In addition to what is there said, it may be remarked, that the doctrine would put it into the power of one single annual conference, and that too the smallest in the Union, to defeat the wishes of all the rest, though these wishes should be unanimously expressed. And surely it was never the intention of the General and annual conferences who proposed and adopted the proviso in the Discipline thus to authorize so small a minority to rule the whole Church, for this was the very thing they designed to defeat or to prevent. Several attempts had been made at preceding conferences to adopt some uniform method by which ministers of other denominations might be received into the Church and recognized in their proper character. At this General Conference the following regulations were adopted: —

Question 1. In what manner shall we receive those ministers who may come to us from the Wesleyan connection in Europe or Canada?

Answer If they come to us properly accredited from either the British, Irish, or Canada Conference, they may be received according to such credentials, provided they give satisfaction to an annual conference of their willingness to conform to our Church government and usages.

Question 2. How shall we receive those ministers who may offer to unite with us from other Christian churches?

Answer Those ministers of other evangelical churches who may desire to unite with our Church, whether as local or itinerant, may be received according to our usages, on condition of their taking upon them our ordination vows, without the reimposition of hands, giving satisfaction to an annual conference of their being in orders, and of their agreement with us in doctrine, discipline, government, and usages; provided the conference is also satisfied with their gifts, grace, and usefulness. Whenever any such minister is received, he shall be furnished with a certificate, signed by one of our bishops, in the following words, viz.: —

This is to certify, that ____ has been admitted into conference as a traveling preacher, [or has been admitted as a local preacher on ____ circuit,] he having been ordained to the office of a deacon, (or an elder, as the case may be,) according to the usages of the ____ church, of which he has been a member and minister; and he is hereby authorized to exercise the functions pertaining to his office in the Methodist Episcopal Church, so long as his life and conversation are such as become the gospel of Christ.

“Given under my hand and seal, at _____ this _____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord, _____.

Question 3. How shall we receive preachers of other denominations who are not in orders?

Answer They may be received as licentiates, provided they give satisfaction to a quarterly, or an annual conference, that they are suitable persons to exercise the office, and of their agreement with the doctrines, discipline, government, and usages of our Church.”

The custom of receiving person on trial for six months before they are admitted into full membership had been made to apply, by the generality of our preachers, to those who came to us recommended from other churches, while some had admitted them without this intermediate process. To settle this question, and to produce uniformity in this branch of the administration, the rule in relation to receiving members was so altered as to read as follows:

—
“Let none be received into the Church, until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall, on examination by the minister in charge, before the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church. Nevertheless, if a member in good standing in any other orthodox church shall desire to unite with us, such applicant may, by giving satisfactory answers to the usual inquiries, be received at once into full fellowship.”

The Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church had become defunct. This had originated partly in an injudicious attempt to amalgamate the Bible, Tract, and Sunday

School Societies together, by which the business of these several societies might be transacted by one board of management, and partly from the little control which the parent society exercised over its auxiliaries and branches, and, I may add also, from the peculiar manner of our organization in respect to the duty of furnishing books for sabbath schools. While the boards of other denominations were responsible for the entire management of all the affairs of the societies under their supervision, ours had nothing to do with raising money to meet the expense of publishing books, this, as well as selecting and printing them, being in the hands of the agency of the Book Concern. In consequence of this wise arrangement, the managers of the Sunday School Union incurred but few responsibilities, and had but little to do, while the mingling of many things together rendered that little perplexing and inefficient.

It must not be supposed, however, that the sabbath school cause had been suffered to languish. The various societies continued their existence, were in efficient operation, and the children were regularly taught in nearly all our congregations, particularly in our large cities and villages; but they acted independently of each other, and were therefore not connected together by any general head, or bond of union, except so far as the agency of the Book Concern exerted its influence in furnishing the books on the cheapest terms, according to the provisions of the Publishing Fund.

There were supposed to be defects, however, in this system, which ought to be remedied. To do this, a memorial was presented to this General Conference, by a number of brethren in the city of New York, praying for the reorganization of a Sunday School Society according to the principles of a new constitution which was submitted to the conference. The deliberations resulted in the adoption of the constitution, and of the following section in the Discipline: —

Question What shall we do for the rising generation?

Answer

- 1 Let Sunday schools be formed in all our Congregations where ten children can be collected for that purpose. And it shall be the special duty of preachers having charge of circuits and stations, with the aid of the other preachers, to see that this be done; to engage the co-operation of as many of our members as they can; to visit the schools as often as practicable; to preach on the subject of Sunday schools and religious instruction in each congregation at least once in six months; to lay before the quarterly conference at each quarterly meeting, to be entered on its journal, a written statement of the number and state of the Sunday schools within their respective circuits and stations, and to make a report of the same to their several annual conferences. Each quarterly conference shall be deemed a board of managers, having supervision of all the Sunday schools and Sunday school societies within its limits, and shall be auxiliary to the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and each annual conference shall report to said union

the number of auxiliaries within its bounds, together with other facts presented in the annual reports of the preachers as above directed.

- 2 It is recommended that each annual conference, where the general state of the work will allow, request the appointment of a special agent, to travel throughout its bounds, for the purpose of promoting the interests of Sunday schools; and his expenses shall be paid out of collections which he shall be directed to make, or otherwise, as shall be ordered by the conference.
- 3 Let our catechisms be used as extensively as possible, both in our Sunday schools and families; and let the preachers faithfully enforce upon parents and Sunday school teachers the great importance of instructing children in the doctrines and duties of our holy religion.
- 4 It shall be the special duty of the preachers to form Bible classes wherever they can, for the instruction of larger children and youth; and where they cannot superintend them personally, to appoint suitable leaders for that purpose.
- 5 It shall be the duty of every preacher of a circuit or station to obtain the names of the children belonging to his congregations, and leave a list of such names for his successor; and in his pastoral visits he shall pay special attention to the children, speak to them personally, and kindly, on experimental and practical godliness, according to their capacity, pray earnestly for them, and diligently instruct and exhort all parents to dedicate their children to the Lord in baptism as early as convenient; and let all baptized children be faithfully instructed in the nature, design, privileges, and obligations of their baptism. Those of them who are well disposed may be admitted to our class meetings and love feasts, and such as are truly serious, and manifest a desire to flee the wrath to come, shall be advised to join society as probationers.”

Whether this society will be able to perform the duties and to accomplish the objects which the other failed to do, remains to be seen. If, however, the members and managers heartily co-operate with the book agency in the selection and publication of books, and otherwise carry into practical effect the spirit and objects of their organization, they will no doubt render important service to the sabbath school cause.

A very able report was adopted near the conclusion of the conference on the subject of ordaining ministers in slave-holding states who own slaves, and will not liberate them from their bondage. This arose out of the practice of the Baltimore conference in refusing to ordain some local preachers, who lived in the state of Virginia, where they pleaded that the laws would not permit emancipation.

As this subject had never before been so fully investigated, and as the report, drawn up by Dr. Bascom, very clearly unfolds the principles by which the Church has ever been governed upon this grave and important question, I think the reader will be pleased to have the entire report before him. It is as follows: —

“The committee, to whom was referred the memorial and appeal of some fifteen official members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Westmoreland circuit, Baltimore conference, on the subject of alleged withholdment of right from a portion of the local ministry within the limits of that conference, and to whom was likewise referred the report of the judiciary committee upon a similar remonstrance from the same division of the Baltimore conference, signed by about thirty official members of the Church, and addressed to the General Conference in 1836, after giving to the subject the attention its obvious importance demands, beg leave to report the following as the result of their deliberations: —

“The particular portion, or rather general section of country in which these remonstrances have their origin, although belonging to the Baltimore conference, is found within the limits of the state of Virginia; and the memorialists represent in strong but respectful terms, that local preachers within the jurisdiction of the Baltimore conference, but residing in the commonwealth of Virginia, have, in considerable numbers, and for a succession of years, been rejected as applicants for deacon’s and elders orders in the ministry, solely on the ground of their being slave-holders, or the owners of slaves. In the memorials referred to it is distinctly stated, that election and ordination have been withheld from the applicants in question on no other ground or pretense than that of their being the owners of slave property; and it is further argued that the Baltimore conference avows this to be the only reason of the course they pursue, and which is complained of by the petitioners. The appellants allege further, that the laws of Virginia relating to slavery forbid emancipation, except under restrictions, and subject to contingencies amounting, to all intents and purposes, to a prohibition; and that the Discipline of the Church having provided for the ordination of ministers thus circumstanced, the course pursued by the Baltimore conference operates as an abridgment of right, and therefore furnishes just ground of complaint. The memorialists regard themselves as clearly entitled to the protection of the well-known provisional exception to the general rule on this subject found in the Discipline; and assume with confidence, and argue with firmness and ability, that no other objection being found to the character of candidates for ordination, it is a departure from the plain intendment of the law in the case, and a violation of not less express compact than of social justice, to withhold ordination for reasons which the provisions of the law plainly declare are not to be considered as a forfeiture of right. It is set forth in the argument of the appellants, that, attaching themselves to the Church as citizens of Virginia, where, in the obvious sense of the Discipline, emancipation is impracticable, the holding of slaves, or failure to emancipate them, cannot be plead in bar to the right of ordination, as is the ease in states where emancipation, as defined and

