



*"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16*

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF REV. WILLIAM BURKE

by James B. Finley

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I was born in London county, state of Virginia, on the 13th day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy. My ancestors by my father were from Ireland, and settled in St. Marys, Maryland, about the commencement of the settling of that colony. My grandmother on my mother's side was born in Wales, brought up in London, emigrated to America about 1750, and settled in Fairfax county, Virginia, in the neighborhood of Mount Vernon; was an inmate of the family of General Washington, and married a gentleman by the name of Compton, and settled in a place called Clifton's Neck, in sight of Mount Vernon. My grandfather died before my recollection, and left two sons and three daughters, all of whom married and settled in Fairfax county. They all became wealthy, and lived to a good old age. My grandmother lived to the advanced age of one hundred and ten, and died a member of the Church of England. My grandfather on my father's side had two children by his first wife, who also lived in Fairfax county. After, the death of my grandmother he moved to Albemarle county, where he had, by a second wife, several children; and while engaged in opening a farm, in the early settlement of that country, was killed by the falling of a tree. With that branch of the family I had no acquaintance. However in 1810 I became acquainted with some branches of the family who were settled in Cumberland county, Kentucky and who had lost the original name, and wrote their names Burks. They were settled on the Cumberland river, at a town called Burksville.

My father, after his marriage to Rhoda Compton, moved to London county, at that time a frontier county, and was engaged with Washington in what was termed Braddock's war. My father, John Burke, had three sons and one daughter, John, Mary, Anson, and William. John and Mary died when young. My brother Anson is now living in Williamson county, Tenn., at the advanced age of eighty-six. He had four sons and one daughter, all living around him, except William Wesley, who came to Cincinnati, Ohio, and died here in 1849. My father, at the commencement of the Revolution, took the side of liberty, and was among the first who enrolled his name under Colonel Leven Powell, as a minute man, and was in that service one year at Hampton, Virginia, and again at Yorktown, at the taking of Cornwallis, where he suffered every thing but death. During the summer of 1775, while my father was at Hampton, the first Methodist preacher visited London county; namely, Joseph Everett. My mother went some considerable distance to hear him, in hopes to meet with some intelligence from my father. I have no recollection of hearing any more of the Methodists till 1780, when Philip Cox commenced preaching at Bacon Fort old church, the parish in which my father then lived and in which I was baptized. There being no (Anglican) parson at that time, the Methodists were allowed to preach in the church. I was then ten years old, and can recollect many circumstances that transpired during that year.

It was the fashion at that day for the ladies to wear enormous high rolls on the head, and a report had been in circulation for some time that a calf had been born in Alexandria with one of those rolls on its head and gave out that the next time he came round, in four weeks, he would show them a wonder. The whole country was in expectation that he would exhibit the calf; and a great concourse of people assembled. The preacher arrived, but instead of the calf he commenced by giving out his text: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun," etc. This gained the attention of the multitude: and from that the Methodism took root in that section of country.

In 1781 Francis Poythress and Michael Ellis were stationed on the circuit; and in the winter of 1781 and 1782, under the preaching of Mr. Ellis, I was strangely and deeply affected; but it wore off by degrees; for at that time I was going to school, where we had but little of religion taught. My father and mother joined the society at Royell's, Bacon Fort old church, in the early part of 1780.

Nothing very special occurred that waked up my attention till the summer of 1784, when it was given out that Thomas Vasey, one of the newly-ordained preachers, was to preach in Leesburg. He preached in the court-house to a very large concourse of people; and numbers who had been in the habit of hearing the Methodists preach, were astonished to hear him performing the morning service as laid down in the Methodist prayer book. The practice and the book have long since been laid aside. The means of education were very limited in those days, and in that part of the country; consequently, I was limited to what was then called an English education, all of which I completed in the years 1785 and 1786.

In the spring of 1787 my father determined to remove to the state of Georgia. We accordingly set out early in the spring. The preceding year had been very unfavorable for crops in the south; and having arrived in North Carolina, not far from Guilford court-home we fell into a neighborhood of Virginians, from Fairfax county, and with whom my father and mother were acquainted, and they persuaded us to spend the summer with them. We did so, with the intention of going to Georgia the next spring; but my father being pleased with the country, determined to settle himself in North Carolina, and accordingly purchased a tract of land in one mile of the high ford, of Haw River. In the neighborhood I formed new associations, became very profligate and vain, and entered fully into all the amusements of the day. My dear mother was very pious, and I was her darling boy. The course I was then pursuing gave her much pain and affliction. She used every means in her power to dissuade me from it, and used to pray for me day and night. In the latter part of the year 1790 I was awakened under the preaching of Isaac Lowe. In the fall of that year the society established a weekly prayer meeting, and I was a constant attendant, and had formed the resolution never to stop short of obtaining experiential religion.

The practice then among the Methodists was to call upon all the seekers of religion to pray in public at the prayer meeting. I was called upon, and took up my cross, and continued to pray at every prayer meeting. In the month of February, 1791, after the preacher concluded, he opened the door to receive members. I went forward alone and gave my name, and there was great joy manifested at the return of so great a prodigal, and I was the first fruits of a great revival. In the month of March, I attended a quarterly meeting at Smith's meeting house, on Guilford circuit. On Saturday and Saturday night I was in great distress and slept but little. On Sunday morning early I betook myself to the woods and wandered about and prayed earnestly for deliverance. At nine o'clock the love-feast began. I can not recollect much that was done. I fell senseless to the floor, and the first I can recollect I was on my feet giving glory to God in loud praises to the astonishment of many.



After my ecstasy was over, and I came to reflect, my load of sin was gone. I felt no more condemnation, but could not say that I was born again. In this situation I remained for eight days; and on the next Sunday evening, after having returned from meeting, I betook myself to the woods, and at the root of a large whiteoak-tree, while engaged in prayer, God gave me the witness of the Spirit, and from that moment I went on my way rejoicing. We continued our prayer meeting with increasing interest, and very soon one and another would get converted, and our meetings would sometimes continue all night. The class-leader, who in those days would open and conduct the prayer meeting, put me forward to open the meetings, and I continued after prayer to give an exhortation.

The heavenly flame spread through the neighborhood, and the neighboring classes caught the holy fire, and in a short time hundreds attended our night meetings. I have often walked five and six miles to a night meeting, and spent the whole night, while the mourners were down in the house and all over the yard, crying mightily to God for mercy. That year George McKinney, a son of thunder, was sent to Guilford circuit, who entered fully into the work, and great numbers were added to the Church. In the month of June of this year, I made my first attempt at preaching from a text. The words were, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, who will have mercy upon him and to our God, who will abundantly pardon." I had great liberty, and found favor in the eyes of the people. I continued to exercise my gift in exhortation and preaching whenever opportunity presented. In the month of August I attended a quarterly meeting at the Haw, New Hope circuit, at the Tartmele. There was a great collection of people on Sunday. Thomas Anderson was elder; but Thomas Bowen was at the quarterly meeting on a tour south, and preached the first sermon on Sunday; and at the close of the sermon they set me up to exhort. I had a voice like thunder, and it seemed as though there was a fire in my bones. The dry bones began to tremble, and sinners began to leave the house; the fire was too warm for them.

Upon the whole, we had a good time. Many in that quarter had never seen the like before. Brother Isaac Lowe was then traveling on New Hope circuit. He was a married man, and his family lived in the neighborhood of my father's, and we returned in company home. In the fall, at the beginning of October, brother Lowe insisted that I should accompany him round New Hope circuit. Accordingly, I arranged my business so as to make the tour of six weeks. We went on together, preaching time about, till he was taken sick and returned home, and left me to complete the round. I did so, and then returned home, where I found him recovered from his illness. One of the preachers had left Guilford circuit and gone home. I was requested to take his place. I did so, and traveled that winter on that circuit. On one of my rounds I fell in with Thomas Anderson, the presiding elder. He inquired if I had any permit to exhort or preach. I told him I had not, and before we parted he gave me a license, which was the only license I ever had, till my name was on the minutes of the annual conference.

The annual conference for that year was at McKnight's, on the Yadkin river, on the second of April.

There was no formal application made by me to travel, and no vacancy offering, I returned home and had thoughts of settling myself for life and began to make preparations for building a house and opening business but my mind was not at rest. During the summer and fall I was to preach three, four, and five times in a radius of forty and fifty miles. The conference for this year was held at Green Hills, at which conference I was admitted on trial, and appointed to West New River circuit, on the head waters of the Kanawha river, in the state of Virginia. On my way to my appointment I stopped at home a few days, and having furnished myself with several suits of clothes, I started all alone for the west, crossed the Blue Ridge at the Flower Gap, entered the circuit at brother

Forbes's, on what was called the Glades, lying between the Blue Ridge and New river. This was about the first of February, 1792. This was a four weeks' circuit, and between four and five hundred miles round.

It extended in length from the three forks of New river, over the Allegheny Mountains, on the waters of Roanoke; and from north to south from Walker's creek to the Glades, near the Blue Ridge. The country is very mountainous, high and cold; and in Montgomery, Wythe, and Grayson counties it is too cold to produce Indian corn with any degree of certainty. Rye was produced in great abundance.

The first preachers that visited that country was in the year 1783. It was then called the Holston country. The head waters of the South Fork of the Holston extended as far east as Wythe and the borders of Grayson counties, extending west as far as the Three Islands. In this tract of country the first preachers began their operations. They were Jeremiah Lambert, Henry Willis, Mark Whitaker, Mark More, and Ruben Ellis, the elder. The district included Salisbury and Yadkin circuits in North Carolina, Holston in the west. In 1787 the Holston circuit was divided into two circuits, Holston and Nolachucky and Philip Bruce appointed elder. Two new preachers were sent Jeremiah Masten and Thomas Ware — in 1788. Two new circuits were made out of the old one. The Holston circuit embracing all the settlements on the south forks of Holston, and all the settlements on the Clinch river, including the counties of Washington and Russell, in Virginia, and Blount county, in the Western territory. French Broad included all the settlements west and south of the main Holston to the frontiers bordering on the Cherokee nation. West New river was this year made a circuit, and Greenbriar added, which was composed of the new settlements on Greenbriar river, and part of the head waters of the James river; Edward Morris elder.

In 1789 John Tunel was presiding elder and Bottetourt circuit added. In 1790 two districts were formed; one was composed of West New River, Russell, Holston, and Green circuits — Charles Hardy presiding elder. This year John McGee and John West were on Green circuit; John West is still living in the bounds of the Pittsburgh conference. Bottetourt, Greenbriar, and Kanawha circuits -Jeremiah Able presiding elder. This year the Little Kanawha circuit was formed, and Jacob Lurton was the preacher in charge. In 1793 he was on Salt River circuit, Kentucky, and married a Miss Tooley, on Bear Grass, Jefferson county, and located, and for many years lived on Floyd's Fork of Salt river. He was an original genius, and a useful preacher. In 1791 Mark Whitaker was presiding elder, and Charles Hardy and John West were on the West New River circuit. Charles Hardy located this year, and the last part of the year I succeeded him. John West remained with me on the circuit till the Holston conference on the 15th of May, 1792.

Nothing material transpired while on the circuit. The state of religion was at a low ebb in all the circuits. Most of the preachers had not been much in the work for several years, and discipline had been much neglected. Mr. Asbury on his return from the Kentucky conference, met the conference members of Holston, on the 15th April. 1792. Hope Hull, who had accompanied him from Georgia, and Wilson Lee, who was now returning from Kentucky, and accompanying the Bishop on to the east, were with him. Both preached at this conference with great success. General William Russell, who had married the widow of General Campbell, and sister of Patrick Henry, who had embraced religion, together with his amiable lady, and who lived at the salt-works, on the North Fork of Holston; attended this conference and accommodated a number of the preachers. Upon the whole, we had a good time for those days. Stephen Brooks, from the Kentucky conference, was appointed to Green circuit, in charge, and I was appointed with him, and Barnabas McHenry, who came also with the Bishop from Kentucky, was the presiding elder. We had an entire set of new preachers for the whole district — Salathiel Weeks and James Ward



on the Holston circuit, both from Virginia; David Haggard, Daniel Lockett, and Jeremiah Norman, from North Carolina. Brother Norman was on Russell, and brothers Haggard and Lockett on West New River. The presiding elder and all the preachers entered into a covenant to attend strictly to the Discipline. When brother Brooks and myself arrived at our charge, which was in a few days after the conference rose, we mutually agreed to enforce the rules of the society; and by midsummer we had the satisfaction of seeing a gracious work in many places on the circuit.

