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Autobiographies

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

By

George Peck

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" Heb 12:14

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

Wesleyan Heritage Publications

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

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Chapter 1
ANCESTORS — EARLY YOUTH

The old Hebrew method of rehearsing genealogies has the merit of clearness and brevity, if no other. Borrowing the ancient style, I begin with the statement that I am the son of Luther Peck, who was the son of Jesse, who was the son of Eliphalet, who was the son of John, who was the son of Joseph, who was the son of Henry.

The American Pecks are descended from an English family, whose history has been traced by the curious back to the commencement of the fifteenth century. They belonged to the gentry, and were known in heraldry, having a coat of arms with the motto, *Probitatem quam Divitias*, all of which is recorded in the Herald's Office in the British Museum in London. Several families of the name emigrated to this country in early colonial times, and settled in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Their descendants were numerous, and the name appears, not only in literary circles, but with some distinction in military affairs during the war of the Revolution. [1]

Henry Peck was born in England, and emigrated to the colonies in the days of the pilgrim fathers. He is supposed to have been one of the company who arrived at Boston, June 26, 1637, in the ship Hector, with Governor Eaton, the Rev. John Davenport, and others, whose names figure in the annals of that period. He was among the first settlers of New Haven, where he located in the spring of 1638. The agreement of the original settlers, of which document he was a signer, is dated June 4, 1639. In the allotment of lands the portion which fell to him is now within the city limits, and a part of the old homestead is still in the possession of his descendants. He took an active part in the management of the affairs of the settlement.

Eliphalet Peck, the great-grandson of Henry, settled in the town of Danbury. The records of the church at Bethel show that he, his wife Rebecca, and their son Jesse, became members at the time the society was organized in 1760. Eliphalet Peck lived to an advanced age.

Jesse Peck, my grandfather, settled in the south part of Danbury, now called Bethel, upon new land, which he cleared of the original forest, and made into a farm. He served as a volunteer in the Revolutionary War, and died while the contest was still undecided, leaving a large family with no means of support save their own exertions. Three of his seven sons entered the army. The oldest died of small-pox while in the service. The other two were taken prisoners by the enemy, carried to New York, and confined in the "Jersey," which was an old ship anchored in the East River, and used by the British as a place of confinement for their prisoners of war. Here they suffered many deaths; and when they were at last released and carried home, they were so broken down in body and mind by disease and brutal treatment, that they were not able to recognize their own mother.

My father, Luther Peck, was one of the younger of the seven sons. He was apprenticed to a blacksmith when he was about fourteen or fifteen years old, and remained in his service till he was twenty. He always, in after years, spoke of his master with great respect, but invariably became grave and shook his head when he named his master's wife. She had cultivated the virtue of domestic economy till she had brought it to a high degree of perfection. This was especially conspicuous in the bill of table fare provided for the boys. She, however, was equal to culinary achievements beyond the corn-bread and thin bean porridge usually set before the apprentices, and generally had a private store of better things in reserve for company and other emergencies. The life of the apprentices was one of hard labor and hard fare.

It would naturally be supposed that a few years of experience like this would have broken the spirit of a fatherless boy, or rendered him desperate and reckless. It did neither. Luther was physically strong, and naturally hopeful and good-natured. Moreover, deep underneath his love of merriment, there lay solid religious convictions. Thus physical endurance, his native hopefulness, and tenderness of conscience combined to save him from the hardening influence of circumstances by no means favorable to the formation of an elevated personal character.

And still another influence helped to counteract the evils of this dismal apprenticeship. It is only the old story. There lived in the neighborhood a Widow Collar, and she had a daughter. The father, in the summer of 1777, enlisted in the army, leaving his wife and children at Danbury. During the memorable winter which followed, the darkest time of all the war, Mr. Collar died of smallpox at Valley Forge, Pa., where the poor remnants of the American army were encamped. About the time of the father's death the mother gave birth to another child, a puny infant, which lived, indeed, but seemed not only feeble but diseased, and in perpetual suffering, his cries, all through his infancy, being almost as incessant as the murmur of the brook which flowed past their humble dwelling.

The winter was a time of privation and suffering to the widow and her little family, as well as to the heroes at Valley Forge. She was exceedingly poor. The husband, some time before his death, sent her what was called his pay, but it was in Continental money, worth little more than so much blank paper. The daughter, Annis, then about fourteen years of age, became the hope and the stay of the stricken family. She was healthy, active, industrious, affectionate, ready to do and suffer all things for her loved mother, and the feeble nursling in the little cottage. She spun flax and wool for the neighbors, and wove cloth, or performed almost any sort of service for honest wages, which she gladly devoted to her mother and brother. During that "hard winter," as it was long called, when the snow was deep enough to hide the fences, Annis went into the woods, and with her own hands collected fuel, and dragged it over the icy crust of the snow-banks to her mother's door. Thus Luther Peck and Annis Collar grew up side by side, and by the stern discipline of a youth of toil and privation, were preparing themselves for resolute battle with the labors and hardships of coming years. They acquired physical endurance, and at the same time a mental robustness which are never without their value.

Soon after the close of the war, Luther Peck and Annis Collar were united in holy matrimony, at the house of the parish minister, the Rev. Joseph Peck. The young husband was twenty years of age, and was an indentured apprentice, with one year still to serve. His master was neither able nor willing to release him from the obligation. To continue the compact was, however, impossible.

Young Peck was in a state of rebellion against the woes inflicted upon him in the house of his master, and determined to have a home of his own. At last, the matter was settled by his agreeing to pay one hundred dollars as an equivalent for the unexpired year.

The newly-married pair commenced housekeeping on a scale corresponding with their diminutive finances, at a place called Great Plain. The shop was no better furnished than the house. In fact, some of the neighbors, seeing the necessities of the case, united in a plan to supply the needed tools, and take their pay in work. But impelled by a strong arm and a stout heart, the hammer rang early and late, the debt was soon paid, and the little home, as the years passed on, accumulated the comforts, and even some of the luxuries, of life as they were estimated at that day.

It may be here remarked, that all the sons of Jesse Peck were much of the type of Luther — full of life and energy, mental and physical, and even down to old age companionable, fond of wit and humor, and without an exception truly religious men. I feel that it is only justice to the memory of my immediate ancestors to here note their industrious habits and decided religious character. Some of them were rich in the goods of this world, but not many. The great majority seem to have adhered closely to the family motto, *Probitatem quam Divitias* — Virtue rather than Wealth. But none can be called poor who possess the better treasures of intelligence, energy, and good morals. Their stout hearts and strong arms did their full share both in the forest and on the battlefield; in the toils and sacrifices which have turned the wilderness into a garden, and won for America a place among the foremost nations of the earth.

My father had a great respect for religion, but at the point of his history where we now are, and for several years afterward, was not the subject of special awakening. My mother had been thoughtful from her childhood. When she became a wife and a mother, her convictions deepened, and she was a sincere inquirer after the way of salvation. She urged my father to pray in his family; but he felt entirely unfit for such a work. He did, however, make it a matter of serious thought, and went so far as to prepare for the duty by composing a prayer, and committing it to writing. This paper my mother accidentally found in the pocket of one of his coats, and after reading it, carefully returned it to its place, and day after day anxiously waited for the result, but waited in vain.

One day their venerable pastor was visiting the family, and in the course of the conversation quietly reminded them that they had children who had never been baptized; and in order that the rite might be administered, the parents must connect themselves with the people of God — it being at that time contrary to rule to baptize the children of any except such as bore some sort of relation to the Church. To meet such cases as that of my parents there was a sort of honorary Church-membership, "half-covenant," they called it, which entitled children to baptism, and yet was not understood to include full profession of religion, or qualify for the Lord's Supper.

My parents, therefore, united in this way with the Church, and their four children, all they then had, were baptized. In taking this step, my mother was greatly encouraged and strengthened in her religious life. My father simply felt that he had done it for his children's sake, rather than his own, and was in nowise disposed to imagine that he had gained any new title to the Divine favor.

Meanwhile, the spirit of emigration had been working among the people of Connecticut, and several families had left Danbury and "gone west," settling in Middlefield, in the State of New York. But little was known of the "new country," and when my father began to talk of leaving his old home and removing westward, the project had to be discussed at great length by the relatives, the neighbors, and all my father's customers at the shop. Many solemn consultations were held, and many sage opinions expressed. All agreed that cheap land was a good thing; but then Middlefield was fifty-six miles west of Albany, and two hundred from Danbury, and the immense distance was an almost fatal objection. There were also grave doubts in regard to the wisdom of his leaving the goodly land of Connecticut, and exposing himself and his family to the attacks of savages and wild beasts in the wilderness. The old people were decidedly opposed to so hazardous an enterprise. "You will starve in the woods," sighed one counselor. "You will be killed by the Indians," said another, the prophecy being reinforced by sundry dreadful narratives from the old colonial traditions. "You will soon come back, as poor as dogs," was the conclusion of another. The public voice condemned the whole idea, as being visionary and full of peril. My mother, however, was not one of the remonstrants, and the decision at last was to go.

Thus in the year 1794, Luther Peck and one of his neighbors removed, with their families, to Otsego County, New York. My father bought some land about two miles southeast of what is now called Middlefield Center, and proceeded to clear a part of his tract, and build a house and shop. These were simply little cabins of logs, the timbers notched into each other at the corners, and the spaces between the logs filled with clay. Considered from an architectural point of view, they were nothing of which to boast; but this was the style of the neighborhood, and of the "new countries" generally. These log cabins were usually about fourteen feet square, sometimes smaller, with a rough stone wall against which the fire was built, a roof of slabs, and a chimney made of sticks notched together like the cabin itself, and thickly plastered with clay on the inside. A rough floor, laid upon the beams above, made a garret, to which access was had by means of a stationary ladder.

All the appointments of housekeeping were in correspondence with the simple style of the dwelling. Carpets and tablecloths were unknown. Food was abundant and substantial, but consisted of few articles. Tea was somewhat used, but was costly. Coffee was not known. Beef, pork, potatoes, milk, bread made of rye and corn, composed the ordinary fare, occasionally diversified with the flesh of domestic fowls, or venison and other wild game. These edibles were set upon the table in pewter plates, wooden trenchers, and wooden bowls great and small, with here and there a piece of earthenware, or other crockery, to give variety to the show.

Thus rude and primitive was frontier life in Eastern New York only eighty years ago. It was laborious, and to modern eyes almost barbarous, but did not lack its bright side. It was independent, free from conventional constraint, and full as conducive to good health, good morals, and contentment, as the more pretentious ways of later times. The men and boys worked in the field, the forest, or the shop, while the women and girls were busy with their domestic duties, which included the spinning of flax and wool, and the weaving of cloth for family wear.

In a little log cabin of the kind described, the first which my father erected, I was born, on the 8th of August, 1797; and amid scenes like these, gradually changing as the years passed on, but long retaining many of their striking features, I spent my boyhood. The family lived in this dwelling but

a little time, and I have no recollections of residence there; but I often saw the place in my early years, and felt a sort of veneration for it. And so frequently did I hear my parents describe its wild, romantic character, that my impressions of it, to this day, are very vivid. The forest was around them on every side, and in some directions, stretched its shadowy solitudes unbroken for miles. By day, the waving of the tall trees, the notes of the birds, the gambols of the squirrels, and the murmur of the brook, gave pleasure to the eye and the ear. By night, the low whisper of the rustling leaves, the weird notes of the whip-poor-will, the startling hoot of the great owl, or the querulous notes of the smaller, with the distant howl of an occasional wolf, formed a sylvan chorus which filled the mind with mingled emotions of awe and pleasure.

After a residence here of about three years, my father, with an eye to a better location for his business, bought land on the main road which leads from Cooperstown to Albany, and built another loghouse and shop, the distance from his first location being about two miles. The new dwelling was an improvement on the other. It had a shingle roof, a stone chimney, and was well plastered between the logs. It stood on the hill south of Red Creek, and commanded a beautiful view of the green hills beyond. Here I spent many a happy day.

When I began to go to school, however, my happiness was seriously interrupted. The schoolhouse had been something of an itinerant. It was built, originally, half a mile below our house, then removed to a point three fourths of a mile above us, and finally found a resting-place on the corner of our land. Here began my acquaintance with the real ills of life. When this notable edifice was making its first pilgrimage, with a dozen yoke of oxen slowly drawing it, and a frolicsome individual astride of the ridgepole, waving a red handkerchief tied to a stick, it seemed to me a spectacle of surpassing grandeur. But after it had been set down on the borders of a marsh, peopled with frogs and lizards, it became to me a prison, of which my recollections are so many wounds. I used to be driven to school as a slave to his toil. I often pretended to be sick, and for a time, my tender mother believed me; but when it was seen that my health every morning began to improve as soon as the other school children got out of sight, my device failed.

I account for my horror of school on several grounds. The confinement was abhorrent to my nature. My mind and body both seemed to be formed for the open air and active life. I loved the fields, the great out-of-doors. Then, again, the exercises were not so conducted as to interest a small child, or make him see that any valuable end was to be answered by them. And lastly, the punishments for petty offenses, of which I doubtless had my full share, were barbarous. The whip and the ferule I could endure; but to hold a gag between my teeth, to have a split stick stuck upon my nose, or to be made to stand in the middle of the floor or upon a bench for an hour at a time, an object of derision, was more than I could bear. There were two things, of singularly opposite character, which mitigated my woes — the religious exercises with which the daily sessions began and ended, and the hours of play. Without these the burden would have been intolerable.

Three or four of my early teachers I remember with special interest, and reference to them will illustrate more than one feature of the times. The first one was the wife of the Rev. Asa Cummings, a regular preacher of our Church, who was then traveling the Otsego Circuit. The people concluded that the schoolhouse might be made to perform additional duty as a parsonage. It was a poor, frame affair, weather-boarded, but without lath and plaster. Loose boards, laid upon the upper beams,

constituted a garret, where the beds of the family were placed, and a few cooking utensils were ranged on one side of the great fireplace. As the children spent all the time they could out of doors, we seldom saw any thing of the domestic economy of the family.

Here was the home of the itinerant minister, and here his wife taught the children of her neighbors. Mrs. Cummings was an old-style Dutch lady, but not unequal to her position as teacher. Her piety was intelligent and earnest. Her school prayers were simple, sensible, and fervent, and made upon my young heart impressions which many years have not effaced. But the itinerant wheel revolved; Mr. Cummings and his wife left us, and another teacher reigned in her stead.

Her successor was a savage old man by the name of Thurston, whose fierceness, however, was chiefly in his language. He seldom called up a boy to recite without applying to him some insulting term. His favorite epithets were rascal, dog, beggar, and the like. "Peck, you scoundrel," he would roar, "come and read."

With the girls he dealt more politely, simply styling them fools. His reign was short. His successor was Roswell Valentine, who was an earnest Christian, and made mighty prayers. He was quite a student, for the times. He taught reading, writing, and the simpler rules of arithmetic only; but his reputation was much enhanced by a rumor that he was studying grammar. The religious character of this man made a deep impression on me. The teacher, however, who really made the school to me something besides a prison, and laid a foundation for my future improvement, was a Dr. John Goodrich, who taught in our schoolhouse, in an intermittent way, for several years. He gave instructions in surveying, in addition to the common branches, and also gave us lectures on many interesting subjects. He was a splendid reader and speaker, too, and did much to wake up the young people to the importance of mental improvement.

About the year 1800 a great religious change took place in my father's family. When my parents left Connecticut they brought Church letters of recommendation; but the nearest place of worship of the Congregational order was at Cooperstown, six and a half miles distant, and they seldom attended worship there. They had heard of the Methodists, but the new sect was described in such contradictory terms that they knew not what to think. Before they left their New England home my mother was informed by my Grandmother Peck that she had heard a Methodist preacher by the name of Lee preach in Redding, and had been brought thus to a knowledge of the truth. She added, that she was so far advanced in years that she would not change her Church relations. "But," said she, "Annis, when you get to your new home, if the Methodists are near you, go and hear them, for you may be sure they are the people of God."

Their pastor came to see them just before they left Connecticut. He, too, gave them some advice on the same subject.

"You will meet," said he, "out in the new country, these strolling Methodists. They go about with their sanctimonious looks and languid hair, bawling and frightening women and children. They are wolves in sheep's clothing, the false prophets which should come in the last days, creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women laden with sins and led away with divers lusts."

My mother pondered all these things in her heart, and was left, perhaps, in about the right condition of mind to form an independent judgment. She had often felt the repulsive force of the Calvinistic doctrines of election and reprobation as they were then taught. And as for the old minister, she thought that he was too fond of seeing the young people dance. She was already hungering and thirsting for a purer Gospel and a higher Divine life than she had hitherto known. These she was destined to find in the wilderness, where, as she had been told, the Sabbath was unknown, and the people were heathen.

In the year 1788 the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson had been sent, with a company of ten or twelve young preachers, to establish circuits in this part of the State, and had been successful. One circuit extended along the Mohawk River as far as Whitestown. Another, south of it, included Middlefield, Springfield, Milford, and Worcester. Otsego Circuit was formed in 1791, and appears in the Minutes of that year. A preaching-place was established at Middlefield, in the house of Isaac Green, on the hill north of Red Creek, about three quarters of a mile from my father's. Here, and at the house of Daniel McCallum, about the same distance on another road, Methodist preaching was maintained for many years.

My parents occasionally attended these services, my mother feeling that she was profited thereby, and my father complaining of the conduct of the worshippers. He could not understand why the people groaned so dismally, and uttered "Amen" so often. The word was familiar to him as the conclusion of a prayer; but that any body who chose should use it to punctuate both the prayers and the sermon in every part was to him unaccountable. It made confusion, he said. Just as he was becoming interested in the discourse, some one close by his side, or behind him, would groan loudly, or thunder "Amen." He turned his eyes this way and that as the strange noises struck his ears, till he became vexed, and wished that they would cease and let him "hear a little of what the preacher said." He did not imagine that he was about to be led, by a way which he had not known, into the closest sympathy with this strange people.

About this time three of my father's intimate friends were suddenly called into eternity. Nicholls, who waved the flag from the roof of the schoolhouse, fell from a cart, and was injured so that he died; Fling was crushed by the fall of a tree; Gilbert was drowned. These sad events, following each other in swift succession, deeply affected him. In secret he thought much, felt much, promised much, but gave no outward token of what was passing within. He had never been addicted to the grosser vices. His Puritanic education had imbedded itself in his character, and he possessed a tender conscience. Still he was worldly, mirthful, fond of lively company, and was constantly led into associations which operated against his religious convictions, and kept him from a full surrender of his heart and life to God. While my mother, who was now leading a life of prayer, was mourning over the apparent unconcern of her loved husband, and while he, perhaps, was really trying to be indifferent and unmoved, he was suddenly arrested in an unusual manner.

In a dream two of the three deceased associates already named seemed to approach him, and summon him to the eternal world. With one of them on each side, he thought he rose from earth and began his flight. He expected at once to be ushered into the presence of a God whose repeated warnings he had disregarded, and whose forbearance he had utterly exhausted. The most intense horror seized his soul. He had no hope of mercy. His whole frame became so agitated with the terror

of the vision that my mother was awakened, and, in alarm, aroused him from sleep. He immediately arose, exclaiming, "I am going to die, and I shall be lost!" He was in an agony of remorse. He alternately fell upon his knees to implore mercy, and walked the floor, wringing his hands, and uttering the most heartrending exclamations of despair. He expected to die before morning, and saw nothing before him but "the blackness of darkness forever."

The weary hours wore away, and at last the morning dawned. The children awoke and gathered in consternation about their weeping father. I well remember being helped down the ladder that morning, and being struck with the changed aspect of things. My father, who was usually the first to salute us with kind or playful words, sat weeping and groaning in one corner, with my sisters gathered around him, sobbing with sympathetic emotion. Mother sat at a little distance, also weeping. The whole scene was to me one of great but inexplicable distress.

This intense mental anguish, of course, could not last; nevertheless, from the hour of that fearful dream, my father changed his course. He began to pray in his family and in secret, and yet found no peace. For months he was under the deepest conviction, scarcely hoping for mercy. Such was his mental distress that he wasted away under it, and his kind neighbors were alarmed lest he should lose his reason, or die. His old associates were confounded with the turn things had taken. One sagely concluded that a little jolly talk would scatter the cloud, and so he came over prepared to amuse my father with a lot of comic stories, but soon found that he was only exciting disgust. Another, rather a religious man, too, in his way, undertook to convince him that he had an exaggerated idea of his own guilt. "Why, Mr. Peck," said he, "if you go to hell, what will become of us?" This "untempered mortar" was also rejected.

In another quarter, however, the penitent found true sympathy. He began regularly to attend the Methodist meetings in his neighborhood, and now found that the responses of the worshippers did not disturb him. My mother and my eldest sister united with the little Society, and encouraged him to trust in the Saviour whom they had found. There were devoted women belonging to the class, who gave him their prayers, and cheered him with their counsel. The preachers made us frequent visits, and filled the whole house with holy influence. When they came, the family was called together, and after a few minutes of conversation, fervent prayer was offered. When they rose to depart, they took the hand of every member of the family, and gave to each an appropriate exhortation. What outbursts of holy emotion marked these occasions! What tears and sighs and earnest responses!

Light gradually broke upon my father's mind, and he, too, united with the Methodist Society. From that time his house became the home of the preachers, and a true house of God. Under its lowly roof preaching, prayer-meetings, and class-meetings were of frequent occurrence. On one occasion the crowd was so great that one of the floor beams gave way, and created a temporary panic.

Many a quaint and curious thing occurs to my mind as I review the history of those days. I remember hearing Jonathan Newman, who traveled the Otsego Circuit in 1804, preach in that old log-cabin, crowded to the last foot of space, a wonderful sermon, which was the talk of the whole country for years. The text was, "Nine and twenty knives." I remember only one feature of the discourse; it was very loud.

Sometimes the meeting was at Uncle Daniel McCallum's, or Father Green's, as the neighbors affectionately termed them. At the latter place I witnessed the first sacramental service which I can remember. There I also heard Benoni Harris, a chubby little man with a mighty voice, preach on the "end of the world." The idea that the earth would be burned never so impressed me before. The preacher stamped, and raised his clenched hand to his head, and dashed it down, and, in a voice of thunder, gave a terrific description of the final conflagration. The descriptions and the language of this sermon haunted my imagination for years.

Mr. Harris was, in more respects than one, a remarkable man. His physique was peculiar. He was very short and very stout, and looked as if he had once been a man of full stature and size, but had been pushed together like a spy-glass. His voice was something terrific. Odd stories were told of his ministrations. One was to the effect that, preaching on a certain occasion in a sugar camp, he mounted upon an empty hogshead, as his pulpit. In the midst of an impassioned deliverance, emphasizing his words with a vigorous stamp, he broke in the head, and in an instant almost disappeared. Still, not in the least disconcerted, he continued his sermon as if nothing had happened, the Congregation hearing the steady roar of his wondrous voice, but seeing nothing of him but the shiny top of his bald head bobbing about, and his hands stretched up, gesticulating wildly.

Soon after my parents united with the Methodists, my mother's brother, Isaac Collar, became a member of our family. He was the puny infant of which I have already spoken. He was now about twenty-eight years of age, but was a dwarf, having the appearance of a boy of nine or ten years, in all except his face and general manner. He had been well educated with a view to his becoming a school teacher; but his diminutive size, considered in connection with the ideas of school discipline prevalent at that time, was decidedly against him, and the plan was abandoned. He had a genius for music, and was an expert performer on the violin.

On his arrival at my father's he was received with great kindness, but soon found that he was breathing a strange atmosphere. He had brought his instrument with him, and I, for one, was delighted with the prospect of enjoying his performances; but when he got out his fiddle, and began to rattle off the jigs, my mother and sisters looked grave, and instead of praising his skill, talked to him about his soul. He was not averse to a discussion of the subject, and declared his opinions very freely, saying that the girls were too young to think of such things, and that they ought to learn to dance, and go into young company. The little fellow did not know with what manner of people he was dealing.

When the evening for the prayer-meeting came my sister Rachel, then thirteen or fourteen years of age, invited him to go. He did so, and saw and heard what were to him new and wonderful things. He had never heard a woman pray. Several of the female members of the class led in the devotions with a propriety and a power which surprised him; but when he heard his young niece begin to pray he was amazed. It was the effectual, fervent prayer which prevails. She gave God glory for his boundless love to sinners; she thanked God for the hope of heaven; she asked for strength to resist the allurements of the world; she prayed fervently for those still in the way of death; and at last, in a still higher strain of earnestness and pathos, implored God's blessing upon her "dear uncle." The little fiddler melted like wax before the fire, his flowing tears testifying that his heart was reached.

He went from the place convinced and convicted, and in a few days had a clear and satisfactory evidence of the Divine favor.

From this time Isaac Collar, "Little Isaac," as every body called him, lived a life of faith and of active usefulness. Being only a little boy in size and physical strength, he became the inseparable companion of the boys of the family. His influence over us was great and salutary. He was social, cheerful, kind, well-informed, and not destitute of wit and humor. We all loved him. His companionable qualities drew us to him, and his good principles reinforced ours in many a time of temptation. After several years' residence he returned to Connecticut. We shall meet him again, however, in the course of this narrative.

It would seem, from the foregoing description of our humble life, that a very small circle formed the horizon of my early days. This impression is correct, and yet we got an occasional glimpse beyond. I had been to Cooperstown once before, and had been greatly impressed with the glories of the place; but in 1808 I made a journey thither with my father and brother Luther, to see what was long referred to as "the hangin'."

A man, whose name was Arnold, had been sentenced to be hung for whipping a child to death. Popular indignation was strong. A great concourse of people assembled on the hillside east of the outlet of the lake, and, with lively satisfaction, waited to see the wretched man die. He had professed to find pardon at the hands of his Maker, and had taken the sacrament in prison that morning. At the appointed hour he was brought out and seated upon his coffin under the gallows, while the Rev. Isaac Lewis preached his funeral sermon from the words, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The sermon being concluded, the sheriff, in the awful silence which ensued, took hold of the rope which was about the prisoner's neck, and, glancing at the hook which dangled from the beam, ordered him to stand up, and then, instead of attaching the rope, drew a paper from his pocket and read the governor's reprieve.

Wild excitement followed. Arnold fell as if he had been shot through the heart. Women shrieked; some of them wept aloud; some fainted; men raged and swore. The criminal was so detested for his cruelty that his escape from execution provoked a storm of fury. So indignant were the people that some rough fellows captured a dog, named him "Arnold," and hung him on the gallows which had failed to do justice to his namesake. The story is not a pleasant one to tell, but it shows how things were done in that day, and it made a lasting impression on me. Arnold died in Sing Sing prison. I became well acquainted with Dr. Lewis in New York city nearly half a century afterward.

After Isaac Collar left us I was more exposed to evil influences. My parents and sisters did what they could to save me from danger, but I sometimes fell into the company of bad boys. There was a tavern on each side of us, where, as is always the case, "lewd fellows of the baser sort" congregated to drink, dance, and run horses. I did not learn to copy their vicious conduct; but I often stole away from home and looked on, and the influence on my moral feelings and general character was any thing but good. Evil examples without, and a depraved nature within, combined their power to render me regardless of duty and of God.

Another thing, innocent enough in itself, became indirectly a snare to me. I was exceedingly fond of martial music, and when but a boy became an adept with the drumsticks. There was general expectation of a war with England, and this gave new interest to "training days:" and all manner of military operations. My skill in drumming drew me into notice, and brought me into military associations. I entered into these things with boyish enthusiasm, and found more enjoyment in martial displays and field music than in any thing else. I often had proof that my parents and sisters were deeply concerned about me. The girls feared that I would come to some bad end; my father doubted whether I would ever "make any thing;" while my dear mother, always hopeful, was confident that I would come out right.

In fact, there was good ground for both apprehension and hope. I was fond of fun and excitement, and often got into mischief, and sometimes sin; but my conscience was always tender, and often troubled me, and I was more sorry for my errors than my best friends suspected. Still I blame no one for judging me harshly, because my faults were visible, and my troubles of conscience I carefully hid; and I have no right to complain that others misunderstood me while I was deliberately misrepresenting myself. I mention this merely to draw two conclusions, which may be of service to others. First, Wayward children must not complain that they get no credit for good impulses and good resolutions which they do their best to conceal. Secondly, Parents whose children incline to be wayward must not be in haste to give them up as hopeless.

On two occasions I came near losing my life through my lack of wisdom. My father was building a new house, the third which he erected in Middlefield, and a frame edifice this time. The mechanics, according to the custom of that day, had a regular supply of liquor. One day they prepared some punch, and invited me to partake with them. I did so till my head became woefully unsteady. Totally unconscious of the state I was in, I must needs clamber up to the top of the building, and as I was in the act of falling, a friendly hand caught me. I was conscious of nothing more till the next morning, when I learned the whole sad story from my deeply grieved mother. She had spent the entire night in watching over me. She laid the chief blame on the men. I blamed and heartily despised myself. I am happy to add that this was my first and last experience of the kind.

The second case of peril was connected with a violation of the Sabbath, and occurred when I was about thirteen years old. My brother Andrew and I had been left in charge of the younger children while the oldest members of the family went to meeting. A sudden temptation seized me to leave our charge for a ramble in the woods, and I prevailed upon Andrew to go. We passed over the hill, crossed Red Creek, and entered a grove of heavy timber. Here we found another boy, who had a pack of cards. He shuffled his cards and offered to teach us how to play, but our consciences were already uneasy, and we declined, and left him.

We collected a few beech-nuts, and then started for home. As we were returning, dense clouds suddenly darkened the heavens, and a furious tornado swept down upon us. The roar of the wind, the groaning of the forest, the blinding dash of the rain would have alarmed us in the best of times, but now our guilty consciences rendered them absolutely appalling. We fled in an agony of fear, the wind at times almost lifting us from our feet. Pausing for a moment behind a tree to get breath, we again started, and had gone but a few steps when an immense hemlock blew down with a crash and buried us with its foliage, the massive trunk striking the earth within three or four feet of me, and

the great branches stretching all around us. Extricating ourselves from the fallen tree, and leaving the woods, we lay down in a little hollow in a field. From this place of refuge we looked out and saw the storm tear through the forest, the trees falling in all directions.

The tempest passed away as suddenly as it came, and we hurried home, drenched with rain, terrified by the fearful scenes through which we had passed, and our hearts burdened with guilt.

"I will never run away with you again on Sunday," said Andrew.

"O if we had been killed!" I exclaimed.

We reached home before our parents returned from meeting. They knew nothing of our absence from the house, and we told them nothing; but for weeks the affair harrowed up my soul. I dreaded to pass the place where the tree fell upon us, and seldom did so, although it often lay directly in my path. Our escape I regarded as almost miraculous. As near as I could estimate it, we paused behind the maple just long enough to escape being crushed by the heavy trunk of the hemlock. The idea of being killed in the act of breaking the Sabbath made my very bones shake, and many were the vows I made to lead a new life. Often did I fear to close my eyes at night until I had promised God that if he would spare me to see another day I would do better. Of all this, however, I revealed nothing to others.

In the autumn of 1811 my parents made a visit to their old home in Connecticut, and on their return brought with them my Grandmother Collar and Uncle Isaac, both of whom remained members of our family till God called them to the home above. Since the time of his first visit to us my uncle had learned to make shoes, which avocation he mingled with his other employments during the remainder of his active life. By using his tools I learned a little of the trade myself.

About this time my father purchased another tract of land, which became to us boys a sort of enchanted ground, and figures largely among my early recollections. It was about two miles distant, on the mountain southeast of Otsego Lake. It consisted chiefly of woodland; but a few acres had been cleared and well cultivated. Here my father made his hay, cut his winter's fuel, and burned the charcoal for his forge. A little log-cabin had been built against the face of a smooth, perpendicular rock. The manufacture of the coal required considerable care. Wood was piled, in the form of a pyramid, five or six feet high, and then covered with sods, grass side down, and earth added, till the enclosure was perfect, except a little place at the bottom, where the fire was applied, and another at the top, through which the smoke escaped. The process took about ten days, and the burning pile must be closely watched all the time to keep the earth wall in repair, and the fire just right. If the lower aperture became closed by the sliding earth, the fire went out; if it burned too fast, it turned the wood to ashes.

In this wild spot we spent joyous days and nights with our dear father, the kindest hearted and most companionable man that ever breathed. It was to us what Robinson Crusoe's island is to every boy that reads the story. The tools needed for our work, straw and blankets for our beds, a basket of provisions, a fife and a drum, were our equipments for a sojourn at "the other place." When the daily labor was ended, and night came on, we kindled a fire in the rocky chimney, which filled the cabin

with a ruddy glow, set down the apples or the green corn to roast, and gave ourselves up to innocent mirth. There was no neighbor to be disturbed, and so we laughed, and sung, and shouted, we made the hollow woods resound with martial music, and, in short, reveled in unlimited noise.

When our surplus spirits had thus expended themselves, we planted our sentinel at the burning piles, and lying down to rest, listened for a little space to the voices of night in the forest, the cry of the owl, the barking of the fox, the moan of the raccoon, and then knew no more till the morning light, and the cheery, paternal voice awoke us to another happy day.

It was not only in the summer months that our labors summoned us to "the other place." In the winter we drew home our firewood over the snow. In the spring we made sugar from the sap of the maples. This was a pleasant but busy season. The tapping of the trees, the regular rounds made to empty the vessels, the filling of the kettles, the keeping up of the fire, the watching of the process as the transparent sap first changed into syrup, and then into sugar; and all this in the woods, fast budding into life and beauty, formed an annual festival scene whose coming we anticipated with joy. It was, in fact, a fortunate thing for us boys that this secluded spot became a part of my father's possessions. No human habitation was near, no public road approached it, and when we were there we were alone in the presence of nature and of nature's God. The grandeur of forest and hill and lake was around us, and the enticements of an evil world were far away.

I often desired, in after years, to visit this loved spot, which looks so beautiful among my youthful memories, but for a long period the wish was not gratified. At last, however, the opportunity came. In June, 1873, Bishop Peck and myself paid a visit to our native place, and I again saw the spot where I spent so many happy hours. The half century which had elapsed had changed it somewhat. The old cabin is gone, but the perpendicular rock is there, still bearing the marks of the fires which we kindled against it. The hills and the lake are as in other days, though apparently reduced in dimensions, nor has the scenery yet lost all its original wildness. Would that every family of children had a home like this, where at least a part of the year could be spent away from the corruptions of town life and the exactions and frivolities of fashion!

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 2
CONVERSION — YOUTH — CALL TO THE MINISTRY

As I began to approach manhood I became a somewhat valuable member of the family. I could aid in the farm work, make shoes in the one shop, and "blow and strike" in the other, and indeed, do almost any thing within the limits of our narrow business; but I had no fixed plan, no definite aim, for the years to come. I alternated from shop to shop, and thence to the field, as my services were required, but felt no preference, and made no choice. My father, seeing my indifference, doubted whether I would succeed in any thing. I did not dream of the line of life which I afterward pursued. I had high aspirations, and built many castles in the air. I was not content with my lot, but I did not see how it might be improved. What Providence might have in store for me was to me a profound mystery. My conscience was troubled, and I knew that I ought to be a Christian, but that was about as far as I could see into the future in regard to either duty or destiny.