qualified by the rule in the case, is found to be practicable. In the latter case the question is within the jurisdiction of the Church, inasmuch as the holding or not holding of property of this kind depends not upon the constitution and regulation of civil property, but upon the will and purpose of individuals. Under such circumstances the conduct in question is voluntary, and in every final sense the result of choice. In the former, however, where emancipation is resisted by the prohibition of law, it may be otherwise and in many instances is known to be resulting entirely from the involuntary relations and circumstances of individuals connected with the very structure of civil polity, and the force and array of public opinion and popular interest. The memorialists advert to the fact, that we have in the Discipline two distinct classes of legislative provision in relation to slavery — the one applying to owners of slaves where emancipation is practicable, consistently with the interests of master and slaves, and the other where it is impracticable without endangering such safety, and these interests on the part of both. With the former, known as the general rule on this subject, the petitioners do not interfere in any way, and are content simply to place themselves under the protection of the latter as contracting parties with the Church; and the ground of complaint is that the Church has failed to redeem the pledge of its own laws, by refusing or failing to promote to office ministers, in whose case no disability attaches on the ground of slavery, because the disability attaching in other cases is here removed by special provision of law, and so far leaves the right to ordination clear and undoubted, and hence the complaint against the Baltimore conference. In further prosecution of the duty assigned them, your committee have carefully examined the law, and inquired into the system of slavery as it exists in Virginia, and find the representation of the memorialists essentially correct. The conditions with which emancipation is burdened in that commonwealth preclude the practicability of giving freedom to slaves as contemplated in the Discipline, except in extremely rare instances say one in a thousand, and possibly not more than one in five thousand. The exception in the Discipline is therefore strictly applicable to all the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church holding slaves in Virginia, and they appear clearly entitled to the benefit of the rule made and provided in such cases.

“As emancipation under such circumstances is not a requirement of Discipline, it cannot be made a condition of eligibility to office. An appeal to the policy and practice of the Church for fifty years past will show incontestably, that, whatever may have been the convictions of the Church with regard to this great evil, the nature and tendency of the system of slavery, it has never insisted upon emancipation in contravention of civil authority; and it therefore appears to be a well-settled and long-established principle in the polity of the Church that no ecclesiastical disabilities are intended to ensue either to the ministers or members of the Church in those states where the civil authority forbids emancipation. The general rule therefore distinctly and invariably requiring emancipation as the ground of right, and the condition of claim to ordination where the laws of the several states admit of emancipation,

and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, and which, in the judgment of your committee, should always be carried into effect with unyielding firmness, does not apply to your memorialists, and cannot by any fair construction of law affect their rights.

“On the other hand, your committee have given the most careful consideration to the position of the Baltimore conference complained of by the appellants. The journals of the several sessions of the Baltimore conference, for a series of years, have been carefully examined, and found to be silent on the subject of the rejections in question, except the single statement that A, B, and C, from time to time, applied for admission or orders, and were rejected. We find no rule or reason of action, no evidence of preconception, no grounds or reasons of rejection, stated in any form, directly or indirectly. Nothing of this kind is avowed in, or found upon the face of the journals of that body. The charge of particular motives, it occurs to your committee, cannot be sustained in the instance of a deliberative body, say the Baltimore conference, unless it appears in evidence that the motives have been avowed by a majority of the conference; and it is not in proof that the conference has ever had an action to this effect, whatever may have been the declaration of individuals sustaining the charge of the appellants. The fact charged without reference to motives, that there has been a long list of rejections, both as it regards admission into the traveling connection and ordination, until the exception seems to be made a general rule, is undoubtedly true, and is not denied by the defendants. The evidence, however, in relation to specific reasons and motives is defective, and does not appear to sustain the charge of a contravention of right by any direct accredited action of the Baltimore conference had in the premises.

“That this view of the subject presents a serious difficulty is felt by your committee, and must be so by all. The rule applicable in this case allows an annual conference to act under the circumstances; but does not, and from the very nature and ubiquity of the case, cannot require it. Among the unquestioned constitutional rights of our annual conferences is that of acting freely, without any compulsory direction, in the exercise of individual franchise. Election here is plainly an assertion of personal right on the part of the different members composing the body, with regard to which the claim to question or challenge motives does not belong even to the General Conference, unless the result has turned upon avowed considerations unknown to the law and rule in the case. The journal of the conference is the only part of its history of which this body has cognizance, and to extend such cognizance to the reasons and motives of individual members of conferences not declared to be the ground of action by a majority, would be to establish a rule at once subversive of the rights and independence of annual conferences. In the very nature of the case an annual conference must possess the right of free and uncontrolled determination, not only in the choice of its members, but in all its elections, and keeping within the limits and restrictions of its charter as found in the Discipline, can only be controlled in the exercise of such right by moral and relative considerations, connected with the intelligence and interests of the body.

“The memorialists prayed the last General Conference, and they again ask this to interfere authoritatively by change or construction of rule so as to afford relief; and in failure to do so in the memorial of 1836, they ask to be set off to the Virginia conference, as the only remaining remedy. In their present petition they are silent on the subject of a transfer to Virginia. Under all the circumstances of the case, and taking into the account the probabilities of future action in the premises, your committee cannot but regard this as the only conclusive remedy. But how far this may be considered as relatively practicable, or whether advisable in view of all the interests involved, the committee have no means of determining, and therefore leave it to the judgment of those who have. That the petitioners, in accordance with the provisions of the Discipline, whether said provisions be right or wrong, are entitled to remedy, your committee cannot for a moment doubt, inasmuch as they are laboring, and have been for years, under practical disabilities actually provided against by the Discipline of the Church. The alleged grievance is by the petitioners themselves regarded as one of administration, not of law. No change of legislation is asked for, unless this body prefer it; and it does not appear to your committee to be called for by any view of the subject they have been able to take.

“Your committee are unwilling to close the brief view of this subject, without anxiously suggesting that, as it is one of the utmost importance, and intense delicacy in its application and bearings throughout our entire country, involving in greater or less degree the hopes and fears, the anxieties and interests of millions, it must be expected that great variety of opinions and diversity of conviction and feeling will be found to exist in relation to it, and most urgently call for the exercise of mutual forbearance and reciprocal good will on the part of all concerned. May not the principles and causes, giving birth and perpetuity to great moral and political systems or institutions be regarded as evil, even essentially evil in every primary aspect of the subject, without the implication of moral obliquity on the part of those involuntarily connected with such systems and institutions, and providentially involved in their operation and consequences? May not a system of this kind be jealously regarded as in itself more or less inconsistent with natural right, and moral rectitude, without the imputation of guilt and derelict motive, in the instance of those who, without any choice or purpose of their own, are necessarily subjected to its influence and sway?

“Can it be considered as just or reasonable to hold individuals responsible for the destiny of circumstances over which they have no control? Thus conditioned in the organic arrangements and distributions of society, is there any necessary connection between the moral character of the individual and that of the system? In this way the modifying influence of unavoidable agencies or circumstances in the formation of character is a well-known principle, and one of universal recognition in law, morals, and religion, and upon which all administration of law, not unjust and oppressive, must proceed. And your committee know of no reason why the rule is inapplicable, or should not obtain, in relation to the subject of

this report. In conclusion, the committee would express the deliberate opinion that, while the general rule on the subject of slavery, relating to those states only whose laws admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, should be firmly and constantly enforced, the exception to the general rule applying to those states where emancipation, as defined above, is not practicable, should be recognized and protected with equal firmness and impartiality. The committee respectfully suggest to the conference the propriety of adopting the following resolution: —

“Resolved, by the delegates of the several annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That, under the provisional exception of the general rule of the Church on the subject of slavery, the simple holding of slaves, or mere ownership of slave property, in states or territories here the laws do not admit of emancipation and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom, constitutes no legal barrier to the election or ordination of ministers to the various grades of office known in the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and cannot, therefore, be considered as operating any forfeiture of right in view of such election and ordination.”

It will be seen by a reference to the address of the managers of our Missionary Society, that they prayed for certain alterations in its constitution. After considerable debate, provision was made for the election of two additional secretaries, and likewise empowering the managers to provide for the widows and orphan children of such missionaries as have fallen in foreign missionary work where an annual conference has been or may be found, inasmuch as they had no claim upon the ordinary funds of the annual conferences. And the general report of the conference regarding missions gave an encouraging view of the great and growing missionary field of labor, and invited preachers and people to a united and vigorous prosecution of this holy and benevolent enterprise.

A memorial was presented to the conference by the secretary of the American Colonization Society, which was referred to a committee, and the following report was adopted almost unanimously: —

“That, after mature deliberation, we are convinced that the American Colonization Society is deserving the patronage and support of the entire Christian community as exerting a most beneficial influence upon the colored population of our own country, and more especially upon the inhabitants of Africa, particularly the colonists of Liberia, and the neighboring native tribes. It is chiefly however, as Christians, and as Christian ministers, that we view this enterprise favorably, on account of the facilities which it affords to the Christian missionary to extend the blessings of the gospel to that benighted portion of our globe. The success which has already attended our missions in that country is, to us, a sure indication that Providence designs to make Liberia a means of enlightening Africa with the light of

salvation, as well as a place of refuge for the distressed. With these views the committee respectfully recommend to the conference the adoption of the following: —

- 1 Resolved, by the delegates of the several annual conferences in General Conference assembled, That we view with favor the efforts which are now making by the American Colonization Society to build up a colony on the coast of Liberia with free people of color by their own consent.
- 2 Resolved, That the success which has hitherto attended this noble and philanthropic enterprise is a sure pledge that, if still prosecuted with wisdom and energy, it will be rendered a great blessing, not only to the colonies themselves, but also to the vast population of Africa, now enveloped in heathenish darkness.
- 3 Resolved, That we recommend this society to the attention and patronage of our brethren and friends; and that the several annual conferences which may feel themselves free to aid this enterprise of benevolence to the souls and bodies of people of color, both in our own country and in Africa be, and hereby are affectionately advised and requested to adopt such measures as they may think suitable to promote its objects, by taking up collections on or about the fourth of July in each year.”