A very peculiar circumstance took place some time in July. On Nolachucky there was a rich and thickly settled neighborhood, which afterward went by the name of Earnest's neighborhood. There was but one Methodist in the neighborhood, the wife of a Felix Earnest who attended preaching when she could; being about five or six miles distant from the meetings. Felix was a very wicked man. Being one day at a distillery, and partially intoxicated, the Spirit of God arrested him. He immediately went home, and inquired of his wife if she knew of any Methodist meeting any where on that day. It happened to be the day that brother Brooks preached, in the adjoining neighborhood, and he immediately put off for the meeting. He arrived there after meeting had began, and stood in the door, with his shirt collar open, and his face red, and the tears streaming down his cheeks. He invited brother Brooks to bring preaching into the neighborhood. He did so, and in two weeks I came round and preached to a good congregation. The word of God had free course, and was glorified. The whole family of the Earnests was brought into the Church, with many others, and by the first of September we had a large society formed. I left the circuit in September, but the work continued. In a short time they built a meeting-house; and in the spring of 1795 the Western conference had their annual sitting at the meeting-house, and Felix was a local preacher. Our second quarterly meeting was in the beginning of August, at the Pine Chapel; south of the French Broad river, and below the mouth of Little Pigeon river. It was a good time. It was given up by all that it was the best love-feast that they had ever seen. On my next round, which was in September, the Cherokee war was just breaking out.

After I crossed the French Broad and Little rivers, and arrived at the extreme point of the settlement, I found the inhabitants in a state of alarm on account of the war. I preached that day, and at night the whole neighborhood collected, bringing intelligence that the Indians were in the settlement. In the morning I started for my next appointment, on the south bank of Little river, having a guard of two brothers, who piloted me through the woods part of the way, but becoming alarmed for the safety of their families, left me to make the best of my way. I arrived a little before noon, but found it would be impossible to collect a congregation. The people were moving in and concentrating at a certain point, for the purpose of fortifying, and by night we were the frontier house. After dark the lights were all put out, and each one sat down with his gun on his lap. One of the company started about nine o'clock to go where the Indians were collected for fortifying; but soon returned, and said the Indians were plenty in the neighborhood.

I immediately determined to make my journey to the next preaching-place, which was about ten miles, and I was obliged to travel under cover of the night; but I had one difficulty to encounter, having nothing but a small path, and the river to cross, and an island to reach in the river. The night was dark, and the timber very thick on the island, and I could not prevail on any of them to leave the house or give me any assistance; However, I put my trust in God and set off. After having passed the first part of the river I alighted from my horse, and undertook to keep the path on foot. I succeeded beyond my expectation, reached the shore at the proper point, and proceeded without meeting with any difficulty. About two o'clock I arrived at the house, where my appointment was for that day, proceeded to the door, and sought admittance, but found no inmates. I knew

there were cabins on the opposite side of a marsh, and I commenced hallooing as loud as I could I soon brought some of them out, who wished to know who I was, and what I wanted. They suspected that the Indians wished to decoy them, and were preparing to give me a warm reception of powder and lead when the lady whose house we preached, came out and knew my voice. They then came over and conducted me to the place where the whole neighborhood was collected, and the next day I crossed the French Broad river, which placed me beyond the reach of danger. I passed up through the circuit, leaving the frontier appointments on the south side of the river, which were Pine Chapel, Little and Big Pigeon. The first intelligence I had from that quarter was, that all the inhabitants in the neighborhood of the Pine Chapel were massacred in one night by the Indians.

The first General conference in the United States met late in the fall of this year. The presiding elder and S. Weeks, from the Holston circuit, both left for the General conference; and the presiding elder moved me from Green circuit and put me in charge of the Holston, and sent brother J. Ward to fill my place. Brother Ward had but moderate talents, but was a devoted and good man; and through his instrumentality good was done on the Holston circuit. In the neighborhood of the Salt-Works a number had been added to the Church. Among the number was the heiress, Miss Sally Campbell, daughter of General Campbell, who distinguished himself at the battle of King's Mountain. Her mother, Mrs. Russell, had, for some time, been a member of the Church, and was among the most excellent ones of the earth. Late in the fall of this year General Russell and family made a visit to the eastern part of Virginia, among their old friends and relations. The General was taken sick and died. His daughter, Cloe Russell, had just married a circuit preacher by the name of Hubbard Saunders. During their visit Miss Sarah Campbell was married to Francis Preston, Esq., of Virginia, whose son is now senator in Congress from South Carolina. The surviving part of the family did not return during my stay on the circuit. We had some good times on our field of labor, at Baker's, near the Three Islands and at Acuff's. I remained on the circuit till Christmas, when, by the directions of the presiding elder, brother Norman and myself changed, and I was on Clinch circuit.

This was a frontier circuit, the whole north side of it being exposed to the savages. On this circuit I first began to eat bear meat, and buffalo tongues. I entered this circuit with a determination, by the help of God, to have a revival of religion, and in some degree succeeded. It was a three weeks' circuit, and I was alone, without even a local preacher to help me. Through the winter we had a considerable revival at Elk Garden, head of Clinch river, at Bickley's Station, and at several other preaching places. On the last Saturday and Sunday in March, 1793, we held our quarterly meeting at Bickley's Station. We had a good time. During the past year we had many conflicts, a new country Indian warfare going on all the winter on our southern borders. The preachers had received about enough quarterage to keep soul and body together. On Monday morning, after the Quarterly meeting, I started for the annual conference, which met on the third day of April. We met Bishop Asbury and William Spencer, from the Virginia conference, and Henry Hill, from North Carolina. The conference business concluded on Saturday; Sunday was taken up in preaching; and on Monday morning we started for Kentucky. Several of our friends volunteered to guide us through the wilderness. Francis Asbury, Barnabas McHenry, Henry Hill, James Ward, and William Burke were all the preachers. These, together with some who met us at Bean's Station, on Holston, made our company all pretty well armed except the Bishop. It was about one hundred and thirty miles through the wilderness with but one house in Powell's Valley where we staid the first night. Next morning, by sunrise, we crossed Cumberland Mountain and entered into the bosom of the wilderness.

I will here introduce a plan that Mr. Asbury suggested before we left the settlements. It



was to make a rope long enough to tie to the trees all around the camp when we stopped at night, except a small passage for us to retreat, should the Indians surprise us; the rope to be so fixed as to strike the Indians below the knee, in which case they would fall forward, and we would retreat into the dark and pour in a fire upon them from our rifles. We accordingly prepared ourselves with the rope, and placed it on our pack-horse. We had to pack on the horses we rode, corn sufficient to feed them for three days, and our own provisions, beside our saddle-bags of clothes. Through the course of the day nothing material transpired till very late in the afternoon, say less than an hour before sunset, when passing up a stony hollow from Richland creek, at the head of which was the war-path from the northern Indians to the southern tribes, we heard, just over the point of a hill, a noise like a child crying in great distress. We soon discovered there were Indians there, and the reason why they used that stratagem to decoy us was, that a few days before they had defeated a company, known for a long time as McFarland's defeat, and a number were killed, and several children supposed to be lost in the woods. We immediately put whip to our horses, and in a few minutes crossed the ridge and descended to Camp creek about sunset, when we called a halt to consult on what was best to be done; and on putting it to vote whether we proceed on our journey, every one was for proceeding but one of the preachers, who said it would kill his horse to travel that night. The Bishop all this time was sitting on his horse in silence, and on the vote being taken he reined up his steed and said, "Kill man, kill horse, kill horse first;" and in a few minutes we made our arrangements for the night. The night being dark, and nothing but a narrow path, we appointed two to proceed in front and lead the way and keep the path, and two as a rear guard, to keep some distance behind and bring intelligence every half hour, that we might know whether they were in pursuit of us; for we could not go faster than a walk. They reported that they were following us till near twelve o'clock. We were then on the Big Laurel River. We agreed to proceed, and alighted from our horses and continued on foot till daybreak, when we arrived at the Hazel Patch, where we stopped and fed our horses, and took some refreshment. We were mounted, and on our journey by the rising of the sun; but by this time we were all very much fatigued, and we yet had at least between forty and fifty miles before us for that day.

That night about dark we arrived at our good friend Willis Green's, near Stanford, Lincoln court-house, having been on horseback nearly forty hours, and having traveled about one hundred and ten miles in that time. I perfectly recollect that at supper I handed my cup for a second cup of tea, and before it reached me I was fast asleep, and had to be waked up to receive it. Part of us remained at Mr. Green's over Sunday, and preached at several places in the neighborhood. The Bishop and brother Henry proceeded on next morning to attend a quarterly meeting at brother Francis Clark's, on the waters of Salt river, six miles west of Danville.

On the 15th of April, 1793, the conference met at Masterson's Station. Preachers present, Francis Asbury, bishop; Francis Poythress, Henry Burchet, Jacob Lurton, James Ward, John Page, John Bell, Richard Bird, Benjamin Northcott, and William Burke. Barnabas McHenry, from the Holston district, and Henry Hill, who traveled with Bishop Asbury, were also present. Nine preachers in all for Kentucky and Cumberland; included, Nashville and the three counties of Davidson, Sumner, and Robinson, including a few settlements in Kentucky, in the neighborhood where Danville is now situated. We received our appointments at the close of the conference, and separated in love and harmony. I was this year appointed to Danville circuit, in charge, and John Page as helper. We entered upon our work with a determination to use our best endeavors to promote the Redeemer's kingdom. The circuit was in but a poor condition. Discipline had been very much neglected, and numbers had their names on the class-papers who had not meet their class for months. We applied ourselves to the discharge of our duty and enforced the Discipline,

and, during the course of the summer, disposed of upward of one hundred. We had some few additions, but, under God, laid the foundation for a glorious revival, the next and following years. The bounds and extent of this circuit were large, including the counties of Mercer, Lincoln, Garrard, and Madison; the west part of the circuit included the head waters of Salt river, and Chaplin on the north, bounded by Kentucky river south and east, and extended as far as the settlements — taking four weeks to perform the round.

There were three log meeting-houses in the circuit; one in Madison county, called Proctor's Chapel; one in the forks of Dix river, Garrett's meeting-house; and one on Shoeney run, called Shoeney run.

Not far from Harrod's Station, in Mercer county, during the course of this year, a new meeting-house was erected in Garrard county, considered the best meeting house in the country, and they named it Burke's Chapel. I remained on Danville circuit till the first of April, 1794, and on the fifteenth our conference commenced at Louis's Chapel, in Jessamine county, in the bounds of Lexington.

Previous to the meeting of the conference we raised a company of twelve persons to proceed to the seat of the conference, for the purpose of guiding Bishop Asbury through the wilderness. We met a company at the Crab Orchard, the place where we usually met by advertisement, circulated for the purpose of collecting a sufficient number for mutual protection against the Indians. The company, when assembled, consisted of about sixty, all well armed. We organized that night, and I was appointed commander. In the morning, all things being in readiness for our departure, we proceeded through the wilderness. The day previous there had started a large company, and among the number there were four preachers, two Baptist and two Dunkards. The company, with whom they traveled, had treated them in such an ungentlemanly and unchristian manner during the first day and night, that on the morning of the second day they all four started in advance, and had not proceeded more than one mile before they were surprised by a party of Indians, and all four killed and scalped, and their horses and all they had taken off by the Indians. We camped the first night not far from Big Laurel river, and next morning passed the place where the dead bodies of the preachers were thrown into a sink-hole and covered in part with some logs, and the wild beasts had torn and mangled them in the most shocking manner. That day we crossed the Cumberland river, and passed up the narrows to Turkey creek, and camped on the bank. I had not slept on any of the two preceding nights, and that night I intended to take a good sleep. Accordingly, after placing out the sentinels and securing my horse, I spread my saddle blanket and my saddle and saddle-bags for my pillow, and laid me down close to my horse and was in a few minutes, sound asleep. It was not an hour before the company was alarmed. Some said they heard Indians, others affirmed that they heard them when cutting cane for their horses, and heard their dogs barking at their camp up the creek; and before they awakened me the greater part of the company were on their horses and had left the sentinels at their posts. Such was the panic that I immediately harnessed up my horse and mounted him, and had the guards brought in. The night was very dark, and we had to cross the creek immediately. The bank was very steep, and we had to cross in Indian file; and before all passed over the bank became very slippery, and the horses would get nearly to the top and slide back into the creek again. I was in front, and the word would pass along the line, "Halt in front." At length all got safely over, and we proceeded about four miles to Cannon creek. The night being very dark, and finding great difficulty to keep the path, I ordered a halt, and directed every man to turn out to the left and alight and hold his horse by the bridle. They accordingly did so, and I threw the reins of my bridle over my arm and laid down at the root of a beech-tree, and was soon asleep. I had previously given orders that we should form one hour before daybreak and be on the road, in order to elude the Indians, should they be in pursuit of us.



We did so, and crossed the Cumberland Mountains early in the morning, and that night arrived at Bean's Station, near the Holston river, where we met the intelligence that Bishop Asbury, in consequence of ill health, could not attend the conference in Kentucky.