My mind began to be the subject of religious impressions as soon as I became capable of religious ideas. I recollect being in a prayer-meeting when I was about four years old, and feeling that I was a sinner, and I wept at the thought that I did not possess that which rendered those about me so happy. The sermons which I heard often impressed, and my father's prayers in the family greatly moved me. My mother's admonitions and tears were always more than I could endure. My sister Elizabeth sought Christ at a campmeeting held at Mindon, and I was powerfully awakened to a sense of my need. Many a time, during the years which, I presume, seemed to others to be spent in careless, boyish mirth and indifference, I was greatly troubled in spirit, wept in secret and formed resolutions which, if permanent, would have led me to a different life.

In 1812 Ebenezer White and Ralph Lanning were appointed to our circuit. Father White's first sermon in our neighborhood was a searching one; and his examination of the members in class-meeting was close and personal. I did not hear the sermon, but I learned, from what I heard of it, that a deep impression was made. On his second round, four weeks after, he came to our house. I well remember the conversation. He asked my sister to comb his hair, and while she was doing it, he talked with my parents.

"Brother," said he, "how many children have you?"

"Eleven," was the reply.

"And how many of them enjoy religion?"

"The three oldest belong to Society," said my father.

Again the faithful pastor asked: "Have you given all your children to God in baptism?"

"I have not," said my father.

"Why not?"

To this my father replied, "The four born in Connecticut were baptized there; the others have not been."

"Well," said Father White, "it is your duty to have them baptized."

My father responded with emotion, "Some of them have grown up in sin and folly, and are not proper subjects of baptism."

I was the oldest of those not baptized, and I felt that the remark was intended for me, and, worst of all, was true.

"Brother," continued the preacher, "you must have those baptized which are still in infancy, and pray for the others."

I had been sitting near enough to hear all this, but at this stage of the conversation I quietly left the room. My sister Mary, eleven years of age, heard the conversation, and was deeply affected by it. She and my brother Andrew began to seek the Saviour. The next Sabbath evening the prayer-meeting was a time of much interest and feeling. The two children were made the subjects of special prayer, and I inferred, from certain expressions of those engaged in the exercises, that they professed to have found peace. The next day, while Andrew and I were at the barn, he asked me if I did not want religion? I answered in the affirmative, and then asked him if he had experienced it. He replied that he thought he had. I told him that I hoped he would hold out to the end, adding that I would never throw the least hindrance in his way. "That is all very well," he replied; "but you must have religion for yourself, or you will go to hell!" This broke me down. I left him, and went behind the barn, and poured out a flood of tears.

The next Sabbath evening the prayer-meeting seemed to have only ordinary interest. It closed at the usual hour, and I went home, being among the first to leave the house. A number lingered, as if unwilling to go. Two or three young ladies began to weep, and asked for the prayers of God's people. The meeting began again with wonderful power. Some fell prostrate on the floor, crying for mercy, and others shouted aloud the praises of God. Six or seven persons professed conversion before the meeting closed. All this was told me, and added greatly to the conflict of my mind. Hearing that another meeting had been appointed for the next Thursday evening, I resolved to seek the Lord publicly at that time. When the day came I thought of nothing but my sins, the salvation I needed, and the purpose I had formed. I mourned, I prayed; I had some hope of mercy, and some fears that I would not find it. Being alone, I began to sing one of our old familiar penitential hymns:—

"Show pity, Lord, O Lord, forgive;
Let a repenting rebel live."

Having sung a verse or two of this, I changed to one of another character:

"O how happy are they,
Who the Saviour obey;
And have laid up their treasure above;
Tongue can never express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love."

To my surprise I found myself entering into the joyous spirit of the hymn. My heart was melted; I felt strangely buoyant, and almost ready to exclaim aloud, "Glory to God!" I said to myself, "What change is this? Is this what I have been seeking? It may be that God has pardoned my sins. I will go and tell my dear mother how I feel."

I went into the house with this design, but my courage failed. I began to doubt, and again I sunk into a state of darkness and sorrow. My mind reverted to my resolution to go to the meeting that evening and openly seek Christ, and I again determined to do it. When evening came I went to the meeting, calling on an intimate associate on my way, to propose to him that we should begin together. To my surprise, I found him ready at once. We did as we agreed to do; but when we bowed in prayer, and fervent supplications went up in our behalf, and a sacred influence seemed to fall upon the whole assembly, and I felt that God was there, I was not conscious of that deep conviction which had weighed me down for days.

At the close of the meeting the people gathered about us to inquire how we felt. My friend was happy, and responded with confidence. I was at a loss what to think. I replied that I felt no burden of guilt, but did not know but that I had lost my convictions. "Ah," said a devoted woman, whom I knew and greatly respected, "the Lord has blessed you; I thought so." And she laughed and wept as she made the remark. "Well," thought I, "she knows. This strange calm is not hardness of heart, but peace." And yet I felt, not exactly disappointed, but that I had been led in a way which was contrary to my expectations. I looked for what was termed a "powerful conversion." I did not experience it, but from that memorable day I have tried to serve the Lord. I believe that God forgave my sins in the morning, while I was alone, singing the prayerful confession of Watts, and the joys of faith as delineated by Charles Wesley. The day named was Thursday, the 12th of November, 1812. I was then a little over fifteen years of age.

The next day Father White preached a glorious sermon from Heb. xi, 24, 25. His words were sweeter to me than the honeycomb. I thought that I never before heard preaching. After the sermon baptism was administered to quite a number of persons, younger and older, and among them the seven of our family born in the State of New York. Four of these were baptized on profession of faith, and three as infants. About a dozen of the converts were received as probationers in the Church. My feelings throughout the day had been characterized more by tenderness than joy. But on my way home alone I began again to sing Charles Wesley's exultant lines:

"O how happy are they,
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above."

In the midst of my solitary song I felt a sudden gush of joy, and I shouted aloud, "Glory to God, glory to God in the highest." From that day I felt myself one with God's people.

About two weeks after my conversion I attended a quarterly meeting in Mindon, a distance of twelve miles. The weather was cold, with snow on the ground. The meeting, nevertheless, was held in a barn. The floor was arranged with rude seats, and there was a platform of some kind, perhaps a workbench, for the preachers. William Case was the presiding elder, and Ebenezer White, Ralph Lanning, and Jonathan Hustis were present. The presiding elder was in, the prime of life, certainly not a profound preacher, but earnest and sympathetic. All loved him because of the fervor of his piety and the kindness of his heart. Father White was the only venerable-looking man among the preachers. He was not old, but the gravity of his character and deportment secured for him the title of "Father." In his sermons he made great use of "McEwen on the Types," a work which he had mastered, and could almost repeat from memory. His sermons on Moses, Joseph, and portions of Solomon's Song, were thought wonderful. He preached what the people pronounced great sermons on his own name, Ebenezer.

Ralph Lanning was a young man, then in the second year of his ministry. He gave evidence of an attention to books unusual in those times, and was an acceptable preacher, and a very pleasant, companionable man.

Jonathan Hustis was thought to be, at the head of the younger class of preachers. He was tall and spare, with a light complexion, a clear, shrill voice, and a pleasant address.

The love-feast was a season of great interest. I had never been in one before, as I could not pass the examination which was always had at the door. It was to me a great occasion, and the impressions which it made were deep and powerful. My part of the exercises was small. After waiting and trembling for some time, I rose and said, "Two weeks ago last Thursday God converted my soul." To this brief speech Father White responded with uncommon fervor, "Praise the Lord!" and there was an outburst of exultant exclamations from every part of the assembly. I felt overwhelmed with the tide of emotion.

Shortly after our little revival Father White established a class for catechetical instruction, composed of the young people who had recently joined the Society. His regular appointment for preaching was once in four weeks, in the evening, and our class met in the afternoon. We were seated in a row, and our venerable pastor, with a copy of the Catechism in his hand, stood behind a chair and examined us, adding comments of various kinds as he proceeded. He was entirely too serious to admit pleasantry, or even invite questions on the part of the class. We answered timidly, and then listened to his remarks as we would to a sermon. He often made very pointed appeals to us, urging us to go on to a more perfect knowledge of Divine things.

I mention this to show that faithful instruction was not unknown in those early days of Methodism. Sabbath Schools had not been introduced into our part of the country, but the children and youth were not forgotten. I here record my gratitude to God for the information which I gained in the preacher's class. From the Catechism, as explained and illustrated by our venerated pastor, I learned the fundamental doctrines of Christianity in their connection, with the Scripture proofs, and

my mind became more imbued with Divine truth than ever before. Thus I commenced the study of theology.

During the latter part of the winter of 1812-13 my Grandmother Collar died in holy triumph. She had connected herself in her youth with the Congregational Church; but after the conversion of her son Isaac she joined the Methodists. She was an intelligent, highminded woman, and in person as straight at the age of seventy years as an arrow, and moving about the house as lightly as a girl of eighteen. Her piety was uniform and her life consistent.

In the spring of 1813 Father White was called to his reward on high. The Church and the whole community mourned, and the young converts, of whom there were many on the circuit, felt like orphans. When the people met at the prayer-meeting or in class allusions to him were frequent. His sermons, his prayers, his remarks were quoted, and in prayer it was no uncommon thing to hear an earnest, tearful petition for grace to persevere and meet Father White in heaven. Thus his name was long "as ointment poured forth."

Ralph Lanning was returned to the circuit as preacher in charge. He was a frequent guest at my father's, and his conversation was a great benefit to me. I felt at liberty to ask him about any matter that interested me — any question of doctrine, or the interpretation of Scripture, and always found him ready to communicate what he knew.

During the summer of 1813 I attended a campmeeting at Mindon. These forest gatherings had then some features which are now unknown. Those having charge of the preparations would select a spot in the dense woods, and proceed to clear away the bushes and small trees, piling the brush around the encampment, and forming with it an impassable fence sometimes ten or twelve feet high. Within this inclosure the tents, perhaps a hundred in number, would be pitched. When the meetings began great multitudes of people would throng the place. Among these would come an occasional party of wild young men, "lewd fellows of the baser sort," noisy, reckless, and often intoxicated, and make a disturbance. To keep such as these in awe, "guards" were appointed, whose duty it was to repress all lawless proceedings, and keep the whole encampment in good order. Now and then the guards would be compelled to seize some frolicsome or pugnacious youth, conduct him to the gate of the brush stronghold, and hand him over to the magistrate, or dismiss him with an emphatic admonition.

With interruptions and bloodless skirmishes of this sort occurring from time to time, the preachers and the Church members carried on the campaign, preaching, exhorting, singing, praying, with a zeal that never cooled, and lungs that seemed never to grow weary.

This campmeeting at Mindon was attended with notable effects, some of which were novel to me. One night the services were continued till the morning dawned. There were many instances of the curious experience which has been termed religious ecstasy. Perhaps while engaged in fervent prayer or joyous song a man would fall prostrate, his eyes fixed, his whole form rigid, and remain thus sometimes for several hours. When he revived he usually was in the same glow of religious emotion with which his singular experience began, and felt no special ill effect, physically, from what he had undergone. Unconverted persons, deeply convinced of sin, not infrequently "fell," as the current

phrase expressed it, under the power of God." These generally remained conscious, but physically powerless. The mind, however, still remained busy with the great thoughts of God and eternity and the need of the Divine favor, and often while the lips were silent, and the powers of voluntary motion were suspended, the soul passed through a great moral crisis, surrendered to the Divine rule, trusted in Christ; and when the physical effect of the intense mental conflict began to subside, the first words uttered were exultant praise and thanksgiving. However we may reason or doubt in regard to these phenomena, one thing is certain, they occurred in connection with genuine religious emotions, and a truly Divine work. Some of our soundest, most reliable and devoted members of Society passed through this singular experience, and some of the convicted, who were thus stricken down, became faithful and consistent followers of Christ, and remained such to the end.

I saw cases of the kind at this campmeeting, and leaped to the conclusion that they were indicative of great grace. I earnestly desired to share the joy and the benefit, and on the last day of the meeting fancied that I detected new sensations, and was on the eve of the coveted experience; but the strange feeling, whether real or imaginary, passed away, and my wishes were not gratified. I afterward saw that the desire was an error; that while faith is essential, and joy desirable, these abnormal physical effects of intense religious emotion are not to be courted, but resisted.

At this same meeting I first saw a young man who became my life-long friend. Some little time before, the Rev. Charles Giles held a campmeeting at Deerfield. The rain poured incessantly all through the week; but few people gathered, and the whole thing was set down as one of those failures which it is supposed the Lord suffers to occur occasionally to try the faith of his people. It was stated, indeed, that there was one conversion, but it was that of a boy that nobody knew. The Rev. Mr. Giles had preached in the rain to a little group of discouraged people, and the young stranger heard the sermon, and was thoroughly convicted. He crept into a sheltered corner of the brush fence, and there prayed alone all night. In the morning he came out of his novel retreat, praising the Lord, and full of zeal for the cause of religion.

Coming to the Mindon camp he was present at a prayer-meeting in the Middlefield tent, and in the course of the service offered a prayer that mightily stirred the hearts of the people. "That boy will make a preacher," said my mother, and her sympathies were at once enlisted in his behalf. Finding that he was a total stranger, and that he had come to attend the campmeeting, bringing a bag of provisions, which had been spoiled by the rain, she invited him to our table, and told him at night to find a place, if he could, among her boys. He became thus an inmate of our tent, and thus began my acquaintance with the Rev. Dr. John Dempster. For many reasons this Mindon campmeeting was very interesting and profitable to me, and to this day my recollections of it are very vivid.

My education, such as it was, at this time depended full as much upon my intercourse with intelligent and pious people as upon books. To Ralph Lanning's aid in this direction I have already alluded. He had a clear, logical mind, and a good memory, and more than ordinary ability to solve theological questions. His frequent visits at our house were of great value to me.

Books in our region were few, and there were no religious periodicals in all the land. Among the family treasures in my father's house were some of the early Methodist publications, such as Wesley's Sermons, Wesley's Life of Fletcher, the Life of John Nelson, Baxter's Saints' Rest, Alleine's

Alarm, Law's Serious Call, and the Methodist Discipline, containing the Doctrinal Tracts. My father and mother, my Uncle Collar and Sister Elizabeth, were all good readers, and when we had the good fortune to secure any thing that was specially interesting, it was read in full family convention, generally in the evening. What a glorious time we had reading the Life of Benjamin Abbott! What notes and comments, what exclamations of wonder and pleasure there were! I remember well how sorry I was that the book is so small. These family readings not only created high religious feeling at the time, but furnished us with themes for thought and conversation long afterward. My Sister Elizabeth possessed a fine mind and an ardent thirst for knowledge, and it must be confessed that she outran the rest of the children in mental improvement, and, without any assumption on her part, she grew into a family instructor. To me, mentally and religiously, she was an invaluable aid.

In the spring of 1814 my father sold his property at Middlefield and removed to Hamilton Township, Madison County. Our new home was in a region which had been settled about twenty years. The people lived in loghouses, and by far the greater portion of the original forest was still undisturbed. There were no religious services held nearer than three miles, and the nearest church, which was Presbyterian, was five miles distant. My father began immediately to hold service in his own house, twice every Sabbath. We had a prayer-meeting in the morning, followed by class-meeting, and in the evening prayer-meeting again. Our meetings were well attended, and there were indications of deep religious interest. My father, my mother, Isaac Collar, and Elizabeth, were most active in the exercises; Luther and Andrew took some part, and I prayed in public and spoke in class, but attempted nothing further.

When we had been thus engaged about a month we got into communication with the preachers on Chenango Circuit, one of whose appointments was about three miles distant, and the preacher in charge, the Rev. Loring Grant, came to our house, organized a class of thirteen persons, eight of whom were members of our family, and established preaching once in two weeks. Over the formation of this class Mr. Grant and his colleague, Elisha Bibbins, rejoiced as those who find great spoil.

I was now placed in new circumstances. In the Society in Middlefield there were so many old and gifted members that there was no need of pressing the younger ones to the front. Now, all were needed. One of the circuit preachers was with us every two weeks, on Wednesday, but we still kept up our Sabbath services; and to do it devolved almost wholly upon the members of the family. The people flocked to the house, and often seemed to be deeply impressed. Several marked conversions took place, and our number began to increase.

At the next session of the Conference, our valued friend, Ralph Lanning, was appointed to the circuit, with Nathaniel Reeder as the junior preacher. The visits of Mr. Lanning at our house were very pleasant and profitable to me, and he was to us all a brother beloved.

During the summer, I was suddenly seized with an overwhelming conviction that I had something more to do in the Church than I had previously contemplated. The impression followed me constantly, and at times my mind was painfully agitated. It was in my thoughts by day, and my dreams by night. For weeks I labored under a crushing burden. I knew my inability, and yet felt the obligation. I could never perform the holy work, and yet I must. Feeling that I could not live much

longer without counsel, or at least sympathy, from some source, I resolved to reveal what was passing in my mind to my mother; and after one or two ineffectual efforts to do it, at last gathered courage to tell her. To my surprise she replied at once, "My son, I know all about it." She then gave me advice which greatly relieved my mind, counseling me to be very faithful in the performance of private religious duty; and in regard to things of a more public nature, to leave all to the direction of the Head of the Church, and follow on as he should clearly lead.

My father and Brother Luther spent the next winter (1814-15) away from home, and the charge of the class fell to me. I also frequently conducted the Sabbath service, and thus gradually gained confidence before the little congregation that met in my father's house. Mr. Lanning often called upon me to speak at the close of his sermons. In June I was licensed to exhort, and began to hold meetings in various places, as opportunities offered. All the time which I could command for the purpose I devoted to study.

In the autumn John Dempster again visited us. Since we saw him he had been licensed as a local preacher, and having offered himself for itinerant service, had been directed to visit the territory north of us, which was not included within the bounds of any charge, and there, if possible, form a new circuit.

Our house lying in his way to his unknown field, he sent us word that he would reach our place on a certain day, and, if we desired it, would preach. I went three miles to meet him, and found him coming in our direction on foot, over a muddy road, and poorly shod for the journey. He had in his hand a diminutive bundle tied up in a handkerchief. Our hasty notices called together a large congregation, and he preached what I consider, today, one of the ablest, most powerful sermons which I ever heard him deliver. It was clear, scriptural, well arranged, full of thought, and delivered fluently, and with great earnestness and fervor. Many in the audience trembled under his eloquent appeals; some seemed frightened and left the house in haste; and one young woman, who had been esteemed very careless, if not frivolous, was awakened under the sermon, and subsequently joined the class. I accompanied him on his journey for two days, and heard him preach each evening.

The next winter (1815-16) I attended school. My teacher was Reuben Reynolds, then, like myself, a licensed exhorter in the Church, now an honored member of the Northern New York Conference. Beginning to appreciate the necessity of an education, I thirsted for knowledge; and yet nothing beyond the mere elements of it was within my reach. The Methodist Episcopal Church at that time did not possess a college, seminary, or school of any description. Few of the preachers had received even what is now deemed a good common-school training, and the demand for laborers in the Gospel field was so urgent that young men, who had not even studied English grammar, were continually thrust out into the work, to study and improve as best they could. Thanks to Reuben Reynolds, and my Sister Elizabeth, for something of a foundation on which to build in coming years.

In March, 1816, the Rev. Loring Grant, then traveling on Lebanon Circuit, exchanged with Elijah King, our junior preacher, for one round of the four weeks' circuit, and visited us. He invited me to go with him to one of his appointments, and on the way, told me that he heard that I expected to offer myself to the Conference at the next session. I was surprised, and told him that I had said nothing of the kind to any one; that I did not know that I could leave home, or that I should be received if I

offered myself. He urged me to go into the work at once, and proposed that I should travel with him on Lebanon Circuit till Conference. I replied that I had no authority to preach, but was licensed as an exhorter only. "That will make no difference," said he, "you can preach on your exhorter's license till quarterly meeting. Do as John the Baptist did, preach many things in your exhortation." The case seemed a great deal clearer to him than it did to me; but I finally agreed to lay the matter before my father, and meet him again, a few days after, at the house of the presiding elder, and report the result.

I returned home, and dreading to speak to my father, told my mother and sister what Mr. Grant proposed. They favored the project, and agreed to broach the subject to my father He opposed, possibly from mingled motives. He was beginning to feel the weight of years. Luther was now of age, and about to leave home, and I would be needed to lead in the farm work. It would not be convenient for him to furnish me with a horse and outfit for travel. Moreover, he thought the movement premature. He was a good judge of sermons, and he thought, from what he had heard of my performances, that I was not prepared to go forth as a preacher. He was really afraid, I imagine, that if I made the attempt it would result in a palpable, if not disgraceful, failure. But my mother and sister argued the case strongly. He was a truly pious man, anxious to do right, and at last yielded.

I met Mr. Grant at North Norwich, at the house of Rev. George Harmon, the presiding elder. After talking with me for some time, and examining the plans of my friend, the elder appointed me to labor on the circuit, for the remainder of the conference year, with L. Grant and J. Hamilton, with the proviso that I should receive no salary for my services.

The first day of April, 1816, was to me a memorable day. For a week or two previous my mother and sister had been preparing my clothing, and on that morning I was to leave home. The hour came, and my horse was brought to the door, and my saddlebags and valise adjusted in their places. My father was absent, as I fancied, from design. I first took the hand of my dear mother, who looked at me with a thoughtful and yet smiling face, and said, "Farewell, my son; may God be with you, and bless you." My Sister Elizabeth, who had been to me, all my life, an angel of light and love, seemed in unusually good spirits, and, taking my hand, said, almost playfully, "Farewell, George, be a good boy." I responded, rather faintly, "I will try," and mounting my horse, rode slowly away. But who can describe my emotions. I looked around at each familiar object, the house, the barn, the trees, the fields, and said in my heart, "Farewell, all. I am going, I know not whither, nor what is to befall me." My course was toward the west, and before evening I was in a strange land and among strangers. Thus, in the nineteenth year of my age, I began a journey which continued fifty-seven years.

As I had been directed, I filled several of Mr. Grant's appointments, commencing on the turnpike between Plymouth and De Ruyter, proceeding to Julius Hitchcock's, in Lebanon, [2] thence to Williams', two miles south of Cazenovia, and on Saturday met Mr. Grant at Keeney's Settlement. Everywhere the people inquired after Mr. Grant. I felt ill qualified to take his place, but was everywhere treated with great kindness. On Sabbath morning Mr. Grant preached at the Settlement, and in the afternoon, at Keeler's, insisted on my preaching. The congregation was large, and I had never attempted a sermon in the presence of a traveling preacher, and the very idea of it filled me with fear and trembling. Still, I could not decline. I took a text, stumbled along some thirty minutes, which seemed to me an age, and then sat down and closed my eyes, mortified enough. Mr. Grant, being about to administer the ordinance, made a long address on the subject of infant baptism, for

the purpose, as I imagined, of helping out the meeting. After the baptism came the class-meeting, and I was asked to conduct it. I objected with emphasis, feeling that I had no courage to look any one in the face; but Mr. Grant urged, and I again yielded to authority. To my great surprise, several persons spoke of what they had enjoyed while listening to the sermon. This looked to me much like an insult. I was sure that every body was disgusted with my performance.

The meeting closed, and we went to the house of Joseph Keeler, where we remained all night. During the evening I had little to say, while Mr. Grant was in high spirits, talking incessantly, and relating various interesting incidents of his itinerant life. The next morning I told him that I wanted to go home. "Go home," said he, "for what?" "Because I can't preach," I replied. "O, Brother Peck," he exclaimed, "if you had heard me when I began you would not be discouraged." He then proceeded to give a singular and amusing account of some of his own troubles and experiences during the early part of his ministry. "No, no," said he; "you are not going home." We continued together about a week, preaching alternately. I gathered some confidence, and possibly did a little better. Mr. Grant continued to encourage me, and gave me much useful instruction in regard to the preparation and delivery of sermons. One day, as we rode and talked, I repeated the substance of a sermon which I had heard. He asked me if I could ordinarily remember a whole sermon in that way. I replied that if the sermon was methodical and interesting, I had no difficulty in doing it at any time. "Well," said he, "Brother Peck, you will make a great man yet. That is something I could not do to save my life." Ah, thought I, it takes something more to make a great man than the ability to repeat the sermons of others. Still, I was conscious that my quick and retentive memory of what I heard had done me good service. Having access to few books, I had formed the habit of treasuring up all that I heard, either from the pulpit or in conversation, that I felt was worth remembering.

The circuit being now arranged for a six weeks' round, I took my regular share of the work with my two older colleagues. I generally felt at home among the people, and experienced some comfort when I tried to preach. Still it was, in more than one respect, a time of trial. The spring was backward, and the succeeding months were long remembered as the "cold summer." Corn failed to ripen even as far south as New Jersey. On the sixth day of June I rode from Julius Hitchcock's to Cazenovia in a severe snow-storm. Ice formed on my face and in my hair. The less hardy kinds of vegetation were cut down as fast as they sprang up, and even the leaves upon the trees were killed by the frost, so that the forest, in some places, looked as if the fire had run through it. There were forebodings of famine. The day after the snow-storm, I discovered, with the unaided eye, two spots on the sun.

My reflections were often of a very gloomy character. I sometimes feared that to entertain me and feed my horse was burdensome to the people. There was great hospitality in general, and I received a cordial welcome; but I remember an exception or two. I once stayed all night at one of our richest farmers, and in the morning a fearful storm was raging, making it almost impossible, and certainly useless, for me to ride on that day to my appointment. I sat down with my book, and was busily engaged, when my host and his wife began a conversation between themselves on the subject of "keeping the preachers." In the course of the talk the husband said, with a good deal of earnestness, "Those that keep the preachers ought not to pay quarterage. It costs me twenty-five dollars to do it." "No," replied his amiable spouse, "we reckoned it up the other day, and made it out twenty-two dollars." "I don't care," said he, "it costs me twenty-five." This discussion was, no doubt, intended

for me to hear, and I did hear, and felt the unspeakable meanness of it. I said nothing, but, on the spot, determined to remain till the storm was over, and after that to trouble them no more. I went on with my reading all day, responding with all alacrity to the call to dinner and tea. I went out to the barn, found the oats, and fed my horse liberally. After breakfast the next morning I left this chilly habitation, and never entered it again. So many friendly doors were open to us in that neighborhood that there was no need of our going where we were not welcome.

In June the quarterly meeting was held at Keeler's. The presiding elder, George Harmon, was absent, attending the General Conference, and Jonathan Hustis came as a substitute. Here I received license to preach, and was recommended for admission into the Conference on trial. In the latter part of this month a campmeeting was held at Lansing, Mr. Harmon having charge of it. On the second day I was called on to preach, to my great consternation, and tried to comply. It was resolved also to hold campmeeting on our circuit. Ground was selected in Plymouth, and July 4 fixed upon as the time of beginning. Mr. Grant and I went into the forest, and worked faithfully for one week, preparing the ground. At last every thing was pronounced in order. We thought our defenses were particularly good, the abundance of undergrowth which was cut away supplying materials for a hedge so thick and high that even "bulls of Bashan" would not be able either to scale or demolish it.

The meeting was marked by some special circumstances. Bishops George and McKendree were present a part of the time. Bishop McKendree preached his great sermon on Prov. xxiv, 30-34: "I went by the field of the slothful," etc. He spoke with great energy, and it was a splendid effort. The multitudes hung upon his lips as if entranced. Bishop George had been elected and ordained about a month previously. He was not well, and took no very active part in the meeting. He preached once, but it hardly amounted to a sermon. His whole discourse consisted of bursts of holy joy, and the preacher and the people shouted together.

The meeting was rather feeble at the beginning, but powerful toward the close. Timothy Dewey, commonly called Father Dewey, preached a terrific sermon on the words, "Prepare to meet thy God." There was a large number of the wicked in attendance, and they had been troublesome, and seemed reckless. The hearts of the brethren were faint. Father Dewey was just the man for the occasion. He stood before the crowd like a giant among pigmies, and his voice was clear as a trumpet, and terrible as thunder. He came down upon the wicked in such sort that hundreds of them, who had been apparently as careless as so many cattle, listened with amazement and terror. God's people took heart, and began to struggle mightily for victory. There was an unbroken roar of fervent supplication all over the ground, while the awful voice of the preacher resounded above this tempest of prayer, and every word was heard as distinctly as if in the silence of midnight. "O sinner, sinner," thundered the preacher, "are you determined to take hell by storm? Can you dwell with devouring fire? Can you stand eternal burnings? Are your bones iron, and your flesh brass, that you plunge headlong into the lake of fire?"

Just as these words were uttered I saw a young man who had been standing by a tree, and holding to a branch of it, begin to reel. Presently his hold broke, and he fell to the ground, crying aloud for mercy. A great commotion arose all over the camp. Seekers were invited into the altar, and the meeting continued all night. Many were happily converted to God. Among these was William Lull,

the young man who stood by the beech-tree, and held to the branch as long as he could. He afterward became a member of the New York Conference. Besides those already named, there were a number of able preachers at that campmeeting — Abner Chase, William Cameron, Dan Barnes, George W. Densmore, Zenas Jones, and others. Powerful sermons characterized the occasion, and its influence upon the Church and the whole community was great and salutary.

At the close of the meeting I went home and spent a few days with my friends.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 3
1816, BROOME CIRCUIT — 1817, CORTLAND CIRCUIT

On Saturday, July 19, 1816, I rode to Sauquoit, where the Genesee Conference was in session. I was told on my arrival that my case had been acted upon, and I had been admitted on trial. I did not witness any of the deliberations of the Conference, the sessions being held with closed doors, as was the rule at that time. On Sabbath morning at eight o'clock Bishop George preached, and there was a great shout among preachers and people. At ten o'clock Bishop McKendree preached, standing by an open window on a platform erected for the purpose. The congregation numbered three or four thousand, the church being crowded chiefly with women and children, and by far the greater part of the people being out of doors. It was an eloquent and powerful sermon from the text, I Cor. i, 22-24, "For the Jews require a sign," etc. These were the days of Bishop McKendree's glory. I think that he was the finest figure which I ever saw in the pulpit. He was about six feet in height, perfectly erect, with a full chest, and a countenance beaming with intelligence and benignity. His voice was shrill and musical, and his elocution simply natural, following the inspirations and impulses of the theme and the moment rather than artistic rules. His private manners were those of a well-bred gentleman who had seen much of the world. I thought it a great privilege to study the Bishop from afar, and expected no more; but on my way from Conference I was introduced to him, and the mingled kindness and dignity with which he greeted me were to me very impressive as well as winning.

When the appointments were read out I listened with the most intense interest until I heard the announcement, "Broome Circuit, Elisha Bibbins, George Peck." I listened no further. I was pleased with the circuit, and especially with my colleague, and was in such a flurry to set off with the rest that I did not even wait to see Mr. Bibbins. The preachers, and even their wives who had come to Conference, traveled on horseback. The session closed about ten o'clock in the morning, and the preachers, expecting the adjournment, had brought their horses to the church equipped for a start. A troop of us set off together over Paris Hill toward Sangerfield. At that point the western men bade us farewell, and we made our way to the valley of the Chenango. About half a dozen of us, among whom were Loring Grant and Marmaduke Pierce, spent the night at Asa Felt's, in Lebanon. The next day I went to my father's, where I remained a day or two, and then left for my new field.

When I reached the bounds of the circuit I found a letter from Mr. Bibbins, containing a plan of the appointments, with instructions in regard to roads and stopping-places. I was to visit the lower half of the circuit before I met my colleague. My first preaching-place was at Isaac Page's, five miles above Chenango Point. Notice had been given, and I had a large congregation in Mr. Page's barn. Here I found a good Society, which seemed to be prospering. My next appointment was in Osborn Hollow, Sabbath afternoon; the third in Stilson Hollow; the fourth at Richard Lewis', on the Susquehanna, near the present Kirkwood Station, on the Eric Railroad.

Here I found a little log-cabin, not of the most inviting aspect. The good woman informed me that they were out of meat, and that her husband had gone out to try to kill a deer. In due time the old gentleman returned, having succeeded in running a deer into the river, where he shot it. It was now the latter part of July, and we found the meat any thing but palatable. I preached to about half a dozen poor people, led the class, and then answered sundry questions in regard to the Conference. My host and his old lady were from Wales, and when evening came they lighted pine-knots, stuck them between the stones of the fire-place, and began to sing Welsh hymns.

In the morning I rode to Jesse Hale's, some six miles above the Great Bend. Father Hale was a mighty hunter. In fact, he came from Vermont, and fixed his home in this new region for the purpose of pursuing game in the Harmony Woods — the great forest which then stretched from the Susquehanna to the Delaware. He slaughtered about a hundred deer annually, most of which he sent to the Philadelphia market. He often killed bears and elks, as well as a great variety of smaller game, of the flesh of which I often partook at his table. He was a shrewd, witty man. He was the father-in-law of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. In this neighborhood Smith, at least in one version of his story, professed to find the golden plates from which he said that he translated the Book of Mormon. He made love to Emma Hale, and finally married her, in opposition to the wishes of her friends. Hale himself detested Smith, considering him an impostor and a knave.

Mr. Hale gave me a cordial reception, and in the afternoon I preached in a little log schoolhouse to a small but earnest congregation. When I was in the midst of my subject, and, perhaps, waxing warm therein, a young woman made a leap in the air and uttered an unearthly scream, which startled me, and came near scattering my thoughts, and bringing my sermon to a premature end. I found afterward that she was given to this kind of procedure. She was teaching school in this neighborhood, and the next day, when my path lay over the mountain to Windsor, where her residence was she must needs borrow a saddle-horse and insist on accompanying me as guide. Her father, now deceased, had been a deacon in the Presbyterian Church, and no one was home when we reached her house but her mother, a genuine old Jezebel, who came hobbling out on her crutch, and gave me a blast of wild denunciation, berating the Methodists in "good set terms," and heaping upon them all manner of angry abuse. The situation was decidedly novel.

I rode on to Higby Hollow, where I stayed all night at Father Higby's; and the next morning, which was the Sabbath, preached in a small schoolhouse. In the afternoon I preached at Randolph, where was one of the strongest Societies on the circuit. My course that week lay in an irregular line through portions of Broome and Chenango Counties. The appointments for preaching were at Merwin's, Wedge's, Allise's, Higby's, Elliott's, and Kimball's, and then on Friday evening my colleague and I met at Page's, on the Chenango, five miles above Binghamton, which was then called Chenango Point. I gave Brother Bibbins an account of my adventures, including my crossing the mountain with my volunteer escort, and my reception at her mother's. He laughed heartily at this part of my recital, and remarked, "I will cure that." What he said to the lady I do not know; but on my next round I crossed the mountain alone.

On Saturday I set off on the northern range of appointments, and in the afternoon reached Smithville, where I found a kind reception at the house of Dr. Grant, the father of my friend, Loring Grant. In Dr. Grant and his wife I found two very pious, intelligent, sensible people, thoroughly

attached to our Church, and firm friends and wise counselors of the Methodist preachers. Sunday morning I preached at Smithville, in a private house, and in the afternoon rode to Lee's schoolhouse, where I preached again.