Much inconvenience had been experienced in some of the conferences in consequence of supernumerary preachers leaving their stations with a view to become agents for societies not in connection with our Church, and which, in some instances, even operated against the peace and harmony of the body. To prevent evils of this character, the following clause was inserted in the Discipline: —

“A supernumerary preacher who refuses to attend to the work assigned him, unless in case of sickness or other unavoidable cause or causes, shall not be allowed to exercise the functions of his office, nor even to preach among us; nevertheless, the final determination of the case shall be with the annual conference of which he is a member, who shall have power to acquit, suspend, locate, or expel him, as the case may be.”

The rule incorporated in the Discipline at the last General Conference respecting the trial of superannuated preachers who reside out of the bounds of their respective conferences, was found inadequate to its object, as it was impossible to arrest the progress of a disorderly person who might choose to evade the rule, if justified in his course by the conference to which he belonged. This conference, therefore, so amended the rule as to make it read as follows: —

“If the accused be a superannuated preacher, living out of the bounds of the conference of which he is a member, he shall be held responsible to the annual conference within whose

bounds he may reside, who shall have power to try, acquit, suspend, locate, or expel him, in the same manner as if he were a member of said conference.”

These comprehend all the important acts of the conference. There were, to be sure, several verbal alterations in some portions of the Discipline, which, however, do not materially alter the sense, or any principle of the government. The motion for a complete revision of the Discipline, so as to harmonize its several parts, to make a more systematical arrangement of its sections, and to correct the phraseology, which had become, in consequence of haste or negligence, somewhat unintelligible, notwithstanding its obvious necessity, was lost, chiefly because the object of the mover was misapprehended. It is hoped, however, that such a revision will yet be made, as it would add greatly to the perspicuity of the Discipline, and prevent much of that discordant administration which arises from the ambiguity of the law in certain cases.

Before the conference adjourned, Bishop Soule was appointed to attend as a representative to the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1842, and he nominated Thomas B. Sargeant to accompany him, and the nomination was confirmed by the conference. Bishop Hedding was requested to attend the Canada Conference, or, in the event of his being unable to go, the bishops were authorized to select a person for that service.

The following is the pastoral address: —

“Dearly Beloved Brethren, — As the representatives of the several annual conferences in General Conference assembled, we assume the pleasing duty of addressing to you our Christian salutations: ‘Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ,’ both now and for ever.

“In reviewing the history of the past four years, while we see some occasions for humiliation before God, we see much in the dealings of our heavenly Father with us which calls aloud for gratitude and praise. The unwelcome and startling fact of a diminution of the numbers in society had awakened in our minds great solicitude. Fearing lest we had so far departed from our original purity of character as to be cursed with barrenness, and to give place to others whom God would constitute more appropriate instruments in achieving the moral renovation of the world, we sent up our cry to heaven, ‘Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach.’ At this point in our history we very justly concluded that instead of indulging in fruitless speculations upon the causes which had brought about this state of things, it became us to gird ourselves for new exertions, and to look up to the great head of the Church for a renewed and signal manifestation of his power and grace, to raise the fainting spirits and cheer the trembling hearts of the armies of our Israel. And how wonderfully have our efforts been succeeded! Truly may we say, ‘In a little wrath he hid his face from us, for a moment, but with everlasting kindness’ has he had ‘mercy upon us.’

“Within the last year the state of the American Methodist Church has assumed a most interesting and cheering aspect. The spirit of grace and supplication has been poured out upon

her, and her converts have been greatly multiplied. Extensive and powerful revivals have been reported through our excellent periodicals, from almost every point of the wide field occupied by our regular itinerant ministry, or by our missionaries. Multitudes of fallen and miserable men have been happily renovated and brought within the pale of the Church. Many desolate and barren fields have become as the garden of the Lord; presenting to the gaze of the world the variegated tints of moral beauty, sending up to heaven the sweet odors of pure devotion, and yielding the precious fruits of righteousness, to the glory and honor of God.

“The first centenary of Methodism has brought with it a state of great enlargement and prosperity. The pious zeal which you exhibited in the appropriate celebration of this new era in our history, and the liberal offerings you presented to the Church, exhibit a praiseworthy regard for her institutions, and doubtless constitute a sacrifice with which God is well pleased. Though, on this interesting occasion, you did no more than was your duty to do, God blessed you in the deed, having brought your tithes into the storehouse of the Lord, and proved him therewith, he has poured you out a blessing that there is scarcely room to contain.

“It affords us great pleasure to witness the strong tendency which develops itself among the Methodists to adhere to the peculiar principles which have characterized them from the beginning, and to remain one and indissoluble. Though some have entered into ‘doubtful disputations,’ and a few of our societies have been hurtfully agitated, yet to the honor of our enlightened membership, and to the glory of God, would we at this time express our solemn conviction that the great mass of our people have remained ‘firm as a wall of brass’ ‘midst the commotions of conflicting elements. There seems at this moment far less occasion to fear from the causes of dissension than there was at the last meeting of this conference. Indeed, brethren, we have no doubt but if we all continue to ‘walk by the same rule, and to mind the same things,’ in which in the order of God we have been instructed, ‘the gates of hell shall not prevail against us,’ and the enemy who would divide and scatter, in order to destroy us, will be disappointed.

“Since the commencement of the present session of the General Conference, memorials have been presented principally from the northern and eastern divisions of the work, some praying for the action of the conference on the subject of slavery, and others asking for radical changes in the economy of the Church. The results of the deliberations of the committees to whom these memorials had a respectful reference, and the final action of the conference upon them, may be seen among the doings of this body, as reported and published. The issue in several instances is probably different from what the memorialists may have thought they had reason to expect. But it is to be hoped they will not suppose the General Conference has either denied them any legitimate right, or been wanting in a proper respect for their opinions. Such is the diversity of habits of thought, manners, customs,

and domestic relations among the people of this vast republic, and such the diversity of the institutions of the sovereign states of the confederacy, that it is not to be supposed an easy task to suit all the incidental circumstances of our economy to the views and feelings of the vast mass of minds interested. We pray, therefore, that brethren whose views may have been crossed by the acts of this conference will at least give us the credit of having acted in good faith, and of not having regarded private ends or party interests, but the best good of the whole family of American Methodists.

“Radical changes in our economy are conceived to be fraught with danger. After having so long, and under such a variety of circumstances, proved the efficiency of our existing institutions, we conceive that it is now no time to go into untried experiments. The leading features of our excellent Book of Discipline, we have every reason to believe, commend themselves alike to the enlightened judgments and to the pious feelings of the great mass of our people. Upon this subject they hold the sentiment expressed in the language of our Lord: ‘No man having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better.’ They desire to continue on in the same tried path, and preserve, in its simplicity and purity, Methodism as we received it from our fathers. With these convictions, we should prove recreant to the trust committed to us were we in the slightest degree to yield to the spirit of innovation.

“After this free expression of our views and feelings in relation to those great interests which naturally come under review in such a communication, will you, brethren, permit us, as your pastors and servants, for Jesus’ sake, to ‘stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,’ in relation to several important duties, which at the present time especially demand your utmost care and diligence?

- 1 In addition to the ordinary means of grace to which we are bound to attend as Christians, there are certain duties which are obligatory on us as Methodists; among these are our class meetings and love feasts. Numerous melancholy instances have proved that these means cannot be wantonly neglected by our people without the loss of their religious comfort, a total paralysis of their spiritual energies, and utter uselessness in the Church. As you then desire to be useful, to be happy, and to glorify God in this life and that which is to come, we beseech you, brethren, never for a moment to decline in your attention to these precious means of grace.
- 2 Exercise the utmost vigilance and care over the moral and religious training of the rising generation. In a very few days we shall be with our fathers: and it is for us now to say what influence our children shall exert upon the condition of society, and the destinies of the world, when we are no more. Give your infant offspring to God in holy baptism. When they are of sufficient age, put them into the sabbath school, impart to them personal religious instruction, pray incessantly for their conversion and salvation, and by

all means, if possible, give them the advantages of the excellent institutions of learning which have been reared by your benevolent and praiseworthy exertions.

- 3 We would also apprise you who are heads of families, of the vast importance of supplying those committed to your trust with such reading as will have a tendency to make them wiser and better. Preoccupy their attention with our excellent books and periodicals, and to the utmost of your power guard them against the dreadful tide of froth and corruption which is making such ravages upon the intellectual and moral character of the age, under the general title of novels. These publications, with very few exceptions, like the dreadful sirocco, blast, and wither, and destroy wherever they come. Superinducing a state of intellectual languor, and blunting the moral feelings, they prepare the young mind for the more open and decided demonstrations of error, in the various forms of infidelity, or make it an easy prey to the seductions of vice. Recollect that 'to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.' Take care, then, to supply the appropriate aliment of the mind in sufficient variety and abundance, that there may be left no opening for the entrance of these mischievous agents.
- 4 We furthermore exhort you, brethren, not to forget the high and holy object of our organization. We profess to be 'a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to help each other work out their salvation.' We are a voluntary association, organized, as we believe, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, for purposes of a purely spiritual nature. It was with reference to our mutual spiritual edification that we struck hands before God's altar, and gave to each other pledges of future fidelity. Let us then labor to the utmost to do each other good, praying for one another, 'bearing each others burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ,' 'forgiving one another if any have a quarrel against another.' Our obligations to these duties we took upon ourselves voluntarily, and under the most solemn circumstances. Can we then lightly cast them off, or claim them at the hands of others, when we will not discharge them ourselves? Nay, brethren, they are mutual, perpetual, inviolable.
- 5 We exhort and beseech you, brethren, by the tender mercies of our God, that you strive for the 'mind that was in Christ Jesus.' Be not content with mere childhood in religion; but, 'having the principles of the doctrines of Christ, go on unto perfection.' The doctrine of entire sanctification constitutes a leading feature of original Methodism. But let us not suppose it enough to have this doctrine in our standards: let us labor to have the experience and the power of it in our hearts. Be assured, brethren, that if our influence and usefulness as a religious community, depend upon one thing more than any other, it is upon our carrying out the great doctrine of sanctification in our life and conversation. When we fail to do this, then shall we lose our pre-eminence; and the halo of glory which

surrounded the heads, and lit up the path of our sainted fathers, will have departed from their unworthy sons. O brethren, let your motto be, 'holiness to the Lord.' 'And may the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and we pray God, that your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.'