A large collection of emigrants was already met for the purpose of crossing the wilderness. The number was about one hundred and twenty, together with a great number of pack-horses. On the next morning we started in Indian file, pack-horses and all, making a line about a mile in length. It was determined by the company that the guard which had come through to meet the Bishop Asbury should bring up the rear. Nothing transpired through the course of the first day or night worthy of notice.

Early on the second day we came to the ford of the Cumberland River; it was very much swollen, and when the front of the company arrived at the bank of the river, a party of Indians being on the opposite shore fired upon them; but the distance was such that no injury was done. None had courage to attempt crossing over, and when we, who were in the rear, came up, the whole company was crowded together, and many, both men and women, were as pale as death, and some weeping, not knowing what course to take. I immediately called out for volunteers, who would venture to cross the river. Out of the whole company we could only get eleven to undertake the hazardous duty. On our arriving at the opposite bank we alighted from our horses and took trees and awaited the approach of the Indians. None appearing we proceeded to the top of the bank; finding the course clear we beckoned them to proceed crossing, while we stood guard. No accident occurred through the remainder of that day. At night we encamped in an unfavorable position — a heavy thunder-shower passing over us forced us to stop. In that situation, after we had tied up our horses and built up our fires, we proceeded to place out the guards, when many who had not been used to such fatigue made themselves as comfortable as the nature of things would admit, and laid down to rest. I found from the manner in which the horses behaved that Indians were about with the intention of stealing some of our horses.

Consequently, I kept on my feet the whole night, passing round and through the camp. The night passed off without any interruption. The third day at night we arrived at the Crab Orchard, and on the fourth day I proceeded to the conference at Louis's Chapel. We had at this an increase of two preachers, John Metcalf, who had come through the wilderness with us from the Virginia conference, and Thomas Scott, now Judge Scott, of Chilicothe, from the Baltimore conference. The presiding elder, F. Poythress, presided in the conference. The business having been gone through, I was dispatched to the Virginia conference with the proceedings of our conference, and to receive deacon's orders. The conference met at Joseph Mitchel's, on James river. Here we met Mr. Asbury, who had partly recovered from his sickness.

At this conference, which was held on the 26th May, I received my appointment on Hinkston circuit, Kentucky. This circuit included Clark county, Bourbon, and Montgomery; bounded on the north and east by the frontier settlements, on the south by the Kentucky river, and on the west by Lexington circuit. It was a three weeks' circuit, that had been taken off from Lexington; here I was alone. At my first quarterly meeting I was removed to Salt River circuit — the preacher having left and put in charge. Here I remained two quarters under very embarrassed circumstances, it being the summer of Wayne's campaign, and great numbers were out in the service. This was the most difficult circuit in the bounds of the conference. It was a four weeks' circuit, and between four and five hundred miles round. It included Washington, Nelson, Jefferson, Shelby, and Green counties; bounded on the north by the Kentucky river, on the east by Danville circuit, on the south by the frontier settlements on Green river, including where Greensburg and Elizabethtown are now situated, and on the west by the Ohio river. Nothing worthy of

record occurred, except hard times. I was reduced to the last pinch. My clothes were nearly all gone. I had patch upon patch and patch by patch, and I received only money sufficient to buy a waistcoat, and not enough of that to pay for the making, during the two quarters I remained on the circuit. After the second quarterly meeting I was changed by the presiding elder to Lexington circuit. This was the best circuit in the bounds of the conference, both for numbers and liberality. In this circuit I met with many good friends; and they supplied all my wants. Nothing special occurred during the year. Wayne's expedition having ended, the people returned to their homes and became more settled, and we had a gradual increase in the societies. Lexington was a four weeks' circuit, and tolerably compact. It contained the counties of Fayette, Jessamine, Woodford, Franklin, Scott, and Harrison; bounded on the east and north by Hinkston circuit, on the west by the frontiers. Frankfort, now the seat of government, was then a frontier station. The southern boundary was the Kentucky river, which is peculiar for the high cliffs of limestone rocks, which present a wild and grand appearance, in many places from four to five hundred feet high.

In the county of Jessamine, situated on the cliffs, was Bethel Academy, built entirely by subscriptions raised on the circuits. One hundred acres of land was given by Mr. Lewis, as the site for the Academy. The project originated with Mr. Asbury, Francis Poythress, Isaac Hite, of Jefferson; Colonel Hinde, of Nelson; Willis Green, of Lincoln; Richard Masterson, of Fayette; and Mr. Lewis, of Jessamine. A spacious building was erected, I think eighty by forty feet, three stories high. The design was to accommodate the students in the house with boarding, etc. The first and second stories were principally finished and a spacious hall in the center. The building of this house rendered the pecuniary means of the preachers very uncertain; for they were continually employed in begging for Bethel. The people were very liberal, but they could not do more than they did. The country was new, and the unsettled state of the people, in consequence of the Indian wars and depredations, kept the country in a continual state of agitation. The Legislature, at an early period, made a donation of six thousand acres of land to Bethel Academy. The land was located in Christian County, south of Green river, and remained a long time unproductive; and while I continued a trustee, till 1804, it remained rather a bill of expense than otherwise. In 1803 I was appointed by the Western conference to attend the Legislature and obtain an act of incorporation. I performed that duty, and Bethel was incorporated, with all the powers and privileges of a literary institution. From that time I was removed to such a distance that my connection with the Academy ceased. Rev. Valentine Cook was the first that organized the academical department; and at first the prospect was flattering. A number of students were in attendance; but difficulties occurred which it would be needless to mention, as all the parties concerned have gone to give an account at a higher tribunal; but such was the effect that the school soon declined, and brother Cook abandoned the project.

The Rev. John Metcalf, who had married and located, was next introduced, and kept a common school for some time. On his leaving the place vacant, Rev. Nathaniel Harris moved, with his family, and occupied the building as a dwelling, and kept a school for the neighborhood. On his leaving the premises, it was soon in a dilapidated state. The land on which it was built fell into the hands of Mr.

Lewis's heirs, the house was taken down, so that not one stone was left upon another, and the whole was transferred to Nicholasville, and incorporated into a county academy, which is still in operation; but the Methodist Church have no more interest in it than other citizens of Jessamine county.

In the spring of 1795 I had traveled all the circuits in Kentucky except Limestone. This circuit lay on the north side of Licking river — a considerable wilderness intervening



between Hinkston and Limestone circuits. It included Mason and Fleming counties. It was a small circuit; bounded on the east, south, and west by the frontier settlements, and on the north by the Ohio river. Taking it all in all, these were days, in the west, that tried men's souls. From the time that the first Methodist missionaries entered this new field of labor up to this spring, there had been one continued Indian war, while the whole frontier, east, west, north, and south, had been exposed to the inroads and cruel depredations of the merciless savages. This spring — 1795 — was the noted Nickajack expedition, which terminated the Cherokee war; and Wayne's treaty at Greenville, Ohio, put an end to the Indian wars, and the whole western country, for once, had peace. There is one thing worthy of notice, and that is, that notwithstanding the constant exposure the traveling preachers were subjected to, but two of them fell by the hands of the savages, and both of them by the name of Tucker. One was a young man, descending the Ohio on a flatboat, in company with several other boats — all were family boats, moving to Kentucky. They were attacked by the Indians near the mouth of Brush creek, now Adams county, Ohio. Several boats were taken possession of by the Indians, the inmates massacred, and the property taken by them. Every man in the boat with Tucker was killed, and Tucker wounded mortally. The Indians made attempts to board the boat, but, notwithstanding he was wounded, the women loaded the guns and Tucker kept up a constant fire upon them, and brought off the boat safe; but before they landed at Limestone he expired, and his remains quietly repose somewhere in that place. Brother James O'Cull assisted in burying him, and is the only man now living who could designate the spot. I think the Kentucky conference should erect a monument to his memory. The other was shot near a station south of Green river, not far from the present town of Greensburg.

The conference for the year 1795 met at Ebenezer Earnest's neighborhood, on Nolachucky, the last week in April. We passed through the wilderness this year without much apprehension of danger. The most of the preachers from Kentucky met their brethren on Holston district. This was the largest annual conference we had ever seen in the west. Bishop Asbury attended, and it was a conference of considerable interest. At this conference I was ordained to the office of an elder. My parchment bears date 30th April, 1795, Western territory. At this conference I was requested by the Bishop to preach the ordination sermon for the deacons. I did so, from the words of Paul to Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We had a most harmonious and blessed time. I received my appointment this year to Cumberland, Mero district, Western territory. The circuit included, Davidson, Sumner, and Robinson counties, in the territory, and part of Logan county, Kentucky, lying on the waters of Red river, and extending out to the neighborhood where Russelville now stands; in a word, it included all the settlements in that region of country.

In order to reach my destination I had to return through Kentucky, and to take my colleague, who was a young man, received at this conference, by the name of Peter Guthrie. He was a man of deep piety, but of slender preaching abilities. We made the best of our way for Cumberland, passed on from Lexington through Danville circuit and Salt River; and on the first night after we left the bounds of Salt River circuit, we stopped at the last house, on the edge of the barrens, on the south side of Green river, at Sidebottoms ferry. After we had put our horses up circumstances made it necessary, by an occurrence in the family that we should camp out; and we accordingly made our fire in the woods and laid us down to rest; and, all things considered we had a comfortable night's rest.

We now had a vast barren track to pass through of between eighty and ninety miles, with but one house — McFadden's Station, on Big Barren river, not far from where Bowling Green is now situated.

The next day we arrived in the settlement, on the waters of Red river. On the following day we, arrived at Nashville, and in the evening at James Hockett's, about two miles west of town. He was a rich planter, and had formerly resided in the Choctaw nation. At this time he was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and his house was a home for the traveling preachers. In this neighborhood I stayed several days, and collected what information I could about the state of the circuit. Moses Speer, one of the preachers that traveled the circuit the preceding year, and had married in the neighborhood of Nashville, and a young man by the name of Joseph Dunn, were traveling on the circuit when we arrived.

On inquiry I found that James Haw, who was one of the first preachers that came to Kentucky, had located and settled in Cumberland, and embraced the views of O'Kelly, and by his influence and address had brought over the traveling and every local preacher but one in the country to his views, and considerable dissatisfaction had obtained in many of the societies. Under these circumstances I was greatly perplexed to know what course to take — a stranger to every body in the country, a young preacher, and Haw an old and experienced preacher, well known, a popular man, and looked up to as one of the fathers of the Church, and one who had suffered much in planting Methodism in Kentucky and Cumberland. After much reflection and prayer to God for direction, I finally settled upon the following plan; namely, to take the Discipline and examine it thoroughly, selecting all that was objected to by O'Kelly, and those who adhered to him, and then undertake an explanation and defense of the same. I accordingly met brother Speer at Nashville, and after preaching requested the society to remain, and commenced my work. When I concluded my defense, I took the vote of the society, and they unanimously sustained the positions I had taken. Brother Speer also asked the privilege of making a few remarks. He stated to the society that he would consider the Church as a house that he lived in; and notwithstanding the door was not exactly in the place he should like it, or the chimney in the end that best pleased him, yet he could not throw away or pull down his house on that account; and, therefore, he concluded that he would not throw away the Church, although some things, he thought, could be improved in the Discipline. In consequence of this victory on my first attempt, I took courage, and proceeded with my work in every society; and, to my utter astonishment, I succeeded in every place, and saved every society but one small class on Red river, where a local preacher lived by the name of Jonathan Stevenson, who had traveled the circuit two years before, and located in that neighborhood. Haw and Stevenson appointed a meeting on Red river, and invited the Methodists all over the circuit to attend the meeting, for the purpose of organizing the new Church. The result was, that only ten or twelve members offered themselves, and the most of them had formerly belonged to the Baptist Church. Having failed in every attempt to break up the societies, the next step was to call me to a public debate. I accepted his challenge, and the day was appointed to meet at Station Cap, one of the most popular neighborhoods, and convenient to a number of large societies. Not withstanding I accepted the challenge, I trembled for the cause. I was young in the ministry, and inexperienced in that kind of debate. He was an old minister, of long experience, and of high standing in the community. I summoned up all my courage, and, like young David with his sling I went forth to meet the Goliath. The day arrived, and a great concourse of people attended. The preliminaries were settled, and I had the opening of the debate.