Amanda Hotchkiss was a member of the Society at Lee's. She was a very tall young woman, deeply pious, and universally respected, and yet somewhat peculiar. She had a way of expressing joyous religious emotion by "jumping." Her motions were modest, and even graceful. She moved gently, with her eyes closed, occasionally saying, in soft, musical tones, "Glory to God." The preachers did not wish to grieve her by questioning the propriety of her exercises, and the most careless of the wicked would not even smile at them. She long believed that she could not avoid these demonstrations, and that they were the result of Divine power. But the conviction at last forced itself upon her mind that these movements were no necessary part of religion, that in her case they were partly the result of mere habit, and that they were undesirable. She wholly ceased from physical demonstrations, and yet averred that she enjoyed closer communion with God, and more solid religious happiness, than when she was more demonstrative.

On Monday afternoon I preached in the schoolhouse at Smithville Flats. That evening I lodged at the house of a man whose wife was a member of our Church, and who kept a little store. During the evening there was drinking and carousing in the store, and someone, evidently intoxicated, sang a vulgar song. I thoughtlessly inquired who it was. "It is my husband," said the lady, with painful embarrassment of manner. I was sorry that I had asked the question. The noise continued, the report of a gun adding to the uproar. In the morning, on taking down my saddle, which I had hung up under the piazza, I found that a musket ball had been shot through it, shattering the frame. My song-singing host did not make his appearance that morning. I complained of the outrage, and Dr. Grant and my colleague were so indignant that they concluded that we could spend our time to better purpose elsewhere. There had been good congregations but no Society, and we preached there no more.

The next preaching-place was at Squire Hamilton's, where I preached to a small congregation, and was kindly entertained by an estimable family. Thence I went to McDonough, where I preached in the comfortable loghouse of Mr. Oisterbanks, and received a cordial welcome. Next I preached in the house of Deacon Punderson, who had been an officer in the war of the Revolution. He was a pious, well-informed man, a member of the Baptist Church. He had read much, and had a strong, sound mind, and was one of the few whom I met from whose conversation I always expected to learn something; and yet he was as humble as a little child. His talk was to me an intellectual feast. His children were Methodists, and he was very friendly toward us.

From this place I went to Father Widger's, whom I found a little rough on the surface, but a man of generous impulses, with a fine, pleasant, pious family. I then passed through the village of Oxford, and preached at David Lyons'. The day following I preached in the schoolhouse near Captain Tillotson's, with whom I lodged. Neither he nor his wife professed religion, but they were very friendly and hospitable, and gave us a good home when we preached in their neighborhood.

The next Sabbath I preached in the morning in the village of Green, in a schoolhouse. There were no members of our Church there at that time. In the afternoon I rode six or eight miles, and preached in the house of Benjamin Jackson, where I found a good Society. Monday evening I preached at

Lisle, in the house of Father Whitney; Tuesday, at Father Norton's; Wednesday, at Henry Palmer's, in what is now called Kettleville; Thursday, at Orrin Seward's, on Potato Creek; and Friday brought me to I. Page's, where I again met my colleague.

Thus I made my first round of the circuit, having traveled over two hundred miles, and preached twenty-eight times in four weeks. There was not a church on the circuit. We preached in schoolhouses, barns, and private houses. We had no appointment in any village except Green, which was then small, and in which we had no Society, and not even a place to lodge. In those regions Methodism first took possession of the sparsely-peopled country neighborhoods. There were on Broome Circuit three hundred and sixty-six members. The congregations were good, often crowding the places of assemblage. The spirit of the people was excellent, and their cordiality and warm hospitality greatly encouraged me. I was called "the boy," and the term was not misapplied. I was tall, but exceedingly spare; my face was pale, and my voice untrained. I was conscious that I was very imperfectly qualified for the great work of the ministry, and I often went from the place of worship in deep despondency, weighed down with a sense of utter failure. Sometimes I perceived indications of levity among the young people present in the congregation, and construed it as evidence of contempt for me and my performances. And then, again, an earnest meeting, and indications of a good effect among the people, would cheer me up, and I would gather courage. My youth and evident inexperience attracted attention, and drew congregations perhaps larger than they would otherwise have been, and thus, take it all in all, I had sufficient experience of the rough ways of the itinerancy to keep me from undue exaltation, and enough of popularity to keep me from total loss of hope and courage.

Meanwhile I was very anxious to improve. In those days the publications of the Methodist Book Concern were sold chiefly through the agency of the ministers. Packages of books were sent from time to time to the presiding elders, who distributed them among the preachers to be sold. The preachers carried copies of the various works as they went around their circuits, and everywhere offered them to the people. When they had canvassed the ground they returned to the elder what remained unsold, and paid for the rest, usually settling up the business at the last quarterly meeting before the Annual Conference.

The books for our district were stored at Norwich. I took an early opportunity to visit the place, and fill my saddlebags with books for sale and for use.

The General Conference of 1816 had planned a course of reading and study for preachers on trial in the Conference, and the presiding elder had furnished me with a list of the books named. The young men were to be examined in their studies, not annually, but when they came up for admission into the Conference. I selected Wesley's Sermons and Fletcher's Checks as the principal work of the year, and tasked myself with a certain number of pages daily. If I gained any time I employed it to the best advantage in my power in other studies. My method was to study the allotted portion of Wesley in the morning, while yet at the house where I had spent the previous night; then, mounting my horse, I rode on to my next appointment, reflecting as I went on what I had read, and studying my sermon. On reaching my next stopping-place I passed a few minutes in conversation, and then got out my copy of Fletcher and studied as long as other duties permitted. Thus I read a portion daily in both Wesley and Fletcher till I had gone through them with close attention. They were more

precious to me than gold. I had read some of Wesley's Sermons while at home; but the Checks were all new to me, and I was charmed with the flowing style, the keen wit, the novel illustration, and the powerful logic of the Vicar of Madeley.

I found immediate use for the edge tools with which I was thus made acquainted. It was a time of controversy and debate. Every preacher was expected to be perpetually in line of battle, ready for either attack or defense; and when sundry zealous opposers of the Methodists thought to win an easy victory over "the boy," they found that they could not stand before John Fletcher.

This year I also studied Watts' Logic and Wesley's Notes on the New Testament. This latter work was all that I then possessed in the line of Biblical criticism, and although I was not wholly satisfied with some of the views of Wesley, it afforded me great assistance. The dictum of Wesley was in general the end of controversy with me, but his notes were often too brief to be clear, and left the difficulty still unexplained. I encountered many hindrances in the prosecution of my studies. I was obliged to sit down with my book in the same room with the family where I chanced to be, the children noisy, the adults full of talk, and all manner of domestic operations in progress. Sometimes I would be assailed with questions, designed to draw me into the conversational current, but I contrived to bring out my answers so slowly, and sometimes so much at random, as to make the impression that my attention was not to be diverted. The good people soon learned my ways, and when I opened my book they usually left me to myself; but there were still difficulties in the way. Sometimes the light was bad, coming through a window glazed with oiled paper, or through the chinks between the logs, or the open gable of the cabin. In the winter I was often obliged to sit first with one side to the fire and then the other, in order to keep tolerably warm all around. The chairs, too, with their high, straight backs, and sagged splint bottoms, were instruments of torture.

When I meet one of the weeping prophets, whose mission seems to be to bewail the "good old times of early Methodism, I sometimes fancy that it would do him good to sit for a few hours in one of those ancient chairs, and meditate on the golden age whose departed glories he mourns. In the summer things were more favorable, as I could retreat to the groves with my books and papers, and thus escape from company, confusion, and interruption. What delightful times I had in the forest, with a log for a seat, and a rock for a writing table.

In September I attended a campmeeting with Mr. Bibbins at Hopbottom. The congregations were small, the nights were cold, and the general success of the meeting not great. Still I was interested in various matters connected with it. I heard Marmaduke Pierce, the presiding elder of the Susquehanna District, preach a great sermon on the evidences of Christianity. The people were extravagant in physical demonstrations. "Jumping" was a general practice. Here I first saw Darius Williams, a local preacher from Wyoming Circuit, well known through the southern part of the Conference as a marvel of song in the prayer-meetings, and a man of great animation and power. James Gilmore, a member of the Conference, attracted no little attention. He was a man of devoted piety and great mental force, but, withal, eccentric in his expressions and actions. He had once encountered a great deal of persecution at the hands of a band of skeptics on his circuit, who seemed to have deliberately set themselves to the work of annoying and resisting him in his Gospel work. Mr. Gilmore suffered patiently for a time, but at last prayed in the public congregation that if these enemies of the truth would not cease that the Lord would remove them out of the way. Soon after

a malignant fever swept away a number of the boldest of them, and spread consternation among the rest far and wide. He was told at this campmeeting that a certain stranger, who had been listening to his talk, had said that he would like to hear him preach.

"He would?" was the reply. "Well, bring him here, and I will preach to him in five minutes; and when he has heard me, he will think that a horse has kicked him."

We had a tolerably prosperous year, but no great revivals. One event gave us great pain, and inflicted a permanent injury upon the cause of religion. Two Unitarian preachers came within the bounds of our circuit, preaching the speedy coming of Christ, the establishment of his kingdom, and the annihilation of the wicked. They denounced all creeds, all "book-learning," all Church organizations. Their names were John Taylor and David Foot, and they declared that they had received a Divine commission to pull down the Churches. They took their texts chiefly from the Book of Revelation, and attempted to show that the Churches were Babylon and the scarlet woman. The burden of their sermons was, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues." The Churches, they said, were all to be destroyed in four years.

Their religious exercises were wild and fanatical, and their assemblies scenes of disorder. They danced and howled, and indulged in antics which were not only foolish, but profane. One evening, while I was preaching in a little log-cabin occupied by a man whose name was Kimball, in came this Taylor, who, as I afterward learned, had already caught Kimball and his wife in his evil net. When I concluded my service, Taylor started up and began to shout and roar in an incoherent manner. He jumped up and down, threw his red handkerchief up against the ceiling, and caught it as it came down. A few men, and more women, in the congregation caught the inspiration, and began to follow his example. Kimball arose, and began a fanatical harangue, declaring that he had at last got into liberty, and was ready to leave the Churches, and abandon all "book learning" whatever. "Yes, brethering," he screamed, "I am munging into the liberty, and if any of you don't like it you may intire into another room." I accepted his proposition by "intiring" out of doors, and, mounting my horse, which had been standing under a shed, rode four or five miles to Charles Stone's, crossing the Chenango on the ice. Here I found the presiding elder, Mr. Harmon, and my colleague, to whom I related the evening's adventures.

These impostors gathered about them a little band of followers, some from our Society, others from other denominations. They called each other by their Christian names, and so got the cognomen of Johnites, from the name of their leader, John Taylor. This outbreak of fanaticism and folly had more power for mischief than one would suppose possible. The Society at Page's was so generally affected by it that it disbanded, the few who remained faithful joining elsewhere. Not a few simple-hearted, good people were led away, and, for a time, Taylor and Foot flourished. They professed boundless Christian love for their disciples, and sometimes kissed them all round at the close of the meeting. After a while suspicions arose, and people began to whisper together; then came discovery, then popular indignation, and hints of tar and feathers; John and David fled to parts unknown, and the Johnite heresy came to an end, leaving behind it an unsavory odor, which lasted many years.

When the year closed I was deeply affected at the thought of leaving the people. I had found among them fathers and mothers who had treated me with parental affection; brothers and sisters who had sympathized with me in my trials, and had in various ways ministered to my comfort. I had taken sweet counsel with them in the solemn assembly, and in their dwellings, at the fireside, and around the family altar. Now I was to leave them. I was not accustomed to this breaking up of cherished associations. It was leaving home a second time. I bade adieu to the people, often with tears, and as often left them in tears. It was still harder to part with my colleague. We had labored together with the utmost harmony, and a friendship had been formed which, I trust, shall never end.

The pecuniary receipts of the year did not make me rich. I received of the stewards of the circuit about fifty dollars. Still, my wants were supplied. The goodly, homespun suit which my mother spun and wove, and my sister had made, lasted through the year. It was, however, waxing old, and the diminutive "salary" named came opportunely, to enable me to prepare for my next field of labor.

There being nothing to call me to Conference, which held its session in Canada, I took the opportunity to visit my friends. During this visit a campmeeting was held at Columbus, some ten miles from my father's. We took our tent, and spent there a very pleasant and profitable season. While trying to preach at this meeting I was greatly moved to see my father break down and weep like a child. The fact is, his faith in my call to the work had not been very strong, and he had often expressed his doubts. He had not heard me attempt a sermon, except at the beginning of my public labors, and in the meantime I had acquired some degree of confidence, and succeeded so much better than he anticipated, that he now went, perhaps, to the other extreme, saying, "I have been wicked in my opposition to that boy's preaching. I give it up. God has called him to the work."

I also visited Middlefield, the place of my birth, and preached in the old Presbyterian church. I was glad to meet again the people with whom I had been associated in my early religious life. My old friends and comrades greeted me very kindly, but I found it something of a cross to preach before them.

This year, 1817, my appointment was on Cortland Circuit, again with Elisha Bibbins. I could not have been better pleased. The circuit was the one organized by Loring Grant, and on which I spent the first few months of my ministry. I had been at all the appointments, knew the roads, the "stopping places," and the people. My brother Luther had married and settled within the bounds of the charge, and I would be within a day's ride of my father's house, and I set out with good courage for my new field.

In passing around the circuit I found things considerably improved. There had been a revival of religion in Cazenovia and the vicinity, and a class, composed chiefly of young people, had been formed in the village. William Cameron had labored in Cortland the previous year, and had been very useful. The people everywhere gave me a hearty welcome, and we were greatly cheered with the prospects of good which were exhibited in all directions. Mr. Bibbins was very acceptable. He was a man of great power in prayer and exhortation. His singing often melted hard hearts, and prepared the way for his mighty appeals, under which whole congregations sometimes broke out in sobs and tears. Our congregations increased. I felt the stimulus of the growing interest, studied my sermons still more carefully, and delivered them with increased earnestness. Awakenings and

conversions took place on different parts of the circuit, and our hopes of a sweeping revival were mounting to the highest pitch.

Several circumstances worthy of note attended our first quarterly meeting. It was appointed at Cazenovia, where we had no church of our own. We expected to occupy the courthouse, which was vacant, the county seat having been removed to Morrisville. The Methodists and the Baptists had been occupying the courtroom on alternate Sundays, and, unfortunately, the quarterly meeting came on the wrong day. Neither party had any lease of the premises, or legal title to them. We applied to the Baptist minister, Elder John Peck, proposing a change of the times of occupancy, but he refused in a somewhat ungracious manner. There stood on the hillside, near the outlet of the lake, between the mills and the bridge, an old two-story building once a distillery, but then unoccupied, and we secured it for the emergency. Mr. Bibbins, Benajah Williams, Father Rowland, and myself, went at the work, and with our own hands fitted up the second story for our meeting. We repaired the floor, constructed benches of slabs, and made a pulpit of a carpenter's work-bench, and had space for five hundred people.

We had a glorious meeting. The love-feast was a time of power. When the public services began the place was filled to overflowing. The presiding elder, George Harmon, preached a powerful sermon against Calvinism, and a strong and permanent effect was produced on the public mind. My old namesake lost, instead of gaining, by his course. In the month of September Mr. Bibbins and I attended a campmeeting on Broome Circuit, on the ground of Charles Stone. Timothy Dewey was there, and preached four sermons, all really great, scriptural, weighty, full of thought, and abounding in powerful appeals, which sometimes were overwhelming. On Sunday George W. Densmore preached an earnest sermon, and John Griffing followed it with an exhortation which cut its way like a two-edged sword. Many penitents cried for mercy. One man fell to the ground, and writhed as if in the agonies of death. He found peace, and when I saw him last, thirty years afterward, was still a faithful member of the Church.

Another incident occurred which may be worth relating, as an illustration of the times. A young man, a sort of itinerant local preacher, undertook to preach a great, learned sermon, and, in the estimation of every body except himself, made the flattest kind of a failure. As he proceeded the preachers grew uneasy, and groaned, and began quietly to leave the stand one by one, and still the preacher went on, without any sign of making an end. At the end of an hour and a half Mr. Densmore, unable any longer to endure his sufferings, crept up behind the speaker and whispered emphatically, "Wind off! Wind off!" This brought the freshet of eloquence and wisdom to an end, and the youth, going up to a group of preachers, innocently asked, "What ails Brother Densmore?" "Your sermon was the cause of his movements. I am astonished at you. It was very much out of place," said the elder. Still the young man seemed unable to understand the matter, and Father Dewey turned his keen, black eyes upon him, and said, in his impressive manner, "You made awful work of it." The ambitious orator soon left the ground, and I have never heard of him since.

While every thing on our circuit was full of promise, and I was anticipating a great harvest of souls, I was suddenly stricken down by severe illness.

On a cold, damp evening, I preached in a crowded and uncomfortably hot schoolhouse, and then walked half a mile in a profuse perspiration to my lodgings. In the morning I found that I had taken a severe cold, but, hoping to wear it off; went on my round, preaching daily, growing worse all the time, my cough being almost insupportable, and my head so dizzy that I could scarcely stand. Reaching the house of Father Isaiah Williams, two miles south of Cazenovia, I could go no farther. Then followed a profuse hemorrhage from the lungs. I had no physician, and I saw, by the faces and language of my kind friends, that they were alarmed and feared a fatal result. The bleeding somewhat relieved the stricture on my lungs, and I was removed to the house of John Rowland, in Cazenovia, where I had all needed care and medical aid. For several nights I sat up in a chair, being unable to lie down. Once I attempted to pray in the family, and fainted, alarming the whole household.

In this feeble condition I rode in a sleigh to my father's. Once more at home, and in the care of my dear mother, I was content, and began slowly to mend, although so slowly that for some time it was by no means clear whether the attack would terminate in restoration or death. I passed through severe mental conflicts. I could not bear the thought of leaving my work. I asked my heart if I was prepared to die; and I felt that, while I had hope in God, I was not in the state of mind I desired to be when I should go into his presence. I wanted a clearer vision. It was a time of searching of heart and deep humiliation. I writhed under the rod, but it subdued me; it checked my ambition and my too high hopes. I saw my weakness as I had never seen it before, and felt the vanity of all human expectations.

I remained at home three or four weeks. I had gone thither in an exceedingly enfeebled condition, and, for aught I knew, to die; for days I was not able to obtain one moment of refreshing sleep, and yet, at the present time, I have none but pleasant memories of that visit. The simple remedies which I took, prepared by my mother from the roots and herbs found in field or forest; the kind attentions which I received; and, above all, the consciousness of home, were a balm to soul and body. While still very weak I returned to my circuit, resolved to do what service I was able. I made my home at Cazenovia, and soon found something that I could do.

The quarterly meeting in the distillery had made a strong impression in favor of Methodism, and the little Society began to gather courage. We learned that the old courthouse was to be sold, and a few of our friends resolved, if possible, to purchase it. We learned, somehow, that the Baptists expected, as a matter of course, to buy it for their own use; and that, not expecting any serious competition, they had appointed a committee to attend the sale and make the purchase, provided the price did not exceed eighteen hundred dollars. We resolved to secure it, even if we were compelled to pay a little more than this sum.

The day of sale came; bids of various amounts were offered, and at last the Baptist committee reached their limit, and there rested, having no idea that any one would go beyond them. To their extreme mortification, our committee went a little beyond, and the property was struck off to us. Then they began to abuse, and even insult, the men who had outbid them, saying that they would never be able to pay for it. To guard against every contingency, we had come prepared with a bond, signed by six or seven reliable gentlemen, guaranteeing due payment. To get this bond drawn up and signed had been the first thing that I attempted to do after my return from my father's. This bond was now produced and handed to the commissioners, who read it, and then turning to our friends, said, "The property is yours." Thus, for the sum of eighteen hundred and ten dollars we became possessed

of a place of worship of our own in the village of Cazenovia. The building is still in existence, and now constitutes a part of the Oneida Conference Seminary. The gentlemen who signed the bond were John Rowland, Benajah Williams, Isaac Parsons, Joseph Keeler, Martin Keeler, and, I think, another, whose name I cannot recall.

I was too feeble to resume my regular work, and yet desired to do something. I felt able to preach once a Sabbath, and by the direction of the presiding elder I established regular services in Cazenovia, and maintained them nearly until the session of the Conference. My colleague insisted that I should rest while he multiplied his labors to supply my lack of service. My strength gradually returned, and toward the close of the year I made a round of the circuit and preached at every appointment. Meanwhile I had prosecuted my studies with little interruption. I had read Wesley on Original Sin, and Fletcher's Appeal. I had studied Watts' Logic, Blair's Rhetoric, and Morse's Geography. For the sake of the rich fragments of Biblical criticism with which the work abounds, I had gone entirely through the two heavy volumes of Wood's Dictionary of the Bible. I had also thoroughly studied the Baptist and Calvinist controversies, and often had use for what I knew in regard to them. One evening, for instance, when my colleague and I were tarrying for a night in the village of De Ruyter, a young man, not a member of any Church, contrived to bring to the house where we were a Baptist minister by the name of Benedict, noted for his controversial pugnacity. A debate followed, as a matter of course. Mr. Bibbins contented himself in silently watching the contest. My opponent plunged at once into the metaphysics of the subject, seeming to fancy that it would be an unknown land to me. But I pressed him with the logical consequences of the "horrible decree," its fatalism, its destruction of moral responsibility, till he was thoroughly entangled in his own web. Confused by arguments and rejoinders which were familiar to those who had seen our side of the controversy, but which seemed new to him, he finally excused himself, and took his departure.

In July we held a campmeeting in Truxton. My colleague and I selected the ground and superintended its preparation. Father Dewey, James Kelsey, and other preachers came to our help, and, best of all, God was with us, and we had a goodly number of souls converted. There were some interesting cases. Several children of the principal members at Keeney's Settlement were among the converts. An interesting daughter of Father Andrews was in the prayer circle. The weather was so hot and the crowd so dense that an elder sister really feared that the penitent young lady would be suffocated. Making her way to her through the throng, she lifted up her sister's head, and said, "Esther, you will die here. Do you not want some water?" The weeping girl looked up at her, and replied, "I want nothing but Jesus." The other retreated in all possible haste, and Esther was soon able to praise the Lord for his pardoning mercy.

James Kelsey preached a powerful sermon. Father Dewey, as he always did, thundered and lightened, and made everything tremble. He preached on the text, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Certain expressions in his opening prayer gave offense in some quarters. "O Lord," said he, "have mercy upon backslidden Methodists, hypocritical Baptists, and cold-hearted Presbyterians." The sermon was in a similar spirit, and cut every way.

The campmeeting closed, but the work went on, and I remained at Keeney's Settlement about two weeks, preaching, attending prayer-meetings, and visiting from house to house. We had some annoyance from a certain Baptist preacher, who, without waiting for an invitation, visited families

where there were converts, misrepresenting the Methodists, talking up immersion, and showing more zeal for water than either piety or honor. His raids resulted in turning aside a few.

Some of the conversions were remarkable. Father Andrews' eldest son, who was married, lived in the same house with his father. He and his wife were awakened at the campmeeting, and sought peace, apparently in vain. He became discouraged and almost despairing. I went to the house late one afternoon, and met James Andrews, who was going up the high hill in the rear of the house to look after his horses. I asked him how he fared religiously. He answered that he was discouraged; that he tried his best to give up all, and yet he felt no relief. I urged him to persevere, assuring him that the cloud would soon burst if he continued to seek earnestly. He went on up the hill, and I entered the house. As I sat musing in the twilight I heard an unusual noise behind the house, and going to see what caused the alarm, I heard Mother Andrews exclaim, "O dear me, the horse has kicked James!" She rushed up the hill in the direction of the noise, her husband close behind her, and I following as fast as I could. When we arrived on the scene of action I found all three with their arms around each other, reeling this way and that, James shouting, "Glory to God," and all three weeping, praising the Lord, and acting as if they were wild with joy.

"O, Mr. Peck," said James, when the first burst of emotion had subsided a little, "I did as you told me, and God has blessed me. I came into this field, and although there are only three acres in it, and the horses are here, I could not find them. I thought I would go to a particular spot and pray, but when I came to it something seemed to say, 'This is not the right place, go to another;' and when I reached the other, that was not the right one. Finally I said I will go no farther, but just fall down here and cry for mercy, and immediately my soul was filled with peace and joy, and I began to praise the Lord aloud."

Thus I spent a few very happy days, not entirely free from pain and disappointment, while I saw a portion of the fruit of our labors lured from us and borne off in other directions. In those days the unscrupulous proselytizing which we sometimes saw roused my indignation, and called forth scathing doctrinal sermons. Later in life I feel less concern. My estimate of the procedure, indeed, remains the same; but I have learned that those who are likely to do well in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and be of real religious value to us, will not be easily persuaded away.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 4
RECEPTION INTO THE CONFERENCE: 1818, WYOMING CIRCUIT— 1819, BRIDGEWATER CIRCUIT AND WYOMING

The Genesee Conference met at Lansing (then called Teetertown and Genoa) July 16, 1818, Bishop Roberts presiding.

About the second day of the session the candidates for admission to membership in the Conference were notified to present themselves before the Bishop at his lodgings for examination. We were eleven in number, and were all ushered into the room together, where we found the Bishop and the six presiding elders. We were examined singly, each rising when his name was called, and standing in the middle of the floor till the questioners were done with him. This was the first examination of Candidates in the history of the Conference, and I had looked forward to it with fear and trembling. I anticipated a thorough, searching process, and was afraid that I should utterly fail. But I was immeasurably mistaken in the whole affair. The good Bishop asked a few questions of the most general character, and three of the elders, Case, Giles, and Hustis, volunteered a few more of the same kind. John Dempster was asked to parse an easy sentence, which he did imperfectly without being corrected. I was not even asked whether I had studied grammar. The examination of the whole eleven occupied only the brief summer evening.

I came away almost vexed. I had studied hard for two years, and the books over which I had spent many a day of intense application were hardly named. Perhaps pride was at the bottom of these feelings; but at the time I thought it only a natural desire to stand in a true light before the Conference. Moreover, I was suspicious that objections might be made to my reception on account of the state of my health. I had been laid aside from my regular work for three months during the previous year, and was still pale and thin, consequently a little reinforcement of my claims on the score of my attention to books might be of service.

The next day I was leaning on the fence in a brown study when out came Mr. Bibbins. "Come in, George," said he, "you are admitted." I went into the church, and for the first time beheld an Annual Conference in session. This custom of holding the sessions with doors closed to all but members of Conference prevailed until 1824, and was then laid aside. When I entered the Conference room the other candidates were under consideration. There was a warm debate over the case of John Dempster. His piety, zeal, and ability were urged, and admitted, but he was declared to be in infirm health. He was finally continued on trial. When I saw the result in his case, I wondered why I had not been rejected for the same reason. I found afterward that my presiding elder, perhaps fully persuaded that my health would soon be entirely restored, had said nothing about it, and no question had been raised on the subject.

At this period the leading debaters of the Genesee Conference were John Kimberlin, Charles Giles, Henry Ryan, William Case, Loring Grant, Andrew Prindle, and William Barlow. Several of these were really able in argument. Marmaduke Pierce, the strongest man in the body, seldom said a word except when his position as presiding elder compelled him.

On Sunday, the church being far too small to contain the crowds which gathered from far and near, the services were held in a neighboring grove. Bishop Roberts preached a plain, practical sermon, after which I, with others, was ordained a deacon. The service was performed in an impressive manner, and the whole ceremony, particularly the ordination vows, sank deeply into my heart. In the afternoon I heard a sermon from Joshua Soule, followed immediately by another, I think, from William Barlow. Mr. Soule was then the principal Book Agent at New York. I had never before heard a preacher of his type. He had an imposing personal presence, and I thought him a man of great talents, but I could not say that I admired him.

At the close of the Conference my name was read out for Wyoming Circuit, on the Susquehanna District. I was surprised at my appointment, as the circuit was one of the oldest, and was considered one of the most desirable charges in the Conference. Meeting the presiding elder, Mr. Pierce, at the door, I expressed to him my fears that I should not meet the expectations of the people upon so important a charge; but he encouraged me, saying that the people were very kind, and that there was a good revival of religion on the circuit.

I set off for my new field of labor in company with Elijah King, who was appointed to Wyalusing. He was an admirer of good horses, and generally owned one of the best. At the Conference Joshua Soule took a fancy to Mr. King's powerful steed, and persuaded him to sell it. Mr. King proposed, as our way for nearly a hundred miles was in the same direction, that we should harness my horse to his carriage, and ride together as far as our roads were the same. Thus we traveled for three days. I then mounted my horse, and rode on two days more, the road lying along the Susquehanna, sometimes close on the bank of the river, sometimes diverging and passing over the mountains. When I reached the Valley of Wyoming I had just fifty cents in money left in my pocket.

There was, so far as I knew, but one man on the circuit whom I had ever seen, and that was Darius Williams, whom I met at the Hopbottom campmeeting, and who was living in Kingston. I directed my steps to his house, and there found a cordial welcome. Here I learned some interesting particulars in regard to the revival then in progress at Forty Fort, two miles north of Kingston. Just before Conference a campmeeting had been held on the mountain west of the valley, about three fourths of a mile from the present camp ground of the Wyoming District. Philip Myers, a resident of Forty Fort, had a large family of sons and daughters, but not one of them, either parents or children, professed religion. The young people were gay and thoughtless, but the novelty of a campmeeting attracted them, and they took a tent and encamped on the ground.

Toward the close of the meeting the spirit of awakening laid hold of them. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth, or, as she was called in the more homely style of the times, Betsey, was the ruling spirit of the circle, and the gayest of the gay. She was deeply convicted, and yet was fully resolved not to yield to her convictions, or, at all events, not to divulge them till she should reach home. The meeting closed, and the people started homeward. A long line of wagons and carriages, and men and

women on horseback, interspersed with foot passengers, came down the mountain. A number of preachers were among them, Marmaduke Pierce, Elias Bowen, George Lane, and others. The Myers young people were near the head of the procession.

About the time they reached the valley the anguish of Miss Myers became so intense that she began to cry aloud. Her brother, who was driving, stopped his horses, not knowing what to do. This blocked the road, and spread confusion all along the line. Every body was inquiring, in alarm and perplexity, what had happened, and people came hurrying on to the front to see. Miss Sally Denison, a young lady friend of the Myers, and a member of the Church, came up to them, and divining the true state of things, exclaimed, "Betsey Myers, get out of the wagon; get out immediately!" Miss Myers took it for granted that the object was to hold a prayer-meeting in her behalf under the shadow of the trees. She accordingly got out, and walking a few rods to the edge of the grove, fell upon her knees and began to cry for mercy.

The people, with several of the preachers, gathered about them, and there was held what, from that day to the present, has been called the "Little Campmeeting." Several hours were spent in singing, exhortation, and prayer, and ten or twelve persons found peace in believing. Miss Myers not only found pardon, but a joy as intense as had been her sorrow for sin. She praised the Lord, and earnestly exhorted all her young associates to give their hearts to the Saviour. Three of her sisters and a brother-in-law rejoiced in the pardoning love of God. The story of this impromptu meeting in the grove went abroad, and attracted great attention, and doubtless was the means, in the Divine hand, of awakening many souls to their need of Christ. At Forty Fort there was a continued work going on when I reached the circuit.

The next morning after my arrival I crossed the Susquehanna in a skiff, there being at that time no bridge there, and, so far as I now remember, none either above or below for hundreds of miles. At Wilkesbarre I called upon George Lane, then a local preacher, resident there, engaged in mercantile business. We had never met before, but the early acquaintance which began that day ripened into a warm and lasting friendship, which, I trust, will be renewed in the other life. In his house the preachers ever found a pleasant home, and in him a true friend and wise counselor. His store and residence, both in the same building, were on the public square, on the corner of Market Street. Mrs. Lane was a most estimable lady. Her name, before her marriage, was Harvey, and she was the daughter of one of the old settlers of Plymouth.

The Wyoming Circuit was arranged on the two weeks' plan, and had twelve appointments, at all of which I was myself to preach, each round requiring me to travel one hundred and thirty-six miles. I preached my first sermon on the circuit in the old Church at Forty Fort, on Sunday morning, August 9, 1818, the day after my twenty-first birthday. In the afternoon I preached in Plymouth, and during the week took the range of appointments along the mountain west of the river. On Saturday I reached Wilkesbarre, where I preached the next morning in a church built by the citizens as a sort of union enterprise, but which, by purchase, afterward became the sole property of the Methodists. On Sunday afternoon I preached in the schoolhouse in Hanover, then called Ruggles' Schoolhouse. On Monday I rode to Stoddardsville, where I found an extraordinary religious interest, which, on the human side, had an extraordinary beginning.

Lewis Stull, a profane and thoughtless young man, engaged in the occupation of making shingles, had been living alone for weeks in a cabin in the depths of a dense pine forest, fearless of harm from man or beast. One night, as he said and verily believed, a frightful figure, with sable countenance and fiery eyes, came into his room, gazed upon him till his blood almost froze with terror, and then disappeared. The next morning, as soon as it was light, he left his solitary dwelling and fled to the settlement. He was in an agony of fear and despair, and his friends thought him mentally deranged. Some tried to convince him that it was a dream, but he steadily affirmed that he had not even been asleep. Others proposed medical treatment, but no medicine could reach the case.

At last Gilbert Barnes, and a pious woman by the name of Alloway, long known in after years as Father Barnes, of Wilkesbarre, and Mother Alloway, of Vestal, were instrumental in bringing the light and hope of the blessed Gospel to this terrified and despairing sinner. Their instructions and prayers were a balm to his wounded soul. His mother had been pious, and doubtless her teachings were not, even yet, wholly forgotten. He finally found pardon and peace by faith in Christ.

The story of Stull created a great local excitement, and gave rise to numberless discussions in all circles, all kinds of theories being broached, but every body believing that he was fully persuaded of the truth of his story. When I made my first visit to Stoddardsville the story was fresh, and still under discussion. I lodged that night at the house of Gilbert Barnes. Soon after I retired to rest I was called up, and informed that a person was under deep conviction, and her friends desired me to come and pray with her. When I reached the place, I found the woman wild with terror, clinging to her husband, and exclaiming, "Hold me fast! They will have me. See them after me!" About a dozen people, among them Mr. Barnes and Mrs. Alloway, were trying in vain to calm her. She wept, prayed, and uttered her cries of agony until we engaged in prayer, during which she was comparatively quiet, and then again as wild as ever. Finding that I could not command her attention for one moment, I soon left. The next morning she was quiet, and said that she had seen Satan coming down the chimney. She and her husband soon after left the place, and I never heard of her afterward.

The next evening after this midnight adventure I preached on the words, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." All classes of the community were talking about the recent strange events, and I had, for the place, a very large congregation. The drift of the sermon was to show the people that to an unsaved soul the wrath of God is the proper cause of alarm; and I succeeded, by Divine help, in turning the attention of the people from alleged visions of Satan to the awful realities of the final judgment. Quite a number came forward desiring the prayers of God's people, and fourteen professed conversion, and joined the class that evening.