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.' And now, we 'commend you to God and the word of his grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' AMEN."

On the evening of Wednesday, June 3, the conference adjourned to meet again in the city of New York, May 1, 1844. At an early period of the session of this conference a resolution prevailed to employ a reporter to take down the proceedings of the conference, that they might be published weekly in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and the other papers published under the direction of the General Conference. The following is the reporter's account of the closing of the conference: —

"A motion being made to adjourn sine die, Bishop Soule addressed the conference:

"Dear Brethren, — Under any other circumstances than those in which we are now placed, I should esteem it a high privilege, as well as a solemn duty, to offer you an extended parting salutation. But the extreme lateness of the hour requires that we should close our session without further delay. Indulge me a few, and but a few, moments.

"It has afforded me much pleasure to witness so little improper excitement. I do not recollect that I ever attended a conference in which I saw less. While great difference of opinion has existed on various subjects, I rejoice to have seen exhibited, universally, so much brotherly kindness and affection. I am more especially rejoiced in the firm persuasion, the steadfast belief, that great and important principles have been investigated and established, destined to exert a most salutary influence on our future prospects, our peace, and our unity. In this I do rejoice, and I will rejoice.

"And now in separating, to carry out the measures here adopted — to further the cause of God with renewed zeal and energy — I entreat brethren to refrain rigidly from all unkind expressions in regard to each other; and to be careful how, as members of this body, they pass their animadversions, publicly or privately, upon its acts. It becomes us to speak, if we speak at all, with great respect and due deference for the opinions of those who have acted under responsibilities so vast and momentous.

"Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.

“And may the God of all grace continue to strengthen our union, until we shall see the accomplishment of the great design for which Methodism was raised up, viz.: to spread Scriptural holiness all over these lands.

“The bishop then read that admirable and appropriate hymn, commencing —

‘And let our bodies part, To different climes repair; Inseparably joined in heart The friends of Jesus are.’

“The whole body, together with a considerable audience, joined solemnly in singing these sacred lines; after which the venerable bishop addressed the throne of grace, amidst the responses, the tears, and the sighs bursting from the heaving bosoms of the conference and the audience.

“The conference then, at ten minutes past one o’clock, Thursday morning, June 4, adjourned sine die.

“Thus closed the Centenary General Conference, after the most protracted, the most interesting, and, to human judgment, the most auspicious session ever held. May its deliberations redound to the glory of God and the good of the Church. The Church! *Esto perpetua.*”

CHAPTER 16

Methodist Book Concern

I. Historical sketch of the Concern. — In vol. i, where a short notice is given of the origin of the Book Concern, I promised to give a more detailed account of this useful establishment in a subsequent part of the History. I shall now attempt to redeem this pledge, although my space will not allow of a very particular and extended account.

As is there stated, at a very early period of his ministry, Mr. Wesley established a printing office, and in 1778 commenced the publication of the Arminian Magazine, in which he vindicated the doctrines taught by that distinguished divine, James Arminius, so far as they coincided with what he believed the truth as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and likewise the doctrine and usages promulgated and adopted by himself and his brother, Charles Wesley. This publication, together with a variety of tracts and volumes on religious, philosophical, and scientific subjects, have done immense good to the community in Great Britain and other parts of the world; and the Wesleyan connection in England has produced some of the first writers of the age, such as Clarke, Benson, Watson, and many others of less note, but equally indefatigable in spreading light and truth by means of the press. The Magazine, filled with a vast variety of the most useful knowledge, has been continued, gradually enlarging its dimensions, and changing its name to the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, to the present time, making in all no less than sixty-three volumes, of from six hundred to upward of nine hundred pages each.

In the early days of Methodism in this country, our people were furnished with books from England, and they were distributed among them by the itinerant preachers, the cost of the first purchase being transmitted to Mr. Wesley to assist in keeping up a constant supply. This method, however, of obtaining the needful books became very troublesome and expensive, and measures were adopted by Dr. Coke, on his arrival in America, to remedy the evil by procuring the republication of such small tracts and sermons, together with a hymn-book, as the growing wants of the people seemed to demand.

The first account I find in the Minutes of the conferences of a book steward is in the year 1789, and John Dickens, then stationed in Philadelphia, where the Book Concern was begun, was the first editor and agent. It appears that when the business was commenced, being but small, and requiring but a portion of the time of the agent for that particular work, he was at the same time the stationed preacher in the city of Philadelphia, there then being but one in the city.

By referring to the books of the agency; the first entry in the handwriting of John Dickens is under date of August 17, 1789, and it appears that the first book which printed was Mr. Wesley's edition of "A Kempis," a little devotional work, written by a Roman Catholic, breathing the true spirit of piety, and containing the most pure and exalted sentiments of

Christianity. In the same year was issued the first volume of the Arminian Magazine, being chiefly a reprint of pieces which had appeared in its prototype in England, but containing also some accounts of the work of God in America, and other miscellaneous matters of an edifying character. The Methodist Discipline, Saints' Everlasting Rest, a hymn-book and Mr. Wesley's Primitive Physic, were all published in the same year.

This was a small beginning, but it was quite equal to the means then at command; for it appears that there were no funds in hand to begin with, except a small amount, about six hundred dollars, which John Dickens lent to the Concern to enable it to begin its benevolent operations.

In 1790, some portions of Fletcher's Checks, much needed at die time, and the second volume of the Arminian Magazine, made their appearance. In this small way the number of books was gradually increased tinder the skillful management of John Dickens, a man of inestimable worth as a Christian minister, and of great prudence, industry, and fidelity in this particular work. To assist him in his labor, and to guard, as far as possible, the purity of the press, a book committee was appointed in 1797, to whom all works were to be submitted before they were published, except such as were ordered by the General Conference; and the first committee consisted of Ezekiel Cooper, Thomas Ware, John McClasky, Christopher Spry, William McLennan, Charles Cavender, Richard Swain,. and Solomon Sharp. From that day to this a book committee, with similar powers, has been appointed from year to year, tinder the direction of the General Conference, which reports the state of the Concern every year to the annual conference in the bounds of which the Concern is located, and every four years to the General Conference.

John Dickens continued in the superintendence of the book business until 1798, when he died in peace and triumph, of the malignant fever which then raged with terrible destruction in the city of Philadelphia. His death was feelingly lamented by all who knew him, for he was a minister of Jesus Christ, of great power and usefulness, much beloved and respected by all who knew him, and had been very successful in printing and circulating books of the most useful character.

In 1799, Ezekiel Cooper, who still lives, was appointed editor and general book steward. The Concern is greatly indebted to his skillful management for its increasing usefulness, as at the end of his term, in 1808, its capital stock had increased, from almost nothing in the beginning, to about forty-five thousand dollars. In 1804, the Concern was removed from Philadelphia to the city of New York, where Ezekiel Cooper continued its superintendence until 1808, being assisted by John Wilson for the last four years. At the General Conference of 1808 Mr. Cooper resigned his office, the conference giving him a vote of thanks for the faithful and successful manner in which he had discharged his duty, and was succeeded by John Wilson as principal, and Daniel Hitt as an assistant editor and book steward. At this General Conference, on the recommendation of Mr. Cooper, the term of service in the

agency was limited to eight years, a regulation which was afterward found to be attended with many inconveniences, so much so that in 1836 the rule was abrogated.

Up to this time the agents received a station, the same as the other preachers, and were held responsible for the double duties of agents of the Book Concern and of stationed ministers, though they were relieved from much of their pastoral labors by their colleagues in the ministry. In 1808 they were entirely released from pastoral labors, only so far as they might be able to preach on Sabbaths, and occasionally on other days, that their time and attention might be more exclusively devoted to the interests of the Concern, in editing and publishing books; — a wise regulation, as has been tested by many years of experience.

On the 28th of January, 1810, John Wilson, who had been long afflicted with an obstinate asthma, died suddenly of that inveterate disease, in the full assurance of faith. He was indeed a most estimable man, a faithful minister, a skillful and diligent book agent, and was greatly beloved and sincerely respected by his brethren and friends. From the time of his lamented death until the General Conference of 1812, the business was carried on by Daniel Hitt alone, but by no means in so prosperous a way as it had been conducted heretofore. In 1812, however, he was elected the principal, and Thomas Ware the assistant editor and book steward; and the General Conference ordered the resumption of the Magazine in monthly numbers; but neither this order was obeyed, nor were the hopes of the friends of the establishment at all realized by the increasing prosperity of the Concern from 1812 to 1816. This fault, however, is not attributable to the want of good intentions or fidelity in the agents, but chiefly, I believe, for the lack of skill and harmony in its general management.