The Lord stood by me. I had uncommon liberty, and before I concluded many voices were heard in the congregation, saying, "Give us the old way!" Mr. Haw arose to make his reply very much agitated, and exhibited a very bad temper, being very much confused. He made some statement that called from me a denial, and the people rose up to sustain me, which was no sooner done than he was so confused that he picked up his saddle-bags and walked off, and made no reply. This left me in possession of the whole field, and from that



hour he lost his influence among the Methodists, and his usefulness as a preacher. In this situation he remained till 1801; and when the great revival began in Tennessee among the Presbyterians and Methodists, he connected himself with the former; and ended his days among them as a preacher. Benjamin Ogden, the colleague of Haw when they first came to Kentucky, married a Miss Easland, on Danville circuit, and located; in 1792 or 1793 joined O'Kelly. He resided in Hardin county, Kentucky. He remained many years unconnected with any Church; but several years before his death became again connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and ended his days among the Methodists. After the difficulties with Haw subsided, we had a considerable revival on the circuit, and some additions to the societies and every thing moved on harmoniously. On the ninth day of January, 1796, I was married to Rachel Cooper, in Sumner county, Tennessee. I lost but one single appointment in consequence of my marriage, but pursued the even tenor of my way. The presiding elder never once visited the country during the whole year.

A few weeks after I was married, the presiding elder sent down a preacher to relieve me, with directions for me to return to Kentucky. I immediately started, and visited the circuits where I had traveled in Kentucky, and remained between five and six weeks, and then returned to Tennessee, where I remained till we started for conference, about the tenth of April.

The conference this year was at Nelson's, in the neighborhood of Jonesboro, Western territory.

In order to reach this conference we had a long and tedious journey through the wilderness of upward of one hundred miles, without a house. We had to pack on our horses the provisions necessary for ourselves and horses for three days and nights, and to camp out in the open air. The company consisted of James Campbell and Joseph Dunn, preachers, myself and wife, and a nephew of my wife. The last night we encamped we were very apprehensive that the Indians would rob us; consequently, some of us kept awake through the night; but we had no interruption, and the next day we reached the settlement in the neighborhood of where Knoxville is now situated. The day after we entered the bounds of Green circuit, where I had traveled in the year 1792, and were now among our old friends. We arrived at Nelson's the day before the conference commenced, and met Bishop Asbury. The business of the conference was done in peace and harmony. I shall always remember what Mr. Asbury said while my character was under examination before the conference and before I withdrew. He stated to the conference that brother Burke had accomplished two important things the past year — “the defeat of the O'Kellyites, and had married a wife.” It was well known to the preachers in those days that Mr. Asbury did not approve of their marrying, and if they did marry, that it was necessary to locate; but notwithstanding the opposition of the preachers and people, I felt it my duty to travel as long as Providence opened my way. Accordingly, I received my appointment that year on Guilford circuit, North Carolina. I immediately proceeded for my appointment, my wife accompanying me.

We arrived in the bounds of the circuit about the first of May. I made my home at my father's, near the High Rock ford, on Haw river, Rockingham county. It was a year of great distress in that section of country. For the want of breadstuffs numbers perished from want. As soon as the fruit could be eaten the people resorted to that as a means of subsistence, which brought on the flux and other complaints, that hurried many off the stage of action. During the summer and fall we had some considerable move among the people in different parts of the circuit, and some additions to the societies.

In the beginning of October I left the circuit to attend the second General conference, which assembled at Baltimore on the 20th of October. Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury presided. The business of the conference was conducted with great harmony. At this

conference the Chartered Fund for the relief of the superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers, was established by a rule of the General conference. It is, perhaps, not known to many of the preachers now living how the funds were made up at the beginning to set the institution on foot. We had for many years previous a preachers' fund for the same purpose. This fund was created by a payment by each traveling preacher, when received into full connection, of twenty shillings, and every year after, at the annual conference, two dollars. The fund, which at this time was pretty considerable was used by John Dickens, the first Book Steward, for printing books for the connection in America. The process was as follows: The money was used to pay for the printing. The books were sold by the preachers, and the principal was returned to the preachers' fund, and the profits retained to lay the foundation for a book fund. At this General conference the preachers' fund was merged into the Chartered Fund, and the residue was raised by subscriptions and donations from the members. In this way originated the Charter Fund and the Book Concern of the Methodist Episcopal Church in these United States; and this was brought about when the preacher's allowance was only sixty-four dollars, including all his presents and marriage fees.

There were several important events which transpired this year in the bounds of Guilford circuit that require a passing notice. A few years previous brother Simon Carlisle, quite a talented young man, was stationed on Caswell circuit, the circuit adjoining Guilford. He had been acceptable and useful, and completed his year to the satisfaction of all. In those days it was the custom for the preacher to select some place in the circuit which he considered his home, where he deposited for safekeeping his surplus books and clothes, etc. He had made his home at a brother Harrison's, not far from Dunn river; and on the morning he was about to leave the circuit for the annual conference, he packed up his things in his saddle-bags, and left them in his room unlocked, and went out to see something about his horse. In his absence a wicked young man, son of brother Harrison, put a pocket pistol into his saddle-bags. On his return to the room, without making any examination, he locked his saddlebags; and left for conference. When he arrived at his mother's, on the way to conference, on taking his things out of his saddlebag, he, found a pocket pistol. He could not account for its being there; but leaving it he proceeded on to conference. During the year the pistol was taken to a shop on the road to have some repairs done to it, and a person passing challenged the same as being the pistol of young Harrison, and the same was traced to brother Carlisle. At the next annual conference, in 1794, he was charged with the fact of taking the pistol, and excommunicated from the Church, and so returned on the Minutes of that year. During the summer of 1796 young Harrison was taken sick and died; but just before his death he made a full confession of his having put the pistol into the saddle-bags of brother Carlisle, with the intention of injuring him; and I had the pleasure of restoring brother Carlisle again to the bosom of the Church, to his great joy. He has remained a minister in good standing ever since, and has been living for many years in Middle Tennessee, and has in old age connected himself with the traveling connection in the Tennessee conference.

On the 4th day of March, 1797, I set out for the western country, and met the conference on Holston. Mr. Asbury was at the conference. I received my appointment on the Holston circuit again, having been absent for five years. Brother William Duzan traveled with me that year. Nothing of importance transpired during that conference year. We had a gradual increase in the societies. I visited Clinch and Green circuits in the course of the year, and attended several quarterly meetings, which in those days of Methodism were the only popular meetings where the preachers, when they could leave their circuits, met to help forward the good cause. In the spring of 1798 Bishop Asbury met the conference on Holston, and I was appointed to Cumberland again, having been absent two years. I traveled this year alone and had not the pleasure of seeing the face of a traveling preacher



through the entire year. The circuit had become very large; the country was settling very fast; and many additions to the Church made by certificate. During this year many local preachers emigrated, and settled in the bounds of the circuit. Rev. John McGee settled at Dickson's Spring; Rev. Jesse Walker settled on White's Creek. This year I became acquainted with J. A. Grenade, who moved from the lower part of the state of North Carolina. He had in Carolina professed religion; but on coming to Tennessee he had fallen into a strange state of mind. He was in constant fear of hell, and despaired of ever being restored to the favor of God again. I did everything in my power for his recovery. He traveled with me considerably, and sometimes he would have lucid intervals — seasons when he appeared perfectly rational, and expressed a hope; but suddenly he would relapse into melancholy and despair again.

During this year I had to pay nearly a hundred dollars for a horse, and I found it hard to raise the money, and support myself, and pay the board of my wife; however, I economized in every way. I borrowed a blanket, and wore it instead of a great-coat through the winter, and by that means paid my debts. Upon the whole, I spent this year very agreeably, and with some success. I left the circuit in the spring of 1799 for conference in Kentucky, at Bethel Academy. This year I received my appointment on Danville circuit for the second time, having been absent for seven years. Part of this year I had Henry Smith for my colleague, who, I believe, is yet living in Maryland. I had many difficulties to contend with, being the first married preacher that had ever attempted with what the people and preachers called the incumbrance of a wife; and every thing was thrown in my way to discourage me. The presiding elder thought I had better locate; for, he said, the people would not support a married man. But I determined to hold on my way, and my wife encouraged me. She wrought with her own hands, and paid her board, and clothed herself; and I divided equally with my colleague, and by this means kept every thing quiet.



## War With the Baptists

This year began my war with the Baptists. Having had some small revival, the Baptists did all they could to draw off our members and get them into the water; and I began with lecturing every time I baptized an infant, which greatly roused up the Baptists, so much so that I received a challenge from the Rev. Thomas Shelton, the champion of the whole Baptist denomination. I accepted the challenge, and the day was appointed at Irvin's Lick, in Madison county. We met according to appointment, and settled the preliminaries of debate, each to speak fifteen minutes. Brother John Watson was appointed by me to keep time and call to order, and a Baptist preacher appointed by Mr. Shelton for the same purpose. We proceeded about four hours to debate the subject. I had the close, when Shelton observed to the immense congregation that he believed I was an honest but a mistaken man. I proceeded to administer the ordinance of baptism on the spot, and Mr. Shelton stood by and witnessed the same. From that day the tug of war began, which continued till 1811, when I left the state. At that meeting Elisha W. Bowman was present, and a young speaker in the Methodist Episcopal Church, who immediately entered upon the study of the subject and became a warm auxiliary in the cause. William J. Thompson also took up the subject. He was a strong man and rendered efficient service. After 1800 John Sale and William McKendree engaged with me in the contest. We kept constant fire upon the Baptists, and the Methodists began to gain confidence and to make a respectable

stand among the denominations of Christians.

The year 1799 I expected would terminate my labors in the western country. At the request of Bishop Asbury, all the preachers that had been in the west for any considerable time were to leave the country and attend the General conference at Baltimore, on the sixth day of May, 1800, and to receive their appointments in the old states, and a new set to be sent to the west. We all accordingly set out early in April. The following were the preachers that left Francis Poythress, Thomas Wilkerson, John Page, John Watson, John Buxton, Henry Smith, John Kohler, and William Burke.

Bishop Asbury had formed the intended plan of appointing a presiding elder to take charge of all the west in one district; namely, Kentucky, Tennessee, and all that part of Virginia west of New river and the North-Western territory, including the Miami and Scioto Valleys. He used his utmost endeavors, during the General conference, to engage a man for that purpose, but failed; for when they understood the extent of the territory they would have to travel over, they uniformly declined to undertake it. Before the close of the conference he applied to me to know if I would consent to return to Kentucky and take with me all the papers appertaining to the annual conference and Bethel Academy, and do the best I could for the work in that part of the field. I consented, and he appointed to go with me John Sale, Hezekiah Harraman, William Algood, and Henry Smith; for the Holston country, James Hunter, John Watson, and John Page; and for Cumberland, William Lambeth. John Sale and H. Harraman proceeded with me immediately for Kentucky. Hezekiah Harraman was appointed to Danville circuit, John Sale to the Salt River and Shelby, William Algood to Limestone.

I was appointed to Hinkston, and to superintend the quarterly meetings where there was no elder.

William Algood never came to his appointment. I prevailed on Jeremiah Lawson to supply his place on Limestone circuit, and I placed Lewis Hunt on Hinkston, and spent the most of my time on Lexington, Hinkston, and Limestone circuits. My labors, during that summer, were very arduous, and to accomplish my work I rode down two good horses.

During that year the annual conference was changed from the spring to the fall; and on the first of October, 1800, the conference met at Bethel Academy. Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat attended, and they brought with them William McKendree, from the center district of Virginia, to take charge of the whole of the western country. Mr. Asbury wished me to go and take charge of the district that McKendree had left, but I told him it was out of the question; that I had returned to Kentucky, at his request, from Baltimore, in the spring; that I had rode down my horses; that I had worn out my clothes; that I was ragged and tattered; and last and not least, I had not a cent in my pocket, and, therefore, could not go. He yielded to the necessity of the case. At that conference Benjamin Lakin was readmitted and William Marsh admitted. I was appointed on Lexington and Hinkston united, with Thomas Wilkerson and Lewis Runt. Wilkerson did not come on from Baltimore circuit till late in the spring of 1801.

I now enter upon a new era in the history of western Methodism. I consider this the proper place to give a description of the men and means employed in the establishment and progress of Methodism in this western country, and the difficulties and hardships encountered in the work. As early as the year 1785 the first traveling preachers visited the Holston country; their names were Richard Swift and Michael Gilbert. The country at this time was new and thinly settled. They met with many privations and sufferings, and made but little progress. The most of the country through which they traveled was very mountainous and rough, and the people ignorant and uncultivated, and the greater part a frontier exposed to Indian depredations. They were followed by Mark Whitaker and Mark



Moore, who were zealous, plain, old-fashioned Methodist preachers, and calculated to make an impression. Their labors were successful, and they were instrumental in raising up many societies.

Mark Whitaker in particular was a strong man, and maintained Methodist doctrine in opposition to Calvinism, which was the prevailing doctrine of that time. He laid a good foundation for his successors, and was followed by Jeremiah Matson and Thomas Ware, and after them in succession Joseph Doddridge, Jeremiah Able, John Tunnell, John Baldwin, Charles Hardy, John McGee, and John West. Under God these men planted the standard of the cross in the frontier settlements of the French Broad, and numerous societies were raised up, so that in 1791 the societies numbered upward of one thousand.