On Wednesday evening, August 19, I preached at the Plains, and lodged at the house of Stephen Abbott, where I then, and ever afterward, found a pleasant home and a cordial welcome whenever I came to that part of the circuit. He was the grandfather of Rev. W. P. Abbott, of the New York Conference. Mr. Abbott and his wife were the descendants of the first settlers of the valley, and their family traditions were full of stories of Indian raids and slaughter. Each of them lost an uncle in the war. I was always happy to reach Mr. Abbott's house in my rounds.

Thursday evening I preached at the house of Ebenezer Marcy, a mile or so above the present village of Pittston; and on Friday afternoon at the house of Preserved Taylor, who cultivated a little farm in a rather lonely neighborhood on the west bank of the Lackawanna. His farm now forms the most densely peopled portion of Hyde Park, one of the western wards of the city of Scranton. There was a small class there, of which Mother Taylor was the leader. She was a holy woman, earnest, full of courage and energy, and withal, of unbounded kindness of heart. From this point I returned to Kingston, having completed my first round on the circuit. I found six of the appointments at private houses, three in schoolhouses, and three in churches; not one of which, however, was legally our property.

Our first quarterly meeting was held at Forty Fort early in September. On Saturday the presiding elder, Mr. Pierce, preached a short sermon, and then called on George Evans to exhort. This Evans was of Welsh descent, as his name indicates, and was a native orator of real fire and genius. He lived among the mountains, somewhere up the Susquehanna, where he cut cedar timber, which he brought down the river and sold. Hearing of our meeting, he pushed his raft into the eddy at Forty Fort, and came ashore to enjoy it. The church was well filled with respectable people; nevertheless, Evans, sunburned and rough, clad in his coarse raftsman's rig, stood up fearlessly before them, and for fifteen or twenty minutes spoke with thrilling power. The people wept and laughed and shouted. Mr. Evans afterward joined the Conference, and after years of successful labor, died in holy triumph.

The Quarterly Conference, according to the invariable custom of the times, was held on Saturday afternoon, and a prayer-meeting followed in the evening.

Sunday was a day of Divine power. The lovefeast began at half past eight o'clock, and lasted two hours; the doors being closed to all but members. The church was well filled. All hearts were full, and every tongue was loosed. Darius Williams led the singing with wondrous effect. There were bursts of holy joy, and strains of holy song, and ringing choruses, which rose from the old church and floated far and wide over the plain.

At eleven o'clock Mr. Pierce preached a sermon, which, for argument, pathos, and effect, was of the highest order. After the sermon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered. In the afternoon Mr. Pierce preached again, and the services of the occasion were ended. This day was an era in the moral and religious history of many who still live to remember it, and of many who are now on the other side of the flood.

Soon after the quarterly meeting I baptized several of the recent converts by immersion in the Susquehanna, among them Mrs. Sarah Hart, of Kingston, and three of the daughters of Philip Myers. Two weeks subsequently I baptized Myron Helme and James Hodge, by effusion, on the bank of the river. Mr. Hodge became a preacher, and joined the Conference. Both of them died in great peace. Mr. Helme in his youth, Mr. Hodge after a long life of faithful service. The public services in the church at Forty Fort were crowded all through the summer and autumn, and not infrequently the greater part of the people present remained during the class-meeting, and I received many valuable members into the Church. Among these were Mrs. Gore, the sister of the late General Ross, a lady of most exemplary and excellent Christian character, and Mrs. Pettibone, who was the wife of Captain Oliver Pettibone, and the sister of Robert Treat Paine, the signer of the Declaration of

Independence. Mrs. Pettibone was the grandmother of Hon. Paine Pettibone, and the ancestor of a large circle of respectable and influential families.

Some time in September I attended a campmeeting in Salem, on Canaan Circuit. The ride of twenty-five miles, up the valley of the Lackawanna and over Cobb's mountain to the place, was exceedingly picturesque. There was a company of eight or ten of us, gentlemen and ladies, old and young, all on horseback, among them Marmaduke Pierce, and two local preachers, Caleb and Robert Kendall. The meeting was comparatively a small one, but not without good fruit. Here I first saw Aunt Polly Lee, as she was called by every body, and heard her pray and exhort with great power and effect. At this meeting I also became acquainted with Father Hamlin and his family. I was invited to preach, and did so on the words, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." Under this sermon, as I have often heard her repeat, Mrs. Sally Stanton, of Canaan, was awakened — a Christian woman now safe in heaven, whose praise is in all the Churches.

At the close of the meeting I took a cross route through the wilderness to Stoddardsville, a distance of twenty-seven miles. Two young men who had been at the campmeeting accompanied me. There was no road, properly speaking; nothing but a bridle-path, made by cutting away the fallen trees and the undergrowth. For twenty miles we saw no human habitation. At Drinker's Beach there was a single log-cabin, where we stopped a little while to rest.

When the chill autumn came on I had a return of my lung difficulty. Timely medical aid, however, gave me relief, and I was able to continue my labors. I was extremely pale and thin, and suffered almost constantly from weakness and pain in the chest. I pursued my studies without interruption, deriving much valuable aid from my presiding elder, who was well read, and a man of fine literary taste. He admitted me into his confidence, and treated me with a familiarity which, considering the disparity of years, I had no reason to expect. I revered and loved him, and the warm friendship which was then formed continued to the end of his life.

At the close of the year I reported an increase of sixty-nine members on the circuit. The tone of piety, as well as the congregations, had improved at every appointment. I had established regular appointments at Leach's, in Abingdon, and at Newport, Carver's, Wyoming, and Blindtown, and multiplied my engagements until I found myself preaching every day in the week. In all these labors my health improved, and I became hopeful of a longer history than I had dared to consider at all probable since my illness on Cortland Circuit. On the 10th of June, 1819, I was married to Miss Mary Myers, the third daughter of Philip and Martha Myers, of Forty Fort.

George Lane had entered the traveling ministry in 1804, and, after four years of laborious service, had located on account of his health. This year he was recommended for re-admission, and he and I set off together, on horseback, for Vienna, where the Genesee Conference was to meet. At Munday's, on the Tioga Circuit, I met my brother Andrew, who was just closing the first year of his itinerancy on that circuit with John Griffing.

The Conference opened July 1, 1819, Bishop George presiding. The question which most interested me was in regard to my friend Dempster. His health was still precarious, and there was a warm debate on his case. Some of his friends at last declared that they would be personally

responsible that he would never become a claimant on the Conference funds, and he was admitted. Two of the preachers were expelled for immoral conduct. Aside from these sad cases, all my recollections of the session are pleasant.

At this Conference I was inducted into the merits of the presiding elder question, which was then being agitated, especially in the north and east. I took sides with those who wished to make the office elective. The General Conference was to meet the next May. Preparatory to the election of delegates, a general meeting of the members of the Conference was had to ascertain how opinion stood on the question. As it appeared that the advocates and the opponents of the new measure were about equal in number, neither party was anxious to run the chances of a ballot, and all agreed to an equal division of the delegates. The number, however, was not an even one, so the lot was cast to see who should have the odd man. The reformers, as they were called, won. My friends Pierce and Grant were elected, one being favorable and the other adverse to the proposed change.

At the close of the Conference I found myself appointed to Bridgewater Circuit, with Edward Paine, who had been a local preacher for many years in that region, and was now admitted on trial, and sent back to preach among his friends and neighbors. He was present in the Conference room, and when he heard our names thus announced he ran to me, and throwing his arms about my neck, testified his pleasure by a most vigorous and emphatic embrace. I was not quite as enthusiastic as he. The circuit had three hundred members, but the reputation of being a very poor one, both in piety and finances. While I was pondering the case. John Kimberlin met me with the cheering salutation, "George, Bridgewater Circuit. You will have to live on sorrel-pie." To modern ears, the edible named may sound like a myth, but it was not. In those regions poor and neglected land was often covered with a growth of what the farmers called horse-sorrel, whose acid leaves were sometimes utilized in much the same way that the rhubarb plant of later times is employed. The allusion was more significant than encouraging. I had not been married a month, and this was to be my wife's introduction to the itinerancy.

After the adjournment I went to my father's, a hard three days' journey; during which I was drenched by a fearful thunder storm. There I spent three days, including a Sabbath, on which Andrew and I preached to our old acquaintances and friends, a multitude of whom assembled to hear "the boys." I then hastened to my circuit, where, on the next Sabbath, I began my work by preaching twice in the little old meetinghouse at Hopbottom. Monday evening I preached at Springville, in John Oakley's loghouse. On Tuesday afternoon I reached Forty Fort, and, with some misgivings, informed my wife of our destination. She received the news hopefully; more so, indeed, than I did; but we concluded not to move our goods till I had been round the circuit and surveyed the ground.

I returned to my field of labor and commenced, according to the plan left me by my predecessor. I found that the country was new, and the people poor. This I could have borne; but to meet small, dead congregations, to feel that every thing was flat, and that nobody expected any change for the better, was too much for my faith. In addition to these discouragements, I had a serious bilious attack. For a time I tried to go on with my work in spite of illness. I went to two appointments in succession, and found no congregations, no expectation of religious service. I then sent on notice to Snake Creek, where I found a little new settlement, surrounded by a dense hemlock forest, and where I preached to a little gathering of women, not a man being present except myself. At the close of the

sermon a motherly-looking old lady came up, and spoke to me in tones of kindness that seemed to me wonderfully sweet. "Brother," said she, "you look sick." I replied that I was sick. "Well," she rejoined, "go home with me and I will nurse you up." I found her living in a building which had been intended for a barn, a rough stone chimney having been added on the outside. Everything, however, was as neat and clean as the prim old lady herself. I took some medicine and went to bed in the granary. The next day I was very weak, but felt better. Toward evening I mounted my horse and rode twenty miles to Vestal, my next appointment, where I again found no congregation, there being no expectation of a meeting.

The next appointment on the plan lay on the height east of the Choconut Creek. The place of the expected meeting was a miserable specimen or a log-cabin — small, dirty, and open to all the winds that blew. The lady of the house was ragged, not over clean in person, timid and dispirited. I introduced myself as one of the preachers, and found that no one expected me there at that time. The poor woman had little to say, and after talking with her a few minutes I resolved to push on to "The Hemlocks," a distance of eight or ten miles. There was no road, and I was told that I could not find my way through the woods without a guide; so I secured the services of a boy, who shouldered his rifle and led me through a most wild and romantic region. "The Hemlocks" were very near what is now called Hawleyton.

But I need not multiply details, as each day's experience was only a virtual repetition of the past. I accomplished the round, preaching where there was any sort of a gathering of the people, and then went to Kingston. I had nothing encouraging to report, but my wife decided to go with me to the circuit. I told her that she could not live there. "I can live where you can," was her reply. I accordingly engaged board for her at the house of my colleague, and in September we removed our effects thither.

On the 13th of September there was a campmeeting held near Carpenter's Notch, which I attended. Marmaduke Pierce preached a short but mighty sermon, and closed with a perfect storm. He addressed the wicked with tremendous power, and then, exclaiming, "I feel the Spirit of God upon me, glory, halleluiah!" dropped down upon the seat behind him, shouting, weeping, laughing, wonderfully moved. The joyous responses from the preachers and the assemblage arose like the sound of many waters, while the whole congregation shook like the forest in a mighty wind. The exhortations of the presiding elder, George Lane, were overwhelming. Sinners quailed under them, and many cried aloud for mercy. The meeting included the Sabbath, and continued about a week. Sixty persons professed to find peace, and thirty joined the Church.

Of course the people of God could not expect all this to be quietly received by the adversary. Two ladies, connected with prominent families of Wyoming Valley, were convicted and came forward to the prayer circle. The husband of one of them and the brother of the other were enraged, and soundly denounced the Methodists for "scaring the women to death." The brother was bold enough to come up and take his sister away from the place. She gave way before his displeasure, ceased to seek the Saviour, and, after living many years without hope in Christ, died, so far as I learned, without hope.

Darius Williams, the son of the Williams of musical fame, fell helpless in a prayer-meeting, and lay for two hours in his father's arms, and on his resuscitation declared that he had found peace. He afterward became a preacher, and, after two or three years' labor among the Methodists, joined the Presbyterians, and began preaching against the doctrines which he had once held, and denouncing the modes and experiences which he himself had once cultivated.

From the Wyoming campmeeting I returned to my circuit, and prosecuted my work with considerable comfort and some hope. My colaborer, Mr. Paine, was a holy man, acceptable everywhere. At several points our congregations visibly increased, and the work of God commenced to revive. When conversions began to occur among us, the Baptists, by whom we were surrounded, began to practice their usual strategy. There were two preachers of that persuasion within the bounds of the circuit who were deep on the water question, but very shallow in the rest of their doctrine. They held a foggy kind of Unitarianism, denying both the divinity and the humanity of Christ. These men were very attentive to our converts. On my first round of the circuit I had a chance to hear one of them preach. His sermon was wholly controversial, and aimed directly at the Methodists, whose doctrine and usages he totally misrepresented. His false statements provoked me to write him a letter, which led to an epistolary controversy between us. I studied the subject, and began to discuss the modes and subjects of baptism in my sermons with good effect among our own people, and to the annoyance of our pugnacious assailants.

Our first quarterly meeting was at Hunt's Ferry. On Saturday George Lane preached in a little log schoolhouse, and on Sunday in an unfinished dwellinghouse belonging to John Bunnell, which accommodated a large congregation. When Mr. Lane ended his discourse, Sunday morning, I preached, by request, a sermon on baptism. We then proceeded to the river, and, the elder declining to officiate, I baptized several children by sprinkling, and several adults by immersion.

We had sonic valuable accessions at Hunt's Ferry. The work extended, also, up the Mehoopany Creek, and we had a fine revival at the Forks, now called Forkston. Here, in the winter, I baptized several converts by immersion, my clothes freezing upon me before I could change them. I spent one sad Sabbath at what was called the Neck. On my way to my appointment I came to the river, and found a great concourse of people gathered on the banks. Mrs. Prentiss, the wife of Captain Prentiss, and an estimable member of our Church, had been drowned that morning, and the people had come from far and near to search for the body. We searched all day in vain; nor was the body found till the next spring, when it was discovered floating thirty miles below, at the head of Wyoming Valley, I preached the funeral sermon.

In addition to the Baptist skirmish, we had a speck of theological war at Hopbottom. Dr. Nathan Bangs had had a public debate in New York with the Rev. Dr. Williston, of the Presbyterian Church, and the discussion was continued by means of the press. Each disputant published two volumes, copies of which found their way to our circuit, and were read by our people. One of our class leaders read them, and became exceedingly belligerent — ready to attack Calvinism anywhere. He finally came into collision with the Rev. G, N. Judd, a Presbyterian, who preached once in four weeks at Hopbottom, and arrangements were made for a public debate. When the time arrived, and the parties met, the valorous class leader's courage had somewhat cooled, and he desired that I should take his

place, and appoint another day for a debate, Mr. Judd consented, and the day was appointed for the discussion.

This arrangement created no little excitement, and at the time appointed it was thought a great crowd would be likely to assemble. About an hour before the debate was to begin I received a note from Mr. Judd, saying that it was not convenient for him to meet me at that time, I replied, asking him to name another day. Ten days after I received a reply from him, declining the public debate altogether, saying that the contemplated discussion would be likely to prove detrimental to the cause of religion in general. I felt some disappointment at the result, and regretted it then much more than I do now.

An affair occurred in the fall, within the bounds of the circuit, which may be worth relating. A young man, who had been at work down the river during the summer, was on his way home. Not far from Tunkhannock he fell in company with another traveler, a stout, rough fellow. They reached Montrose in the evening, and the young man proposed that they should remain there till morning. The other urged him to go on further, and they proceeded. About two miles from the village the stranger knocked down the young man, and pounded his head with stones till he thought that his victim was killed, and then robbing him of his watch and money, left him weltering in his blood. The wounded man recovered his senses while the work of plundering was going on, but he had the rare self-control to keep silent and motionless till the robber left him.

Faint and bleeding, he made his way to a house and gave the alarm. Intelligence was sent to Montrose, and a large number of men started out in pursuit of the villain. He was on strange ground, and had lost his way, and the sheriff overtook him at sunrise not far from the scene of his murderous deeds. Drawing a knife he severely wounded the sheriff, and fled to the woods. All day a multitude, with dogs and guns, hunted for him without success. In the evening he came into the settlement on Snake Creek, and entering the cabin of an old man, whose name was Chalker, asked for something to eat. While the old lady was preparing the supper a neighbor entered and whispered to Mr. Chalker, and then went out to secure help. The story of the outrage had reached the place, and every body was looking for the culprit.

The robber, too, was watchful. He saw the hasty consultation, and divined its meaning. He moved toward the door, saying that he "wished to step out just a moment." Mr. Chalker placed himself against the door, and said he must not go out. The robber drew his knife, but before he could use it Mr. Chalker knocked him down with a chair, and then fell upon him, calling to his wife to bring him a rope. But the robber was young and strong, and he rose to his feet with the weight of the old soldier's slight frame upon him. Then the old lady came into the battle. The two succeeded in throwing the highwayman down, and the woman got her rope around his neck, and he surrendered at once, imploring them not to choke him to death. When the neighbors rushed in they found the robber prostrate, Mr. Chalker lying across his legs, and Mrs. Chalker holding the rope just tight enough to keep him powerless and submissive. I saw the culprit the next morning at Great Bend in the hands of the officers. He seemed to be more troubled at the idea of being captured by two old people than in view of his crime. The injured man recovered; the robber was sent to prison for twenty-one years.

In April, at the close of the third quarter, I was removed from Bridgewater Circuit to Wyoming to supply the place of Mr. Pierce, who had been elected a delegate to the General Conference, and wished to be released for the rest of the year. We were kindly received at my father-in-law's, where we remained until the session of the Conference. I was grieved to find that in many places on the circuit the religious interest had declined. In June I attended a campmeeting on Bridgewater Circuit. Some good was done. My old colleague, Mr. Paine, was present, but seemed pensive and unusually quiet. He was drowned in the Susquehanna a few days afterward.

The sudden departure of Mr. Paine deeply affected me. We had labored together in great harmony while I was on the circuit. He had generously opened his doors to me, and was a true friend. He was a man of simple manners and unaffected piety, a little eccentric, but sincere and open-hearted. He always preached sound doctrine and good sense, was universally beloved, and very useful. His name was "as ointment poured forth." He will have many stars in his crown in the day of his rejoicing.

In summing up the results of the year's labors I could not complain that I had preached in vain. Souls had been converted, and the Church quickened. In regard to finances, the showing was not so satisfactory. On Bridgewater Circuit I received forty dollars for the nine months spent there. For the three months on Wyoming I received nothing. At the Conference I received eighteen dollars from the Conference funds, making the receipts of the year fifty-eight dollars. Many years afterward, dining with Bishop Hedding at the house of a mutual friend in the city of New York, the conversation turned upon the "good old times," and the Bishop said to me:

"Brother Peck, how small a salary did you ever receive in any one year of your ministry?"

I thought of the year whose history has just been narrated, and answered, "Fifty-eight dollars. What was your smallest, Bishop?"

"Four dollars," replied the Bishop.

The Conference met this year at Niagara, on the Canada side. My wife desired to see the great falls, then a still greater wonder than now, because very few comparatively had visited them. I procured a one-horse wagon, with wooden springs, and we set off, and in three days reached Ithaca, where we spent the Sabbath. On the next Tuesday I met my brother Andrew, and went with him to a campmeeting on the Holland Purchase, where we had rather a dull time, with few indications of good. We resumed our way toward Niagara, and passed along the Ridge road, and at the end of a two-weeks' journey, reached our place of destination.

The Conference began its session on the 20th of July, 1820, Bishop George presiding. The place of meeting was a little church at Lundy's Lane, where one of the hardest battles of the recent war had been fought. There were members of the Conference present who were in that battle, and not all on the same aide. The boarding-place assigned my wife and myself was two miles from the church. The host and his wife were renegade Americans and backslidden Methodists, who must needs be perpetually parading their royalist notions, and assailing "the Yankees." We bore this style of talk till patience ceased to be a virtue, and then left them, and found more agreeable quarters elsewhere.

At this Conference I was ordained elder by Bishop George, and thus terminated my probation for the full powers and responsibilities of the Christian ministry. The Bishop's manner of performing the ordination service was always characterized by solemnity and earnestness. In all his public ministrations, indeed, there was a pathos and a power which left deep and permanent impressions. My heart was greatly moved by the sacred and weighty responsibilities thus laid upon me, and I left the church with firm purposes of soul to be more completely given up to God and his work.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 5
1820, CANAAN CIRCUIT —1821, PARIS — 1822-3, UTICA

I was appointed on Canaan Circuit. We immediately began our journey homeward, visiting, as we went, such places or objects of interest as lay in our path. We visited the British Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara River, and had also a beautiful view of the American side, with Fort Niagara just opposite. Around us, on the Canada side, were the charred remains of the village which had been burned by the Americans during the war.

We returned by the Ridge road to Rochester, which was then a new village, with stumps, logs, and brush-heaps scattered among the buildings. We passed through Auburn, stopping long enough to visit the prison, little anticipating the fact that I was to be chaplain there in after years. We visited my brother Luther, and, in company with him, went to Hamilton to spend a few days with our father and mother. We reached Kingston about the middle of August.

Early the next week I set off for my new field of labor. I found it a two-weeks' circuit, with a membership of two hundred and twenty-three, and twelve preaching-places, one of them being the courthouse at Bethany, three or four schoolhouses, and the rest private houses — not one church. After three weeks' labor I returned to Kingston, and on my way had a narrow escape. As I was crossing a deep, sluggish stream between Salem and Cobb's, the bridge gave way, and fell with a crash into the gulf beneath. The spirited horse upon which I was mounted saved me by springing forward with a lightning quickness which almost threw me from the saddle.

I remained at my father-in-law's a few days, during which I attended a campmeeting held at Carpenter's Notch, on the same ground where the last year's meeting was held. It was a successful meeting. Several young persons from Wilkesbarre were converted, among them Miss Hannah Slocum, afterward the wife of Judge Bennet; a Christian lady now gone to her reward, but whose praise is in all the Churches.

At the close of the campmeeting Father Hamlin took my wife and child, and our household goods, in his great lumber wagon, while I rode on horseback, and we made a most fatiguing journey, nearly all the way in the rain, from Kingston, up the valley and across Cobb's Mountain to Salem, a distance of thirty miles. The road over the mountain, which was ten miles, passes description; all the way over rocks which tossed the wagon and its contents about, and seemed every moment to threaten total wreck. My wife sat under the cloth cover, on a little chest, holding the infant in her arms, while I rode on my horse. We began the weary journey about sunrise, and reached Father Hamlin's house at Salem about dusk. Here we found a comfortable home. Father Hamlin offered us a part of his house for the year, and we gladly accepted it. We boarded with him a part of the time, and he also kept my horse when I was at home, and at the end of the year he refused to receive one cent for all that he had done for us. He was a man of generous impulses and solid worth, an earnest Christian,

and a thorough Methodist. His wife was a kind-hearted, deeply pious, and sensible lady; and their daughter, now Mrs. Baldwin, of St. Anthony's Falls, Minnesota, a very acceptable companion and friend of my wife. All our recollections of our stay in this hospitable dwelling are very pleasant.

The work on Canaan Circuit was hard. It lay in the region known as the Beech Woods. It was sparsely settled, and the chief occupation of the people was clearing their land, and winning farms from the original forest, which still covered by far the greater portion of the country; The roads were simply wagon paths, made by cutting away the trees and undergrowth so as to admit of a passage, provided the driver was skillful in winding about among rocks and stumps. They were so narrow that the dense foliage of the trees shut out the sun, and, in consequence, they were always muddy in the warm season, except where the rocks were bare. Through the swamps the roads were of the style called in some sections of our land, "corduroy;" but the poles of which they were constructed were often decayed, and the way unsafe. When winter came, and the mud began to freeze, it was still worse. My poor horse became sore and stiff, and almost broke down. He often halted on the edge of some icy Slough of Despond, and could be forced into it only by a sharp application of the spur.

There was, however, a bright side of the picture. I was cordially received, my congregations were large, and there was life among the people, with about enough of opposition to awaken healthy activity. I found myself unexpectedly popular at Bethany, the county-seat. This I attributed to the good offices of my friend the Hon. David Scott, the circuit judge, who spoke well of me among his associates and the leading men of Wayne County. My congregations there included the most respectable families of the place.

My health suffered somewhat this year from hard work and exposure; and it was with much difficulty that I endured the cold, and met my appointments. A few illustrations of the poverty and the spirit of the people may not be out of place. It may be said, in general terms, that there was no money in circulation. I often had presents of stockings, yarn, meal, butter, pork, cheese, rye, and corn, and sometimes payments of salary were made in these articles. To make this liberality available, I was obliged to carry these cumbrous benefactions, even rye and wheat, on my horse, with my clothes and books. At the last quarterly meeting a good sister paid in a quantity of maple sugar, which she had brought fifteen miles, making the journey on horseback. In fact, so much of my support came in the shape of maple sugar, that we had more than a supply for home use, and I traded off the surplus for a set of wooden bottomed chairs, of which I am able to add, to the credit of the man who made them, that they are still in existence.

It is hardly necessary to add that my ministry was not making me rich in the goods of this world. My receipts the preceding year had been only fifty-eight dollars. My clothes were wearing out. My mother-in-law, Mrs. Myers, had spun and woven a piece of cloth, and sent it to the fulling-mill to receive the finishing touch; and when it was done I was to have a suit of the goodly fabric. But the fuller delayed, and winter came, and I was really suffering. A brother who lived near Bethany saw the state of things, and one day said to me, "Brother Peck, I think we are about of a size." I replied, "I suppose we are." He then brought out a new coat, and asked me to try it on. I did so, not suspecting his design. "It fits you exactly," said he; "now wear it till you get another." I objected, but he would take no denial. "You shall do it," said he, resolutely. Thus I wore Myron Whitmore's coat for six weeks. He was a brother indeed.

In regard to the Church and the cause, the year was a good one. There was no general revival, and the increase of members was small; but we had some valuable accessions. Our people were encouraged, and our prospects brightened. I had not neglected personal improvement. Under all the disadvantages of this year, as well as the preceding one, I had pursued my studies with some success. I found some works in the possession of certain families who had immigrated from England and settled in the Beech Woods. Among them were Stackhouse's System of Divinity, Wesley's Philosophy, Bishop Berkeley's Minute Philosopher, and some of the Hampton Lectures. These I devoured with great relish, and from them contracted a taste for the English literature of their age. The writings of the old English bishops thenceforth had a strong attraction, and no doubt strongly influenced my modes of thought.

I loved the people on Canaan Circuit, but I began to feel that such fields of labor were not suited either to my mental or physical constitution. My physical strength was too severely taxed; and I also greatly desired larger opportunities for study.

In July, 1821, the Genesee Conference met at Sauquoit, or Paris, and was a pleasant occasion. On Sunday morning Bishop George preached a sermon, which wonderfully excited the audience, and called forth a universal shout. In the afternoon we had two sermons in the grove; first, Henry Ryan preached, and immediately afterward, Thomas Mason. On Monday evening, I was called for the first time to preach in the presence of a bishop, and did so, with some liberty, before a crowded congregation. I was told that at the next meeting of the Bishop and elders, Bishop George, without asking any questions, wrote down my name on his list, saying, "I have stationed one man, anyhow." When the appointments were announced I found myself appointed to Paris, the seat of the Conference. Paris was then a station. There were at that time only three or four in the entire Conference. I had expected, of course, to be sent again to a circuit; and felt some trepidation in view of the responsibilities of my new position.

After a brief visit to our friends at Forty Fort we again crossed Cobb's mountain in a little old-style buggy which I had purchased, and which almost upset several times among the rocks. Tarrying a night at Father Hamlin's, we set off Wednesday morning for Paris, and, after four days' weary travel, reached the place at ten o'clock Saturday night, and were kindly received by the venerable Elijah Davis. We found that the stewards had rented for our accommodation one room, not a large one, in Mr. Davis' house. The rent was twelve dollars for the year, and this, they said, was all that they could afford.

The Sauquoit, or Paris Church, was perhaps the oldest in the Genesee Conference, and there was a strong Society for these times. The building had just been put in good order, and the trustees had rented the pews. Bishop George opposed this arrangement strongly, and threatened to leave them without a preacher if they did not return to the free-seat system. "I give you," said he, "one year to repent." The brethren made no promise, nor uttered any threat, but quietly continued their plan, and we heard nothing more about it.

I soon found that a station is a very different thing from a circuit I was called to preach twice every Sabbath to the same congregation. These services were in the morning and the afternoon, and in the evening we had a prayer-meeting. There was no Sabbath School. I could no longer devote the

greater part of my time to general reading, and prepare my sermons at irregular periods when all things were favorable. Preaching was now an affair of labor and anxiety, and preparation for it became a department of daily toil. My position demanded a constant supply of new sermons, thoroughly elaborated, and however much they cost me, however well they were received, they could be delivered only once in my charge.

This change of circumstances produced a corresponding change in my methods. In my sermons I no longer dealt in generalities, or traversed large spaces in a single discourse, but took up specific topics and discussed them logically. I had a fine congregation, and all the circumstances of my position were such as tended to create interest and awaken my zeal. My plans of study, whether wise or otherwise, were definite and laborious. I now had access to Clarke's Commentary on the Historical Books of the Old Testament, Dr. Scott's Notes on the Prophets, and Dr. Coke's Commentary on the New Testament. I began all these three authors at once, reading a chapter in each, with the notes, every day, and completed them during the year. To this I added a regular course of history, which included the works of Prideaux and Harmer. I wrote but little.

This year would have been the most pleasant of my ministry had it not been for a foolish disturbance in regard to the singing. The momentous question was, whether we should have a choir in the gallery, or let a good brother start the tunes among the people. Hobart Graves, who had been accustomed to lead in the congregation, favored the choir, and gave me notice that he would lead no more. We called a meeting of the Church, and held a solemn consultation, which showed that the leading members were favorable to the choir, and that a small portion were wholly opposed to it. The next Sunday the choir were in their places in the gallery in good season.

The leader of the opposition was one of the stewards, a man of property, who always came to church in his carriage, with a remarkably fine pair of grays. He, too, was at the church early that morning, and saw what was in the wind. He came to meet me as I was going to church, and asked, in a rather rough way, if the singing was to be in the gallery. I answered that it was to be there for the present.

"Then," said he, "I shall leave. I have got a span of horses which can carry me to meeting where the singing is not given up to the wicked."

And he straightway brought his carriage to the door, took in his wife, cracked his whip with great emphasis, and drove to the Presbyterian church, where the singing was conducted in the very way to which he was so intensely hostile. He never returned to us, and the Church suffered no material loss by his departure. The affair, ridiculous as it now seems, was the cause of much anxiety and mental discomfort.

On the 24th of July, 1822, the Genesee Conference met at Vienna, Ontario County. I went to Conference in company with the Rev. Charles Giles, who was at that time the presiding elder on the Chenango District, but lived at Paris. I had been acquainted with him from my childhood, and had great respect for him; but his deportment among the people as he passed around his district gave me a still higher idea of his piety. He possessed a great deal of humor, and, on occasion, could write satirical verse, not particularly elegant, but not destitute of force. A little poem, written in a sort of

Hudibrastic style, and entitled the "Dagon of Calvinism," shows the sharp wit of the man, and also illustrates, in a humorous way, the style in which the Methodist preachers in those days sometimes dealt with the doctrines which they opposed. Poor man, I could not see how he managed to maintain so cheerful an air when his home, as I was well aware, was a very purgatory of domestic infelicity. He went to Conference on this occasion with sundry scratches on his face, to explain which would have been exceedingly embarrassing to him. He was devotedly attached to his wife, but was absolutely compelled to separate from her. The curious part of the history is this: although their affairs were brought before the public in a legal process, which resulted in his being released from all obligation to support her, and they lived separate for perhaps thirty years, yet when Mr. Giles, in old age, was on his death-bed, his wife returned and nursed him with tenderest care to the end.

Bishop Roberts presided at the Conference, and the business passed off as usual, without any occurrence of special note. I preached before the Conference under very unfavorable circumstances, and, as I thought, made a failure, and was duly criticized by some of that class of brethren who feel that they have a mission to cultivate the grace of humility in other people.

I was stationed this time at Utica, where was a small Society, and yet one of the most important points in the Conference. Our affairs had not been wisely managed. Some ten years previously an attempt had been made to build a church two miles out of town to accommodate the people of New Hartford as well as those of Utica. A frame building was begun, and when partly finished was used as a place of worship. Finding that instead of accommodating both places it accommodated neither, the site was abandoned to its former owner, and another situation in the extreme eastern part of Utica was purchased, and a small brick church erected. We were still in the wrong place, but had to make the best of it. Sabbath morning, when the weather was favorable, I had a good congregation, but a little rain sometimes reduced our numbers to a mere handful. We have grown wiser by experience, and now are more careful in locating our church edifices.

I now had an excellent opportunity for study and improvement. I had access to several respectable private libraries. I attended book auctions, and strained my means to the utmost, and possibly beyond reason, to secure what I needed. I read much, studied hard, and wrote more than I had hitherto done. I tried not to waste a moment of precious time. I read Clarke, as fast as the successive numbers were published; and also Benson, whose Commentary began to be published this year. I read the mental philosophies of Payne, Reid, and Stewart, and some of the principal authors in the Episcopal Controversy. I paid attention to the preparation of sermons, using few of the sketches made in former years.

In the autumn, illness and death invaded my father's family. On the 8th of November my Uncle Isaac Collar, who had been declining for some years, passed peacefully away. The various stages of life with him seemed to be diminished in proportion to his diminutive stature, and at the age of thirty-five he was an old man. Soon after his death, several members of the family were attacked with a malignant typhus fever; and one week after the death of our uncle, my sister Mary died in triumphant hope of heaven. She was twenty-two years of age, and had been a member of the Church eleven years. She possessed great amiability of character, and extraordinary powers of mind. She was the first called away by death, of a family of eleven children. When her remains were buried, my Sister Elizabeth fell upon her knees, with her face almost touching the fresh earth, in silent prayer.

A few days after we were called to lay her down in her last rest, by the side of her whose departure we then mourned. I wrote an account. of those dear ones, for "The Methodist Magazine" of that year. My father and mother were also attacked by the fever, and brought apparently to the verge of the grave, but ultimately recovered.

On the 15th of July, 1823, the Conference met at Westmoreland, Oneida County. The most notable feature of the session was the renewed agitation in regard to the election of presiding elders. The General Conference was to hold its session before we should meet again; and, consequently, we were to elect our delegates. Four years before, as will be remembered, the friends and the opponents of the new measure agreed to divide the delegation equally. This time the friends of the proposed change resolved to nominate a full ticket, and risk a ballot. They succeeded in electing all their men. The older members of the Conference were dismayed at the result, and predicted the certain ruin of the Church. Some of them spoke in somewhat disparaging terms of the brethren elected, styling them "a pack of boys." I was the youngest man in the delegation: the majority were of respectable age and standing, and we were all loyal to the Church. We favored only one change in the methods of the Church; and as time passed on, and the proposed measure was more fully examined, the desire to see it adopted declined, and finally the project was wholly abandoned. I was returned to Utica for another year.