In 1816, Joshua Soule and Thomas Mason entered upon the duties of this agency. They found the Concern much embarrassed with debt, with but scanty means to liquidate it, the number and variety of publications small, and the general aspect of things was quite discouraging. They, however, applied themselves to their work with prudence and diligence, and succeeded in keeping it from sinking under its own weight, and of infusing new energy into some of its departments, by increasing the variety of its publications, and lessening the amount of its debts.

In 1818, the order for resuming the publication of the Magazine, which had been made again by the General Conference of 1816, was carried into effect, agreeably to the desire, and to the joy of thousands. Indeed, the appearance of this periodical, filled as it was with useful matter, was generally hailed with delight by the members of our Church, as the harbinger of brighter days, especially in regard to the revival of literature and sound knowledge among us as a people though it must be confessed that there were some then, who would even sneer at this most laudable attempt to diffuse useful knowledge and Scriptural piety, by means of the press. I could relate many anecdotes in confirmation of this statement, as dishonorable to their authors as they were mortifying to the more enlightened friends of the Church. But, as the day is passed, let these “times of ignorance” be “winked at” and

forgotten, from the joy that a more bright and vigorous state of things has so happily succeeded.

In 1820, Nathan Hang's succeeded Joshua Soule, and Thomas Mason was re-elected an assistant. He found the Concern still laboring under a heavy debt, and was often much embarrassed to meet the demands upon its resources. After looking at things as attentively and impartially as possible, he said to his colleague, "We must increase our debt, with a view to add to the number and variety of our publications, or we never shall succeed in answering public expectation, or of putting the Concern in a prosperous condition." They went to work accordingly, and commenced with Benson's Commentary, Clarke's Wesley Family, Lady Maxwell, and other works of smaller dimensions; and they likewise introduced into our catalogue, philosophical, historical, philological, and scientific works, by exchanging, and by taking parts of editions as publishers conjointly with other publishers; and with a view to rid the Concern of many old and unsaleable books on hand, the prices were lowered, by which means many books that had lain useless upon our shelves were put in circulation. Still, for the want of more experience, many blunders were committed, which were afterward either corrected or avoided. And though by these appliances the debt was augmented, resources to meet the pecuniary demands were created, and by maintaining our credit, we could always obtain money when it was needed.

In 1823 the Youth's Instructor, a monthly periodical designed for the special benefit of youth, was commenced, and for some years it had a very extensive circulation, and I believe did much to increase the taste for reading, and to raise the tone of an enlightened piety.

Very soon after the General Conference of 1820 measures were adopted, in conformity to its order, for the publication of a revised edition of the hymn-book, and also of a tune-book, containing tunes suited to the great variety of metres in which our most excellent hymns were composed. Hitherto, for the want, of such tunes, many of these hymns, the poetry and spirituality of which are of unrivaled energy and beauty, were left unsung by most of our congregations, and therefore stood useless in the hymn-book.

Nor was the hymn-book before in use much less defective. Some of the hymns had been marred in unskillful hands by alterations and mutilations, while others, which had edified thousands in Europe by their strong, deep, and spiritual sentiments and highly poetical character, had never been introduced into our worshipping assemblies. These defects were now in a great measure supplied by the publication of these editions of the hymn and tune books; and since then the art of singing, that most useful and animating part of divine worship, has been gradually improving among the members and friends of our Church.

Up to this time all our printing and binding had been done by the job, on such terms as could be agreed upon with the different printers and binders who did the work. In the year 1821 we were strongly urged to establish a bindery and printing office. After considering the subject for some time, it was finally concluded to make an experiment first with a

bindery, and if this succeeded according to expectations, a printing office could be established at a future time. Accordingly the basement story of the Wesleyan Seminary in Crosby Street was rented, a competent binder employed, and the bindery went into operation in 1822.

At the General Conference of 1824, the constitutional term of Thomas Meson having expired, John Emory was elected as an assistant to Nathan Bangs. Soon after, having tested the beneficial consequences of having a bindery under our own control, the principal, who had great confidence in the intelligence of his assistant, proposed the establishment of a printing office; and after maturely considering the subject, committing with the book committee and others, it was finally concluded to make the experiment; and in the month of September, 1824, the office was commenced in the second story of the same building in Crosby Street, and finally, during the same year, the entire premises were bought of the trustees of the Wesleyan Seminary for a printing office and bindery.

In coming to this conclusion, however, there was great hesitation on the part of the book committee, arising out of a fear that the project would not succeed. So thoroughly convinced, however, was the writer of this sketch of the feasibility of the plan, and of its profitableness to the Concern, that, after obtaining the consent and co-operation of his assistant, they offered to purchase the premises and commence operations on their own personal responsibility; and if the next General Conference should not approve of the undertaking, they would take the entire establishment as their own, provided the Concern should pay them the interest on the purchase money, and the net profits of the printing, after deducting the usual prices paid for the work to other printers. This proposition, indicative of such perfect confidence in the successful issue of the project, silenced opposition, the purchase was made, and the printing office and bindery were very soon permanently established. The utility of the measure, in every point of view, though it added great additional labor and responsibility to the agents, became so manifest, that it was soon seen and appreciated by all concerned, and highly approved of by the next General Conference.

Measures were adopted for a gradual and constant increase to the number and variety of our books. Hitherto Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary had been published by other publishers, and was now in the hands of Abraham Paul, a very worthy member of our Church, and a printer of established reputation in the city of New York. He made an advantageous offer of the stereotype plates of the octavo edition, and of the numbers of the quarto edition which he had on hand, together with a list of his subscribers, with the privilege of publishing the remainder as it should come out. This offer was accepted by the agents, and hence this most valuable and deservedly popular Commentary became the property of the Methodist Episcopal Church, so far as such a work, a copyright of which could not be legally secured in this country, — could become its property, and has been ever since published by this Concern. The printing of books from stereotype plates had recently been introduced into this country, by which means standard works, for which a constant demand might be expected, were

very much cheapened. The first work stereotyped in this establishment was the 24mo. edition of the Hymn-book, soon after the General Conference of 1820. Since that time stereotype plates have been gradually introduced, until nearly all the books now issued from this press are printed from these standing types, — an improvement in the art of printing as great as the improvement in navigation by the use of steamboats, — more especially since the power of steam has been so usefully applied to printing, by the introduction of presses moved by this powerful agent. Of these improvements in book-making this Concern has wisely availed itself, as its means and constantly increasing demands would seem to justify.

But to return to the narrative. Beholding the beneficial results of periodical literature on the intellectual, moral, and religious state of the people, measures were adopted by the agents; with the advice and concurrence of the book committee and of the New York conference, for issuing a weekly paper, to be called the “Christian Advocate.” Accordingly, on the 9th of September, 1826, the first number of this advocate of Christian doctrines, morals, and the institutions of Methodism, made its appearance, much to the gratification of all the members and friends of the Church. As a proof of this general gratification, in a very short time its number of subscribers far exceeded every other paper published in the United States, being about twenty-five thousand; and it soon increased to thirty thousand, and was probably read by more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons, young and old. Though Mr. Badger was the editor of this paper, yet the editorial matter was chiefly furnished by the senior editor of the establishment, even before he was appointed its editor in 1828. Mr. Badger, however, displayed a good taste and correct judgment in selecting and arranging matter for its columns, and was therefore an efficient instrument in giving it a popular character; but so far as the editorial articles were concerned, he received more credit than he was entitled to, as most of those articles were furnished by the person named above, and some very valuable ones by his worthy and able assistant; and its columns were also enriched, from time to time, by some able and pious correspondents. These, together with the religious, scientific, and secular intelligence it inculcated, did much to aid the cause of sound knowledge and solid piety; and it was particularly useful in defending our doctrines and primitive usages from reproach, as well as in making known to our people the character and labor of the entire establishment. Indeed, the “Christian Advocate and Journal” soon became to the Book Concern like a faithful herald to a government, proclaiming to all its will, and making known its plans.

This continual enlargement of the establishment, while it infused energy into its operations, and mightily extended the sphere of its usefulness among the reading community, increased also its debt; but we knew that it also increased the means of its liquidation, and must ultimately both tend to its entire emancipation from its pecuniary embarrassment, and enlarge its sphere of usefulness, in respect to the number, variety, and character of its publications.

It should be noticed, also, that at the earnest request of our brethren west of the mountains, the General Conference of 1820 authorized the establishment of a branch of the Book Concern in Cincinnati, and Martin Ruter, of the New England conference, was appointed to its charge, to act under the direction of the agents in New York. One thing which led to this establishment was the depreciation, since the annihilation of the old bank of the United States, in 1810, of the currency in the west. For a number of years the Concern had several thousand dollars lying useless in the banks of Cincinnati, merely because it was almost worthless in New York; and we had no other way to realize any thing from it, but by authorizing our agent there to invest it in cotton and tobacco, and ship them to our account to New York. The cotton was sent to Liverpool; but the tobacco, I believe, was chiefly a dead loss, in consequence of the wreck of the boat in which it was shipped. [Blessed Loss! Which, I suspect, may have been ordered of the Lord. — DVM]

This branch, however, has gone on from that day to this with less or more prosperity; has become a publishing office, and bids fair to do much in diffusing useful knowledge through all that region of country.

It has been already stated, that the debts of the Concern had very considerably increased; but they had been increased by the procurement of those means, such as an office for printing and binding, presses, stereotype plates, and all sorts of tools for each department, as must, if properly managed, finally lead to the liquidation of the debts, and thus place the Concern on a permanent foundation, beyond the reach of danger by the fluctuations of the times, so often occasioned by the frequent pressures of the money market. Its credit was good; its liabilities were always promptly met; its working hands paid; and all its parts were in vigorous operation.