About this the I arrived in the Holston country. These fathers of Methodism, most of whom have gone to their reward, will be long had in grateful remembrance. But two of them are lingering on the shores of mortality — Charles Hardy and John West. The most of them died in connection with the Church, and are now reaping the reward of their labors and sufferings. Joseph Doddridge received orders in the Episcopal Church of England, and settled in the Monongahela country, and there died.

Jeremiah Able joined the Presbyterians, and lived and died in the Green river country, not far from Greensburg, Green county, Kentucky.

The pioneers of Methodism in that part of western Virginia and the Western territory suffered many privations, and underwent much toil and labor, preaching in forts and cabins, sleeping on straw, boar and buffalo skins, living on bear meat, venison, and wild turkeys, traveling over mountains and through solitary valleys, and, sometimes, lying on the cold ground; receiving but a scanty support, barely enough to keep soul and body together; with coarse home-made apparel; but the best of all was, their labors were owned and blessed of God, and they were like a band of brothers, having one purpose and end in view — the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. When the preachers met from their different and distant fields of labor, they had a feast of love and friendship; and when they parted, they wept and embraced each other as brothers beloved. Such was the spirit of primitive Methodists.

There were but few local preachers at that time in that part of the western country, and they were like angels' visits, few and far between — one local preacher on West New River circuit, a brother Morgan, whose labors were confined principally to a small circle; but one on Holston, old father Ragen, in the Rich Valley, not far from the Salt-Works. He was a man much respected, and, in some degree, useful in his neighborhood, but circumscribed in his operations as a preacher. At an early time brother Benjamin Vanpelt, a local preacher of considerable talents and usefulness, moved from Alexandria, Virginia, and settled on Lick creek, Green county, Western territory. He labored extensively, was very useful, and was made an instrument, under God, of doing much good. Several societies were formed by his ministry, and he may be considered one of the fathers of the Church.

His memory will be long had in remembrance by the people of the French Broad country. He was the old and particular friend of Bishop Asbury, and one of the first meeting-houses built in that country was Vanpelt's meeting-house. I have been in company with the Bishop at his house, and heard him preach in the meeting-house as early as 1792. Brother Stilwell, another local preacher from Virginia, settled in the same neighborhood and united with brother Vanpelt, and they labored harmoniously in the good work. After the conclusion of the Indian war, in the spring of 1795, there was a great influx by immigration. Some of the traveling preachers married and settled in the country. James O'Connor settled on Watauga, Mark Whitaker near Jonesboro, Stephen Brooks in Green

county, and many others, both preachers and members, settled in different sections, and some new preachers were raised up, and the work was enlarged; new circuits were formed, and some useful and talented young men entered into the traveling connection. Among the first was Francis Acuff, of precious memory, who, at an early period, fell a victim to disease, and died in the triumphs of faith on Danville circuit, Kentucky. Nathaniel Massie, David Young, Henager, and Porter, in succession were raised up in that section of country, whose labors and usefulness are known among the thousands of Israel; and the few who remain to witness the spread and triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom are ready to exclaim, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." We now turn our attention to Kentucky. This country began to be settled by adventurers soon after the commencement of the Revolutionary war. It was completely insulated, being a vast wilderness to the south from the frontiers of Virginia and the Western territory, of one hundred and thirty miles on the eastern boundary; an uninhabited country till you arrived on the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania; a few settlements being scattered through Brook county, Virginia, and on the Monongahela, and on Greenbrier river, and the head waters of James river, and on the north by the Ohio river; and the whole country extending to the lakes without inhabitants, except the Indians, who were the friends of the British, and under their influence, and kept up a constant warfare on the whole of the settlements in Kentucky. The first families that emigrated to Kentucky was in the year 1773, and the first station established was Boonsboro, on the Kentucky river, situated in what was afterward called Madison county. The next stations were Harrod's and Bryant's. Harrod's Station was situated on the south side of the Kentucky river, below the mouth of Dick's river; and as the settlements spread the stations were multiplied. Every new settlement had a station; one at Ruddell's Mills, at Georgetown, Millersburg, Mays Lick, Washington, Frankfort, Louisville, Masterson's Station, Burnt Station, and numerous others formed as the country settled. The frontier settlements kept up the stations and block-houses till the treaty of Greenville, in the spring of 1795. In the first settlement of Kentucky the denomination of Baptists were the most numerous. Among the first preachers of that order were the Craigs, the Bledsoes, and Bailey, etc. There were a few Presbyterian ministers that settled in different sections of the country. Old father Rankin, of Lexington, Rev. Mr. Rice, from Virginia, settled in the forks of Dick's river, and the Rev. Robt. W. Finley at Cane Ridge.



## Frontier Doctrine

After the conclusion of the Revolutionary war the emigration was very great to Kentucky; and the Presbyterians sent out numbers of missionaries, who traveled and preached through the country, and settled down wherever they could establish a congregation. Among the first was the Rev. Messrs. James Blythe, Lyle, Welch, McNamer, Stone, Reynolds, Stewart, and several others not recollected.

They established congregations in Fayette, Clark, Bourbon, Scott, and Woodford, and McClelland, in Mercer, and Washington. The Baptists still continued the most numerous; but at an early period, say about 1789, or 1790, they had a division in the Church. A numerous party arose among them calling themselves Separate, or by some denominated Free-Will Baptists. The Free-Will Baptists held in common the doctrines of the Methodists, except the unconditional final perseverance of the saints, and baptism by immersion as the only mode, while the Regulars held to the doctrine of predestination, as



set forth in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith; but they were subject to another division. Rev. John Bailey and Bledsoe embraced the doctrines of Winchester, and were denominated Universalists. They were popular preachers among the Baptists, and made great inroads in many of their Churches, and the controversy was carried to great lengths, and conducted with much acrimony. At this period the Separatists took the lead. They successfully preached against the doctrine of predestination and decrees, enforced experimental and practical religion, formed Churches, and established separate associations, and became very numerous; but they have long since ceased to exist as a separate denomination. They gradually united with the Regular associations, and are now known as Baptists generally. At the commencement of these controversies the Methodists were few and far between.

Soon after the conclusion of the war with Great Britain, Francis Clark, a local preacher from old Virginia, settled in the neighborhood of Danville, Mercer county, and was among the first Methodists that emigrated to the country. He was a man of sound judgment, and well instructed in the doctrines of the Methodist Church. As a preacher he was successful, and was made the instrument of forming several societies, and lived many years to rejoice in the success of the cause that he had been the instrument, under God, of commencing in the wilderness. He died at his own domicile, in the fall of 1799, in great peace, and in hope of a blessed immortality. I attended his funeral in connection with the Rev. Francis Poythress, and at his request I preached from these words: "For to me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." The Rev. William J. Thompson emigrated at an early day from Stokes county, North Carolina, and settled in the same neighborhood. He became also a useful auxiliary, and preached with acceptance and success. He afterward joined the traveling connection in the Western conference; and when he moved to the state of Ohio became connected with the Ohio conference, where his labors and usefulness are held in remembrance by many. He still lives in good old age, in Clermont county, Ohio.

The next local preachers that came to the country were Nathaniel Harris, from Virginia, Gabriel and Daniel Woodfield, from the Redstone country. Harris settled in Jessamine county, and the Woodfields in Fayette county; and not long after Philip Taylor, from, Virginia, settled in Jessamine county. These were considered a great acquisition to the infant societies. Nathaniel Harris and Gabriel Woodfield were among the first order of local preachers, and they were highly esteemed, and labored with success. They have been connected with the itinerancy, and labored in that relation with acceptance. Gabriel Woodfield afterward settled in Henry county; but before his death removed to Indiana, in the neighborhood of Madison, where he lived to a good old age, and died in peace among his friends and connections.

Brother Nathaniel Harris still lives, at the age of nearly fourscore years. He is still actively engaged in the good cause, and lives in the midst of his friends, highly esteemed and useful. Joseph Ferguson, a local preacher from Fairfax county, Virginia, moved to Kentucky at an early time, and settled in Nelson county, and was among the first preachers that settled in that section of the country.

He was an amiable man, possessed good preaching talents, and was rendered very useful. He was highly esteemed, blessed with an amiable family, and his house was a home for the traveling preachers, who were at all times welcome guests. Brother Ferguson was subject at times to great depression of mind; but when in the company of the traveling preachers he was always cheerful and happy. He lived to a good old age, at the place where he first settled, and died in peace and in the triumphs of that Gospel which he had proclaimed for many years. Ferguson's meeting-house was one of the first that was built in that part of the country; and at one time there was a large society at that meeting-house, and when I was last in the neighborhood, in the fall of 1811, they still maintained a

respectable standing.

One of the oldest meeting-houses in Madison county was Proctor's Chapel, not far from Boonsboro. That part of the country shared largely in the blessings of the Gospel, and Methodism flourished to a very great extent in that county. There were a number of respectable local preachers, whose labors were extensive and successful. Charles Kavanaugh, John Cook, R. Baker, and J. Proctor, were all early emigrants to that part of the country. Charles Kavanaugh was a preacher of splendid talents and great usefulness. He was an able defender of the doctrines of the Methodist Church, and was highly respected by all denominations. There were several families of that connection. Williams Kavanaugh was raised in that neighborhood, and was a cousin to Charles.

Williams Kavanaugh and Lewis Garrett were both raised on Danville circuit, and both entered the traveling connection in the spring of 1794, and traveled that conference year together on Green circuit, now East Tennessee, then the Western territory. Of these two young men we shall hereafter have something more to say. Charles Kavanaugh, after having made full proof of his ministry in Kentucky, removed, in 1796 or 1797, to the neighborhood of Nashville, Tennessee, where I found him settled in 1798. He there commenced the practice of medicine, and was celebrated as a cancer doctor. Of his labors and usefulness in that country, and the manner in which he closed his life and labors, we hope some friend will furnish the account.

We must now turn our attention to the introduction of the traveling missionaries into the state of Kentucky. The first traveling Methodist preachers that ever set foot on Kentucky soil was James Haw and Benjamin Ogden. They were stationed in Kentucky, 1786 — James Haw elder; and at the end of the year they returned ninety in society. This was the commencement of Methodism in the great west. In order to show the progress of Methodism, and the means and instruments employed, I shall give you the numbers of increase of members and traveling preachers in 1788. Number, 589.

Circuits: Lexington, Thomas Williamson, Peter Massie, Benjamin Snelling; Danville, Wilson Lee; Cumberland, David Coombs, Barnabas McHenry. In 1789: Number, 1,088. This year Francis Poythress was appointed presiding elder, and a regular district was formed. Lexington, James Haw, Wilson Lee, Stephen Brooks; Danville, Barnabas McHenry, Peter Massie; Cumberland, Thomas Williamson, Joshua Hartley. In 1790: Number, 1,366. Francis Poythress presiding elder. Danville, Thomas Williamson, Stephen Brooks; Cumberland, James Haw, Wilson Lee, Peter Massie; Madison, Barnabas McHenry, Benjamin Snelling, Samuel Tucker, Joseph Lillard; Lexington, Henry Burchet, David Haggard. In 1791: Number, 1,969. Francis Poythress presiding elder. Limestone, Peter Massie; Danville, Thomas Williamson, J. Tatman; Salt River, Wilson Lee, Joseph Lillard; Lexington, Henry Burchet, David Haggard; Cumberland, Barnabas McHenry, James O'Cull. In 1792: Number, 2,235. Francis Poythress presiding elder. Limestone, John Ray; Lexington, John Sewell, Benjamin Northcott, John Page; Danville, Wilson Lee, Richard Bird; Cumberland, John Ball, J. Stephenson; Henry Burchet, Isaac Hammer, Salt River.

We shall now notice the state of religion. The first two years were principally taken up in seeking the lost sheep that had been scattered in the wilderness. In 1798 there was a new recruit of preachers sent out. Thomas Williamson, Wilson Lee, and David Coombs came from the Redstone country, which at that time was connected with the Baltimore conference as missionary ground; but soon afterward, as early as 1791, Bishop Asbury held a conference at Uniontown, not far from the foot of Laurel Hill, in Pennsylvania. This new recruit consisted of young men, and all well qualified for the work of missionaries. They had no other object in view but to push forward the redeemer's kingdom, and to enlarge the borders of Zion.



The same year Barnabas McHenry, then quite a youth, and one of the early fruits of Methodism in the Holston country, came out into the field. His parents resided in the Rich Valley not far from the Salt-Works, Washington county, Virginia. He also penetrated the wilderness, and came to the help of the Lord against the mighty. This band of young, resolute soldiers of the cross united under two old and experienced veterans — Francis Poythress and James Haw. Providence opened their way, and they began to make some favorable impressions upon the minds and hearts of the people.