In April, 1824, I removed my family to Wyoming Valley, and started for the General Conference, in company with Loring Grant and Gideon Lanning, who came down from Western New York on their way to Baltimore. They rode in a carriage with two horses, one geared before the other in tandem style. They invited me to a seat in their vehicle, and with this rather novel turnout we crossed the Pokono Mountain, and in three days reached Philadelphia. Here we found the Philadelphia Conference in session. We remained two days in the city, and I preached twice, once in St. George's Church, Saturday evening, when I thought I made a failure, and the second time in the Academy, Sunday evening.

On Monday, April 26, we left Philadelphia, reached Port Deposit on Wednesday, where we left our horses and took passage on a steamboat, and arrived at Baltimore the next day early in the afternoon. On Friday, May 1, the General Conference began its session. The three bishops, McKendree, George, and Roberts, presided. Bishop McKendree's health was not good, and he was evidently beginning to wane. I never saw Bishop Roberts appear to equal advantage. He and Bishop George performed their duties with great dignity and propriety. The debates and the general dispatch of business were creditable to the body; and, I judge, equal to those of any succeeding General Conference.

There was a very long discussion on "Rules and Orders." Dr. Capers, of the South Carolina Conference, objected to the old rules on the ground of their being too complicated. He was appointed chairman of a committee to prepare new ones, and in due time reported a code far more complicated than the old. His report was discussed at great length, perhaps three or four days. He argued in favor of his workmanship, making a speech on every point, and generally succeeding in securing its adoption. I was struck with the fact that he was supported in almost every case by the delegates from the South and the West, and opposed by those of the North and East. This debate, the appeals of

William Burke and Joseph Crawford, and the reading of petitions and memorials, occupied about two weeks of the session.

I was much interested in noting the methods of the various speakers. Dr. Capers was ready and animated, and occupied his full share of the time. James Smith, of Baltimore, was a powerful speaker, but was more of the orator than the debater. Ezekiel Cooper and Wilbur Fiske I thought models. William Burke's defense was bold and telling, but not wholly free from evasions and cunning devices. The question in regard to presiding elders did not occupy much space, being disposed of for the time being by passing again the resolution of 1820, which suspended action in the case.

The other prominent questions of the session were those of providing a constitutional test, lay delegation, and the election of bishops. The constitutional test question was a proposal to establish a sort of ecclesiastical supreme court, which should sit in judgment on the validity of the acts of the General Conference itself. The idea was suggested by Bishop McKendree's declaring the election of presiding elders unconstitutional. After some talk the project was laid aside, and has never been revived. The lay delegation movement was feeble, and, although it was discussed, nothing more was done. While this subject was pending, William Winans, of the Mississippi Conference, made a speech which was devoid of the grace of oratory, but was much applauded by the opponents of change.

The election of bishops attracted great attention. On the 19th of May the Committee on Episcopacy reported in favor of electing two; and two parties, a Northern and Southern, were at once developed. The Northern delegates met in council in my room, which was large and convenient. We resolved to select two candidates; and when nominations were called for, Elijah Hedding and John Emory were named. Mr. Hedding, who was present, was requested to retire to another room, while his qualifications were discussed. He did so, but not without reluctance, and not until he had earnestly begged that his name might not be used in connection with the Episcopal office. When I went to call him into the room again, I found him standing with his face to the wall, weeping and groaning. We nominated Mr. Hedding and John Emory by a unanimous vote. The Southern and Western delegates nominated: Joshua Soule and William Beauchamp.

On Wednesday morning, May 26, the election took place. The number of votes was one hundred and twenty-eight, which made sixty-five necessary to elect. On the first ballot J. Soule had sixty-four votes, W. Beauchamp sixty-two, E. Hedding sixty-one, and J. Emory fifty-nine. The second ballot gave Soule sixty-five, Beauchamp sixty-two, Hedding sixty-one, and Emory fifty-seven. Mr. Soule was declared duly elected, and Mr. Emory declined in favor of Mr. Hedding. The third ballot gave Mr. Hedding sixty-six votes, and he was elected.

Nathan Bangs was elected Book Agent, and J. Emory, Assistant Book Agent. Mr. Emory was understood to be favorable to lay delegation and the election of presiding elders, and for this reason had lost favor in his Conference, the Baltimore men being averse to all changes. He was one of the ablest men of the Church, had been a delegate to several General Conferences, and also to the English Wesleyans. On account of their views, Mr. Emory, B. Waugh, and J. Davis had all been left out of the Baltimore delegation. The delegates from the North and East sided with the proscribed

brethren, and succeeded in electing at least one of them to an important position, Mr. Emory, though not a delegate, being elected Secretary of the General Conference. The contest was animated, but not in a bad spirit.

During the month which we spent at the Conference I sought every opportunity to hear the best preachers of the Church. I heard the immortal Summerfield in one of his happiest efforts, also Wilbur Fiske, Samuel Merwin, James Smith, William Ross, Thomas L. Douglass, Lovick Pierce, and others. Richard Reece and John Hannah were delegates from the British Conference. Mr. Reece was a man of venerable appearance. His speeches in the General Conference were plain, sensible, and to the point; but were uttered in some kind of provincial English, which seemed a little uncouth. His sermons were respectable, but scarcely equal in interest and power to those of Mr. Hannah.

The first missionary meeting which I ever attended was one held in the Light Street Church. The speakers were Messrs. Reece, Hannah, Summerfield, and Finley. Mr. Finley was then missionary among the Wyandote Indians, and gave us some thrilling incidents connected with his work.

The General Conference adjourned on the 28th of May, having transacted a considerable amount of business. The next day we set out for home, traveling by water to Port Deposit, and there resuming our carriage and tandem team. I reached Wyoming on Friday, June 4, less than two months remaining of the conference year, I left my family in the valley, and returned to my charge. During this period the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, with his wife and daughter, spent several weeks in Utica, visiting General Lynch. He preached for me several times, and once in the First Presbyterian Church, and was heard with great interest. Bishops George and Hedding spent the Sabbath before Conference with us, and attracted great attention. I took Bishop George to Conference in my carriage, and found his conversation very interesting and instructive.

My two years in Utica had passed very pleasantly, and with a fair degree of success. I had found favor with the people. The religious tone of the Church had improved, and the number of members had nearly doubled. I had made progress in study, and formed friendships with many excellent people. I received about two hundred dollars a year during my pastorate at Utica.

On July 25, 1824, the Genesee Conference met at Lansing, Cayuga County, Bishop George presiding, assisted by Bishop Hedding. Few of the Canada brethren were present, the late General Conference having constituted a new Conference out of that part of our territory.

At this session I was chairman of the Committee on Education. The trustees of the Church at Cazenovia sent a communication to the Conference, proposing to remodel their church, and open a seminary in the edifice, on condition that it should be adopted as the Conference school. I drew up the report, recommending the acceptance of the proposal, and the project was carried into effect that year.

At the close of the Conference my name was read off for the Wyoming Circuit, and William Case, who had been laboring ten years or more in the Canadian part of the Conference, and now wished to return to the States, was appointed presiding elder of the Susquehanna District. I went to the valley procured a wagon and pair of horses, and went up after some household goods left at Paris. The

expedition occupied two weeks. When I reached home I found that a young preacher, Joseph Castle, had come from Canada with a letter from Bishop George, informing me that Mr. Case could not be spared from that part of the work, and that I was appointed presiding elder in his place. Mr. Castle was directed to travel Wyoming Circuit. The letter was not for consultation, but direction, and its action was final.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 6
1824-5, SUSQUEHANNA DISTRICT
1826-7, WILKESBARRE — 1828, ITHACA

In 1824 the Susquehanna District extended from the Delaware River on the east to Ithaca and Wellsborough on the west, and from Norwich and Bainbridge on the north to Plymouth on the south. The area included within these bounds was nearly identical with that of the present Wyoming Conference, and at least equal to it. There were eleven charges, called Wyoming, Canaan, Bainbridge, Broome, Caroline, Owego, Spencer, Tioga, Wyalusing, Ithaca, and Bridgewater. The district had nineteen preachers and three thousand six hundred and ninety-six members and probationers. Our people owned six small churches, one still unfinished, and had some privileges in two others. Besides these, there were on the district about two hundred regular preaching-places, the great majority of them being private houses, and not a few of them in neighborhoods where we had not a single member of the Church.

I entered upon this new charge with fear and trembling, but tried to rely on God. I was only twenty-seven years of age, and had been only eight years in the ministry, while there were on the district men far in advance of me in age and experience. Among them was Loring Grant, who had been as a father to me, but who seemed to hail my appointment with great satisfaction. I usually traveled in primitive style, on horseback, and was necessarily away from home much of the time — often for five or six weeks continuously, not even hearing from my family.

My quarterly meetings were seasons of interest, and I labored in the utmost harmony with the preachers. Good was done at various points, and we had two successful Campmeetings during the latter part of the Conference year. The first of these was held in June on Caroline Circuit, the ground being prepared on the most approved plan by Loring Grant. George W. Densmore and Chester V. Adgate preached powerful sermons, the memory and the fruits of which remain to this day. Prejudice gave way, and souls were saved.

The second campmeeting was at Nicholls, on Wyalusing Circuit, and began August 11. On Sabbath we had a mighty breaking down. At eight o'clock in the morning Gaylord Judd preached with wonderful unction. In the afternoon and evening. the preaching of the word was crowned with striking displays of Divine power. Twenty souls professed conversion that day, among them several children of our preachers. Such weeping and shouting I have seldom heard or witnessed. I had come to the place unwell; and somewhat dispirited; but amid these victories my courage and faith revived. The whole number converted was about sixty.

This, however, was a year of trial both to me and my wife. There were some cases of discipline that gave me anxiety and trouble. A local preacher was charged with embezzling money collected for church building purposes, and was expelled, after a series of trials. In Ithaca a miserable quarrel

about church music — the question of choir or no choir — kept the whole Society in a ferment for months, and threatened to wreck every thing. As generally happens in such cases, the belligerents, as the war progressed, soon ceased to care a copper about the matter originally in dispute, and were only anxious each to defeat the other side. I visited the place for the express purpose of effecting a reconciliation, but failed to accomplish any good.

On returning from a long absence on distant parts of the district I found our child in an almost dying state. He had received an accidental injury on the back of his neck, which totally paralyzed his right side and limbs. There was great danger of a fatal termination of the case, and little hope of complete recovery. Unwearied care, and the constant application of remedies for months, so far restored him that he was able to move about in a feeble, halting way. It was no small burden to my spirit to be absent from home for a month at a time while he was in this critical condition, and his mother was left alone to bear the weight of care and anxiety.

My journeys were not only long, but sometimes perilous. I was once coming home from Ithaca, the weather was intensely cold, and the ground frozen. I urged on my weary horse as night approached, and he fell down with me, crushing my leg under him. I thought it was broken. Dragging myself to the fence, I succeeded in getting upon it, and so mounted my horse again, and rode forward. Happily for me, the injury, though painful, did not permanently disable me.

On the 17th of August, 1825, the Genesee Conference met in Asbury Chapel, Lansing, Cayuga County, N.Y., Bishop Hedding presiding. Few incidents of the session are now of public interest. There was an unpleasant affair between a presiding elder and one of his preachers, resulting in mutual charges; but Dr. Emory, the Book Agent, who was present, proposed terms of peace, which were accepted. The difficulty had been of sufficient magnitude to disturb the whole Conference, and, indeed, good feeling was never restored between the two brethren. Another incident shows how the event of a moment sometimes changes the tenor of perhaps a whole life. Joseph Castle, who had come to my district from the Canada Conference, desired greatly to remain, and I wanted him for a certain charge. Bishop Hedding stated that Bishop George said that he must have Mr. Castle for the work in Canada, and so it was fixed. The appointments were read off in the evening, and we did not leave Lansing till the next day. At the breakfast table the next morning Bishop Hedding, turning to Dr. Emory, said,

"There is one case that has worried my mind, and I would like to have your opinion. Brother Castle wishes to remain in the States, but they want him in Canada, and I have so appointed."

Dr. Emory, without a moment's hesitation, replied that he would let him remain. The Bishop turned to me and inquired if I still had a place for him. I replied that no one had been set down for Bethany, the place for which I needed him.

"Well," said the Bishop, "let him go to Bethany."

The conversation had scarcely reached this point when Mr. Castle, all equipped for his journey north, rode up to the door to bid me farewell. I went out to the gate, and pointing down the road by which he had come to the house, said,

"Joseph, turn about; the Bishop has appointed you at Bethany."

Without uttering a word; he turned his horse, and was off in a moment.

I returned to my district cheerfully, and with good hope of a successful year. I was soon drawn into a new field of action. The Rev. C. R. Marsh, a young Universalist preacher from New England, had been settled at Hopbottom in charge of a congregation of that faith. Zealous and confident, he began the publication of a magazine entitled the "Candid Examiner," and opened his battery upon the "limitarians," generously offering them space in his columns to defend themselves if they could. These banters were annoying to our people, and "were commented on by others, and I began occasionally to hear the inquiry, "Why does not Mr. Peck meet Mr. Marsh in his magazine, if he thinks that he can sustain his doctrine?" I resolved, at length, to accept the challenge, and addressed to the editor a note to that, effect, signing it Observer. He gave me a cordial reception, and made profuse promises of fair play. I wrote five papers, embracing the main points of the controversy. These were published in successive numbers of the magazine, the editor replying to each in the same number. He evidently assumed that I was a Calvinist, and constructed his replies accordingly. When I began my rejoinder he discovered that he had aimed his guns in the wrong direction, and that his ammunition had been wasted. He found that his arguments were not valid against a Methodist. He began to delay my articles, and finally declined to publish any more of them. I wrote him a letter on the subject, and my friends, in vain, called on him, and at last he discontinued his magazine altogether. My letters were published in a large pamphlet at Wilkesbarre, in 1827, and, except two or three brief articles in the "Methodist Magazine," constituted my first appearance in print.

This little controversy turned my studies into a new channel. I read every thing I could obtain on either side of the question, and was satisfied that I had mastered the principal points of the subject, but the debate with Mr. Marsh showed me that it was important for me to be able to read Greek. I accordingly procured a copy of Varkhurst's Greek Grammar and Lexicon, and began the study, which I prosecuted with some success.

While the Universalist debate was pending, another assailant, whose name was also Marsh, came out for battle. He appeared as the champion of the doctrine of the Divine Unity, and felt called to attack Trinitarians everywhere. His assaults attracted considerable attention in Kingston, and the region round about, and some of the less intelligent of our people began to be disturbed. Happening to meet him one day we had some conversation, in which he told me frankly that he intended to make war upon the errors of the Methodists until he rooted them out. I remarked that I would like to hear him speak. This seemed to please him, and he immediately published an appointment in the old academy at Kingston, and set afloat the idea that we were to have a debate. The evening came, and a crowd, and the sermon, which was two hours long. At the conclusion Mr. Marsh turned to me and invited me to reply. I declined to do it at that late hour, but named a day, to which he agreed.

From certain signs I inferred that my assailant was a man of quotations only. I suspected that the pond by which he ran his controversial mill was small and not very deep. Examining Millard's little book on the Unitarian controversy, I found all Mr. Marsh's arguments, and nearly all his language. I prepared my answer accordingly, and when the time came, put Millard's work in my pocket, and

carried to the place a half dozen other books, which I placed upon the desk. My opponent was invited to take a seat with me, and did so, but seemed to look at my books with apprehension.

After prayer, and a brief introduction, I remarked that I had taken no notes of the discourse to which I was about to reply, but that I had it all in a little book. As I drew it from my pocket, and named the author, Mr. Marsh, who was sitting at the desk facing the audience, gave evident tokens of dismay and consternation. The wound was mortal. I spoke an hour and a half, and then gave the gentleman an opportunity to reply. He tried to do so; but it was clear that he knew nothing of the question beyond his single author, and when Millard was answered, Marsh was confounded. The audience began to laugh, and we retired. In a few days he left the region, and I saw him no more.

We had two campmeetings on the district during the year. The first was on Canaan Circuit. It commenced on the seventh of September, and resulted in the conversion of forty souls. The second was on the Wyoming Circuit, beginning on the fifteenth of September. I have attended many campmeetings in various parts of the country during the past sixty years, but this was the most powerful I ever saw. The first prayer-meeting on the ground was crowned with a conversion. Reuben Holgate came forward and knelt down, with a fixed determination, he said, never to leave the place till he found the pardon of his sins. He had been but a few minutes thus engaged, when a sudden shower scattered the people to their tents. I had not observed Mr. Holgate, and of course left with the rest and sat down in a tent. A lady saw him and came and told me. I hurried back and found him there, praying, one devoted female member of the Church standing by his side. I knelt down and offered a prayer, perhaps a long one; and when I rose up I found the congregation all there again, in the rain, but rejoicing in the Lord. A number of others came forward, among them young people of the most reputable families of the valley. Mr. Holgate did not leave the spot till he found peace, nor did he have to stay long. Thus the meeting began with notes of victory,

The power of God was so evident that sinners were disarmed, and we had little to do but receive those who pressed forward, and labor with them. They came in crowds at every invitation. Darius Williams and Benjamin Bidlack were triumphant. The musical, moving strains of Mr. Williams were heard from morning till night, and almost from night till morning. Father Bidlack was a veteran of eighty years, but his tall form was as erect as ever. He had been a soldier in his youth, having enlisted in the army of the Revolution, and served from the very beginning of the war to the surrender of Cornwallis. Having been converted, he joined the Methodists, was called into the itinerancy, and did faithful and efficient service as a minister of Christ. He was now retired from active service, and age was laying its burdens upon him; but the stirring scenes and events of this meeting roused him as if it were a battle. In one of our stormiest prayer-meetings, when scores were crying for mercy, and scores of others were praying importunately for them, and the noise was like the roar of the ocean surf, a sort of inspiration came upon the old soldier, and he marched around the encampment, his eyes uplifted, the tears flowing down his face, and his mighty voice, as he shouted and praised the Lord, rising above the tumult, echoing from the rocky hillsides about us, and seeming to die away on the summits of the mountains.

The meeting had been appointed to last for one week, but continued ten days, and could hardly be dismissed then in any regular way. On the last day, as the custom was, we invited those who had

found peace to unite with the Church on probation. Some one struck up the chorus, at that time very popular among us:—

"Clear the way; let me go;
I'm going to join the army."

They came forward from all parts of the ground, old and young, men, women, and children, till two hundred stood in a body, to take upon them the solemn vow. A large congregation witnessed the wondrous scene. God's people shouted with holy rapture. Many of the spectators, yet unconverted, wept and were deeply moved. An invitation was once more given them to seek the Lord, and thirty or forty came forward for prayer and counsel. Among these, William Abbott, who came to the ground that morning for the first time to take home his father's family, was suddenly convinced of sin, yielded to the Divine call, and found pardon. He lived a faithful Christian life for many years, and died trusting in the Saviour whom he that day found. He was the uncle of Rev. William P. Abbott.

Other duties at last compelled the preachers to leave the ground, but the people went on with the work all day. As we reluctantly rode off, the sound of prayer and holy song followed us a long way down the mountain pass. The work went on for months at the various appointments on the circuit. John Copeland, now a superannuated member of the Western New York Conference, then an eloquent and popular young preacher, was in charge of Wyoming Circuit, and was efficient and successful during the whole year. The sacred influence extended far and wide, and the fruits of this revival were long afterwards found, not only in the neighboring churches, but in distant parts of the land.

Soon after this campmeeting I attended a quarterly meeting in Oxford, Chenango County, New York, which was blessed to the salvation of souls. Our people at that time worshipped in an old building erected for a store, on the bank of the river. The Presbyterians kindly lent us their church for the Saturday and Sunday of, the quarterly meeting. Observing signs of awakening among the people, I concluded to remain during the week, and preach every evening in our own room by the river, the circuit preacher being compelled to leave in order to keep up his regular appointments. God's Spirit was poured out and sinners were converted. Among the rest Asahel J. Hyde, a man of intelligence and influence, who had been considered skeptical, was so deeply convicted one evening that his emotions could not be concealed. "Hyde, what is the matter?" asked one of his careless associates. He answered solemnly, "I feel the necessity of prayer." "Well, then," rejoined the other, "go forward, and Mr. Peck will pray for you."

He rose immediately, and coming to the bench where others were kneeling, fell upon his knees and cried out in agony of soul, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." He soon found peace, and rising up, addressed the congregation with propriety and effect, exhorting his friends, with tears, to seek the Lord. When he returned home his wife was amazed, and at first thought that he was losing his reason. When I called on him the next morning I found him calm and happy. Said he, "This morning I commenced family prayer. I began with a prayer-book, but it did not satisfy me, so I shut it up and prayed as the Spirit gave me utterance." I conversed with his wife on the subject of personal religion, and she, too, sought the Saviour, and united with the Methodist Episcopal Church. Both of them

remain faithful to the vows then assumed. They not only led their children into the Church, but a large circle of relations followed their example. Emmeaus Locke, of this village, whom I received into the Church in 1817, while I was on Broome Circuit, married my wife's sister Elizabeth, and was an influential member of the little Society at the time of the revival.

My second winter on Susquehanna District was a hard one for me. Constant alternations of severe cold with comparatively mild weather, made the roads bad and travel uncertain. I took my wife with me in a carriage on one of my northern trips. We went as far as Oxford, and when we had reached Owego, on our return, a deep snow fell and rendered it impossible to proceed on wheels. I went to work, and with some little help constructed a sled, or "jumper," as it was called, and pushed on to Nicholl's, my next appointment, and thence, crossing the Wyalusing, through the Auburn woods toward home. The snow began to thaw, the runners of our sled soon wore out, and I bought an old sled and continued on our journey. By the time we reached Springville, thirty miles from home, the snow was gone, so I borrowed a wagon, and happily reached Kingston without being compelled to make any further change of conveyance. I received during the two years of my presiding eldership less than one hundred and fifty dollars a year, on which sum I supported my family and paid my traveling expenses. How it was done I can hardly tell. My family now numbered four, our second child, Luther Wesley, having been born in the month of June, 1825.

On the 7th of June, 1826, the Conference met at Palmyra, Wayne County, New York, Bishop Hedding presiding.

In those days it was not the custom to consult either the preachers or the people in regard to their appointments, and I had, thus far in my itinerancy, never known where my field of labor was to be till the bishop announced it. At this session, however, the health of my family constrained me to ask to be relieved from the presiding eldership, and I was appointed to Wyoming Circuit, with Philo Barberry as junior preacher. It was seven years since I traveled this circuit; but my old friends greeted me as warmly as ever, and I felt that I was at home among them.

In August I attended a successful campmeeting in Danby, near Ithaca, New York. An unusually large number of able preachers were present. On the Sabbath George Gary preached a sermon which seemed to break down every thing before it. Robert Burch excelled himself Abner Chase, Benjamin Sabin, Horace Agard, and Denison Smith, preached strong sermons. John Griffing almost literally "prayed without ceasing." The last night, as was often the case, the prayer-meeting continued till morning, and although I went into a tent at eleven o'clock and tried to sleep, I heard his voice incessantly from that hour till daylight. About sixty souls were converted.

We also had a good meeting in the autumn on the old ground on Wyoming Circuit. Rude fellows of the baser sort gave us a great deal of trouble, and sundry of them were subsequently arraigned before a magistrate and fined for their misdeeds. A degree of annoyance, indeed, was quite common on such occasions. We seldom held a campmeeting anywhere without finding out, sooner or later, that some mean character in the neighborhood was trying to make a little money by secretly selling alcoholic drinks. At this meeting we not only had to look after intoxicated men, but one evildoer was malicious enough to set fire to our brush barricade, which had been made the previous year, and was very inflammable. Several rods of it were burned in spite of our efforts to extinguish it.

I removed my family to a small parsonage in Wilkesbarre, and traveled the circuit during the first quarter of the year. The people of the town then applied to the presiding elder for a division of the circuit Wilkesbarre was accordingly made a station, with three outside preaching-places — Hanover, the Plains, and Newport, and I was appointed pastor. The arrangement required three sermons every Sabbath. In Wilkesbarre we had no church, but met in a spacious hall in the second story of the courthouse, the lease of which we secured for ten years. Methodism was still in its infancy in the place. There had been preaching in the town for thirty years; but the Society was small, the official brethren, with one exception, were young men, and their means were scanty. The amount paid as salary was small; but, reinforced by home supplies from Forty Fort, we made it answer our purposes.

On the 22d of February, 1827, Joseph Castle was married to Martha Ann Myers, my wife's sister. I had no idea of this when I urged Bishop Hedding not to send him to Canada two years before. On the 10th of April our only daughter, Mary Helen, was born.

The approaching session of the Conference was to be held in Wilkesbarre, and in due season we set about preparing for it. The wood work within the parsonage had never been painted. One of the brethren mixed the paint, and I wielded the brush, doing the whole myself. I also tried my hand at building a picket fence in front of the house, and setting out a row of trees, and succeeded in both enterprises. I found no difficulty in procuring quarters for the two hundred members of the Genesee Conference — all the citizens of the place being ready to entertain them.

On the 26th of June, 1827, the Conference met, Bishop George presiding. The several denominations had been living in the utmost harmony. When the Conference began its session the Presbyterians offered their church for the public services, and members of all the Churches in the place attended in large numbers. By a vote of the Conference, the previous year, three special discourses had been arranged. John Dempster was to preach on Imputed Righteousness, Andrew Prindle on the Divinity of Christ, and Elias Bowen on Natural and Moral Ability. This program was, at the best, rather perilous under the circumstances. But Mr. Bowen had prepared his sermon without any knowledge of the peculiar situation of things in Wilkesbarre, and performed, in the merciless style of the controversies of the day, the duty thus assigned him. Our preachers, at that period of our history, were constantly assailed as teachers of false doctrine; the pulpits of other denominations rung with the charge; and often, at the close of a sermon, some pugnacious hearer started up and called the preacher to account for what he had uttered. The preachers were not slow to accept these challenges, and Calvinism especially was a subject upon which their hands were taught to war and their fingers to fight. But as we were holding our Conference in a Presbyterian church, whose members were kindly entertaining scores of our preachers, it was natural that the discourse should give offense, not only to the Presbyterians, but to the general public.

The morning after its delivery I was asked if the discourse of Mr. Bowen met my approbation. I replied that no one but the preacher himself was responsible for the objectionable things which he had uttered. The gentlemen conceded that I was under no obligation to condemn the preacher, and accepted my personal disclaimer; but the affair made a bad impression, and was long remembered as one of the misfortunes of our history in the Wyoming Valley.

This year we elected delegates to the General Conference, and I was again chosen. I was re-appointed to Wilkesbarre. In November I published my book on Universalism. I spent much time and labor upon it; but the printer was without experience in this line, and so was I, and between us the typographical part was not a brilliant success. As to the argument, I do not know that I could now improve it. Some of the grounds which I took were new, so far as I knew then or know now. Some of the new phases of that error were met in an original way, and some of my arguments have been adopted by subsequent writers without any intimation of the source whence they were obtained. The volume was received with some favor, and did some local good. Dr. Martin Ruter wrote me a commendatory letter and Dr. Fiske adopted my historical argument in his publication on the same subject. The edition was small, and I lost money by it; and it is possible that writing the book was a greater benefit to me than reading it has been to any one else.

On the 22d of April, 1828, my friend, H. Agard, and I set out for Pittsburgh, the seat of the General Conference, our conveyance consisting of my horse and his carriage. There had been a fall of snow, and the roads were almost impassable. Toiling on for eight days we at last reached the place, and found excellent quarters in the hospitable home of Mr. James Borbidge.

At this General Conference the Radical Controversy again came before us. The Baltimore Conference had tried and expelled several of the agitators; they had appealed to the General Conference; and in the process of trying these appeals, the various questions which they had long been arguing in the "Mutual Rights" were discussed, and all the matters in controversy were debated. In these trials Stephen George Roszel and Asa Shinn were pitted against each other; Mr. Shinn for the appellants, and Mr. Roszel for the Conference. The contest was ably conducted on both sides, but in the midst of it Mr. Shinn's physical powers suddenly failed, and he was compelled to retire from the field. The whole question of reform was disposed of in a report which was read by Dr. Emory, but which, as it was subsequently ascertained, was written by Dr. Bond, of Baltimore. The principal questions agitated had been in regard to the election of presiding elders by the Annual Conferences and lay delegation; but from this General Conference the agitation ceased, and peace was restored.

The application of the Canada Conference to be made an independent Church occasioned a warm discussion, in which the ablest members of the General Conference took part. A report was finally adopted allowing the Canada brethren to organize on an independent basis, and authorizing our bishops to ordain a bishop for them, whenever one should be elected. The question of dividing the property of the Church and giving the Canada brethren their proportion of the Book Concern and of the general funds came up four years afterward, and was referred to the Annual Conferences, where the proposition so to divide failed to receive the necessary majority. The Southern Conferences voted mostly in the negative. Thus terminated an agitation which for years had disturbed the Methodist Church in Canada.

A somewhat unpleasant matter came before the General Conference in connection with Bishop Soule. Joshua Randall had been arraigned by the New England Conference for preaching false doctrine, and had been expelled. The doctrinal error for which he was tried consisted in his affirming that the moral law is abrogated by the Gospel. He appealed to the General Conference; the appeal had been tried, and the action of the New England Conference was affirmed. Bishop Soule had

published a sermon on "The Law," in which, as some of the eastern delegates alleged, he had taught the same heresy. Lawrence McCombs and Timothy Merritt introduced a resolution to take up the Bishop's sermon, and, after a heated debate, succeeded in getting it referred to the Committee on the Episcopacy. The committee examined the discourse, and reported that it did not contain the errors which had been charged. In the debates which took place in the Committee, and also in the General Conference, Dr. Wilbur Fiske managed the argument, and made some strong points against the Bishop, but failed to convict him. Those who had introduced the question in regard to Mr. Soule's orthodoxy were not dissatisfied with the result, inasmuch as the action of the General Conference was of such a nature as to condemn the doctrine, while it exonerated the Bishop from the charge of teaching it.

A resolution allowing the Genesee Conference to divide itself was warmly opposed by some of the Southern and Western members, on the ground that it would tend to destroy the itinerancy and establish Congregationalism among us. The idea of the opponents seemed to be, that the integrity and efficiency of Methodism depended upon large circuits, large districts, and large conferences; and that it was in the highest degree unwise for us, as they expressed it, to "cut up the work into little patches." We succeeded, however, in carrying the measure.

On Friday, May 23, Bishop McKendree delivered before the Conference an address of a truly primitive and apostolic character. It made a fine impression. The next day Bishop Soule made some explanations in regard to his sermon and its supposed heresies; and then the doxology was sung, prayer was offered by Nelson Reed, and the Conference adjourned. The Southern members took the steamboat and departed. We remained till Monday, in honor of the Sabbath, and then were detained another day by a great rain. Leaving Pittsburgh Tuesday morning, the 27th, we had a pleasant journey, and reached home on Wednesday, June 4.

On the 9th of July Mrs. Martha Ann Castle died at her father's house in Forty Fort, after an illness of only three days. She departed in holy triumph. Death came at an unexpected hour, while her husband was absent on his circuit, so far away that the utmost exertion on his part did not bring him to her bedside in time to receive her last farewell. She was a woman of deep piety, and unusual intelligence and force of character. An infant son survived her only a few weeks.

The Genesee Conference began its session July 24, 1828, at Ithaca, N.Y. The Church in this place was in a prosperous condition, and there had been a large accession of members during the previous two years. Some matters transpired during the session which were of no great importance, and yet, as they belong to my personal history, and at the same time show that, in regard to the itinerancy, "former times" were not as much " better than these" as some imagine, I name them.

Early in the session of the Conference an active and somewhat fussy official member of the Church at Ithaca informed me that it was the general wish of the brethren there that I should be their next pastor, and he hoped that I would not object. Two or three days after this a member of another Conference visited us, preached a sermon, and made a missionary speech. My friend was greatly pleased with the eloquent stranger, and soon there were rumors that Ithaca was to have a transfer, the clerical brother in question agreeing to the arrangement. To make every thing agreeable, some one brought forward a resolution requesting the Bishop to transfer him to our Conference. This

resolution passed, and I considered the matter settled; but when things came to the test it was discovered that the visiting brother, while he highly appreciated the compliment paid him by our action, had no intention of coming to the Genesee Conference, and the project failed. When this result was reached the officious official of Ithaca came to me once more to urge me to consent to come to his Church. Not knowing exactly how matters stood, I made him no definite reply. Soon a committee of the leading brethren waited upon me to assure me that the official board had taken no action in regard to a transfer; that the best men of the Society deemed it altogether visionary and ill-advised; and that they did not wish to be held responsible for the action of the self-appointed committee of one. I believed these to be the facts, and therefore replied that I should leave my case in the hands of the Bishop, neither asking nor declining any field to which he might see cause to assign me: and in accordance with their request I was appointed.

The health of my family was such that I could not remove immediately to Ithaca. Wilkesbarre had been returned to the Wyoming Circuit, and Joseph Castle and Silas Comfort were the preachers. I preached at Ithaca the Sunday after the close of the Conference, and then, with the consent of the presiding elder, arranged with Mr. Castle to change places with him until we were able to move. This arrangement continued till the middle of October, when we made the transit. This time, moving was an operation of somewhat portentous dimensions. The distance was one hundred and ten miles, and the road was over the mountains much of the way. Our goods were loaded upon two wagons, and sent on in advance, our oldest child, George, accompanying them, in the care of the men in charge of that part of the expedition. A strong carriage conveyed the rest of the family, my wife and the nurse sitting on the back seat, each holding a child, while a third was committed to me. These, with needful baggage, made a heavy load, which demanded careful horsemanship and slow marches. While we were descending a very steep hill near Tunkhannock the front axle of the carriage broke like a pipe-stem, the carriage turned completely over, and the powerful horse, tearing loose from the wreck, rushed away at the top of his speed. Strange to tell, no one was injured. As we crept from under the ruins I looked down the road, and saw my horse coming back at the same furious pace, and charging directly upon us. This peril seemed as great as the other, but we were again saved from harm, the horse stopping suddenly just as he came within four or five steps of the group, and standing still long enough to be caught.

We returned to Tunkhannock, and I addressed myself to the question of repairs. A stage passing through the village, I placed my family in it and sent them to Montrose, and then followed with my horse, arriving late at night. The next day I found the poor beast so lame from injuries received at the time of the accident that he could scarcely stand. Then one of the children was taken sick, and the sick child, the lame horse, and the broken carriage detained us at Montrose nine or ten days. We were so fortunate, however, as to find in the place an old and intimate friend, Mrs. Daniel Baldwin, who received us into her house, and, with her excellent husband, did all that could be done to render us comfortable. I preached twice during my stay — once on the Sabbath, in the Presbyterian Church, and the other at the funeral of a grandchild of Putnam Catlin, the father of George Catlin, the famous painter of Indian portraits. At last, after having been twelve days on the journey, we reached Ithaca, and found a most cordial welcome, and a new parsonage, comfortably furnished, awaiting us. I commenced my work, preaching three times every Sabbath to the same congregation of respectable and highly intelligent people. The house was always well filled. The intellectual character of my people, the ability of my immediate predecessors, the state of the Church at the time of my

appointment, — every thing being then at flood tide, — and the three sermons weekly, tried my powers; but, by diligence in study and Divine help, the year passed pleasantly, and not without fruit. The brother whose intermittent friendship annoyed me during the session of the Conference afterward treated me with all kindness and respect.