It was found, however, that there was on hand a large stock of old unsaleable books, bound and unbound, both in the general depository in New York, and on the circuits and stations, as well as at Cincinnati, which had been accumulating for years. All these, through reported from year to year as capital stock, were entirely unproductive; and the manner in which the accounts were kept, and the books sold, had a tendency to increase this unproductive stock, and also the amount of debts due to the Concern. I allude to the credit system, and the discount of eighteen per centum which was allowed to preachers and others for whatever books they might sell, merely rendering an account of the books remaining on hand at the end of each year, which passed to their credit on the settlement of their accounts. By these means the number and quantity of books were constantly augmenting in the districts, while the Concern was increasing its liabilities by being obliged to pay the expense of those already on hand, and for furnishing a fresh supply, a part of which might help to swell the amount of those unsold; and the longer they remained on hand, the more unsaleable they became. The question now was, What means can be devised to rid the Concern of this mass of unproductive stock, and more speedily and certainly dispose of books which may be hereafter

published? In answer to this question, it was suggested by the assistant agent, and promptly assented to by the principal, that the old stock on hand, scattered through the country in the several circuits, should be offered at wholesale prices, for cash or good security, at a discount of fifty percent, and that hereafter our books should be sold to wholesale purchasers, whether preachers or others, at a discount of thirty-three and one-third percent for cash, and twenty-five percent on good security, payable at the next annual conference after the purchase was made, and if not then paid, with lawful interest until the note was discharged. This system was accordingly recommended to the General Conference of 1828, and, after mature consideration, was adopted, and its provisions inserted in the Discipline.

At this conference, the constitutional term of Nathan Bangs having ended, he was elected editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, John Emory the principal editor and book steward, and Beverly Waugh his assistant.

With this broad foundation laid, and these wise plans devised and sanctioned, the new agents went to their work in good earnest, and soon succeeded in paying off the debts of the establishment, and in widening the sphere of their operations greatly. Wesley's and Fletcher's Works were published, the *Methodist Magazine* was improved by commencing a new series under the denomination of the "*Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*," the number of Sunday school books and tracts was multiplied, though these latter were under the charge of the editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. The new method of selling the books worked admirably well, the old stock on hand was rapidly disposed of, and the orders for books became more numerous, and of course the and all profits proportionally augmented.

This rapid increase in the business very soon led to the necessity of enlarging our buildings. Accordingly all the vacant ground in Crosby Street was occupied. But even these additions were found insufficient to accommodate the several departments of labor, so as to furnish the needful supply of books now in constantly increasing demand.

To supply this deficiency five lots were purchased in Mulberry Street, between Broome and Spring streets, and one building erected in the rear for a printing office and bindery, intending to erect another of larger dimensions after the General Conference of 1832. Accordingly the plan of the new buildings was submitted to that conference, with an estimate of the probable expense, and of its utility in furthering the benevolent objects of the Concern. The plan was highly applauded, and the agents were instructed to carry it into execution.

At this General Conference, Dr. Emory, whose wise counsels and literary labors had been of so much service to the Concern, and were therefore highly appreciated, was elected a bishop, and Beverly Waugh was appointed to fill his place, and T. Mason his assistant. Acting on the principles which had been laid down by their predecessors, they carried out the plans which had been suggested with great energy and effect. At the same conference, in consequence of the increased labors in the editorial department, Nathan Bangs was re-

moved from the editorship of the Christian Advocate and Journal to the editorial charge of the Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review and the general books, and John P. Durbin was elected editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal and Sunday school books and tracts, and Timothy Merritt his assistant. Mr. Durbin introduced one very important improvement into the Sunday school department, and that was the commencement of a Sunday School Library, which has now reached its two hundred and forty-fourth volume, made up of some of the choicest books to be found for the edification of youth. This division of labor had a most beneficial tendency, as it enabled the editors to devote themselves more exclusively to the improvement of the literary and scientific departments of their work.

What an alteration in this respect! In the infancy of the Concern the agent did all the work of editing, packing up the books, and keeping the accounts, besides doing the work of a stationed preacher. In 1804 he was allowed an assistant; but no clerk was employed until 1818, when, on resuming the publication of the Magazine, the agents, by the advice of the book committee, employed a young man to assist in packing the books and shipping them off. From 1820 to 1828 the writer of this history had the entire responsibility of the establishment on his shoulders, both of editing and publishing the Magazine and books, and overseeing its pecuniary and mercantile department. It is due, however, to his assistants to say, that they labored faithfully and indefatigably to promote the interests of the Concern, and the labor of keeping the books and attending to the pecuniary business devolved chiefly on them, under his advisement. In 1825 a clerk was first employed to keep the books; and after the Christian Advocate and Journal was commenced, and the Sunday school books and tracts began to multiply, it became necessary to employ several clerks to keep the accounts, and to pack up and send off the periodicals. In taking charge of the Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review, the editor found himself exceedingly cramped, as he was not at liberty to offer any remuneration to contributors, but must take such as he could get, chiefly by selections from other books or furnishing matter from his own pen. In consequence of these embarrassments, he is free to confess that the character of that publication was far beneath what it should and might have been, had the editor been at liberty to follow his own convictions of duty and propriety in furnishing suitable materials for the work. This defect was as mortifying to him, as it was a disappointment to its readers and patrons; and he rejoices that his advice, long urged without effect, was at last adopted, and that hence a brighter day has dawned upon this department of our literature; for now, by employing able writers, the worthy editor is giving a character to that periodical which is likely to be equally honorable to himself and to the Church whose interests he is endeavoring to promote.

Immediately after the adjournment of the conference of 1832, the new agents went to work, and erected the front building in Mulberry Street; and, in the month of September, in 1833, the entire establishment was removed into the new buildings. Not being able to dispose of the property in Crosby Street, the old edifice was taken down, and four neat dwelling houses

were erected in its place, the rent of which is worth to the Concern from twelve hundred to two thousand dollars a year. They are intended as residences for the editors and agents; and if they do not choose to occupy them, they are at liberty to rent them, and take the avails toward defraying the expense of other houses. Thus the premises which were at first procured as a site for the Wesleyan seminary, an institution designed for the religious as well as secular education of youth, has become the permanent property of the Methodist Book Concern, and is therefore still devoted to scientific, religious, and literary purposes. May it never be otherwise employed!

In this new and commodious building, with diligent and efficient agents and editors at work, every thing seemed to be going on prosperously and harmoniously, when, lo and behold, the entire property was consumed by fire! In this disastrous conflagration, the Methodist Church lost not less than two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The buildings, all the printing and binding materials, a vast quantity of books, bound and in sheets, a valuable library, which the editor had been collecting for several years, were in a few hours consumed. It is impossible to describe the sensations which were produced by this calamitous and mournful event. It was on a very cold night in the month of February, 1836, but a short time after the great fire in the city of New York, which destroyed about twenty million dollars' worth of property. I was awakened about four o'clock, A. M., by a ringing at my door, and a voice which apprised me that the Book Room was on fire! I sprung from my bed, dressed, called my two sons who were at home, and repaired with all possible speed to the scene of conflagration. I hoped, at least, to save the library. But the smoke was already issuing from the windows of my office, and the flames from other parts of the house! Here I found the agents, who were on the spot before me. The hydrants were frozen, and the waters were thrown but feebly, though all exerted themselves to their utmost. We saw that all was gone. Suddenly, and with a tremendous crash, the roof fell in! The flames seemed to ascend in curling eddies to the heavens, carrying with them fragments of books and papers, which the winds swept over the city to the eastward, as if to carry the news of the sad disaster to our distant friends. Indeed, a leaf of a Bible was found about three miles from the place, on which the following verse was but just legible: — "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned up with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste," [Isa. lxiv, 11.](#)

While standing upon the smoking ruins, about ten o'clock in the morning, a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church informed me that this leaf had been picked up in the city of Brooklyn, and that it was in the possession of a gentleman in the lower part of the city, a bookseller, in Pearl Street. I requested a friend to call and ascertain the fact, and if possible to obtain the relic, which seemed precious in my estimation. He accordingly called, and found it was even so; but the gentleman, wishing to preserve it as a memento of this disastrous

event, and as an evidence of the truth of his own statement, declined to surrender it to another.

Our “beautiful house,” and all our “pleasant things,” our books and printing and binding apparatus — were indeed “burned up with fire!” But the fire-proof vault had, by the skillful management of the firemen, preserved the account books, and most of the registry books for subscribers were saved by the timely exertions of the clerk of that department. The rest was gone, except about three hundred dollars’ worth of books, and some of the iron work, stone, and brick about the building.

“How did this fire originate?” This question has been asked a thousand times, but never satisfactorily answered, although an inquiry was immediately instituted, and diligent search made, with a view to ascertain the fact. It still lies buried in obscurity; but my own opinion is, that it took fire by accident in the interior of the building, in the second story, where the fire was first discovered by the man who came to open the office and make the fires for the day. The reasons for this opinion, though satisfactory to myself, I cannot here detail; and, as they do not involve any one connected with the establishment in blame, while it relieves us from entertaining the cruel suspicion that any one was wicked enough to set fire to the premises, it may pass for what it is worth, without injury to any individual concerned.