They occupied the whole ground, and, with the assistance of the few local men who had been there before them, they carried the war into the camp of the enemy, and in a short time a powerful and extensive revival took place. Hundreds were added to the Church; and considering the situation of the country, surrounded by a wilderness, and the Indians continually making depredations on the frontiers, and the people constantly harassed and penned up in forts and stations, it may be considered among the greatest revivals that was ever known. In this revival a number of wealthy and respectable citizens were added to the Church — the Hardins, Thomases, Hites, Lewises, Easlands, Mastersons, Kavanaughs, Tuckers, Richardsons, Letemors, Browns, Garretts, Churchfields, Jefferses, Hoards, and numbers of others of respectable in society; and out of this revival was raised up some useful and promising young men, who entered the traveling connection, and many of them made full proof of their ministry, and lived many years to ornament the Church of God. I will name a few of them. Peter Massie, who was termed the weeping prophet, was among the firstfruits. He was made an instrument of great good wherever he went, scattering the holy fire. His labors were so great that his race was but short. He literally wore himself out in a few years. The zeal of God's cause literally consumed him. He was great and mighty in prayer, and always wished that he might die suddenly, and without lingering in pain. He labored faithfully for three years; and on the 18th of December, 1791, he was sitting in his chair at brother Hodge's, a station six miles south of Nashville, Tennessee, where he suddenly expired, in the morning about nine o'clock. So ended the labors of brother Massie. His remains lie near the Old Station, unhonored by a single stone, and to the present generation entirely unknown; but he rests from his labors in hope of a resurrection, while his immortal spirit is in the world of bliss and of glory. Others well known to the present generation of Methodists were also thrust out into the vineyard — John Ray, Benjamin Northcott, Joseph Lillard, and Joseph Tattman. In the year 1791 Henry Burchet and David Haggard, from the Virginia conference, and James O'Cull, from the Redstone country, were sent out as a reinforcement, and united in carrying on the work, which was still in progress, notwithstanding the campaigns that were carried on against the Indians; for during this the Harmar and St. Clair had both been defeated on the north of the Ohio river, and the country constantly kept in a state of agitation. Still Methodism held up her head, and presented a bold front. The societies maintained their ground. In 1792 the number was 2,235, and the number of traveling preachers eleven — about two hundred members to one preacher. The reader may have some kind of an idea what kind of pecuniary support they had.

Traveling and preaching, night and day, in weariness and want; many days without the necessities of life, and always without those comforts that are now enjoyed by traveling preachers; with worn and tattered garments, but happy and united like a band of brothers. The quarterly meetings and annual conferences were high times. When the pilgrims met they never met without embracing each other, and never parted at those seasons without weeping. Those were days that tried men's souls.

Thomas Williamson was a very successful and laborious preacher. He literally wore himself out in traveling and preaching, but ended his days in peace in the state of Kentucky, not far from Lexington. Wilson Lee was one of the most successful preachers

among those early adventurers. He was a man of fine talents, meek and humble, of a sweet disposition, and not only a Christian and Christian minister, but much of a gentleman. During his stay in Kentucky, from 1787 to 1792, he traveled over all the settlements of Kentucky and Cumberland, much admired and beloved by saint and sinner. In the spring of 1792, in company with Bishop Asbury, he crossed the wilderness from Kentucky to Virginia, where I met him at conference on Holston, and from thence to the eastward, and attended the first General conference at Baltimore, November 1, 1792, and remained in the bounds of the New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore conferences till he departed this life, in 1804, at Walter Worthington's, Ann Arundel county, Maryland. The last the I had the pleasure of seeing him was in Georgetown, District of Columbia, on my way to the General conference of May 1, 1804.

He was then in a very feeble condition. His affliction was hemorrhage of the lungs, of which he died.

During the time he traveled in Kentucky he passed through many sufferings and privations, in weariness and want, in hunger and nakedness; traveling from fort to fort, sometimes with a guard and sometimes alone; often exposing his life; for the savages were constantly in quest of plunder and of life; and scarcely a week passed without hearing of some one falling a prey to them; and what we say of brother Lee may be said of all the traveling preachers, as it respects their exposure and suffering, till the year 1794 — the year of Wayne's campaign — when the northern Indians were held in fear and finally subdued.

In 1791 Henry Burchet was sent from the Virginia conference and stationed on Lexington circuit; in 1792 on Salt River. On both those circuits he was eminently useful. He was very zealous, and declined no labor or suffering, but offered himself a willing sacrifice to the cause of his Redeemer.

He was among the first preachers in the west who took a deep interest in the rising generation. In every neighborhood where it was practicable he formed the children into classes, sang and prayed with them, catechized them, and exhorted them. For this work he had a peculiar turn, and was successful in carrying out his plan of instruction. Many years after I have heard the young people in Kentucky and Cumberland speak in the highest terms of Henry Burchet. At the conference held at Masterson's Station, in May, 1793, our beloved brother Burchet was in a poor state of health. He had labored the preceding year on Salt River circuit, the most extensive in the district, requiring more labor and suffering than any other in the country. Before the close of the year he felt a great weakness in his breast and spitting of blood. At the conference it appeared that Cumberland must be left to be provided for hereafter. Brother Buchet said, "Here am I, send me." His friends remonstrated against his going; the distance was great; considerable danger from Indians; the small-pox prevailing in the country — all was urged against his going; but after asking the consent of Bishop Asbury and the conference, he said, "If I perish who can doubt of my eternal rest, or fail to say, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" He labored with great success in Cumberland.

Though weak and much afflicted in his breast, he held on his way till late in the fall, when he was obliged to stop traveling. He was a welcome guest at the house of a rich planter, two miles west of Nashville, by the name of James Hockett, where he remained, enjoying the hospitality of the family and the visits of his numerous friends, till the month of February, 1794, when he departed this life, in hope of eternal blessedness in the kingdom of God. At his request he was wrapped in white flannel and committed to the silent grave. I often visited his grave in 1795 and 1798; but I suppose since that day strangers are in the possession of the premises, and every vestige of the spot where he lies is obliterated, and, with the exception of a few, his name is forgotten. It is now forty-five years since Henry



Burchet ceased to labor and to live. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works follow them." James Haw must next claim our attention. He was the first traveling Methodist preacher that entered on the field in Kentucky in 1786. He was an able and successful laborer in the Lord's vineyard. Numerous were the sufferings and hardships that he underwent in planting the standard of the cross in that wild and uncultivated region, surrounded with savages and traveling from fort to fort, and every day exposing his life; and notwithstanding every difficulty and embarrassment, the good work progressed. In the years 1787, 1788, and 1789 holy flame spread all over Kentucky and Cumberland. Haw, Poythress, Wilson Lee, and Williamson were the chief instruments in carrying on this great work. We may gather something from a letter written by James Haw to Bishop Asbury in the beginning of the year 1789.

It reads: "Good news from Zion; the work of God is going on rapidly in the new world; a glorious victory the Son of God has gained, and he is still going on conquering and to conquer. Shout, ye angels! Hell trembles and heaven rejoices daily over sinners that repent. At a quarterly meeting held in Bourbon county, Kentucky, July 19th and 20th, 1788, the Lord poured out his Spirit in a wonderful manner, first on the Christians, and sanctified several of them powerfully and gloriously, and, as I charitably hope, wholly. The seekers also felt the power and presence of God, and cried for mercy as at the point of death. We prayed with and for them, till we had reason to believe that the Lord converted seventeen or eighteen precious souls. Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord! "As I went from that through the circuit to another quarterly meeting, the Lord converted two or three more. The Saturday and Sunday following the Lord poured out his Spirit again. The work of sanctification among the believers broke out again at the Lord's table, and the Spirit of the Lord went through the assembly like a mighty rushing wind. Some fell; many cried for mercy. Sighs and groans proceeded from their hearts; tears of sorrow for sin ran streaming down their eyes. Their prayers reached to heaven, and the Spirit of the Lord entered into them and filled fourteen or fifteen with peace and joy in believing. 'Salvation, O the joyful sound; how the echo flies!' A few days after brother Poythress came and went with me to another quarterly meeting. We had another gracious season round the Lord's table but no remarkable stir till after preaching; when under several exhortations some burst out into tears, others trembled, and some fell. I sprang in among the people, and the Lord converted one more very powerfully, who praised the Lord with such acclamation of joy as I trust will never be forgotten. The Sunday following I preached my farewell sermon and met the class, and the Lord converted three more. Glory be to his holy name forever! "The first round I went on Cumberland the Lord converted six precious souls, and I joined three gracious Baptists to our Church; and every round, I have reason to believe, some sinners are awakened, some seekers joined to society, and some penitents converted to God. At our Cumberland quarterly meeting the Lord converted six souls the first day, and one the next. Glory, honor, praise, and power be unto God forever! The work still goes on. I have joined two more serious Baptists since the quarterly meeting. The Lord has converted several more precious souls in various parts of the circuit, and some more have joined the society, so that we have one hundred and twelve disciples now in Cumberland — forty seven of whom, I trust, have received the gift of the Holy Ghost since they believed; and I hope these are but the first of a universal harvest which God will give us in this country. Brother Massie is with me, going on weeping over sinners, and the Lord blesses his labors.

A letter from brother Williamson, dated November 10th, 1788, informs me that the work is still going on rapidly in Kentucky; that at two quarterly meetings since I came away, the Lord poured out his Spirit, and converted ten penitents and sanctified five believers, at the first, and twenty more were converted at the second; indeed, the wilderness and solitary

places are glad, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose, and I trust, will soon become beautiful as Tirza and comely as Jerusalem.

“What shall I more say? Time would fail to tell you all the Lord's doings among us. It is marvelous in our eyes. To him be the glory, honor, praise, power, might, majesty, and dominion, both now and forever, amen and amen!

“P.S. Some of our responsible members of Cumberland have formerly lived at a place called Natchez, on the Mississippi river, then under the British, now under the Government of Spain. There are, they say, six or seven hundred American families there who have no Protestant minister of any kind, and I fear are perishing for want of the bread of life. I expect to know by the spring if there be free and full toleration for the Protestant religion there, and if there be to make the report to the conference.”

The conference year of 1789 closed the labors of James Haw in Kentucky. The superintendence of the work was now altogether under the direction of F. Poythress, both in Kentucky and Cumberland. The circuits were well supplied in 1790: Danville, Thomas Williamson, Stephen Brooks; Cumberland, Wilson Lee, James Haw, Peter Massie; Madison, Barnabas McHenry, Benjamin Snelling; Limestone, Samuel Tucker, Joseph Lillard; Lexington, Henry Burchet, David Haggard. Methodism still found favor in the eyes of the people, and the good work progressed, and numbers were added to the societies; and the circuits were enlarged in proportion as the immigration increased and new settlements were formed. In the course of three years the increase was rising one thousand. In 1794, the year of Wayne's campaign, the work declined very much, and many turned aside from the right way. Discipline was strictly attended to, and many expelled from the societies.

The Indian war having terminated the people began to scatter in every direction. New settlements were formed; and Ohio and Indiana began to settle rapidly, and the societies many of them were broken up, and we had not preachers sufficient to follow the tide of emigration to their new settlements; consequently, we had a considerable decrease of members in the year 1795 and till 1801, when the great revival commenced and spread throughout all the western country; so that at the end of the conference year 1802, we had doubled our numbers from that of 1795. The revival also produced a great increase of local and traveling preachers.

The conference year of 1801 commenced a new era in the west. Mr. Asbury changed the name of the conference from that of Kentucky to that of the Western conference, which embraced all the western country then occupied by the Methodists; and William McKendree was appointed presiding elder. The circuits that composed the conference, and the preachers stationed this year, were as follows: Scioto and Miami, Henry Smith; Limestone, Benjamin Lakin; Hinkston and Lexington, William Burke, Thomas Wilkerson, and Lewis Hunt; Danville, Hezekiah Harraman; Salt River and Shelby, John Sale and William Marsh; Cumberland, John Page, Benjamin Young; Green, Samuel Douthel, Ezekiel Burdine; Holston and Russell, James Hunter; New River, John Watson. In the commencement of this year the appearance was rather gloomy in different sections of the work. The district was very large, and the presiding elder could not perform his round in less than six months.

The spring of 1801 the quarterly meetings in Kentucky were held without the presiding elder. The quarterly meeting for Hinkston circuit was held early in June, at Owens's meeting house, Four-mile creek, commencing on Friday and breaking up on Monday morning. At this meeting was the first appearance of that astonishing revival to which we have alluded. Several professed to get religion, and many were under deep conviction for sin, and the meeting continued from Sunday morning till Monday morning, with but little



intermission.