This year I undertook a thorough review of two branches of study: Ecclesiastical History and Metaphysics. I had previously read Mosheim. Considered as the history of the Church as an organization, its outward forms and manifestations, and in its corruptions, it is a learned and invaluable work. I now studied Milner. In him I found elaborately traced the history of the evangelical portion of the Church, particularly that subdivision of it which took the Augustinian type. In my metaphysical investigations I commenced with Locke, and went through several of the best Scotch authors. I had previously read Dr. Reid's works. I now studied Dugald Stewart and Payne. Notwithstanding the war made upon John Locke, I was strongly inclined to the judgment of Dr. Beasley, that the reviewers of the great English philosopher had drawn from his premises unwarrantable conclusions, and attributed to him opinions which he did not hold, and which his theory in regard to the elements of knowledge would hardly authorize. I had some taste for these investigations, and, I think, derived some profit from them; but I hardly know, on the whole, whether the time which I spent thus might not have been employed to better advantage.

During the winter and spring we were visited with domestic trials. Our children were all sick, the infant died, and our little daughter was at one time, as we thought, very near death. We were kept in a state of anxiety day and night, for months. Our people were very kind, and yet that long period of weary watching and constant apprehension was a burden upon soul and body. Still, I came to love the people and the place. I began to cherish the idea that if I should live to be old I would return, and there spend the evening of my days. With this thought in my mind I purchased two lots of land, one on the corner opposite the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the other on the hill. But we little know, at thirty years of age, at what point we may be tethered at threescore and ten. Those pleasant visions of a home in Ithaca have long since faded. The memory of the kind friends who gathered about us is still fresh, but the only spot of ground there to which our hearts are drawn is the little mound that covers the dust of our infant son.

The Genesee Conference, in accordance with the action of the previous General Conference, had been divided, one part retaining the old name, and the other being called the Oneida Conference. Ithaca was within the bounds of the latter. The Oneida Conference held its first session at Cazenovia, June 10, 1829, Bishop Roberts presiding. The room in which we assembled was the seminary chapel, once the county courthouse, in which I preached in 1817. The session was harmonious. The Conference was visited by a large deputation of chiefs and other great men of the Oneida tribe of Indians. Among them was William Doxtater, a most fluent and beautiful speaker in his own language, who had been the instrument of a great work of God in his tribe. I was re-appointed to Ithaca, in accordance with the expectations of pastor and people.

This year, 1829, at the invitation of Herman Camp, I delivered, at Trumansburgh, my first Fourth of July oration, selecting for my special theme the Temperance Reform. Some years afterward I heard a gentleman in New York, who was supposed to be well informed in such matters, state, as an historical fact, that the first temperance celebration of the national anniversary occurred in that

city about, the year 1832. If the date of the New York celebration is correctly given, that at Trumansburgh occurred three years before it, and was probably the first instance of the kind. I also spoke on the same theme the next year at the celebration held at Speedsville.

In the Church matters went tolerably well this year, and yet our numbers declined. The business interests of the place were depressed, and a considerable number of our members removed. The lull which followed the great religious movement of three years previous told seriously upon some whose piety grew more out of the excitement of the hour than from thorough conviction, and "because they had no root, they withered away." I was also somewhat annoyed by certain irrepressible female members of the Church, who were ready to assume the control of everybody and everything, including the pastor, his family, and all of his domestic arrangements. These good sisters were gifted in prayer, and earnest in spirit, and rendered much aid in social meetings; but they had been consulted so often, and deferred to so much, that they were offended if they were not consulted and their advice taken in every case. This was the state of things which I found when I came to the charge, and I was compelled to inaugurate a new line of policy. I treated the ladies with all courtesy, but did my work in my own way, and the feminine dictatorship came to an end. I did my best to render its last hours peaceful, but did not entirely succeed. There was some irritation, and the course of the pastor was duly criticized, and the motives, real and imaginary, which led him to adopt it were duly canvassed by the aggrieved party. It was probably in view of these things that the brethren of the official boards, at the close of my term of service, were led to express their respect for me, and their approval of my administration, by a complimentary resolution, which was communicated to me as I was leaving for Conference.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 7
1830, UTICA — 1831, CAZENOVIA
1832, CAZENOVIA AND AUBURN — 1833-4, AUBURN

The Oneida Conference met at Utica, July 15, 1830, Bishop Hedding presiding. We had, during the session, two spirited debates over matters of importance. The first occurred in connection with a movement in favor of a more thorough examination of the candidates for admission into full connection. A course of study had been arranged, and every year committees of examination were appointed, and went through the forms of their duty; but it seemed impossible to secure the needful attention to study on the part of many of the young men; and when the question of their reception came up, the Conference showed a disposition to be satisfied with very slender literary qualifications. The presiding elders were so in need of men that they generally had excellent reasons to urge in favor of every candidate, however ignorant of the books named in the course of study. I had been for several years on the committee of examination, and often felt that our action did not accomplish much, the Conference attaching little importance to our reports. This year the committee requested me to address the Conference, in connection with our report, and urge the necessity of a higher grade of qualification. I did so to the best of my ability. My friend John Dempster strongly seconded the movement, and from that time there was a marked change in our modes of action. As might have been anticipated, however, the increased tendency to be stringent in our demands upon candidates led to innumerable skirmishes between the committee and the presiding elders over special cases.

The other matter of interest was a warm discussion in regard to the measures of the temperance reform. A resolution was offered in favor of temperance societies. A strong party in the Conference held the position then maintained by Dr. Bangs, the editor of our Church paper at New York, that the Methodist Episcopal Church is, in itself, a temperance society, and that there was no need of our uniting with any other for the promotion of the cause. Others, of whom I was one, held the position of Dr. Fiske, that Methodists, both ministers and people, ought to encourage and unite with special organizations for the prosecution of the reform. In debating this resolution the Conference became strangely excited, and finally fell into a state of wild confusion. A dozen members were upon the floor at the same moment, and a dozen voices were shouting "Mr. President," in continuous roar. I was standing up with the others, and probably making my full share of the noise. In the midst of the confusion the old bishop brought his great foot to the floor with emphasis, and thundered, "Silence! Now, brethren, stop; I will have no more of this!" In an instant every man was in his seat, and all was still. I do not know how the others felt. I was mortified, and never allowed myself to be caught in any similar situation afterward: The motion was laid upon the table, and thus, for the time, was lost; but not long after both the Oneida Conference and the "Advocate" changed their position.

At this Conference I was appointed pastor of the Church at Utica. I had left this station only six years before; but since that time a new church had been erected on Bleecker Street, and considerable

changes had taken place in the Society, though I was still acquainted with nearly all the leading members. We moved with all convenient dispatch to our new charge. I found that the stewards had rented a small house situated in a marsh, in the western part of the town, where the streets were not graded, nor the sidewalks laid, and where there were around us on every side open ditches full of water. The house was new, the walls still damp. Some of the people demurred at our moving into it, and, agreeing with them in opinion, I rented another near the church on my own responsibility. This did not please the leading steward, and he gave me no help, either in getting settled in my new house or in paying the rent afterward.

I entered upon my work with unusual hopefulness. Our congregations were crowded. In the fall the Presbyterian brethren held a protracted meeting, and there was considerable religious interest among them. Mr. Akin was still pastor of the First Church, and Dr. Lansing of the Second, in Bleecker Street; and the latter minister especially was attracting great attention by his zeal and eloquence. My own congregation shared the general feeling, and the interest seemed to be growing every week.

I was apprehensive. There had been in the Church at Utica from the beginning two parties, one in favor of shouting and other noisy demonstrations in public worship, and the other totally opposed to them.

These parties were always more or less in conflict. I made strenuous effort to call the attention of the rival factions to the state of things within and around us, and the necessity of harmony in the Church. I visited the members, and strove to rouse them to Christian activity. I called the official board together, and made it the special business of the meeting to inquire into the religious state of each brother present. I found their hearts tender. While we were praying and counseling together the cloud broke over us, and we were overwhelmed with the influences of the Spirit of God. O what confessions followed! We humbled ourselves and wept like children. I never saw a more complete breaking down and surrender than I saw and felt that evening.

On the next Sabbath morning I entered the pulpit with hope and courage, assured that God had given me a message for the people. The house was filled to its utmost capacity. While I was preaching from the words, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh," God was in his own truth; the people seemed to tremble like the leaves of the forest before a mighty wind. In the evening I invited those who were awakened to come forward for prayers, and ten presented themselves, some of whom found peace before they left the house. The work went on during the week. There was now a deep religious interest throughout the city, and popular revivalists were employed to assist the pastors of several Churches. I held a meeting every evening, and visited the people all day. A large number of promising converts were brought into the Church. I received eighty at one time. About one hundred had found peace, and there seemed no indication of any abatement of the interest. And then, in the very height of the battle and the victory, my strength suddenly failed, and I was compelled to retire at once from the field. "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

This illness was the greatest trial which I had ever encountered. At first I was wholly unreconciled to it, and thought that it must not be; but finding myself completely broken down, I submitted and was quiet. About the same time a young lady, resident in my family, was prostrated with an alarming

hemorrhage of the lungs, and for weeks my wife had two invalids for whom to care. The weary watching and anxiety broke down her strength, and she, too, became ill. Lying sick in the same room, we condoled with each other, and tried to gather comfort from Divine sources. When the brethren came to see me they looked sad and seemed desponding. The presiding elder, Brother George Gary, came to utter words of friendly cheer. He bade me give myself no anxiety in regard to the Church. Supposing that the brethren would be gratified to hear my experience in the hour of trial, I wrote a few lines, which Mr. Gary read in the love-feast. He released me from all responsibility in regard to the charge, and directed the Rev. Isaac Stone to supply my place.

The winter passed slowly away, and as the spring opened, I found myself able to attend church, and move about a little in good weather. My hopes began to revive in some degree, and one day I made to my friend, who was walking with me, a remark which looked in the direction of a possible resumption of the work. He looked at me with astonishment, and asked me if I expected ever to preach again, adding, "You never will; your work in that line is done." "Well," thought I, "if such is the will of God, be it so." At the same time, I saw no reason to suppose that my friend pronounced this opinion. under the influence of inspiration, and I therefore did not regard it as the conclusion of the whole matter.

I resolved to try the effect of a little journey. Early in the month of May I gave up my house, stored most of my goods, and secured for my family two or three rooms in the house of a friend. On the ninth of the month snow fell so abundantly that if it had not partly thawed as it fell there would have been a depth of perhaps twelve inches. On Wednesday, the 11th, I took passage on a canal-packet going east, then the most comfortable conveyance, and as expeditious as any. To my great joy I found my old friend, Loring Grant, on board, on his way to New England. In the company of Mr. Grant, and that of the other passengers, who were very friendly, I almost forgot my weakness. Being invited to preach a sermon in the saloon of the packet I did so, and felt no particular harm from the exertion, although I had been silent for three months previous.

In due time I reached the city of New York, where I found a home with a relative, and placed myself under the medical care of Dr. D. M. Reese. I remained in the city only a week, during which I visited Newark, and had an interview with the Rev. Nathaniel Porter, who was in the last stage of pulmonary consumption, and passing peacefully home. Leaving New York I proceeded to Springfield, Mass., the seat of the New England Conference, where I attended some of the daily sessions, and made various little excursions to points of interest, meanwhile steadily gaining strength. Here I saw John N. Maffitt for the first time. He was in some kind of trouble. The last time I saw him he was in similar circumstances. From Springfield I proceeded north and west, crossed the Green Mountains, visited Troy, and halted at Saratoga. After a stay of ten or twelve days at the springs, during which I drank quantities of the water, and preached once, still improving steadily, I returned to Utica, and went thence with my family to Wyoming Valley, where I spent a week or ten days, and then proceeded to Conference.

The Oneida Conference met at Lowville, Lewis County, July 14, 1831, Bishop Soule presiding. On my way thither I spent a night in Cazenovia, where I was waited upon by the stewards of the Church, who stated their desire that I should be appointed to serve them the next year. I explained to them the state of my health, saying that I had preached but twice in four months — that I feared

I would not be very effective — and that I certainly could not undertake to preach three sermons every Sabbath. They replied that they would be satisfied with what I found myself able to do, and that they would secure for me all the aid I might need. I saw no reason to decline their kind invitation.

During the session I preached once, and made a missionary address. For the first time I was asked, on the conference floor, whether I desired to say any thing in regard to my health. I answered promptly, "Nothing," being resolved to try another appointment, trusting in the grace of God. I was accordingly appointed to Cazenovia, and also elected delegate to the next General Conference. I at once removed my family to my new field, and began my work. Our congregations filled the Seminary Chapel, in which all our religious services were held, and I soon became greatly interested in my people. There were members who joined the Church when I was laboring on Cortland Circuit in 1817. The teachers and students of the Seminary formed a large part of the audience at every meeting. To preach twice every Sabbath tried my physical strength severely for a time; but I gradually improved, and before the close of the year my health seemed fully re-established. I went on with my studies during the year, taking regular lessons in Greek, under the instruction of Professor Hoyt, and attending lectures on several of the natural sciences. I derived great advantage from the new opportunities afforded me.

Having no place of worship except the chapel of the Seminary, the leading members of the Society were very anxious to erect a church edifice. A subscription had been circulated, but failed to secure an amount sufficient to warrant the commencement of the work. I proposed to the trustees the plan of selling the pews, and thus securing the needed funds. They adopted the suggestion, fixed upon the size and style of the building, prepared a diagram of the audience room, numbered the pews, and set them up at auction. At the first sale about half the pews were sold, the proceeds amounting to more than half the sum needed for the building, and contracts were immediately entered into for the erection of a stone edifice.

A protracted meeting held during the winter resulted in the conversion of twenty-five or thirty souls, and yet was not, on the whole, as useful as we had hoped. Little things are sometimes greatly in the way of important enterprises. An active and erratic local preacher, a student in the Seminary, had introduced into Cazenovia and the region round about a mode of conducting prayermeetings which caught the fancy of some and greatly annoyed others, in the Church and out of it. His plan was to set all present praying aloud at the same moment. Instead of saying, "Brother B____ will now lead us in prayer," he would say, "Now let us all pray," and immediately there would arise a miniature Babel, a noisy chaos of indistinguishable sounds. Finding this to be the local custom, I did not at first interfere with it; but soon becoming convinced that it was doing evil, I set myself to the work of reform. The transition from the old way to the new, however, would not be made easy and pleasant to all; and while some were rejoicing in the new order of things, others shook their heads mournfully, and talked about the lost "life and power" of our meetings. Still the disorderly method was laid aside, and a wiser one established.

The General Conference of 1832 sat in the city of Philadelphia. I was entertained at Thomas Kelley's, with George Pickering, Peter P. Sandford, and George Harmon. Bishops McKendree, Roberts, Soule, and Hedding were present at the Conference, all apparently in robust health, except

Bishop McKendree, who was scarcely able to preside. He undertook to preach a sermon in memory of Bishop George, who died in August, 1828. The text, "He was a burning and a shining light," was well selected, but the sermon of the venerable bishop was almost a failure.

During this General Conference we had an earnest debate on the subject of pews. There was a very decided difference of opinion. New England was in favor of them, and it was generally conceded that the plan was useful, and perhaps necessary, in that part of the work. The South and West were opposed. Dr. Fiske took a leading part in the debate, urging such a change of the Discipline as would leave each Society to decide the question or its own locality. The delegates of the Genesee and Oneida Conferences united with those of New England in support of the proposed change, and for the first time I made a set speech in General Conference. The change, however, was not effected. Some of the brethren who were in the majority admitted that they could not deny the local necessity, but they still were unwilling to change the rule, and thus encourage a general abandonment of the old method. They preferred to see the rule disregarded in certain sections of the Church rather than repeal it, and thereby inaugurate agitation and strife everywhere else.

Two bishops were to be elected, and there was a great deal of talk over possible candidates. Dr. Capers proposed that a meeting, composed of one delegate from each Conference, be held to consider the subject. At this meeting I represented the Oneida Conference. Dr. Capers proposed James O. Andrew as the Southern candidate, stating that he held no slaves, and was therefore wholly unexceptionable. Some one present asked the doctor why he himself would not consent to be a candidate. He answered with great apparent candor, "I am, from necessity, not from choice, a slaveholder. Slavery is a local institution, and it would prejudice a bishop at the north to be connected with it. When I was a delegate to the British Conference I felt the embarrassment. I there really represented the whole Church — slaveholders and non-slaveholders; but I was so identified with the South in policy that I found it difficult, not to say impossible, for me to properly represent the views and feelings of the Northern portion of the Church."

This was the spirit of Dr. Capers' remarks, and this, so far as I recollect, was the language. The delegates from the North and East proposed the name of John Emory. When I reported the result to our delegation, all seemed satisfied with it except Elias Bowen, who strongly objected to Mr. Andrew, and declared that he intended to vote for Dr. Capers, even if he was a slaveholder. In my reply to Dr. Bascom's pamphlet, in 1845, I referred to this matter, and said that, so far as I knew, all our delegates voted for Mr. Andrew, but an examination of my private memoranda, and more thorough reflection, make it necessary to admit the exception. John Emory and James O. Andrew were elected.

On the last day of the Conference Bishop Emory took the chair for the first time, and, as is generally the case during the last hours of the session, there was a great press of business and great difficulty in keeping order. The new bishop, however, displayed great ability as a presiding officer, and won the admiration of all parties.

The Oneida Conference met at Manlius, Onondaga County, N.Y., July 12, 1832. I was re-appointed to Cazenovia, and had a prosperous year. A revival, in the autumn, occurred at Woodstock, in the neighborhood of my old acquaintance, Elder John Peck. The work was carried

on chiefly by the instrumentality of one of the preachers on Madison Circuit. Several local preachers from the seminary, as well as myself, assisted him. A large class was formed, composed of Elder Peck's regular hearers and the children of his members, who held their meetings within sight of his residence.

Our new church was dedicated on Christmas Day. The presiding elder, John Dempster, preached in the morning, the pastor in the afternoon, and Z. Paddock in the evening. We commenced a protracted meeting immediately, and had a gracious revival, during which a large number of the students were brought into the Church. Early in February, 1833, I preached one of the sermons at the dedication of the new stone church at Auburn, and was requested to remain and preach again the next evening. I did so, and the truth was indeed "the power of God unto salvation." A considerable number of penitents presented themselves, asking the prayers of God's people. I was invited to stay and preach the next evening, and again complied. The meetings continued, and I was still constrained to remain, and did remain for three weeks, preaching every evening as well as on the Sabbath. The work assumed a very interesting type, taking hold of a large number of leading citizens, some of whom had been avowed Universalists, and others infidels. Returning to my home at the end of the period named I resumed my regular duties, but had hardly recovered from the weariness of the Auburn campaign when the presiding elder made his appearance, and announced that he must remove me to Auburn, and that I must be there by the next Sabbath. He called the official members together, explained the emergency, and asked their consent to my removal. One of the brethren asked :"What if we do not give our consent?"

"Then I shall remove him without it," replied Mr. Dempster.

We made our arrangements as soon as possible, and started for our new charge. My wife was so exhausted by the fatigue and excitement of the sudden movement that she became seriously ill on the way, and I was obliged to leave her at the house of a friend at Camillus. It was three weeks before she was able to complete the journey.

My new situation was somewhat delicate. The congregation was chiefly new, gathered from all quarters in a time of wonderful excitement. No doubt my reputation in the community was sufficiently high, but it had been acquired under peculiar circumstances. The aggressive revival influence, which, when I was there before swept onward with the force of a mountain torrent, had subsided. And as the rocks which are buried out of sight in the flood come again to the surface when the waters ebb, so the time had come for old prejudices to appear, and old associations to assert their power. Fully aware of the adverse influences, I thought I saw the hand of Providence in the matter, so far as I was concerned. I resolved, therefore, to put my trust in God, and go forward. I studied diligently, and preached with all my might three times every Sabbath, and once during the week.

The general result was, perhaps, equal to reasonable hopes. A number of prominent men had been received on probation, only a few of whom became full members. The second Presbyterian Church received a large number of our converts, and the pastor had the candor to say, on their reception, that they were not the fruits of his own labors. But with all these and other losses, we still had a strong Church and a fine congregation.

Being anxious to avail myself of all the advantages within my reach, I commenced soon after my removal the study of Hebrew under the instructions of Dr. Mills, professor in the Theological Seminary, and after a few private lessons joined the class, and went on regularly with the students. The hours allotted to study I devoted chiefly to Hebrew, Greek, and Biblical criticism. I derived great assistance from Dr. Mills, who gave me free access to his large and valuable library. All this was what I had greatly desired.

It was hard for me to leave my kind friends at Cazenovia; the burdens of our new circumstances were not light, but here was the compensation. Becoming exceedingly interested in the history of the primitive Church, I formed the project of writing several small books, embracing the lives of the apostles and their immediate successors. Dr. Durbin, then the editor of the "Advocate" and of our publications, favored the plan. I accordingly prepared a small volume, entitled the "Lives of the Apostles and Evangelists," which, in due time, was published, but subsequent events interrupted my labors in that direction, and I never completed my project. In fact I was tasking myself beyond reason, and before long paid the penalty. My head began to feel heavy, and there was a dull, steady pain. Taking a little drive one day this pain became so intense that I was compelled to stop at the house of a friend and ask to be permitted to lie down and rest. A physician was immediately summoned, but it was several days before I could be conveyed to my own house, and weeks before I preached again, or attempted any kind of labor. I resumed my studies by degrees, but it was a long while before I could endure my usual amount of close application.

The Oneida Conference held its session at Cazenovia, commencing September 28, 1833, Bishop Hedding presiding. The chief matter of interest connected with the session was the movement made in behalf of the seminary. The preachers were urged to pledge certain amounts, which they were to be at liberty to raise among the people, or pay out of their own pockets. I had already subscribed and paid a sum which was more than all I was worth financially at the time of subscription; but, moved by the exigency, we all pledged ourselves again, and the institution was placed upon a secure basis.

Dr. Fiske attended this session of our Conference. He was then in the height of his fame. On Sabbath morning he preached a most powerful sermon, under which men quailed and wept, from whom, perhaps, the Gospel had never before drawn a tear. As we were walking together afterward Bishop Hedding, alluding to the sermon, said:—

"That's preaching for you! No one who heard it will ever forget it."

I was at this Conference appointed to Auburn. In the latter part of February, 1834, we held a protracted meeting, which continued for two weeks, and was blessed in the conversion of about seventy persons.

Two or three incidents occurred during the meeting which may be worthy of mention. One of the leading Universalists of the town had attended the revival meetings of the previous year, and professed religion. He wished to unite with the Methodist Episcopal Church, but his wife, who belonged to another denomination, strongly opposed it. The result was that he did not unite with any Church, became discouraged, and perhaps irritated, and finally returned to his old ways. When our meetings began this winter I noticed that this man was often present in the congregation, generally

sitting near the door, with a number of wild young men about him, and I soon began to suspect that some mischief was on foot.

The work commenced, and numbers came forward every evening for prayers. One evening I gave the general invitation, and immediately about twenty of these young men arose and came in procession through the middle aisle of the church, and knelt down in a row. I saw at once the spirit of the movement, but proceeded as if all was right, first giving a brief exhortation, and then holding a prayermeeting. When the time came to close, I requested the brethren to pass along the line and take the names of the professed penitents. This was not an unusual thing, and attracted no particular attention. The next day the town was full of talk in regard to the "hoax" which had been played off at the expense of the Methodists, and some of our people were greatly disturbed. I thought I saw a way to deal with the case, and had no fears.

The next evening I preached, and then referred to the occurrence, stating that I was fully aware that the young men had done what they did in pursuance of a plan devised by older heads, with the design of making a burlesque of our services. I denounced it as a foolish scheme, planned to hinder the work of God, and sure to fail. I assured them that they might as well expect to extinguish the flames when a house is burning by scattering straw upon it; but that the wickedness of the design and the greatness of the insult were in nowise diminished by the utter failure in which it was destined to end. Then, drawing a paper from my pocket, I added, "I have here the names of those who engaged in this business. I warn you, at your peril, not to repeat the offense. If you do, you will be punished. You will find that we have rights, and know how to maintain them."

I then went on with the service, inviting, not hypocrites, but honest penitents, to come and seek the Lord. To the astonishment of many, the communion railing was nearly filled with those who came to weep and pray, of whom ten found peace that hour. The whole congregation remained till the close of the meeting, and all felt that the right had triumphed. The whole community condemned the insolent and heaven-daring conduct of the scoffers, who soon learned also that they had committed, in the eyes of the law, a very serious offense, for which they could be severely punished. Several of them became so alarmed that they called upon me to apologize, and beg me not to expose them. This affair made a talk for a time, but our meetings went on prosperously, and we had a large accession to the Church.

Just before the close of our meetings another singular affair occurred, which, however, did not come at that time to the knowledge of the public. A young man, over whom an old and respectable minister of the Episcopal Church seemed to have some sort of guardianship, professed to experience religion among us. He had a degree of talent, and took part in prayer and exhortation in the young people's meeting. Suddenly he ceased to attend. Then I received a note from the minister informing me that a young man, a resident in his family, had practiced an imposition upon me, for which he required him to make an apology, and wished me to call at his house for that purpose. I went, taking with me my friend Goodwin. The parson and his wife seemed quite grieved at the occurrence. The young man was called in and requested to state the case. He replied briefly, in a low voice, to the effect, that he had made a false profession; he knew it was wrong, and was sorry for it, that he desired to ask my pardon, and have nothing more said about it. I listened to the confession, but hardly knew what reply to make; and to this day, I do not know whether the hypocrisy was in the

profession of religion, or in the retraction. So far as I could see, he seemed full as sincere in the first performance as he did in the last.

This was, to me, a winter of severe labor and trial, but of prosperity in the Church of which I was pastor. My family was in the Wyoming Valley, and I lived a sort of solitary life, spending much time among my books. In reading Professor Stuart's Commentary on Hebrews," I found that he gives up the Calvinistic exposition of the passage, chapter vi; 4-6, and suspends, upon a mere spider's web, the theory of the impossibility of total apostasy. I wrote an examination of his exegesis, and it was published in "The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review," vol. of 1835, pp. 221-230.

The Oneida Conference assembled in Auburn, September 25, 1834. Bishop. Hedding presided. The various services exerted an excellent influence upon the public mind. I was returned to the charge at Auburn. By previous appointment I was to deliver an address before the Literary Society of the Conference at this session. I selected the subject of Ministerial Education as my theme. The question of theological seminaries had been discussed in the Magazine and Review by two writers, Dr. D. M. Reese in opposition, and Rev. Le Roy Sunderland in favor of them; and so much acrimony had been displayed, that the editor, Dr. Bangs, declared the controversy at an end, so far as that publication was concerned. The discussion greatly interested me, and I regretted its sudden termination. I wrote to Dr. Fiske, asking his opinion. He replied, admitting the importance of theological training, but declaring that the time to establish seminaries for that purpose had not yet come, nor could we attempt it without crippling our rising colleges.

The friends of theological seminaries in the Methodist Episcopal Church were few. The discussion had also got into the columns of "The Advocate," but was very distasteful to many readers. A number of preachers of the Philadelphia Conference had united in a formal remonstrance against its admission into the paper, and the editor, Dr. Durbin, accordingly excluded it. In my address, I took the unpopular side, and declared myself in favor of such institutions. Willing to let my argument go before the whole Church, I afterward revised my notes so as to leave my reasoning unchanged, and yet avoid all terms and allusions that would involve me directly in the prohibited controversy; and the substance of the address was published in the Magazine and Review for 1836. I have lived to see precisely my line of argument adopted by the General Conference, and leading that body to action in favor of theological schools. I name these facts, not through ostentation, but hoping that my being at one time twenty years ahead of the age may be pleaded in mitigation of the offense, if I should at any time be convicted of falling behind it.

During my second year at Auburn I performed the duties of chaplain at the State Prison one third of the time, often preaching one sermon there, and three in my church, the same Sabbath. In August, 1835, I received a letter from the Board of Trustees of the Oneida Conference Seminary, informing me of my election to the principalship of that institution. I had never aimed at any such position. My studies of every kind had been prosecuted with sole reference to my high calling as a minister of Christ. I visited the seminary, however, conversed with the trustees, and finally accepted.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 8
1835-8, CAZENOVIA SEMINARY

The Oneida Conference met at Oswego, September 24, 1835. Bishop Hedding presided. In addition to the usual business, the Conference discussed the project of a local paper for the special benefit of the Genesee, Oneida, and Black River Conferences.

The Rev. Green P. Moore, formerly of the Maine Conference, and Francis A. Wiggins, of New York, proposed to undertake the enterprise. They had printed a specimen number of the proposed journal, entitling it "The Western Banner," and came to Conference seeking recognition as the Conference organ. The movement was strongly opposed by Dr. Bangs, the editor of the "Advocate," and Rev. B. Waugh, then Book Agent at New York. The Conference, however, favored the enterprise, and so declared itself in formal resolutions. This first attempt to secure an organ in Central New York was not altogether successful, as we shall see hereafter, but it did good service, and resulted in something stronger and more permanent.

I was again chosen one of the delegates to the General Conference. Z. Paddock succeeded me as pastor of the Church at Auburn.

Immediately on the adjournment of Conference I removed to Cazenovia, and entered upon the duties of my new position. For nineteen years I had been devoted solely to the work of an itinerant Methodist preacher, declining no labor, and hesitating at no sacrifice, which the needs of the Church required. I felt that my new path deviated from the old, but resolved, nevertheless, that I would not give up the ministry as the great business of my life. When the school opened in the autumn we had about two hundred students, of whom about a hundred and fifty boarded in the seminary buildings. I taught Hebrew, Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Logic and Rhetoric, managed the general business of the institution, and yet found opportunity to preach. The health of the pastor of the Church at Cazenovia, Rev. N. Rounds, was not firm, and I took his place once every Sabbath, and also, labored at various points in the vicinity.

In the seminary we had good order and attention to study, and our affairs moved on smoothly till about midwinter, when I discovered that there was among the students a little knot of young men who professed to be infidels. They were not timid in the declaration of their sentiments, and yet showed no active hostility until we were favored with a season of religious interest in the school. There were many professors of religion among the students. Prayermeetings in their rooms were of frequent occurrence, and the young men were sometimes overheard in earnest prayer for "backsliders and infidels." This excited the anger of those who deemed themselves alluded to in these terms, and they threw off their mask.

One Saturday morning, while I was conducting the usual exercises of the day, one of the students, whose father was a very respectable member of the Church and a trustee of the seminary, undertook to read, as the essay for which I called, a paper designed to bring revivals and religion itself into contempt. I ordered him to stop, and directed him at the same time to leave his paper on the desk, according to our rule. He ceased reading, but refused to leave his essay. I went on with the exercises, and at the conclusion addressed the students on the subject, stating what I considered it my duty to do as a Christian minister, placed at the head of an institution founded by a body of Christian ministers. Public attacks on the religion of Christ could not be tolerated. The offender must apologize for his conduct, but I would allow him a certain time to consider the matter.

He refused to comply; his case was considered in a meeting of the trustees convened for the purpose, and he was expelled, and informed that he must leave the institution by nine o'clock the next morning. Precisely at the hour named the young man left, attended by twelve or fifteen others, who escorted him to the gate, where a sleigh, drawn by four horses decorated with ribbons, received them, and they drove two or three times around the square, carrying a flag, and cheering as they passed the seminary. After the excitement was over I had private interviews with these sympathizers, and all yielded but one, who was expelled, and the infidel club came to an end. The institution was characterized thenceforward by a decided religious tone.

The General Conference of 1836 met at Cincinnati, a place which I and the other Oneida delegates reached by divers methods of traveling. We rode in a wagon to Nanticoke, where we embarked upon a raft and floated down the Susquehanna, forty or fifty miles, to Northumberland; thence we rode by stage to Duncan's Island; thence took a packet boat on the Pennsylvania canal to Pittsburgh, where we took a steamboat down the Ohio, reaching Cincinnati on Saturday, April 30.

The General Conference convened on Monday. Bishops Roberts, Soule, Hedding, and Andrews were present. Two had gone to their reward within a year, Bishop McKendree having died in triumph in May, 1835, and Bishop Emory having been thrown from a carriage and killed instantly the following December. Two or three matters were disposed of by this General Conference in a way which looks curious at the present time. Dr. Martin Ruter was chairman, and I a member, of the Committee on Education. The doctor wanted the committee in their report to consider the subject of theological seminaries, and pronounce against them. I resisted, arguing that there was no such institution in connection with our Church; that the General Conference had given us no instructions to examine the question, and that it was not expedient for us to go out of our way for a subject. These views prevailed, and thus the Conference was, perhaps, saved from the embarrassment of a false position.

The slavery question came up, and caused some excitement. The address of the British Conference alluded to the subject, and there was opposition to its publication on that account. A committee on slavery was appointed; but before they reported, another incident, small in itself, occurred to add to the agitation. Two of our delegates, Orange Scott and George Storrs, one evening attended an abolition meeting, and took part in the proceedings. This was considered by some to be of sufficient importance to justify extraordinary action in the General Conference. Hence Stephen G. Roszel, of the Baltimore Conference, introduced a preamble and resolutions, which were passed, censuring the two brethren, and taking ground that looked decidedly proslavery. This action, and the

discussion which preceded, not only increased the excitement, but gave great advantage to those who were anxious to prove that the Church was a defender of the "peculiar institution;" an advantage of which they availed themselves for years. I was opposed to the resolutions, and voted against them, believing them wrong in principle, a misrepresentation of the attitude of the Church, and practically mischievous. I was in the minority, which was very small; but time soon vindicated our position.

The agitation, moreover, soon showed itself at another point. The Conference resolved to elect three new bishops, and the Southern delegates, for the first time in the history of the Church, openly demanded the election of a slaveholder. They nominated W. Capers, J. Early, and T. A. Morris. Dr. Capers had utterly changed his opinions since the previous General Conference. He made no objections now to be named as a candidate for the Episcopacy. The Northern candidates were B. Waugh, M. Ruter, and G. Peck. Dr. Fiske stood very high in the estimation of the Church, and would have been the first choice of the Northern men could he have been spared from the Wesleyan University. It was also believed that he would prefer to remain there; but he was in Europe at the time, and could not be consulted. Dr. Winans, however, nominated him in open Conference, possibly with a view to disturb the plans of the Northern delegates. Messrs. Waugh and Fiske were elected on the first ballot. The vote stood thus: Whole number of votes, 153; necessary to a choice, 77. B. Waugh, 85; W. Fiske, 77; T. A. Morris, 76; M. Ruter, 54; W. Capers, 47; G. Peck, 35; N. Bangs, 26; J. Early, 10. T. A. Morris needed but one more vote to elect him, but he did not receive a majority till five or six more ballotings were had.

During the session I received the sad intelligence of the death of my friend and colleague, Rev. Josiah Keyes, who was to have roomed with me at the General Conference. He was an eloquent and powerful preacher, a wise administrator, and a devoted Christian. By untiring perseverance he had made himself a thorough scholar. He read Greek, Latin, and Hebrew almost as readily as English. His constitution was broken down with excessive labor in the study and the pulpit, and he died at the early age of thirty-seven, having really done enough work to occupy a much longer life. He departed in great peace.