In the deep affliction felt by the agents, and indeed all in any way connected with the establishment, it was no small consolation to be assured of the sincere and wide-spread sympathy which was both felt and expressed by our brethren and friends for us on account of this heavy loss. At a public meeting held a few days after in the city of New York, about twenty-five thousand dollars were subscribed toward relieving us in this distress, and as the news spread, similar meetings were held all over the country, and liberal donations and subscriptions were made, which mightily cheered the hearts of those more immediately interested in the Concern. The entire amount which has been received toward making up this heavy loss is \$88,346.09. This, as it came in, enabled the agents to continue their business, and they recommenced building, even while the smoke gave signs that the fire was not entirely extinguished.

What made this fire the more disastrous was, that the much more destructive one which had preceded it only about two months in the city of New York, had prostrated most of the insurance offices, and rendered them unable to pay the demands against them, and made it impossible to get insured in New York with any safety for some time. Most of the policies held by the Concern had expired about this time by their own limitation and such were the fears entertained abroad for New York fires, that it was next to impossible to get insured elsewhere on any terms. Hence but a small portion was under insurance at the time of the fire, so that only about \$25,000 were realized from these sources to make up the loss.

Happily, the Concern was not in debt. By hiring an office temporarily, and employing other printers, and accepting the kind offers of some who proffered their services, the agents soon

resumed their business, the smaller works were put to press, and our herald of news, the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, soon took its flight again, though the first number after the fire had its wings much shortened, through the symbolical heavens, carrying the tidings of our loss, and of the liberal and steady efforts which were making to reinvigorate the paralyzed *Concern*.

Things went on in this way till the assembling of the General Conference of 1836, when Beverly Waugh being elected a bishop, Thomas Mason was put in his place, and George Lane was elected his assistant. To this conference the plan of the new building was submitted, approved of; and the new agents entered upon their work with energy and perseverance. Samuel Luckey, D. D., was elected general editor, and John A. Collins his assistant. Of their labors I need say nothing, as they are before the public, and will be appreciated according to their worth.

The new buildings went up with all convenient dispatch, in a much better style, more durable, better adapted to their use, and safer against fire than the former. A view of the front building may be seen in the engraving which accompanies this volume. [graphic not included with this electronic edition — DVM] This is one hundred and twenty-one feet in length, and thirty in breadth, four stories high above the basement, with offices for the agents and editors, a book-store in the north end, and a committee-room in the first story above the basement in the south end, in which the managers of the *Missionary Society* meet, and the corresponding secretary has his office, the other story being occupied for a printing office, drying and pressing the printed sheets.

The building in the rear is sixty-five feet in length, and thirty in breadth, four stories high, and is used for stitching and binding, and storing away the printed and bound books.

There are now, 1841, employed in the printing office eight power-presses, moved by steam; and the cylinder press, on which the *Christian Advocate and Journal* is printed, throws off one thousand and eight hundred impressions in an hour. To keep all these in operation requires the labor of fifty-six hands, a much less number than before power-presses were used, besides the superintendent of the office, to whose skill and diligence the *Concern* is much indebted for its steady improvement and encouraging success.

In the bindery there are employed eighty-seven hands, besides the worthy superintendent, whose activity and skill in his business have gained him the confidence of his employers. Of these thirty-six are male and fifty-one are female, the latter of whom are engaged in folding and stitching, and the former in pressing and binding the books.

Adding these to those employed in the printing office, they will make the whole number at present, including the editors, agents, and clerks, in the *Book Room*, one hundred and seventy-four workmen, the number varying either less or more, to meet the exigencies of the times.

I need only add here, that at the last General Conference the same agents were continued in office, George Peck was elected editor of the Methodist Quarterly Review and the general books and tracts, and Thomas E. Bond editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal, and Sunday school books, and George Coles his assistant.

In addition to this principal establishment, as I have already noticed in the general history, the branch establishment at Cincinnati has been so conducted that it has constantly increased in magnitude and importance, and is receiving more and more of the public patronage. A weekly paper, ably conducted, and with a circulation of upward of twelve thousand, now entered upon its seventh volume, is published there, besides a variety of books of the smaller class, together with a periodical in the German language, and another called the Ladies' Repository and Western Gatherer; and the agents keep on sale all the books which are published in New York. In addition to these, with a view to afford facilities for the more general circulation of both books, tracts, and periodicals, depositories have been established in Boston, Philadelphia, Richmond, Va., Charleston, S. C., Pittsburgh, and Nashville, at each of which places a weekly religious paper is published, all under the patronage of the General Conference except those in Boston and Philadelphia, the former being under the patronage of the New England, Rhode Island, Maine, and New Hampshire conferences, and the latter being the property of individuals. Though these several papers may not add any thing directly to the pecuniary resources of the Concern, as some of them have not heretofore supported themselves, yet they no doubt increase and extend its moral power and influence, and indirectly promote its pecuniary interests by inculcating more generally religious and scientific information, advertising the books, and thus creating, improving, and more widely diffusing a taste for reading, by which means a demand for books is proportionally increased and perpetuated.

This imperfect narrative will enable the reader to judge of the moral power which this Concern has exerted, and does still exert, on the reading community by means of its numerous publications.

II. Objects and Influence of the Concern — Many have egregiously misapprehended the objects of this establishment. They have supposed that its chief object and primary design were to make money, and hence the virulence with which it has been at times assailed. But it has been affirmed over and over again, and also demonstrated by an appeal to facts, that this never was, and is not either the primary or secondary object and design of the Methodist Book Concern. It was commenced, and is now kept in operation for the purpose of diffusing abroad sound knowledge, moral and religious information, and general intelligence on all subjects connected with the best interests of mankind, which involve their present and future, their temporal and eternal well-being. These are its objects.

But knowing that, if judiciously managed, it might yield something over and above its expenses, provision was made for the application of its surplus revenue for the best of all objects,

namely, the spread of Scriptural truth and holiness through the land, by means of itinerant preaching. The objects, therefore, to be realized by its pecuniary means are identical with the preaching of the gospel, and fall in with the grand design for which the Saviour came into our world, and that is to redeem mankind "from all iniquity." And its annual avails are sacredly applied for the promotion of this most benevolent object.

Our ministry differs, in respect to its means and amount of support, from all others. We are not, however, inquiring into the comparative merits or demerits of each, but simply in regard to facts. While most others are so amply provided for that they may lay up something for old age, and procure an inheritance for their children, our ministers are allowed what is considered barely sufficient to meet the necessary wants of themselves and those who are dependent on them for a support, and hence the appropriations are made in proportion to the age and number in a family, and to the expensiveness of living. But in many places not even this much is ever realized. Hence many come to conference every year more or less deficient, especially those who labor in the exterior parts of the work. Yet allowing that they were to get all that is allowed them, unless they have other means of accumulating property, they will "have nothing over."

Under these circumstances, it was thought to be a sacred duty which the Church owed to her servants, who have worn and are wearing themselves out in her service, to provide something for their support and comfort in old age, as well as to meet the annual necessities of those who are most emphatically preaching "the gospel to the poor." For this purpose a public collection, called "the conference or fifth collection," is made once a year in all our congregations, the amount of which is sent to the annual conference, and equally divided among deficient preachers toward making up their disciplinary allowance; and to aid in this benevolent work the avail of the Book Concern are added.

We have also on our list not less than two hundred and sixty-one superannuated preachers, perhaps as many wives and widows, besides a large number of orphan children. These are some of the "treasures of the Church," as a certain primitive bishop said to his heathen persecutors, when, in answer to their demand for his church treasures, he brought out the poor of his flock, and replied, "These are my treasures;" but they are a sort of treasure which hung us in no other income than what is called forth by the commiseration which they excite in the hearts of the people. They are nevertheless a treasure of great worth.

Well, to meet the wants of these superannuated preachers, their wives, widows, and orphan children, the avails of the Methodist Book Concern are appropriated, and we rejoice that it has always yielded a little for so noble and philanthropic an object. Hence this is made one of the many grounds on which the plea is founded, and a very strong one it is, even resistible to those who understand and duly appreciate it, for as extensive a circulation as possible of the books of this establishment. And then as the bishops have no legal claim upon any circuit or station, nor even an annual conference, for any thing more than their bare allowance as

traveling preachers; that is, one hundred dollars a year for each bishop and one hundred dollars for his wife, and not over twenty-four dollars for each child under fourteen years of age, a portion of the annual dividends of the Book Concern is appropriated for their family and traveling expenses. These then are the objects which are incidentally provided for by this Concern, and it is thought that they are such as to commend themselves to the approbation of every just, generous, and benevolent mind.

I say incidentally — for they were not the primary, nor the chief object for which the Concern was instituted. If they were, they would not be worthy of the labor and anxiety of conducting its complicated affairs, inasmuch as its pecuniary benefits might, if this did not exist, be realized with less trouble from other sources. But when we take into the account its immense moral, religious, and scientific object, to promote which was its primary design, no man need to grudge the labor he bestows upon it, the sacrifices he may make to build up and perpetuate its interests, and to make it wield as great and extensive a power as possible. To guard the purity of the press, to promulgate sound, Scriptural doctrine, to spread the most useful information, and to proclaim to all within the hearing of its voice, “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” — these were the high, and holy, and enlightened purposes for which this Concern was established, and for which we have labored, and do still labor to keep it in operation.

Those therefore who understand its character and objects, will be convinced that they who work in this Concern, editors, agents, printers, and binders, as well as the venders of the books, are subserving, in the most powerful and diffusive manner, the grand designs of redemption. Whatever may be the motive of any subordinate or principal agent in its concerns, let it be remembered that it was created, and has been carried forward, for the sole purpose of enlightening mankind by the principles of truth, whether of moral, philosophical, historical, or divine truth, and of saving sinners from the error of their ways, by pointing them to the “Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.”