From thence brother Lakin and myself proceeded in company, on Monday morning, to a Presbyterian sacrament, at Salem meeting-house, in the neighborhood of Col. John Martin's. The Rev. Mr. Lyle was pastor of that Church. There had been during the occasion more than ordinary attention and seriousness manifested. I arrived on the ground before the first sermon was concluded, and during the interval they insisted on my preaching the next sermon; and, notwithstanding I was much fatigued from the labors of the quarterly meeting, I at length consented, and commenced about two o'clock, P. M. I took for my text, "To you is the word of this salvation sent;" and before I concluded there was a great trembling among the dry bones. Great numbers fell to the ground and cried for mercy, old and young. Brother Lakin followed with one of his then powerful exhortations, and the work increased. The Presbyterian ministers stood astonished, not knowing what to make of such a tumult. Brother Lakin and myself proceeded to exhort and pray with them. Some obtained peace with God before the meeting broke up. This was the first appearance of the revival in the Presbyterian Church. From these two meetings the heavenly flame spread in every direction.

Preachers and people, when they assembled for meeting, always expected the Lord to meet with them.

Our next quarterly meeting was for Lexington circuit, at Jesse Griffith's, Scott county. On Saturday we had some indications of a good work. On Saturday night we had preaching in different parts of the neighborhood, which at that time was the custom; so that every local preacher and exhorter was employed in the work. Success attended the meetings, and on Sunday morning they came in companies singing and shouting on the road. Love feast was opened on Sunday morning at eight o'clock, and such was the power and presence of God that the doors were thrown open, and the work became general, and continued till Monday afternoon, during which time numbers experienced justification by faith in the name of Jesus Christ. The work spread now into the several circuits. Salt River and Shelby were visited, and Danville shared in the blessing; also the Presbyterian Church caught the fire. Congregations were universally wakened up: McNamer's congregation on Cabin creek; Barton Stone's at Cane Ridge; Reynolds's near Ruddell's Station and in Paris; Rev. Mr. Lisle at Salem; Mr. Rankin, Walnut Hills; Mr. Blythe at Lexington and Woodford; and Rev. Mr. Walsh at Cane run; likewise in Madison county, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Houston. The work extended to Ohio at Lower Springfield, Hamilton county; Rev. Mr. Thompson's congregation and Eagle creek; Rev. Mr. Dunlavey's congregation, Adams county. The Methodist local preachers and exhorters, and the members generally, united with them in carrying on the work, for they were at home wherever God was pleased to manifest his power; and having had some experience in such a school, were able to teach others. The Presbyterian ministers saw the advantage of such auxiliaries, and were pressing in their invitations, both for the traveling and local preachers, to attend their sacraments through the months of July and August. The Rev. Barton Stone was pastor of the Church at Cane Ridge. I had been formerly acquainted with him when he traveled as a missionary in the Holston and Cumberland country, previous to his settling at Cane Ridge; and we agreed to have a united sacrament of the Presbyterians and Methodists at Cane Ridge meeting-house, in August. The meeting was published, throughout the length and breadth of the country, to commence on Friday.

On the first day I arrived in the neighborhood; but it was a rainy day, and I did not attend on the ground. On Saturday morning I attended. On Friday and Friday night they held meeting in the meeting house; and such was the power and presence of God on Friday night that the meeting continued all night; and next morning, Saturday, they repaired to a stand erected in the woods, the work still going on in the house, which continued there till

Wednesday, without intermission. On Saturday the congregation was very numerous. The Presbyterians continued to occupy the stand during Saturday and Saturday night, whenever they could get a chance to be heard; but never invited any Methodist preacher to preach. On Sunday morning Mr. Stone, with some of the elders of the session, waited upon me to have a conference on the subject of the approaching sacrament, which was to be administered in the afternoon. The object in calling on me was, that I should make from the stand a public declaration how the Methodists held certain doctrines, etc. I told them we preached every day, and that our doctrines were published to the world through the press. Come and hear, go and read; and if that was the condition on which we were to unite in the sacrament, "Every man to his tent, O Israel;" for I should require of him to make a public declaration of their belief in certain doctrines. He then replied that we had better drop the subject; that he was perfectly satisfied, but that some of his elders were not. I observed that they might do as they thought best; but the subject got out among the Methodists, and a number did not partake of the sacrament, as none of our preachers were invited to assist in administering.

There is a mistaken opinion with regard to this meeting. Some writers of late represent it as having been a campmeeting. It is true there were a number of wagons and carriages, which remained on the ground night and day; but not a single tent was to be found, neither was any such thing as campmeetings heard of at that time. Preaching in the woods was a common thing at popular meetings, as meeting-houses in the west were not sufficient to hold the large number of people that attended on such occasions. This was the case at Cane Ridge.

On Sunday morning, when I came on the ground, I was met by my friends, to know if I was going to preach for them on that day. I told them I had not been invited; if I was, I should certainly do so.

The morning passed off; but no invitation. Between ten and eleven I found a convenient place on the body of a fallen tree, about fifteen feet from the ground, where I fixed my stand in the open sun, with an umbrella affixed to a long pole and held over my head by brother Hugh Barnes. I commenced reading a hymn with an audible voice, and by the time we concluded singing and praying we had around us, standing on their feet, by fair calculation ten thousand people. I gave out my text in the following words: "For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ;" *and before I concluded my voice was not to be heard for the groans of the distressed and the shouts of triumph.* Hundreds fell prostrate to the ground, and the work continued on that spot till Wednesday afternoon. It was estimated by some that not less than five hundred were at one time lying on the ground in the deepest agonies of distress, and every few minutes rising in shouts of triumph. Toward the evening I pitched the only tent on the ground. Having been accustomed to travel the wilderness, I soon had a tent constructed of poles and papaw bushes. Here I remained Sunday night and Monday and Monday night; and during that time there was not a single moment's cessation, but the work went on, and old and young, men, women, and children, were converted to God. It was estimated that on Sunday and Sunday night there were twenty thousand people on the ground. They had come far and near from all parts of Kentucky; some from Tennessee, and from north of the Ohio river; so that tidings of Cane Ridge meeting was carried to almost every corner of the country, and the holy fire spread in all directions.

Immediately after this meeting the last round of quarterly meetings commenced for that conference year, and they were appointed for four days to commence on Friday. The work continued, and quarterly meetings were attended by thousands, and generally continued night and day with but little intermission; and during the week, at appointments in different parts of the country, we had to preach in the groves to thousands of people. We



gave invitations to all the Presbyterian ministers to unite with us at our quarterly meetings; but they generally pleaded as an excuse that they had appointments to attend, and Friday, Saturday, and Sunday would pass off without any aid from them; but on Monday we generally saw some of their ministers in the congregation, but having our plans filled up for that day we consequently paid no attention to them; for we were fully satisfied that they only wanted the Methodists to shake the bush, and they would catch the birds. My advice to our official members in quarterly meeting conference was, to quietly withdraw from their meetings, and mind our own business. They did so, and no difficulty occurred in any of our societies. This conference year ended with the greatest prospects that had ever visited the far west.

In the year 1801 the Presbyterians had some gracious revivals in Sumner county Tennessee, and Logan county, Kentucky. The two McGees, John — an old traveling preacher, who had located and settled on the Cumberland river — and his brother William, a Presbyterian minister, with two other Presbyterians, Messrs. Rankin and Hodges, in connection with brothers Page and Wilkerson, were united in carrying on the work both among the Methodists and Presbyterians; but the conference of 1802 opened with greater prospects, and the work became universal in Tennessee. The Presbyterians appeared to have forgotten that they had any Confession of Faith or discipline, and the Methodists had laid aside their Discipline, and seemed to forget that they were bound to observe the rules contained therein, and as established from time to time by the General conference.

I visited the old stamping-ground, Sumner and Davidson counties, where I had labored in 1795, and again in 1798, and found a great change. The class meetings were free to all; the love-feasts open to all; and they were mixed up in such confusion that it was impossible to tell to what Church or denomination they belonged. The Western annual conference for the year sat at Strauther's, in Sumner county, Tennessee. Bishop Asbury presided. There was a general attendance of the preachers; and the conference sat in the house of brother Strauther, and the public exercises were in the woods at a stand in hearing of the house. The conference and the public exercises were of the same mixed character. To my astonishment, on the first day of the conference several of the Presbyterian clergymen were introduced into the conference, and remained during that day. When the conference adjourned I took brother McKendree aside, and stated to him my views on the impropriety of the course pursued in breaking down all our rules and regulations as Methodists, but especially in our annual conference, I observed to him, that many of our local brethren, and some who had been traveling preachers for years, were excluded a seat among us, while those ministers of another denomination were admitted and not objected to. I insisted on him, as the presiding elder, to enter his objection when we met the next morning. He admitted it was wrong, but said he could not broach the subject, as Mr. Asbury appeared to entertain such favorable notions of the union that then prevailed. I observed that I was no enemy to union and communion with any denomination upon proper principles, and if he declined I would bring the subject before the conference, and accordingly did so on the sitting of the conference next morning. I stated my objections at length, and cited our Discipline, and insisted that our rules established class meetings ( these disciplined seekers into His Rest, which the others did not believe in) and love-feasts as wise and prudential means, and that they were peculiar to the Methodist Church. Other denominations did not consider them either wise or prudential, or they would introduce them into their Churches; and why should they wish to intrude on our privileges, while they, by their own showing, considered them no privilege? And in regard to the annual conference, the Discipline clearly pointed out who had the right to a place in their sittings, etc. Mr. Asbury decidedly opposed my views, and stated to the conference that I was but a young man, and referred the conference to some

of Mr. Wesley's views and conduct on like occasions. No member of the conference took sides with me, but all remained silent; and when Mr. Asbury concluded his remarks, I made my rejoinder, and acknowledged that I was but a junior, but thought I understood Methodist Discipline, and that as a Church we were not to be governed by Mr. Wesley's views or the views of any other man, however aged, but by the rules laid down by the General conference; and if the Presbyterians, or any other denomination, had a desire to enjoy what we esteemed privileges, let them adopt them in their Churches, and then we would reciprocate, and not till then. When I concluded my observations I requested Mr. Asbury to give me my appointment in this country, and I assured him I would soon put a stop to the present mode of doing business. He observed that I was too cold for that climate; that I should go further north. And here our controversy ended; but we had no more Presbyterian ministers during the sitting of conference.

Mr. Asbury was at that time not able to walk alone, from a rheumatic affection in his feet, and brother McKendree had to accompany him to the Holston country; and after they arrived in the settlement in the neighborhood of Knoxville, the subject of what I had said at conference was brought up, and Mr. Asbury acknowledged that I had taken the proper ground, and wrote me on the subject, stating that reciprocity was the true doctrine. He also wrote to Mr. Rankin and Mr. Hodges his views, and at the next conference at Mount Gerizim, 1803, he preached that doctrine to the conference.

From the conference at Strauther's, October, 1802, I received my appointment on Limestone circuit alone. I was appointed at the conference to attend the Legislature of Kentucky and obtain an act of incorporation for Bethel Academy. I performed that duty and arrived on my circuit late in November. I took with me Adjet McGuire, a young man that had been lately licensed to preach, and employed him as a helper, which was afterward sanctioned by the presiding elder. When I entered upon my circuit, I found that, to a very great extent, the people were prejudiced against a married preacher, and I could find no house open at which I could board my wife, either for love or money. (there were not enough log cabins built yet)

In this state of affairs I was brought to a stand. I had some little money, and found a few friends; and in those days I considered myself equal to any emergency and immediately set about cutting logs for a cabin, and a few friends assisted me in getting them together, and I purchased some plank and brick, and in the course of a few weeks had a snug little room fitted up adjoining brother L. Fitch's, about three miles from Flemingsburg. During the time I was building my cabin I attended my Sunday appointments, and through the week attended to my work and collecting materials to fit out my cabin; and having accomplished that business, I entered regularly upon my work. The circuit had been much neglected the past year, and religion was at a low ebb, and we commenced in good earnest. The winter was severe and the congregations but small. On the opening of spring I commenced two days' meetings, and called together the local preachers to my aid.

Early in June we had a two days' meeting at Union meeting-house, not far from Germantown; and on that occasion it pleased God to manifest his power in a very singular manner on Sunday, and the first-fruits was the conversion of brother Petticord's oldest daughter. Brother Petticord was one of the first race of Methodists from Frederick county, Maryland, and a relative of Caleb B. Petticord, who was admitted on trial as a traveling preacher in 1777. This meeting continued on Sunday night and part of Monday, and numbers were seriously affected. From this meeting the holy flame spread in every direction, and the work became general throughout the circuit, at Bracken meeting-house, and Shannon, and Flemingsburg, and Locust meeting-house, and at private houses, and our congregations became crowded night and day.





## More Holiness Revival

In August we had a four days' meeting at Shannon meeting house. This was a time that numbers still living well remember. This meeting continued night and day, without intermission. I was employed night and day with out sleeping for three nights. Brother McKendree preached on Monday morning, and while he was preaching the power of God rested on the congregation; and about the middle of his sermon it came down upon him in such a manner that he sank down into my arms while sitting behind him in the pulpit. His silence called every eye to the pulpit. I instantly raised him up to his feet, and the congregation said his face beamed with glory. He shouted out the praise of God, and it appeared like an electric shock in the congregation. Many fell to the floor like men slain in the field of battle. The meeting continued till late in the afternoon, and witnesses were raised up to declare that God had power on earth to forgive sin, and many did say he could cleanse from all unrighteousness. From this meeting the work went on with astonishing power; hundreds were converted to God; and one of the most pleasing features of this revival was, that almost all the children of the old, faithful Methodists were the subjects of the work.