The General Conference adjourned June 26th, and I hastened home, and resumed my work in the seminary. Meanwhile our paper, the "Western Banner," had become embarrassed. One of the two proprietors had left, the other was dying with pulmonary disease, and the project would have to be abandoned unless its friends came to the rescue. The three Conferences chiefly interested, the Genesee, the Oneida, and the Black River, appointed committees with power to act in the case. In November, 1836, the first committee met, bought the paper, appointed an executive committee of three — G. Peck, Luther Lee, and James Richardson — to manage the business, and elected Z. Paddock editor. Loring Grant was appointed agent. The name of the paper was changed to "The Auburn Banner, and the Genesee, Oneida, and Black River Conference Record."

Thus we ventured upon an enterprise which proved useful and troublesome. The paper was a valuable medium of communication to the three Conferences; but we had begun wholly without capital, and the finances were hard to manage. I had no connection with the matter until appointed a member of the joint committee by the Oneida Conference; but as a member of the executive committee, I did what I could to secure success, and often was compelled to become personally responsible for the debts of the concern in order to keep it afloat. After a financially feeble existence

of about three years it came to an end, leaving us somewhat wiser from our little experiment. The advantages of a Church organ in central New York were so evident, however, that the Conferences not many years afterward established one on a better foundation.

This year the antislavery excitement in our Church reached a fearful height. "Zion's Watchman," a weekly journal, published in New York, and edited by Rev. Le Roy Sunderland, a superannuated preacher of the New England Conference, did some good, and much evil. It helped to stir the national conscience on the subject of slavery, and so far was right; but its spirit was bitter, and its style inflammatory beyond description. It denounced the Bishops, the General Conference, and the Annual Conferences. It assailed private character, it violated the sanctities of private life, seeming to aim, not so much to win men to the advocacy of real reform, as to compel them to accept its leadership and adopt its methods. The justice of the cause which it represented gave it influence, and rendered its errors the more mischievous.

Dr. Fiske entered the field against the agitators, and wrote some scathing articles which were published in the Advocate at New York. He did not defend slavery, but rebuked the blind destructiveness of its unwise assailants. The positions assumed, and the demands made by the abolitionists of that period, were these: 1. Slaveholding is a sin under all circumstances; 2. Immediate and unconditional emancipation; 3. No fellowship with slaveholders; 4. Conference action, Church action, all through the Connection; 5. War upon Church councils, and Church officials, who refuse or hesitate to act in harmony with the leaders of the reform; 6. No toleration of the Colonization Society, or sympathy with its designs. This was the image which the Watchman set up, and called upon bishops, preachers, and people to fall down and worship, or be cast into its fiery furnace of slanderous denunciation. Such were the spirit and the measures of the agitators whose errors Dr. Fiske, Dr. Bangs, and Bishop Hedding opposed.

Baron Macaulay remarks that slavery is a devil which always rends the body which it leaves. The evil may possibly have been so imbedded in the politics and financial interests of the nation, that a zeal which seemed blind, and a violence which looked reckless, alone could rouse the Church and the people. Nevertheless, multiplied evils followed. The controversy engendered secession and disintegration; societies were torn in pieces, and friends were turned to enemies. I did not escape. I could not adopt the language nor the measures of those who claimed to be leaders, and consequently I was misrepresented and reviled, and denounced as an enemy of all truth and righteousness.

Orange Scott and George Storrs, one a member of the New England, and the other of the New Hampshire Conference, gave themselves wholly to the work of agitation. The principal points of excitement within the bounds of the Oneida Conference were Utica, Auburn, and Cazenovia. Our village would have remained free from strife had it not been brought to our doors by others. A convention was held in the place, and the orators on the occasion, Mr. Goodell, Gerrit Smith, and others, assailed the Methodist Episcopal Church in unmeasured terms, vilifying her councils and her leading men. Bishop Hedding had offended certain ultraists by refusing to put to vote, in the New England Conference, resolutions endorsing their favorite measures. In retaliation for this, a layman from Utica offered, in the Cazenovia Convention, a resolution to the effect that they would not

receive a preacher from the hands of the Bishop who refused to put such resolutions to vote in the Conferences over which he presided.

Mr. Gerrit Smith charged, in his speech, that the Methodist Episcopal Church was a rum-drinking, pro-slavery Church. I replied in the columns of the "Auburn Banner" to this assault, charging him with misrepresentation. Mr. Smith replied, and we had a brief controversy. He admitted, in his final article, that he had been misinformed in regard to our true position.

The Oneida Conference held its annual session in Cortlandville, New York, August 30, 1837, Bishop Hedding presiding.

Messrs. Scott and Storrs came to the place on their peculiar errand, and applied to the Baptists for the use of their church. Supposing it was needed for conference business, the Baptist brethren opened the doors of their edifice, and Storrs and Scott commenced lecturing every afternoon on slavery and the Church. Seeing that our neighbors did not exactly understand the case, I offered a resolution in Conference, condemning the action of the invaders as irregular and intrusive. The house was full, and many Baptists were present. Learning the true state of things, they withdrew their consent in regard to the use of the church. The lecturers tried in vain to secure another place, and then left the village. There were about a dozen members of the Conference who sympathized with them. They were restless and discontented, and most of them finally left the Church. So fierce an agitation could hardly fail to work division. The leaders, Scott, Storrs, Sunderland, Prindle, Lee, and others, had taken such a position that they must either bring the Church into their measures or leave its communion. Failing to secure the general adoption of their views, they seceded and formed the True Wesleyan Church.

The session of the Conference was quite harmonious, but on returning to their Churches, the preachers here and there encountered difficulties. The spirit of controversy was abroad in the land. I was formally waited upon, and asked to give my consent to the organization of an Abolition Society among the students of the seminary. I inquired the object, and was told that the aim was discussion. I assured the petitioners that they need not fear restriction. The question was brought into the Seminary Lyceum. We finally drifted into a public debate on the comparative claims of the abolitionist and the colonization societies; and for three evenings in succession, the Congregationalist minister on the one side, and I on the other, maintained our respective opinions. This discussion had a good effect among the students, and we had no further uneasiness on the subject.

In the disturbed condition of the Church within our bounds, I felt it obligatory upon me to do what I could to warn our people against ill-advised measures and hasty action, and accordingly wrote a series of four articles which were published in the Banner over the signature of "*Aw-lay-thays Low-goy*". With another good object in view, I also wrote a series of twelve articles on the subject of education, which were published in the same journal.

During the winter of 1837-8 we were favored with a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the seminary, forty or fifty students being converted. One notable and very pleasant fact connected with

this revival was, that every student in the seminary who was concerned in the infidel rebellion of the previous winter was brought into the fold of Christ.

The Oneida Conference began its annual session at Ithaca, August 22, 1838. The ultra-Abolitionists had given us some annoyance, and at various points of our territory had done some damage; and I was anxious that the Conference should take such action as would, on the one hand, vindicate the Church, and on the other, rebuke unreasoning destructiveness. The Conference, however, was slow to act, and, as I thought, showed timidity and indecision.

The seminary was prospering. For three years I had labored in the utmost harmony with the trustees and the teachers, and had begun to feel at home in my position. Providential circumstances, however, were destined to sunder my connection with the institution. A member of my family took the measles, and the disease attacked every one of the circle except myself. My wife was very ill for a long time, and when she began to regain her strength a little, a tendency to lung disease was developed. Our physician warned us of the danger of her remaining during the winter in so cold a climate, and advised us to go South. I accordingly informed the trustees of the seminary that I must have at least six months' leave of absence. I resigned my office as president of the board, and Hanford Colburn was appointed principal pro tem. I sold most of my household goods, and arranged to leave the older children in Cazenovia. We set out on our journey, October 13, 1838.

Traveling with an invalid is not apt to be attended with incidents of much interest to the public, and therefore I do not propose to devote much space to this part of my story. Still, things have so changed within the past few years, that the younger class of readers will not find a brief recital wholly destitute of the charm of novelty.

The first Sabbath was spent at Syracuse, where I heard an able sermon from the Rev. William W. Ninde, now deceased. He was one of the most gifted of our young ministers. His discourses were eloquent, and often powerful — overwhelming. He was a devoted, earnest Christian. He died early, but his name is still held in grateful remembrance.

Progress was slow in those days. To reach Ithaca from Auburn, a distance of forty miles, by stage, occupied twelve weary hours. A miserable horse-railroad between Ithaca and Owego afforded no more speedy transit. On the 24th of October I embarked with my wife and infant child on a canal packet at Wilkesbarre. The next day we were delayed several hours at Northumberland. This place was the last residence of the celebrated Dr. Priestley, who was equally famous for his discoveries in natural science and his heresies in theology. He discovered oxygen gas, and advocated materialism. I visited his grave. A marble slab contains the following inscription: "To the memory of the Rev. Joseph Priestley, who departed this life the 16th of February, 1804; anno aetatis 71. 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with the.'" "I will lay me down and sleep, till I awake in the morning of the resurrection."

At nine o'clock in the evening of the 25th October we reached the junction of the North Branch and Pennsylvania canals, and went on board a western packet. The boat was crowded, and the captain informed us that he could offer us no accommodations for sleeping. My wife made some kind of terms with the chambermaid, and disappeared. I pushed my way into the main cabin, which

was packed with men, the majority of whom were noisy, restless, and profane, and many of them half drunk. I passed the night not in sleep, but in serious thought, suggested by what I saw and heard. The next morning the packet grounded, and a large number of the passengers, I among the rest, went ashore to help push her off. We succeeded, but were compelled to walk three miles before we could get on board again. On Saturday, the 27th, we reached Huntingdon, where we learned that a breach had occurred in the canal, and that for the next eighteen miles it was not navigable. The passengers were crowded into large wagons, which were covered with coarse canvas, and without springs, and we thus made the eighteen miles. We embarked again ten miles from Hollidaysburgh, which place we reached at eight o'clock in the evening. Here we spent the Sabbath, and had a delightful season of rest and religious privilege. It was quarterly meeting; the presiding elder, Rev. John Miller, was in the place, also President Durbin, of Dickinson College. In the society of these and other good brethren we spent two pleasant days, our enjoyment being heightened by contrast with the noise and profanity on the packet, and the murderous ride over the mountains.

We reached Pittsburgh on Thursday, November 1, and were cordially received by our old friend, James Borbidge. Here we learned, to our consternation, that the Ohio was so low that it was not navigable. Three thousand travelers, it was estimated, were gathered in the city, waiting for the moving of the waters. We were detained thus three weeks. Our friends exerted themselves to the utmost to make our detention tolerable, and even pleasant, and we received many tenders of hospitalities, more than we were able to accept; but our child became dangerously sick, and we greatly desired to reach our journey's end. Meanwhile the host of detained travelers continued to accumulate, and daily grew more impatient. It was the policy of the eastern agents of the companies interested in this route to conceal the fact that steamers were not running on the Ohio. Resort was had to all sorts of devices by the impatient travelers. Some purchased flatboats, and even skiffs, and embarked upon the shallow river, with the hope of thus reaching, the Mississippi. Others chartered miserable stages, which promised neither speed nor comfort.

Finally there came a rise in the Ohio, and the steamers were once more afloat. On Saturday, November 24, we embarked on board the "Canton," and started down the river. But after we had gone about ten miles we ran upon a ledge of rocks and were fast. Another steamer came to our rescue, fastened a hawser to us, and tried to drag us into deep water, but failed. There we stayed all night, and nearly all the next day until at last an "ark" was brought alongside and freight transferred to it till our steamer floated, when we began our voyage again with the ark in tow. The cold was intense, and the river full of floating ice. We went on a few miles further, sometimes touching the bottom, sometimes drifting sidewise, sometimes going stern foremost, sometimes standing still, considering what to do next. At last, surrendering to the inevitable, we reached the shore and tied our steamer to the trees. A small sternwheel boat was obtained, by which we succeeded in reaching Wellsville, fifty miles from Pittsburgh. From this place a crazy old hack bore me and mine to Steubenville, where we spent the Sabbath.

On Monday, December 3, we embarked on another small steamer, the last one that went down the river that season, and arrived at Wheeling, where, contrary to our original plans, we were destined to remain till spring. The preacher stationed in Wheeling, the Rev. Wesley Kenney, received me as a brother beloved, and adopted me as a colaborer in the Gospel. He Commenced, soon after our arrival, a series of meetings which were very successful. I aided him in his work, and also spent

some time in teaching a select school. We enjoyed the situation so well, found so many warm friends, and saw so much good done, that we were ready to consider our detention providential, and on leaving the place in March, felt somewhat as we had often felt in leaving a pastoral charge at the end of our term of service.

Leaving Wheeling, March 25, 1839, we spent the succeeding Sabbath at Louisville, where I preached twice, and on the 5th of April reached Nashville, where we remained till the 23d. During our stay we took the opportunity to visit General Andrew Jackson. The Hermitage was a large, well-constructed house, with spacious piazzas front and rear, in the midst of a beautiful plantation. The general's wife had died some years before, and had been interred in a corner of the garden. A spherical roof, supported by graceful columns, covers her grave, and a horizontal marble slab records her virtues. By its side was another slab of the same kind, without inscription, which I inferred was intended by the General for his own tombstone.

I found the old hero alone with his family, and free to entertain me with the story of his remarkable career. He was now in his seventy-third year, but genial, cheerful, and companionable, seeming more like an old friend than the acquaintance of an hour. He invited me to remain with him till the next day, which invitation I accepted. Mrs. Donaldson, the wife of his adopted son, and her group of beautiful children, seemed almost to worship him, and to be in turn the objects of his idolatry. Religious order appeared to pervade the household, and the old age of the famous warrior and statesman was as the calm sunset after the day of clouds and storm. He died in June, 1845.

We spent three Sabbaths in Nashville, and I preached twice each Sabbath. One of the most interesting services was held in the African Church. The congregation was large and the worship earnest, and in the best sense of the term, enthusiastic. We found many friends in the city, and our recollections of our visit are very pleasant.

We left Nashville in the latter part of April, visited St. Louis, where we spent a few days, and thence went to Lebanon, Illinois. Here we found our friends Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin, who had removed hither from Pennsylvania some years before, and taken up their abode on Looking-glass Prairie. Here we also found McKendree College, then just beginning its career of usefulness and honor. This prairie contains one of the most perfect mounds of the west. It is about forty-five yards square on the top, and perhaps fifteen feet high. Six or seven smaller ones surround it. Who erected the group, and for what purpose, none can with certainty tell. They stand the mementos of an age which has passed away and left no other records.

Leaving my wife and child at Lebanon, I returned to St. Louis, and thence took passage on a steamer bound up the Mississippi. Some two hundred miles above St. Louis we saw, on the Illinois side of the river, a very singular encampment. A multitude of people, men. women, and children, ragged, dirty, and miserable generally, seemed to be living in tents and covered wagons, for lack of better habitations. This strange scene presented itself along the shore for a mile or more. We were informed that they were Mormons, who had recently fled from Missouri. The place where we saw them became afterward Nauvoo, the city of the Latter-day Saints.

On Saturday, May 11, we landed at Stevenson, Illinois, and finding that we were destined to remain here till Monday, set out to examine the situation in regard to religious opportunities. I ascertained that there was a Society of Methodists in the place, and that it was the time of quarterly meeting. I was among total strangers, and on board the steamer had been known only as "the "squire," the captain having bestowed that honorable title upon me in token of respect; but the Methodists found me out, and I had the privilege of preaching once on Saturday and twice on Sunday, besides listening to three other sermons, and attending a love-feast.

The next day the presiding elder, Rev. Henry Somers, kindly offered to take me in his carriage and help me on my way. We rode to Dixon's Ferry, and thence to Kishwaukie, following an Indian trail a part of the time. We passed the place where, in the year 1832, a battle was fought with the Indians, and our forces, commanded by General Stillman, were defeated. We saw the place where the troops were encamped, the stakes to which the tents were fastened, the ashes of their campfires, and the common grave in which the slain were buried. Only seven years before, Black Hawk and his savage bands swept over these beautiful plains, and spread terror far and wide among the newly-planted settlements. We tarried a day at Pine Creek, the very day on which a committee, appointed to choose a site, located the Rock River Seminary at that place. On Saturday we directed our course across the open prairie to Gap Grove, the place of the next quarterly meeting. Four brethren accompanied us on horseback, and we all came near being lost in a slough of unfathomable mud.

The arrangements for the meeting were ample, but primitive. The place was a log schoolhouse, without a sawed board in it. The floor was made of split-oak planks, the door was of the same, and was hung on wooden hinges. Seats of rails were arranged before the door, with an awning of green boughs. Mr. Somers preached at noon on Saturday, and Mr. Wood, a presiding elder from the Indiana Conference, in the afternoon. The next day we had a lovefeast and two sermons. There was a large congregation. I counted fifty wagons ranged around us. On Monday we crossed the Winnebago Swamp, and the next day reached the residence of my esteemed friend, General Samuel Thomas, from Kingston, Pennsylvania, where I had a delightful visit. Thus, in various visits, and little explorations of a country new to me, the remainder of the month was passed, and I then returned to St. Louis, and thence started homeward, on a steamer bound for Pittsburgh.

Both the Mississippi and Missouri were high and obstructed with flood-wood. During the night the floating logs pounded incessantly upon the bow and the wheels of our vessel, and the engineer's signal-bell was continually ringing. We entered the Ohio, and, touching at Louisville, proceeded up the river on the afternoon of the 31st of May. About four o'clock the next morning all on board were startled by a tremendous crash. I hurried out of my berth to see what had happened. As I did so a gentleman who occupied the other berth said, in a quiet way, "Stranger, you are not scared, nor nothing! I am going to finish my, sleep." I found the vessel sinking. Rushing to the ladies' cabin, I hurried my wife out, with the child, and was on the point of going up to the hurricane deck, when the vessel grounded, with the water within eighteen inches of the floor of the saloon. There was, of course, great excitement. My sleepy friend postponed the remainder of his nap, came out of his room, and I saw him, when the danger was over, pensively gazing down into the hold where a large quantity of groceries belonging to him were submerged. A blind man stood leaning against his stateroom door, perfectly motionless and silent. I said to him afterward, "My dear fellow, were you

not dreadfully frightened?" "O, no," said he, "I never am scared; I never yet got into any trouble where I could not see my way out."

The disaster was caused by the breaking of some part of the engine, the fragments of which had torn a hole in the bottom of the vessel. If the mishap had occurred when we were in deep water, and unable to reach the shore in time, there would have been a fearful loss of life. Thankful that things were no worse, the passengers were disposed to be cheerful. The pilot had run the boat ashore, and we lay very near the land. A forest of large trees lined the margin of the river. Morning came, ushering in a beautiful day. A large number of those on board were transferred to the shore. The cook, with his stove, accompanied them; a coffee mill was nailed to a tree, and in due season a satisfactory breakfast was spread before us. Here we waited for another boat going up the river. Just as evening came, a steamer approached and took a part of our passengers. The rest of us waited till the next chance. About ten o'clock at night another steamer coming up received us on board, and we arrived safe at Cincinnati the next morning. It took four days more to reach Pittsburgh; and six thence to Wilkesbarre, where we arrived on the 12th of June.

The journey had not been in vain. My wife had been greatly benefited; and, in addition to this, I had acquired a little knowledge of the great West by personal observation, seen some old friends, formed some new ones, and preached the Gospel about as often as I would had I been at home.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 9
1839, SUSQUEHANNA DISTRICT

The Oneida Conference met at Norwich, August 21, 1839. Bishop Hedding presided. I had previously sent the trustees of the seminary a letter dissolving my connection with the institution. I was appointed presiding elder of the Susquehanna District, and also elected a delegate to the General Conference. The appointments were read Thursday evening, and my first act in my new position was early the next morning to behold the distress and the tears, and hear the protest, of a young man who had been set down for that same Canaan Circuit to which I was sent in 1820, when it was almost a wilderness. Now a railroad ran through the center, and good roads traversed it in every direction; the people were living in comfort, and not a few were becoming rich. Still, the Bishop was so far moved by this young preacher's anguish of soul that he released him from the unwelcome appointment, and left him in the hands of the presiding elder for another, if any could be found worthy of him. The district over which I was appointed to preside comprised, in 1839, fifteen appointments, twenty preachers, and about four thousand members.

I spent the Sabbath succeeding the Conference at Cazenovia, where I heard Bishop Hedding preach a great sermon, which stirred the depths of my soul; and then, bidding farewell to my many valued friends there, returned to Kingston, the place fixed upon as our residence.

The early part of this year was to me a memorable period on account of certain religious experiences which, not without much reflection and some hesitation, I have concluded to record more at length than has been my custom.

I was not conscious of any spiritual decline, but, on the contrary, felt that I was advancing. The evidence of my acceptance with God was clear. From the time of my conversion, and especially from the time of my entrance into the ministry, I had striven to exercise a constant faith, "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men," to be obedient to every Divine call, yielding a willing service. Still, I was not at rest. Grateful for all that I had received, I felt that there were better things in store for me. I began more and more to hunger for deeper spirituality, a stronger faith, a prompter and more complete victory over temptation, a new advance into better light and richer joy.

At my first quarterly meeting on the district I preached on the subject of holiness, with no great satisfaction to my own mind, but in pursuance of a determination to seek a deeper work of grace in my own soul and preach it to others. The next week I went to a campmeeting in McClure's Settlement, on the Lanesborough Circuit, where I preached three times with unusual liberty, my yearning after a clean heart constantly increasing. It was a time of rejoicing and of power. Two brethren were active and useful in the meeting, and attracted my attention. One was Major Dixon, a great and good layman, famous as a leader in the prayermeetings, which were in his charge

throughout the entire week. His control over a crowd was something wonderful. He issued his orders with the air of a general on the field of battle. When he shouted, "Power! power! On, brethren, on!" it was like the storming of a battery, and when he paused and said, "Hark! hark! Silence," the stillness of night followed. None of the preachers interfered with his management. There was always unity of design, perfect harmony, and uniform success in his plans. His equal, in his own line of service, I never saw.

The other one referred to was Dayton F. Reed, afterward a member of the Newark Conference, and now, I doubt not, in the home above. He had been for a short time at the Cazenovia Seminary, but could not confine himself to study. He was at this time a young man of about twenty-one years of age, deeply pious, enthusiastic, with a very acute and active mind, and a reputation for eccentricity. He had received license as an exhorter, and on the strength of the authority bestowed was constantly preaching. He came to me on Sunday morning, and said that he thought that God required him to "sound the alarm somewhere" that day. I told him that older men must occupy the stand; but that if he felt like it he might, at the close of the morning sermon, mount a certain wagon that stood a little way off; and preach till the time for the afternoon service to as large a congregation as he could gather. This seemed to please him, and as soon as the morning service closed he mounted the wagon, and with all the strength of his lungs shouted, "All you who want to hear the crazy boy talk for awhile draw near." The whole multitude gathered about him, and he held them for two hours listening to an argumentative and convincing discourse on the existence of God, the divinity of Christ, the certainty of a general judgment, and the eternal doom of the lost. I stayed to hear every word of the sermon. For conclusiveness of argument, originality of illustration, and forcible appeal, I have seldom heard its equal.

The next week I attended another campmeeting in South Canaan, during the progress of which I preached four sermons. My spiritual necessities were pressing more heavily than ever upon my heart. We closed Saturday morning with a sacramental service. As I was making some remarks after the sacrament I came, without any previous intention, to speak of my own religious state, and observed that my experience had been somewhat variable, and of too low a grade, but that I expected to be "made perfect in love in this life." This accidental allusion, as it seemed, to a solemn question which I had answered at the time of my ordination and reception into Conference membership, fell upon my own soul with so much weight that I could not refrain from weeping.

Spending a Sunday in my quarterly meetings at Duddaff and Carbondale, I returned home, where I remained several days suffering great mental depression, and feeling an increasing self-abhorrence and thirst after God.

The next Sunday, in the love-feast at Gibson, several clear testimonies were given to the enjoyment of perfect love. I began now to feel the blessing near, and was more than ever fixed in my purpose to seek until I attained it. Monday morning, September 30, I woke in the spirit of penitence and prayer. The Rev. William Reddy, one of the preachers on the circuit, led the family devotions in the house where we lodged. As he read the fifty-first psalm the words came home to my mind with new light and power, and pierced my soul like sharp arrows. During his prayer my tears flowed freely, and it was only by strong effort that I refrained from weeping aloud.

As we were traveling in the same direction that morning I took a seat with Mr. Reddy in his carriage, and led my horse. He had told us something the day before of the possession of the blessing, and I wished to converse with him on the subject. His account of his past experience and his present enjoyments was modest, clear, and, as I judged, scriptural. He was much younger than I, but I was ready to be taught by any messenger whom God might send, so I fully opened my mind to him. My hunger and thirst for holiness were increased by our communings, and when our roads diverged and I left this dear brother and rode on alone till night, I prayed with every breath.

Tuesday, October 1, I rose, in the spirit of prayer, and resumed my homeward journey. I crossed the Susquehanna at Tunkhannock, and rode forward in inexpressible anguish. When passing through the forest and solitary places, where there was none but God to hear, I uttered aloud my burning supplication for a clean heart. I came to a stream where the bridge had been swept away in a recent flood, and as I was preparing to ford it these words came with power to my soul, "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

As my horse entered the water, and went in deeper and deeper, the great deep of my soul was broken up, and I wept aloud, with exclamations of self-condemnation and self-abhorrence. My whole being seemed dissolved in a torrent of godly sorrow; but in a moment I caught encouragement from the language of the prophet. It implied a Divine wish that men would hearken. I was most assuredly willing, eager to hear the voice Divine. Quick as lightning I felt that God would bless me and write his commandments on my heart. An indescribable change passed through all the avenues of my spirit. God seemed to be there, in the glory of his grace. I melted like wax in the presence of the Lord. I sank into nothing. Christ was all, elevated upon the throne of his holiness. As my horse gained the shore I felt that I, too, was emerging from troubled waters and gaining the land of rest. In the fullness of my joy I wept aloud and gave glory to God in the highest.

I went on my way exulting in God, the holy and adorable God, whose glory I now saw, as never before, impressed upon mountain and rock, forest and river, and whose presence and favor I felt so powerfully that I seemed almost in heaven. In this inexpressibly happy state of mind I reached my home in the evening, scarcely knowing how I had passed over the road.

This was the way in which God led me, and for his glory, and with devout gratitude, I pen the narrative. I write not for "the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world." My years are passing, and soon, to me, neither the praise nor the censures of men will possess any value. Still, when my eyes no more behold the light, other eyes may rest upon this page, and the record is made with the humble hope that here and there a reader whose soul thirsts for the living God may be thereby encouraged, and therefrom gain, possibly, a little light.

I would also add, with humble gratitude and giving God all the glory, that the impulse which my religious life then received has helped me ever since, even to this hour. From that day I have had a stronger faith, a deeper joy, a clearer evidence of my acceptance with God, a readier and more thorough victory over temptations of every kind. I have labored to exercise a faith which would enable me to hold my position, and I have never wholly failed. Gloom has gathered about me at

times, but the light has always returned. A faith that constantly appropriates the blood of Christ is able to maintain, in the soul, a constant fellowship with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

In regard to the duty of relating what God has done for us, one cannot well judge for another. I have seldom felt that I was called to say much in mixed assemblies about this peculiar experience; still there certainly are times and occasions when an unostentatious profession may not only be allowable, but beneficial. When earnest Christians commune one with another in regard to the possibilities of the religious life, and are of one heart and one mind, waiting for the salvation of God, it is certainly right for each to tell all that God has done for him. This question came before me at an early period of my own experience, and I find my conclusions thus set down in a memorandum made at the time:—

"1. God should be acknowledged in his gifts whenever an opportunity occurs which promises good results. 2. The example of eminent Christians, both the living and the dead, encourages us in this course. 3. The help and encouragement which such relations afforded me when I was athirst for full salvation, convince me that they may be of service to others in like circumstances."

I will here take the liberty of expressing, in regard to another phase of the general subject, an opinion to which I tend. I incline to think that one who has enjoyed a great salvation, does not by unfaithfulness decline into simple justification, but falls into condemnation, from which new acts of repentance and faith must lift him, if at all, not simply to a justified state, but to something of the condition from which he has declined; though it may be in some cases a shade less joyous, than before.

There were soon indications of a high degree of religious interest throughout the district. There was, in fact, a revival in every charge. Many were converted, and many attained the love which "casteth out fear." Protracted meetings were everywhere in progress. Wherever I went to attend my quarterly meetings I was importuned to remain and help in the work. Even the few days which I occasionally spent at home were not an exception. Revivals were in progress in the Churches at Wilkesbarre and Forty Fort, and for weeks services were held every evening, and between the two my "rest days" were as busy as any.

This year, dating from the organization of the first Methodist Society in London, was the centenary of Methodism, and was celebrated as such both in England and America. One evening, in the latter part of October, I delivered an address in the old church at Forty Fort on the subject of education, in which I advanced the idea that a Methodist seminary was needed in the Wyoming Valley, and that Kingston furnished as good a location as could be found for such an institution. This was the first formal step in the movements which resulted in the establishment of the Wyoming Seminary, a school which is an ornament of the beautiful valley in which it is located, an honor to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and one whose strong sons and daughters, "polished after the similitude of a palace," are found on every side.

During the year I read everything upon the subject of holiness which fell in my way — Wesley, Benson, Treffry, Watmough, Carvosso, and especially Fletcher, whom I esteemed the greatest of modern Christians, and whose words and spirit were sweeter to me than "honey and the honeycomb."

I found it a large field for study, the source of grand inspirations, the marrow of the Gospel, and an essential element of Methodism. I became more and more convinced of the great practical value of the doctrine, and grounded in the Wesleyan theory of it. I gave my brothers an account of my experiences without giving them any definite name, however, and also wrote to Bishop Hedding on the subject. My letter seemed greatly to interest him, and we seldom talked together afterward without his referring to the matter, and inquiring in regard to my progress.

On the 23d of October, 1839, our beloved mother, aged seventy-one years, died in the house of my brother, Jesse T. Peck, at Gouverneur, N.Y. She became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1803, and continued such, without reproach, until she was removed to the Church triumphant. She was a true mother in Israel, kind and conciliatory in disposition, firm and patient under trials, praying without ceasing, with strong and victorious faith, "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." She had a sympathetic heart, which prompted her to care for the sick and the poor, and seek diligently the wandering, the discouraged, and the reckless. Her burning zeal impressed all who came into her presence. The giddy and the profane were struck dumb by her tender reproofs, uttered in well-chosen words, and in the spirit of kindness; and her desire for the salvation of souls often engaged her in personal efforts which won them to the Saviour.

She was the mother of five sons and six daughters. She early consecrated her children to God, and sought, by precept and example, to lead them to Christ. They were all converted, and united with the Church. Two of her daughters died before her, in holy triumph, and she lived to see all her sons ministers of the Gospel. When she heard the last of them preach, she said, "Now, Lord, let thine handmaid depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Her death was peaceful, triumphant; a fitting close to such a life. The Rev. E. Wentworth, D.D., now editor of the "Ladies Repository," was present at the closing scene, and in reference to it, penned the following: "Sacred music is appropriate to the chamber of death. At that hour, when worldly concerns have receded, when it is almost profanation to converse above a whisper, the sacred song

"'May stir the brooding air.'

"Years ago I stood by the deathbed of a mother in Israel. A venerable servant of God, in other days a leader of sacred song, was waiting to close the eyes of the companion of his youth. The breeze of an autumnal evening rustled the drapery of the open window; but besides this, there was no sound save the deep breathing of the aged sufferer. Suddenly the soft, silvery, tremulous voice of the white-haired veteran fell upon the ear

"'Give joy or grief, give ease or pain,
Take life or friends away,
But let me find them all again
In that eternal day.'

I fancied that the dying saint listened to the music of two worlds, and listening, smiled and died."

Spring found me considerably worn down with excessive labors. My finances, also, were in an unsatisfactory condition. I had expended something in improving my place at Kingston. My receipts

from the district amounted to about $300 for the year, and were not equal to my wants, as may well be imagined. How to avoid ultimate embarrassment I could not see. I was solicited, in two or three directions, to take charge of literary institutions, and very possibly might have accepted an invitation of the kind, had I not been providentially led into another field of labor.

On the 29th April, 1840, I reached Baltimore, the seat of the General Conference. On Friday, May 1, the Conference assembled in Wesley Chapel. Bishops Roberts, Hedding, Andrews, Waugh, and Morris were present. Bishop Soule was detained a few days by sickness. Rev. Robert Newton, delegate from the English Wesleyans, was present, and made a brief address, as did also Revs. John Ryerson and Joseph Stinson, of Canada. Sunday morning I preached in the Lutheran Church, and at five o'clock heard Dr. Newton preach to an immense multitude from the piazza of Barnum's Hotel, in Monument Square. His text was: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The eloquent sermon made a profound impression.

Several petitions on the subject of slavery had been previously presented; but on Monday a number more came from the New England, the New Hampshire, and the Genesee Conferences and the Southern members of the General Conference were evidently becoming uneasy. Dr. Few, of Georgia, felt that he was called to define his position in regard to these memorials. He was ready to hear brethren on any subject if their language was respectful. They might address the Conference on the evil of poverty, for instance, and he would hear them at reasonable length. Poverty, he said, is as great an evil as slavery. Bishop Waugh, who was presiding at the time, pronounced the remarks out of order, as no motion was pending; but it was evident that the North and the South were drifting away, each from the other, in their views on the whole subject of slavery.

In the afternoon and evening of the same day we had a political episode. It was the beginning of the memorable campaign which resulted in the election of General Harrison as President of the United States. When the name of the General was first publicly brought forward, some editor or orator on the other side spoke of the candidate as a man of little mind and low pursuits, whose sordid ambition rose no higher than a log-cabin, and a satisfactory supply of hard cider. The Whigs at once took up the foolish expression, wrested it into an insult to the common people, and proclaiming their man as the people's candidate, inaugurated extraordinary measures for rousing popular enthusiasm. Mass meetings were held, processions were got up, in which miniature log-cabins figured, ornamented with raccoon skins and cider barrels, and serio-comic songs were sung, with thunderous choruses, in praise of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too." We saw one of these processions, some three miles long, pass through the streets of the city, the concourse of participants and spectators being estimated at a hundred thousand. In the evening I heard Henry Clay address an immense crowd in Monument Square, but was too far off to hear well. After him, Mr. Graves, of Kentucky, of duel notoriety, poured forth a torrent of invective against the Democratic party and its measures. While this eruption was in full blaze I and my friend left, and went to another meeting held at the same hour, where Daniel Webster was to speak. We succeeded this time in getting near enough to hear the speech. He first addressed the delegates from his own State, who were present in large numbers, a thousand or more, and then proceeded to an examination of the faults and failures of the national administration. He was calm, respectful in his language, and seemed to appeal to the reason rather than to the passions. His voice and manner reminded me of Dr. Newton. The intonations of both

were upon the same grave key; when in thorough earnest, they were overwhelming, and neither of them descended at any time from proper self-respect and manly dignity.