But has it accomplished this work? It has. I remember at the public meeting held in the city of New York in its behalf, soon after the disastrous fire I have before noticed, a gentleman present, a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, arose and remarked, in substance, “I have lived heretofore in the new countries; and I remember the time when the people who dwelt in their log cabins had no other books to read but such as they obtained from Methodist itinerants, who carried them around their circuits in their saddle-bags, and after preaching sold them to the people. In this humble way the poor people in the wilderness were supplied both with the living word from the lips of God’s messengers, and with reading matter for their meditation by the fire-side when the living teacher had taken his departure. Therefore,” he added, with a warmth of feeling which thrilled through the whole assembly and brought forth a spontaneous burst of applause, “put me down one thousand dollars to help rebuild the Methodist Book Room.”

This was all strictly true. Wherever the Methodist preachers went; — and where did they not go? — they not only carried the glad tidings of salvation upon their lips, but they also “published the acceptable year of the Lord” by means of the press, and by circulating the best of books in the cheapest possible form among the people, often giving them away, at their own personal expense, to those who were not the to pay for them.

What a mighty engine is the press! What an event was that when this engine was first set in motion Since then, what a revolution has been effected in the civilized world, in religion, in civil jurisprudence, in philosophy, and in every department of knowledge, human and divine! Mr. Wesley well knew the power of this instrument. he therefore availed himself of it to aid him in the great work of evangelizing the world. He made it speak, in clear and distinct tones, “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” His sons in the gospel have had wisdom and perseverance enough to follow in his track, and make this speaking-trumpet continue its “certain sound,” and it has been, not a “tinkling cymbal,” but a high-sounding instrument of peculiar force, warning the unruly, instructing the ignorant, and rejoicing the hearts, by its thrilling accents, of tens of thousands of immortal minds.

Others have also imitated the example. Hence publishing establishments, among various sects and parties, have come into existence both in Europe and America, which are sending out their tracts, Sunday school books, Bibles, and various other publications, in every direction. Success to them all, so far as they are guided by the “wisdom coming from above,” and are actuated by motives of benevolence to the souls and bodies of men!

But the voice of this mighty instrument is now heard in almost every quarter of the globe. The men that have been raised up by the lever of Wesleyan Methodism have “gone out into all the world, and their words,” which are uttered through the press, “unto the ends of the earth.” On both sides of the Atlantic men have been raised up, and qualified to hold “the pen of ready writers;” and they have wielded, and are wielding it, with powerful effect among the different nations of the earth. Portions of the works of the Wesleys, and the doctrinal tracts and biographies of those and others of the same connection, have been translated into the French, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Dutch languages, and even into some of the languages of the North American Indians, and, by means of the press, are “flying upon the wings of the morning to the utmost bounds of the earth.” Even at our own press, Bibles and Testaments, of various sizes Commentaries, — Wesley’s, Clarke’s, Benson’s, Watson’s, — sermons, from a variety of authors, doctrinal, experimental, and practical; tracts, to the number of upward of three hundred, from four to sixty pages each; biographies of Christian ministers, and other eminent characters, male and female; histories; critical dissertations on a variety of subjects; various periodicals, loaded with the best of matter, of a miscellaneous character, one of which, the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, is read probably by not less

than one hundred thousand⁸ people; are now published, and sent abroad in various directions.

Now, who can calculate the immense moral power of this press? Besides the influence it exerts upon the readers of its publications, it tends to call forth the talents of writers who are benefiting themselves while they are striving to instruct others, thus increasing the moral and intellectual ability to do good, while the good itself is diffused throughout the whole community. For, indeed, these publications are carrying light and instruction, not only throughout our own continent, but to Africa, to South America, to the British provinces of North America, to the West Indies, and are now lifting up their voice in the Oregon territory, on the shores of the North Pacific.

No wonder that its enemies have tried to cripple its energies, and to silence its voice. They had felt its power; they therefore feared its effects; but, by using it judiciously, it has made known our character and objects, vindicated our doctrines, institutions, and usages, and developed our plans of operations. Hence a comparative silence has succeeded to the clamorous opposition which was raised against it and us not many years since.

And this demonstrates more forcibly still its vast utility. It has spoken so plainly, conclusively, energetically, and truly, that others now understand us better than formerly, and we humbly trust fellowship us more cordially.

It is hoped, therefore, that neither pride nor vain-glory on the one hand, nor fear and man-pleasing on the other, will ever lead to the abuse of this high and distinguished privilege, of speaking to the public through the press. And may it ever be guarded against all impurity in doctrine and morals, and be made to utter the sentiments of truth and love! so shall it be like a faithful sentinel, to guard the walls of our Zion, and to direct the wandering traveler, who has his "face thitherward," into the "narrow way" and the "strait gate," which may safely conduct him to everlasting life.

But it is time to bring this History to a close. I have finished my work, at least in this department of labor. I have done what I could to present facts, with such comments as seemed needful to throw light upon them. If I have allowed some of these facts to pass without any

8 Since the establishment of the other papers before mentioned, there has been a falling off in the number of subscribers to this paper, while the aggregate number of readers has increased. Allowing twelve thousand to the Western Christian Advocate, and three thousand to each of the other five weekly papers, and twenty-six thousand to the one issued in New York, the whole number of subscribers will be forty-three thousand; and, allowing four readers to each subscriber, which probably is the average number, it will give one hundred and seventy-two thousand readers of these weekly sheets. Though this may sound large, yet the number is not by any means in proportion to the number of Church members, not being more than about one fifth of the entire membership. Should not every Methodist family, consisting of probably not less than two hundred thousand, be blessed with the visits of one or more of these heralds of good tidings?

note of approbation or disapprobation, the reader is not to infer that they are therefore either approved or disapproved, but simply that I chose to let every one draw his own inferences, without any predilection from the opinions of the historian.

One word, by way of apology, for the general arrangement and manner of the History. It is said that "history is philosophy teaching by example." This is true. But how does philosophy teach by example? I apprehend, by the facts it furnishes, and not by substituting philosophical disquisitions for the facts of history. Well-authenticated facts furnish the philosopher with his data, whence he draws his conclusions respecting causes and effects and their mutual dependence, as well as the influence they exert upon human affairs. The principal business of the historian, therefore, is to record facts as he finds them, without disguise or coloring, whether he can account for them or not.

This I have endeavored to do; though not, as one has thoughtlessly said, by suppressing inquiry, on all proper occasions, into the causes which originated the facts, and of the effects which they produced on human society, and especially on the religious world. And could I conscientiously have taken the reins from the imagination, and suffered my reason to run mad, I might have conjured up a thousand fanciful theories to account for the success and influence of Methodism, without ascribing it to its true original cause, namely, the divine agency. This, however, I dare not do. But in the close of the first volume, and in various other places, I have endeavored, and I hope not without some success, to show the aptitude of the means which divine wisdom saw fit to employ to produce the desired results, and the suitability of the instruments, and their plans of operation, to the condition and tendencies of human society. So far, therefore, from keeping philosophy if you understand by that word the art of tracing effects to their causes, or of inferring causes from their effects, — under abeyance, I have freely availed myself of its assistance in the course of my work, as every one must see who reads it with attention, and does not make up a judgment without consulting its pages.

I might, indeed, have omitted many of the reports and other documents of the General Conference, and extracts from writers on other subjects, and have simply stated the substance of them, in my own language, in few words. But this would not have answered my purpose. These documents I considered of great importance in settling doctrines, in establishing principles, and in confirming usages, and, therefore, would be often appealed to for or against us. Some of them had been published, and others given in a mutilated form, and commented upon by our opponents greatly to our disadvantage. Others were locked up in the General Conference trunk, and were of use to no one except to those who had an opportunity to consult them in manuscript. These are now made public in an authenticated form, are accessible to all who desire to read them, and will be of convenient reference in time of need.

I have endeavored thus to use the discretion which the General Conference so generously allowed me to exercise over its documents, according to the best of my judgment, for the edification of the reader, and for the good of the general cause; and if the absence of all complaint, on the part of those most interested, may be considered an evidence of satisfaction in the selections I have made, I have reason to infer that I have not abused my trust.

Had these documents and extracts been omitted, my work, I confess, would have had more the appearance of a continued history, faithfully elaborated in a uniform style; but I chose, in this respect, to sacrifice the reputation which such a course might have secured to the greater utility, and, I should hope, satisfaction, of the reader, arising from variety in matter and style, by adopting the method I have.

I have, indeed, been much encouraged, from knowing that the former volumes have had an extensive circulation, that many have expressed themselves highly gratified in their perusal, and a hope that the History might be continued to the present time. And, as this is in conformity with my original intention, though it has lengthened on my hands much beyond my expectations when I commenced writing, I have accordingly brought it down to the year 1840. Here I close it, with an expression of gratitude to Almighty God for the good that he hath done by the humble instrumentality of the Methodist ministry, and for permitting me to record it to the glory of his name. Amen.

New York, March 26, 1841. _____

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Coacti sunt enim in hac civitate vere adversus sanctum Filium tuum Jesum quem unxisti, Herodes et Pontius Pilatus cum Gentibus et populis Israelis, Ut facerent quaecumque manus tua et consilium tuum prius definierat ut fierent.: [22](#)

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Car en effet Herode et Ponce Pilate, avec les Gentils et le peuple d'Israel, se sont assemblees contre ton saint Fils Jesus, que tu as oint, Pour faire toutes les choses que ta main et ton conseil avoient auparavant determine' devoir etre faites.: [21](#)

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