Our last quarterly meeting was at Flemingsburg, at which brother Nicholas Snethen and brother McKendree attended, and preached in the power and demonstration of the Spirit. It was a time long to be remembered. There was one peculiar circumstance which I will relate. Old father Duzan, who had raised a numerous family of sons and daughters, and then had a son in the traveling connection, was surrounded by his family and engaged in prayer on the ground. Presently he was seen supporting his youngest son, and proclaiming aloud to those around, "Glory to God, he has converted my last child. Now let me, thy servant, depart in peace; for my eyes have seen thy salvation." This conference year closed with an increase for Limestone circuit of about five hundred. The people were anxious for my return for the next year *There were now houses enough* open to receive me to live in and cost me nothing. The preachers who united in carrying on this work, were Benjamin Northcott, James O'Cull, Jarvis Taylor, Joshua Sargent, Jeremiah Lawson, Hugh Barnes, and Richard Tilton, together with many exhorters and leaders, who entered heartily into the work. This year ended the happiest days of my itinerant life; for the happiest days of a Methodist preacher is to be on a circuit where he can pursue a regular course and preach every day. I had the honor of lodging the Bishop one night, in the log-cabin I had built, while on his way to conference.

The conference this year was at Mount Gerizim, October 2, 1803. At this conference Mr. Asbury insisted that I should cross the Ohio and take upon me the formation of a new district in that new and wilderness country, and act as presiding elder. I took several days to think on the subject, and gave him for answer, that I considered myself not sufficiently qualified for such a responsible undertaking; but he would not take no for an answer, but appointed me presiding elder of Ohio district, which included all the settlements from the Big Miami up to the neighborhood of Steubenville, which was then called West Wheeling circuit running down the Ohio, including Little Kanawha and Guyandotte circuits, in Virginia, and some settlements on Licking, in the state of Kentucky. I entered upon my work about the last of October, 1803. The first quarterly meeting was at Ward's meeting-house — a new house built of rough beech logs — on Duck creek, Hamilton county, near where Madisonville is now situated — John Sale and Joseph Oglesby were the circuit preachers. This was then called the Miami circuit, and included all the settlements

between the Miamis and as far north including the settlements on Mad river, as high up as the neighborhood where Urbana now stands, and east of the Little Miami as high up as the settlements on Bullskin, and all the settlements on the East Fork of the Little Miami, and a few settlements in Campbell county, Kentucky. This route the preachers accomplished in six weeks. We organized two quarterly meetings in the bounds, so that the presiding elder was two weeks in the bounds of the circuit, preaching nearly every day. The most easterly appointment was at brother Boggs's, on the Little Miami, a few miles from the Yellow Springs. From that point we generally started at daylight for the settlements on the Scioto, having between forty and fifty miles, without a house, to the first inhabitants at old Chilicothe. The Scioto circuit included all that tract of country inhabited on Paint creek out to New Market, Brush creek, Eagle creek, and Ohio Brush creek, and up the Ohio to the mouth of Scioto, and then up the Scioto to the Pickaway Plains, including Chilicothe and the settlements on White's creek, a four weeks' circuit. From thence one day's ride to the settlements in Hocking Valley, which was called Hocking circuit, which laid principally on that river and its tributaries, and a few settlements on the waters of Walnut creek.

From New Lancaster we generally took two days and a half to reach the bounds of West Wheeling circuit, in the neighborhood where St. Clairsville is now located. This was a four weeks' circuit, including the settlements on the Ohio river, and extending back to the frontier settlements on the West Wheeling and Short creeks, etc. From this point we returned by the same route to New Lancaster, and then down the Hocking to Sunday creek and Monday creek, and then over to Marietta circuit. This circuit was up and down the Ohio from Marietta as low down as the settlements were formed, and up to the head of Long Reach, and up the Muskingum river as far as Clover Bottom and Wolf creek and so down to the neighborhood of Marietta, and over the Ohio into Virginia on the waters of the little Kanawha. This was called the Muskingum and Little Kanawha circuits. It was but a three weeks' circuit, and had one preacher. From the neighborhood of Marietta we started down the Ohio river by way of Graham's Station to the mouth of the Great Kanawha, and down to Green Bottom — brother Spurlock's — which was the first appointment on Guyandotte circuit. This circuit contained all the territory south and west of the Great Kanawha, and down to the mouth of Big Sandy and the settlements back from the Ohio river. This was a field of labor that required about eleven weeks to accomplish, and many privations. *The Methodists were, in those days, like angels' visits, few and far between, and we were half our time obliged to put up in taverns and places of entertainment, subject to the disorder and abuse of the unprincipled and half-civilized inmates, suffering with hunger and cold, and sleeping in open cabins on the floor, sometimes without bed or covering, and but little prospect of any support from the people among whom we labored, and none from any other source; for there was no provision in those days for missionaries.* But, notwithstanding all the privations and sufferings that we endured, we had the consolation that our labor was not in vain in the Lord. We were gratified in having souls for our hire, and rejoiced to see the wilderness blossom as the rose. New societies sprang up in various places, the circuits were enlarged, immigration increased, and the forest was subdued, and comforts multiplied. In the fall of 1805 I was removed from the Ohio district to the Kentucky district, and brother John Sale was appointed my successor. The Western conference for this year was held at brother Houstin's, in Scott county, Kentucky October 2d. Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat attended at this conference. Our borders became greatly enlarged. We now included in the Western conference five districts, stretching from the Muskingum, in Ohio, to the Opelousas, in Louisiana.

The two years that I presided in the Ohio district laid the foundation for the future success of Methodism. We had been successful in introducing our doctrines into almost every



neighborhood, and this formed a nucleus for the immigrants that were constantly arriving in the country. Numbers of Methodists from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the eastern states, settled in the Miami, Scioto, Hocking, and Muskingum Valleys, and a goodly number of valuable local preachers settled among them, and united with us in carrying on the good work of God, under the superintendence of divine Providence. Numbers of young men were raised up in different sections of the western country, and entered the missionary field full of zeal, and eminently pious, and by this means we were enabled to follow immigration and the wide-spread settlements.

In 1804 the number of circuits in the Western conference was twenty-six, and the number of preachers stationed was thirty-seven, and but one district in Ohio. In 1810, which included brother Sale's four years on Ohio district, the work had extended, and there were three districts north-west of the Ohio river, and twenty-one circuits; number of preachers, thirty-one. The number of circuits for this year in the Western conference was fifty-nine, and the number of preachers stationed was eighty-one. In 1804 the number of members in the Ohio district was one thousand, two hundred and fifteen, and in the bounds of the Western conference, nine thousand, seven hundred and eighty. In 1810 the number in Ohio was eight thousand, seven hundred and eighty-one; and in the bounds of the Western conference, twenty-two thousand, nine hundred and four. Compare this with 1798.

Number of preachers in Ohio, John Kobler; number of members, ninety-nine. Number of preachers in the bounds of the Western conference, fourteen; and the number of members, two thousand, five hundred and ninety-five. To compare the present number in the bounds of Ohio, in fifty-six years they increased from ninety-nine to at least one hundred and fifty thousand. Surely this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. In 1798 was the first introduction of itinerancy north-west of the Ohio; and one solitary pilgrim passed over the brook hunting up the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and now behold them spread into bands, not only in Ohio, but Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Minnesota, Nebraska, Salt Lake, Oregon, and California, all of which at that time was comparatively a vast howling wilderness! The exposure and labor incident to my appointment brought on severe attacks of bilious fever.

At one time my life was despaired of; and in the fall of 1805 Mr. Asbury thought best to remove me to the Kentucky district. Here I was among my old friends with whom I had fought many a battle sore, and dried up Enon, near to Salem, and caused the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation to become a stench in the nostrils of those who calmly investigated the subject. I spent four years in that district with great satisfaction to myself, and also to the people whom I was sent to serve. There were but a few things that interrupted our harmony and peace. One was, that in consequence of my illness I could not attend a meeting where the sacrament was to be administered.

I sent a deacon with instructions to administer, which was called in question by some, and complaint entered against me; but I sustained the position I had taken, on the ground that the deacon was directed to assist the elder in such cases, and I succeeded in my justification. The other was the part I took with the local preachers in advocating their right to elder's orders, which was finally successful. In 1807 there was a meeting of the local deacons at my house, at which Bishop Asbury was present, and favored the plan. The agitation after this meeting settled down quietly, and my opponents remained quiet.

I was next appointed to the Salt River district, where I remained two years, during which time another difficulty arose. A traveling elder was accused of immorality; and among the charges and specifications were some of improper words. I examined the charges, and for improper words I, as his presiding elder, acted upon them officially, and did not submit them to the committee, for which they charged me at conference with maladministration;

but the conference sustained me. We had in general very good times throughout the district; but the field was a large one, including a very extensive territory; consequently, at the end of two years I was willing to have some better situation, and received my appointment to the Cincinnati circuit.

Here I had for my helper John Strange. We passed an agreeable year; and at the conference held at Chillicothe, in the fall of 1811, I was appointed to Cincinnati station, it being the first station in the state of Ohio. I organized the station, and many of the rules and regulations that I established are still in use. We had but one church in the city, and it went under the name of the Stone Church. I preached three times every Sunday, and on Wednesday night; and while stationed in that house my voice failed me. The Methodists being too poor to buy a stove to warm the house in winter, and on Sunday morning it being generally crowded, their breath would condense on the walls, and the water would run down and across the floor. The next conference I did not attend but was appointed supernumerary on Cincinnati circuit. I was not able to do much, but to give advice in certain cases.



## Retirement

This year I closed my itinerancy, and sold my horse, bridle, saddle-bags, and saddle, and gathered up the fragments, and the fortune that I had made from twenty-six years labor amounted to three hundred dollars. From the 9th of January, 1796, I traveled as a married man, no allowance being made for the wife. Part of the time sixty-four dollars was allowed a traveling preacher, and he must find his own horse and fixins, his own wardrobe and that of his wife, together with her board; and the other part of the time it was eighty dollars, still nothing for wife. I was the first married preacher in the west who traveled after marrying. I met with every discouragement that could be thrown in my way. Preachers and people said, "You had better locate." I shared equally with the single men when they were on the circuit with me, in order to keep peace. I bore all the murmurings and complainings from every quarter, and appeared at conference every year ready for work. One winter I had to use a borrowed blanket instead of a cloak or overcoat. That year my wife was among her relations, and well taken care of. Now a man is no preacher except he has a wife and family, whose allowance is one hundred dollars, and wife the same, and children provided for; house rent, fuel, and table expenses; the bishops' salaries to the full secured, and for presiding elders so much is apportioned among the circuits and stations. The allowance to many of the preachers of the present day varies from eight hundred to fifteen hundred dollars per year, while the poor superannuate must find his own house, pay his rent, furnish his own table, etc., and receive from the conference steward sometimes fourteen and twenty dollars, and sometimes as high as forty dollars; and how can a superannuate keep soul and body together on that dividend? I am superannuate in the Southern division, and know not how I shall make out to live. My labors and sufferings to cultivate and prepare the way for my brethren in the Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio conferences, are all known to God and the Church, and my testimony is in heaven. None seem to care for my circumstances now. I am at present in my eighty-fifth year, and can not stay much longer in the tabernacle; but, through riches of grace in Christ Jesus, I have for me prepared "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."





## SKETCH OF WILLIAM BURKE

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Burke, William, a pioneer Methodist preacher, a native of Virginia, was converted in 1790, when twenty years of age. In 1791 he was sent to the Holston Mountains. Few men saw harder service than he, traveling by night in order to escape the dangers threatened by the Indians throughout that region.

After laboring in Virginia and Tennessee, he was for a time an active presiding elder. His life was full of adventure and of great suffering, traveling frequently a hundred miles without the sight of a house or human being. He labored twenty-six years in Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. In 1811 he organized and took charge of the first Methodist station in Cincinnati, and, it is believed, the first in Ohio. His health failing, he retired from the effective work. He was appointed judge of the county, and afterwards postmaster of the city, and held the latter office for twenty-eight years.

Becoming involved in trouble, however, he was suspended by the Conference in 1818. He thereupon organized an independent church in Cincinnati, which flourished for a few years and then failed.

After a long-continued investigation, the General Conference of 1836 restored his name to the minutes. He died in Cincinnati in 1855, aged eighty-five. He was a member of the committee of fourteen who, in 1808, drafted the Restrictive Rules of the church.



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