I was a member, and the secretary, of the Committee on Slavery. The first time we met the whole afternoon was spent in an irregular discussion between the delegates from the two sections, W. A. Smith taking the lead of the South, and O. Scott of the North. The Southern delegates took the position that slavery was a merely civil institution, without any moral character whatever, and therefore not a proper subject of Church action. The extreme Northern view was, that slavery in itself, and under all circumstances, is wrong, sinful. Both Smith and Scott agreed that the Church must adopt one or the other of these views, and contended against any middle course.

Besides these there was a third party, who held that while slavery is wrong, and not for one moment to be defended as an institution, yet the individual may be so compassed about by circumstances that the legal ownership of a slave may not be a sin. Thus the Committee was divided into three parties, each tenacious of its own theory; and as it was composed of one delegate from each Annual Conference, it embodied and expressed the state of opinion existing in the General Conference, and throughout the Church itself.

The Committee held sessions almost daily for about two weeks, but could agree on nothing except the merest generalities. The South demanded that the General Conference censure the Abolitionists, and reduce them to silence, and endorse the existence of slavery in the Church. The Abolitionists, on the other hand, demanded that the General Conference condemn slavery irrespective of circumstances, and rid the Church of it by enacting laws to deal with slaveholders as we deal with thieves and murderers. Between these upper and nether millstone's the moderate party was in danger of being ground to powder; but, after a long discussion, their views finally prevailed, and a short-lived truce was secured.

I was also a member of the Committee on Education. After passing in review the various institutions of learning under the patronage of the Church, a question was raised in regard to the future policy which ought to be pursued, and several of our leading educators were invited to express their views before the Committee. Dr. Bascom, Dr. Durbin, and others argued that it would be wisest to reduce the number of our colleges, and concentrate our means and efforts in the establishment of two, or at most three, great universities; that two or three strong institutions would be more creditable and more useful than a multitude of feeble schools, without endowment, numbers, or reputation.

Professor Emory, on the other hand, took the position that the Church was at work in all parts of the land striving to foster education, and that the strongest appeal would be made to the people, and the largest number of students gathered, by multiplying colleges, though many of them must of necessity have small beginnings. The question was considered at great length in the Committee, and the conclusion reached was in favor of retaining all the institutions we already possessed.

Dr. Bascom brought forward a proposition from the trustees of Transylvania University, Kentucky, to place that institution in the hands of the Church. The Committee favored the plan, the General Conference adopted the recommendation, and the transfer was made. The friends of the

University were so zealous in its behalf, that they moved the Legislature of the State to repeal the charter of Augusta College, the oldest of the institutions of learning under our care. Dr. Bascom was elected president of the University, and it died in his hands. Thus ended our first attempt to do things on a grand scale in the matter of education.

A somewhat delicate matter came before the General Conference. Bishop Hedding had presented charges against two members of the New England Conference. The Conference tried the accused brethren, and acquitted them. The Bishop memorialized the General Conference on the subject, alleging that they were acquitted contrary to the facts and the evidence. N. Bangs, W. H. Raper, G. Peck, and J. Early were appointed a committee to examine the case. The Bishop and the delegates of the Conference appeared before us; and, after a full discussion of the affair, the delegates conceded that the Conference had erred in its action. Bishop Hedding thereupon expressed himself as unwilling to press the matter further, and withdrew the complaint.

Another question came before us which occasioned some excitement in the General Conference at the time, and the shedding of much ink subsequently. The Rev. Silas Comfort, then a member of the Missouri Conference, admitted, in a Church trial, the evidence of a colored person against a white member. For this action he had been tried by his Conference, and censured by formal vote. He appealed from the decision of the Conference, and not being able to attend the General Conference, requested me to conduct his case for him. I did so, urging the very obvious fact that the appellant had violated no law of the Church, and therefore could not be legally tried, convicted, and censured. The action of the Missouri Conference was set aside. The Southern delegates were greatly dissatisfied with this result. Some days after, Dr. Few came to me, asking me to approve the following resolution, and favor its adoption by the General Conference:—

"Resolved, That it is inexpedient and unjustifiable for any preacher among us to permit colored persons to give testimony against white persons in any State where they are denied that privilege in courts of law."

The best men of the South solemnly alleged that without such a resolution to cover them, the decision of the General Conference in the case of Mr. Comfort would ruin Methodism in the Southern States, and that, without it, they would be obliged to leave us. This Dr. Few declared with all earnestness and all apparent sincerity. I had been firm in maintaining the rights of Mr. Comfort, and had been successful; but the appeals of the Southern brethren were very strong, and I was moved to favor the resolution, which passed. This was my first attempt to conciliate and save the South.

But a little reflection and comparison of views convinced me that the rule in regard to evidence thus established was unjust and wrong. Moreover, Dr. Few's resolution would do more injury at the North than the action of the General Conference in the Comfort case could do in the South. I, therefore, moved to reconsider the resolution. This brought on a protracted and somewhat fierce debate. Various attempts to amend were made, but all failed. Motions were made sundry times to lay the whole subject on the table, but these, too, failed, and the daily session closed without a decision. In this unsatisfactory state it remained some time, creating great uneasiness.

On the 2d of June, Bishop Soule assumed the unusual position of a member of the Conference, and read what he called a "Plan of Pacification," as follows:—

"First, Resolved, That in the decision of the Conference in the case of the appeal of Rev. Silas Comfort, it is not intended to express or imply that the testimony of colored persons against white persons in Church trials is either expedient or justifiable in any of the slaveholding States or Territories where the civil laws prohibit such testimony in trials at law.

"Second, Resolved, That it is not the intention of the Conference, in the adoption of the resolution of the Rev. Ignatius A. Few, of Georgia, in regard to the admission of the testimony of colored persons, to prohibit such testimony in church trials in any of the States or Territories where it is the established usage of the Church to admit it, and where, in the judgment of the constitutional judicatories of the Church, such testimony may be admitted with safety to the peace of society, and the interests of all concerned.

"Third, Resolved, That it is not the intention of this Conference, in either of the above cases, or in any action had by this body, to express or imply any distrust or want of confidence in the Christian piety or integrity of the numerous body of colored members under our pastoral care, to whom we are bound by the bonds of the Gospel of Christ, and for whose spiritual and eternal interests, together with all of our fellow-men of every color, and in every relation and condition of life, we will never cease to labor."

These resolutions were passed by a vote of ninety-seven to twenty-seven. It will probably strike the adherents of parliamentary rules as somewhat singular that these resolutions should be introduced and passed while my motion to reconsider was still pending, and that, after the passage of Bishop Soule's resolutions, my motion was gravely laid on the table. Bishop Soule's paper was a mere temporary expedient, and really did nothing toward the settlement of the great questions coming before the Church and the whole nation.

Meanwhile this particular phase of the slavery question was not the only shape in which it came before the Conference. The Committee on Slavery presented their final report on the 21st of May. O. Scott and three other members of the Committee brought in a minority report, but as its publication in the Journal was objected to, Mr. Scott contented himself by using the substance of it in an extended speech which he made against the adoption of the report of the majority. He was earnest, bold, full of invective against slavery, reflecting on the action of the Southern Conferences, and arraigning the "Christian Guardian," the organ of the Canada Methodists. Dr. Bangs replied, defending the report, and Dr. Ryerson explained his course as editor of the Guardian.

Dr. Capers followed in a speech an hour long, characterized by pathos rather than logic. He complained that northern interference hindered the southern preachers in the blessed work of saving both masters and slaves; that northerners denounced slavery as a great moral evil, while the southern men, who alone understood the matter, lamented it as a great providential misfortune. With tears he besought the assailants of the peculiar institution to cease their interference, and let those manage slavery who were competent to the work. This speech produced considerable emotion in certain

quarters, but did not move the antislavery men of the North and East a hair-breadth from their position.

The Rev. J. Crowther, of the Virginia Conference, made a plain, homely, out and out defense of slavery, taking the ground that it is right, and justified by the word of God. Dr. Few and W. Winans threatened rebellion and secession. Dr. W. A. Smith undertook to demonstrate that slavery is philosophically an essential element of the social state.

"Cannot brethren see," asked the doctor, "that slavery is service? Now if service is unjust and immoral, a man's children cannot serve him, his wife cannot serve him, without a breach of the moral law."

The principal speakers on the antislavery side were O. Scott and P. Crandall, who argued against the morality and justice of the institution, and all the measures necessary for its defense.

On Saturday, May 23, another firebrand was thrown to increase the conflagration. O. Scott had presented an abolition petition from the city of New York, said to contain the signatures of eleven hundred and fifty members of the Church. The news that such a petition had been presented at Baltimore created quite a stir in New York, and much curiosity to know who were the signers, and the petition was sent back to the city for investigation, though not by the direction of the Conference. In due time Rev. C. A. Davis and Dr. D. M. Reese came to Baltimore, bearing a protest against the petition, and were heard before the Committee on Slavery. They alleged that the petition contained the names of persons who were not members of the Church, and names of persons appended without their consent, and that some names were inserted twice, and others three times. Warm words passed between these gentlemen and Mr. Scott, and some of the southern members of the committee charged him with imposture. He replied that the memorial was placed in his hands by a respectable member of the Church, and that he had no personal knowledge in regard to the matters complained of. Thus, in one form or another, the subject continued to harass the Conference to the very last session, when Dr. Bascom read his report on a memorial coming from Westmoreland, but read it before a body of men who were weary and impatient, more desirous of going home than of continuing a discussion which produced no changes of opinion.

The temperance question also excited some interest. It had been previously discussed in the Church papers, the point at issue being the expediency and necessity of excluding from the Church all persons who manufacture, sell, or use intoxicating beverages. In the North there was a conviction that the General Conference ought to take such action as would secure their exclusion. In the South new legislation of any kind on that subject was opposed. The chief argument against it was, that the proposed action would introduce a new condition of membership; that it would be really a change of the General Rules. I wrote an article for the Advocate, taking the ground that the rule which requires members of the Church to "do no harm," and "avoid evil of every kind," fully covered the case, and consequently the new legislation proposed by the friends of temperance was designed to be merely a specific application of the rule. I argued, also, in favor of restoring Mr. Wesley's original rule on the subject.

In March, 1840, Rev. George Lane, who was visiting the Southern Conferences on the business of the Book Concern, wrote me a letter containing a reference to this subject:—

"I was much pleased with your article in the Advocate respecting the restoration of the rule on ardent spirits. To me it is a subject of vital importance, one in which the Church and the world are deeply interested. Its restoration will meet, however, with strong opposition from that quarter particularly where it has always been opposed. The principal grounds which will be taken are the following:

"1. It changes the terms of membership.

"2. The conduct prohibited is not 'clearly forbidden in the word of God,' nor does the Spirit 'write' the proposed law 'on all truly awakened hearts.'

"3. It is not expedient. We are not prepared for it. It would drive many from the Church."

Dr. Capers, the editor of the Charleston Advocate, made a formal reply in his paper to my article. I rejoined in the columns of the New York Advocate, and soon after we met in the General Conference. To change a General Rule requires a three-fourths vote of all the Annual Conferences, and a two-thirds vote of the General Conference. The process may be inaugurated either in the General Conference or any one of the Annual Conferences. The New York Conference had inaugurated the vote in favor of the restoration of Mr. Wesley's original rule, but the measure failed to obtain the requisite majority. An effort was now made to originate the movement in the General Conference, but the vote was seventy-five in favor to thirty-eight opposed, and for the want of one more vote the attempt failed, at least for the time.

I was elected editor of the Quarterly Review. I had come to the Conference with no aspirations in that direction. My mind was drawn to the subject of education, the establishment of a seminary in the Wyoming Valley. I had had some experience in the management of an institution of the kind, and had some taste for the work of a teacher, but the position of an editor would be new to me, and I might not succeed either in my friends' estimation or my own; still I was fixed upon, chiefly by the Northern delegates, and elected. Dr. Bond, who had been the candidate of the South, was elected editor of the New York Advocate.

The General Conference appointed a Committee to prepare a Pastoral Address. I was a member of the Committee, and it fell to my lot to write the Address, which is found in the Journal, but without name or date.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 10
1840-4, METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW

I reached Wilkesbarre on Sunday morning, June 7, preached at the quarterly meeting, and then crossed the river to see my family and the humble home at Kingston, which we were learning to love, but now were called to leave. I moved my family at once to New York and began my work. I found an abundance of important business waiting for me. The Book Agents were anxious to put the Journal of the General Conference and the new edition of the Discipline in type at the earliest practicable moment, and I was expected to read the proof and supervise the whole matter. Dr. Elliott's work on Romanism was going through the press, and I read the manuscript, chapter by chapter, before it was placed in the hands of the compositors. The Rev. P. C. Oakley, of the Oneida Conference, had been designated for the Sands Street Church, Brooklyn, but was to remain at Ithaca two months; and I was requested by Bishop Hedding to supply the pulpit till his arrival. Amid engagements and responsibilities like these I was still to find time and strength for my main work, the editing of the Quarterly Review.

Under the rule of the Discipline, as it then was, the Editors and Book Agents were, by virtue of their office, members of the New York Conference. I visited my old Conference, the Oneida, in August, and, by the request of the bishop, attended the sessions of the council, and gave an account of the district of which I had been the presiding elder. It was a great pleasure to me on this occasion to be for a few days the guest of my old and tried friend, John Williams, for whom I here desire to record my respect and esteem. He was a noble specimen of a man — just, generous, true, high minded, one of the wisest and most efficient of the trustees of the seminary, and an invaluable citizen.

In the closeness of my application to my new work I overdid matters. After a long day in the office I was accustomed to go home and have some one read to me in the evening. Before many months I was prostrated by illness, and was warned by my physician that I must pay more attention to my health, and lay aside some of my business, or my labors would not be likely to continue long. And yet it was hard to find the right place for retrenchment. The duties of my office could not be curtailed, and the calls outside were hard to deny. There was an incessant demand for sermons. There were then twelve Methodist churches in the city, in each of which three services were held every Sabbath. Lest the officials at the Book Room should grow rusty for want of work, the preachers' meeting made out a plan, which assigned at least two sermons every Sabbath to each editor and agent, and sent him in turn to every church in the city. During the autumn and winter we were often called to aid in protracted meetings, and I sometimes preached three or four times during the week, in addition to the labors of the Sabbath.

Our missionary interests also demanded time and care. A heavy debt pressed upon the treasury, and alarmed the more cautious members of the Board. The idea had prevailed that a hold policy was

the best, and that the Church would not fail to meet all the demands of the work. The result was a debt of fifty thousand dollars. Dr. Bond questioned the wisdom of this method, and with his views I fully sympathized. Retrenchment was finally resolved upon — not without strenuous opposition — and the missions in Oregon, South America, and Africa were singled out as the fields which could best bear it. I was chairman of the Standing Committee on the Oregon Mission for a year or two, and then was appointed chairman of the Committee on the African Mission, which post I occupied, I think, until my connection with the Book Room terminated.

Our mission in Africa had become involved in difficulty with the Colonial Government. The colony was financially weak, our mission had been liberally supported, and the superintendent of it had more money than the governor. Hence jealousies sprung up between the two functionaries, and collisions occurred. The superintendent of the mission, Rev. John Seys, wrote to the Board of Managers, stating that timber was abundant in Liberia, but that the Government provided no means of making it of use to the colonists. He therefore asked that the machinery for the erection of a saw-mill be sent him. The machinery was sent, but when it arrived the governor seized it, and refused to surrender it till the regular duties were paid.

The Board determined to abandon the saw-mill project, and the machinery was left in the hands of the authorities to be destroyed by rust. The feud occasioned by this affair was serious and protracted. There were two little periodicals published in the colony, the "Liberia Herald," which was the Government organ, and "Africa's Luminary," which was published by our mission. These periodicals went into the war with great zeal and acrimony, the Herald assailing the mission, and the Luminary stoutly defending it, and both belligerents publishing many things which considerate men of all parties regretted.

The authorities at home took the matter in hand. Judge Wilkinson, president of the Colonization Society, addressed our Missionary Board, complaining of the action of Mr. Seys, and insisting upon his recall. It was even intimated that if the Board refused to remove him he would be expelled by force from the colony. Mr. Seys came home on business, and an earnest discussion took place between the two Boards in regard to his return to Africa. A large committee was sent by our Board to Washington, to confer with the Board of the Colonization Society, and we had a full investigation and a protracted discussion. Congress was in session, and several members attended the meeting, and took part in the debate. Mr. Mason, of Ohio, Mr. Underwood, of Kentucky, and Dr. Spring, of New York, were particularly severe in their attacks upon Mr. Seys. I was appointed to set forth our side of the controversy. I showed, from the columns of the two African papers, that Mr. Seys was not the aggressor; that the Herald had endeavored to bring our mission into disrepute, and had assailed the superintendent personally; that he had aided the colonists very materially in all their interests, and that hostile action on the part of the Colonization Board against our mission would injure all parties. The conference resulted in an amicable adjustment of the difficulty; Mr. Seys returned to Africa, and harmony was restored both at home and in the colony.

The Oregon Mission, established for the evangelizing of the Indians west of the Rocky Mountains, was accused of having become too secular in its measures. The superintendent, Rev. Jason Lee, had secured large tracts of land, and explorers not connected with the mission began to complain of it as a monopoly. Several families, sent thither by the Board, were ill prepared to encounter the

privations of frontier life, and became weary of the work which they had been sent to prosecute. These complaints and failures greatly annoyed the Board, and especially the missionary secretary, Dr. Bangs, who had planned the arrangements of the mission. There was also a lack of harmony among the missionaries, and the condition and success of the mission generally did not satisfy the expectations of the Church.

At this juncture, and in pursuance of the policy of retrenchment which had been found necessary, the Rev. George Gary, of the Black River Conference, a gentleman of distinguished prudence and ability, was sent to Oregon as superintendent of the mission, with instructions to reorganize it, and to sell all lands and other property not needed for a purely missionary undertaking. The good offices of Mr. Gary brought order out of confusion; but unforeseen events soon changed the aspect of Oregon as a field of mission work. Immigration increased along the coast, the Indians receded before it toward the mountains, and wars broke out between the settlers and the native tribes. As an enterprise for evangelizing the savages of the Pacific Coast, the mission failed of its object. The Board, however, adapted its plans to these changing circumstances, and the mission became the nucleus of the Oregon Conference, and its fruits are seen in the Churches and literary institutions which we have been enabled to plant in that new and rising State.

The mission in Buenos Ayres was also taxing our treasury too severely. The missionary, Rev. John Dempster, was planning for the erection of a seminary, but the Board deemed the needed outlay impracticable and the project was postponed.

The action of the Board in reference to these three missions was, by some of the real friends of the cause, denounced as timid and ruinous; but the effect was to establish confidence in the management of the missions, and increase the liberality of the Churches, so that the debt began to decrease and was finally all paid.

An attack was made upon the Methodist Episcopal Church about this time in "The Churchman," the organ of the Episcopalians, and I was led to reply in the columns of The Advocate. The first of a series of sixteen articles was published December 16, 1840, under the heading of "The Church and the Methodists," a title borrowed from our assailant. The series contains much that is old, and, perhaps, some things which are new and original, in the debate with the High-Church pretenders. The Oneida Conference passed a resolution requesting that my articles be published in book form, and I was inclined to comply; but Dr. Abel Stevens, who had been studying the same subject, announced a volume in much the same general line of research and argument, and my project was abandoned.

It may be recollected that the year previous to my coming to New York I had been greatly interested in the subject of entire sanctification. I found a deep interest in it in the New York Churches. Increased attention had been called to the doctrine by the fact that several Congregational ministers, Mahan, Upham, Fitch, Finney, and others, had lately assumed a new position in regard to it, and were earnestly engaged in preaching what was called Perfectionism. I read their publications with interest, and often heard them preach. It looked, at the first glance, as if they had embraced the Wesleyan theory of Christian perfection; but a close examination of the language which they employed convinced me that they had a theory of their own, and on several vital points

were in error. By the request of the pastor of the Mulberry Street Church, where my family attended, the Rev. J. H. Perry, D.D., I delivered a series of lectures on the subject in that Church, and afterward repeated them, also by request, in the John Street Methodist Episcopal Church. Continuing my researches, I gradually gathered a mass of matter which I finally concluded to put in print.

I believed that the subject needed a more thorough review, and more comprehensive treatment, than it had hitherto received at the hands of any one author. I studied the Church fathers and the Reformers, and found that conflicting theories on the subject had existed for centuries. Wesley and Fletcher had ably discussed the doctrine of Christian perfection in opposition to the Antinomian tendencies of their times; but since then the old, exploded dogma of legal perfection had been revived, clothed in a new and specious dress. The measures of Finney, Mahan, and the rest, attracted attention among our people, while their publications called forth from the ranks of both the Old and New School Calvinists a host of champions in advocacy of the doctrine maintained by Augustine and Calvin, of the necessary continuance of sin in believers.

These defenders of the Calvinistic theology were not content with attacking the errors which had arisen among themselves, but undertook to demolish all theories of Christian perfection. They brought into the discussion nothing that was really new, yet the old logic assumed new forms, and was applauded in certain quarters as if it had been hitherto unknown. My plan was to set forth the history of the doctrine, and of the controversies which had gathered about it; to define it in accordance with the Wesleyan standards; to prove it from the Scripture; to answer the objections which had been brought against it; and to develop its practical bearings upon the Christian life.

In the historical exhibit of the polemics of the question, my plan embraced everything essential to a full understanding, not only of the doctrine itself, but of the arguments of friend and foe. I had observed among our preachers a want of precision in defining the Wesleyan doctrine; a want of acquaintance with the controversy as found in the writings of Wesley and Fletcher; and what seemed to me, a growing indisposition on the part of some to study, with the diligence necessary to a mastery of the subject, the war of mighty thought and mighty words which gave Methodism its early triumphs, and entitled it to be respected not only as a great revival of religion, but as a theological system.

Consequently, I quoted my authorities sufficiently *in extenso* to give a clear idea of the perspicuity, theological accuracy, and logical skill of the old champions of evangelical truth. This method of treating the theme indeed makes increased demands upon the attention of the reader; nevertheless, I deemed it needful to a thorough understanding of a very important subject.

The work was published in 1842, and thoroughly revised in 1848. In the revision of the work I availed myself of the light derived from the criticisms of both the adherents and the opponents of the doctrine; and the book, as it stands, records my settled views on the subject.

In December, 1843, I put to press a work on the Rule of Faith, which I intended to be an exhaustive discussion of the question. I examined extensively the Romish and High Church authorities; I compared the traditionary systems of these writers with those of the Jewish Talmudists, and found a striking parallel between them. They all obscure the light of revelation, introduce serious

error, and are condemned by the great Teacher as making void the law of God. Dr. McClintock published an able review of it in the Methodist Quarterly Review.

In the winter of 1843-4 the Rev. James Sewell, pastor of the Washington Street Church, Brooklyn, having been transferred to the Baltimore Conference, I took the charge, occupied the parsonage, and was the acting pastor until the following June.

In May, 1844, the General Conference met in the Greene Street Church, New York. I had been elected a delegate by the New York Conference, of which the laws of the Church at that time made me a member. I regarded my election by that body as evidence, not only of kind feelings toward me personally, but of liberality toward strangers. The question of slavery was attracting great attention. The session had scarcely begun before there were exciting rumors afloat in regard to one of the bishops having become connected with the institution by a second marriage. The Rev. F. A. Harding, of the Baltimore Conference, had also become by marriage the legal owner of slaves, whom he refused to set free. For this he had been tried and expelled by his Conference, and had appealed to the General Conference. The appeal was presented by the Rev. W. A. Smith, of the Virginia Conference, while the action of the Baltimore Conference was defended by the Rev. John A. Collins, and the other delegates of the Conference. These two champions were both able debaters, ambitious to do good service to their respective causes, and thoroughly interested in the question at issue. The contest was long and arduous and in its progress the Conference and the whole Church became greatly agitated. It was a conflict between freedom and slavery, and the right triumphed; The action of the Baltimore Conference was confirmed.

On the 20th of May the second act of the ecclesiastical tragedy began. The Rev. John A. Collins and J. B. Houghtaling offered a resolution directing the Committee on Episcopacy to inquire whether there was any foundation for the report that "one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church had become connected with slavery." Two days afterward the committee reported a communication from Bishop Andrew stating the circumstances of his connection with the obnoxious institution. On the reception of this paper the Revs. A. Griffith and J. Davis, of the Baltimore delegation, offered an elaborate preamble and a brief resolution requesting the Bishop to resign his episcopal office. The remainder of the daily session was spent in discussing the motion. The next day the Revs. J. B. Finley and J. M. Trimble introduced a substitute in the following language:—

"Whereas, The Discipline of our Church forbids the doing of any thing calculated to destroy our itinerant general superintendency;

"And, whereas, Bishop Andrew has become connected with slavery by marriage and otherwise, and this act having drawn after it circumstances which, in the estimation of the General Conference, will greatly embarrass the exercise of his office as an itinerant general superintendent, if not in some places entirely prevent it; therefore,

Resolved, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of his office so long as this impediment remains."

This substitute was discussed day after day. Several plans of compromise were brought forward, but failed. On the first day of June the question was decided, and the substitute passed, one hundred and ten delegates voting in the affirmative, and sixty-eight in the negative.

The debate had been characterized by great decorum, but the excitement which it occasioned was intense. On the 5th of June a declaration was presented, signed by all the delegates from the slaveholding states, except those of the border Conferences, that "the continued agitation on the subject of slavery and abolition in a portion of the Church — the frequent action on that subject in the General Conference — and especially the extra-judicial proceedings against Bishop Andrew, which resulted in the virtual suspension of him from his office as superintendent — must produce a state of things in the South which renders a continuance of the jurisdiction of this General Conference over these Conferences inconsistent with the success of the ministry in the slaveholding States."

This declaration was referred to a committee of nine — Revs. Robert Paine, Glezen Filmore, Peter Akers, Nathan Bangs, Thomas Crowder, Thomas B. Sargeant, William Winans, Leonidas L. Hamline, and James Porter.

The next day Dr. Bascom read a protest against the action of the Conference in relation to Bishop Andrew, and a committee of three, consisting of S. Olin, J. P. Durbin, and L. L. Hamline, were appointed to prepare a statement of the facts connected with the proceedings in the case. Dr. Olin was excused from serving on this committee on account of ill health, and Dr. Hamline in consequence of his election to the episcopacy, and C. Elliot and G. Peck were appointed to fill the vacancies. The protest which Dr. Bascom read was the work of his own pen, and was marked by great boldness of statement and strength of language. He read it in his best style. The report of the Committee of Three took the form of a reply to this Protest.

The Committee of Nine reported a paper, which was adopted. This measure has since been styled in certain quarters the "Plan of Separation," but not truly, its design being simply to designate the principles by which the Church would shape its action in case the Southern Conferences should secede.

As chairman of the Committee on Slavery, it fell to my lot to report the following resolution: "That the resolutions passed at the General Conference of 1840, on the subject of colored testimony in Church trials be, and the same hereby are, rescinded." Bishop Soule was presiding at the time. He had a peculiar way of expressing his opinion in regard to any action proposed when he was in the chair. I made a few remarks in support of our resolution, and while I was doing so I saw the scowl gathering on the Bishop's brow. He shook his head, significantly and solemnly, and shrugged his shoulders in token of general disapprobation. When he came to put the motion, he characterized it as a proposal to rescind the "Bishops' resolutions" adopted by the last General Conference. But neither his obvious displeasure nor his little strategy produced any effect. Our report was adopted by a vote of one hundred and fifteen in the affirmative to forty opposed.

A new arrangement was made by the General Conference for the appointment of the Book Committees at New York and Cincinnati. Hitherto the committee had consisted of the preachers

stationed in those cities; and the power to supply vacancies occurring among editors and agents was with the New York and Ohio Conferences. It was now ordered that the Book Committee at New York consist of six preachers, the New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia Conferences each electing two. The committee of the Western Book Concern were to be elected in like manner by the Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana Conferences: The Committees and the Bishops were empowered to fix the salaries of editors and agents, and fill all vacancies. This transfer of responsibilities and powers was not altogether popular with those from whom the transfer was made, but was generally approved. It was also determined by the General Conference that an editor or agent might retain his membership in his own Conference.

Another change of some importance was made, restricting the power of the bishops in the appointment of presiding elders. Thenceforward no elder, having served a term of four years on a district, could be returned to that same district until after an interval of six years. A restriction was added in reference to the appointment of preachers in cities, it being determined that no preacher should remain more than four years in the same city at any one time, nor return till after an interval of four years. Those restrictions I regarded at the time as of doubtful utility, and the latter has since been repealed. Some probably favored them, with the idea that they would aid the bishops, and lessen the temptations of the preachers to localize their labors. It is said, however, that the chairman of the committee which reported them, Rev. J. B. McFerrin, rather boastingly declared that his object was, before he left us to tie up the North. to the itinerancy, and prevent our going into Congregationalism. My convictions have always been that the efficiency of our system depends upon the existence of a strong and untrammeled superintendency.

Still another important measure was the appointment of an editor for our Sunday School literature. This measure I earnestly advocated. Dr. Bangs opposed it as involving a needless expenditure. Dr. Bond, who, although not a member of the General Conference, had been invited by vote to participate in the deliberations, earnestly seconded the arguments of Dr. Bangs, maintaining that his assistant would have ample time to do all the work of the Sunday School department. It was argued, on the other hand, that we were doing too little in this promising field, and that its interests were of sufficient magnitude to demand one of the best minds of the Church. These more progressive views prevailed.

The proposition to restore to the Discipline Mr. Wesley's rule on the subject of spirituous liquors was again introduced. The Southern delegates had defeated the measure in 1840, and they still opposed. Bishop Andrew had decided, in 1840, that the majority of two thirds," named in the Restrictive Rule as necessary to inaugurate a measure of the kind, means two thirds of all the members elected to the General Conference. When the proposition was again brought forward, the Rev. J. Early, of the Virginia Conference, offered a resolution that it required "two thirds of all the members" to take the proposed action. This motion created an animated debate, in which I took part, maintaining that a constitutional quorum constituted the General Conference; and, a quorum being present, "two thirds of the General Conference" are simply two thirds of the members present and voting. Mr. Early's motion was lost, the vote being fifty in favor of it, and ninety in the negative. The vote was then taken on the main question, and resulted in favor of the restoration of the original rule, there being ninety-nine in favor, and thirty-three opposed. The resolution went the rounds of the

Annual Conferences, and, having obtained the requisite three fourths of all the members, the rule was restored to its place among the laws of the Church.

The measure afterward termed the Plan of Separation was provisional only, to be of no effect unless the Conferences in the slaveholding States should find separation inevitable. It was pressed by the Southern delegates as a peace measure. Some of the leading men among them held out the idea, in their conversations with the Northern delegates, that the Report of the Committee of Nine, if adopted, would tend to prevent separation rather than promote it; that it was an olive branch to carry through the South, showing that the Northern Conferences were not hostile to the Southern, and had no disposition to deprive them of their rights.

In a conversation with me, Dr. Capers said that he hoped there would be no division. On his return home he would go by way of Washington and consult Mr. Calhoun and Mr. McDuffie; and if they thought that the Methodists in the Southern Conferences could be held in connection with the General Conference under existing circumstances, he would use his influence to prevent secession." He seemed very sincere in all this, and, on the strength of such representations, the report was adopted by a strong majority; but before the Southern delegates left New York they met by themselves and determined on separation, laid their plans accordingly, and returned to their several Conferences to carry them into effect. It is very possible that the time has not yet come for us to pass final judgment on the men who took part in these transactions. These things were, in fact, a part of the great conflict which was steadily approaching — the first scattering drops of the coming storm.

Slavery tends to make the master-race bold, arrogant, conceited, savage, unscrupulous, and remorseless. He who would uphold it must neither fear God nor regard man. It is a despotism which is brutal in all its instincts, and blind to justice, honor, humanity, everything but its own sordid interests. In the free States opposition to the system, on moral and religious grounds, was becoming daily more general, more active and strong. In the slave states the institution held an iron sway, ruling political parties, the press, the Church. It was swift to reward its friends, and equally swift to punish its enemies. It tyrannized over men's lips, and minds, and consciences. He that doubted was damned. All must bow down and worship the hideous image set up, or be cast into the fiery furnace.

The delegates from the two sections, aside from their own personal convictions, were subject to a fearful pressure. The proslavery sentiment of the South and the antislavery sentiment of the North were equally exacting and vigilant. The one required action in the direction of universal liberty, the other demanded concessions in favor of slavery. If the action of the General Conference seemed for a moment to lean in the one direction, there was indignation and threatened disintegration at the North. If in the other, there was alarm and threats of separation in the South. How far the Southern Conferences were wrong in giving way before the pressure — how much of good or evil, as God sees it in the hearts of men, was involved in each man's agency — none but the Great Judge can tell; but we do the Southern delegates the merest justice when we recognize the straits in which they were placed. No possible measures of the General Conference could avert calamity. To do what the Southern members deemed essential to the welfare of the Churches in their section would ruin whole Conferences at the North; and even to temporize was full of peril. To do all that Northern sentiment demanded would have torn the Southern Conferences to shreds.

Nor were the convictions which men expressed, and the positions which they took, determined by the latitude of their homes. The field of the Baltimore Conference lay chiefly in slave territory, and yet its action was steadily in accordance with the traditions of the Church. It had expelled Mr. Harding for refusing to free the slaves of whom his marriage had made him the legal owner, and when his appeal came before the General Conference its delegates defended its action with the determination of men whose convictions are fixed. The Rev. Mr. Collins did very effective service. Two others, Messrs. Griffiths and Davis, introduced the resolution requesting Bishop Andrew to resign his episcopal office. Throughout the entire struggle the whole delegation "stood as an iron pillar strong."

The debate in the cases of Mr. Harding and Bishop Andrew was marked by great Christian courtesy, yet it foreshadowed a rupture of the Church. The North was in the right, both morally and ecclesiastically. It had been the settled policy of the Church not to elect to the office of General Superintendent any man implicated with slavery. It was maintained by the North, and granted by the South, that such complicity would impair the efficiency of an officer whose duty was to travel through the whole connection, North and South, to preside in the Annual Conferences, to ordain and appoint the preachers, and superintend the whole work. All knew that a slaveholding bishop would not be tolerated at the North. Bishop Andrew had been nominated in 1832 as a nonslaveholding southern man, and as such had been elected by northern as well as southern votes. When by his own voluntary act he became a slave-owner, he voluntarily unfitted himself for his high office, and violated the virtual compact. It therefore became the duty of the General Conference to remove the impediment. It was a sad issue for the delegates to meet, but they met it like men of nerve and men of God. The result is before the world.

The General Conference adjourned on the tenth of June, thus terminating a quadrennial session which had dealt with more momentous issues, and left a deeper mark in the history of the Church, than any which had preceded it. Two new bishops were elected and ordained at this General Conference, E. S. Janes and L. L. Hamline. I was re-elected editor of The Quarterly Review.

At this point I pause in my narrative to sketch a few of the leading men who took part in the controversy which affected so seriously the destinies of the Church, and who, by their own action, were soon to have no more place among us.

Bishop James O. Andrew was placed by circumstances in a very conspicuous position. He was elected to the episcopacy in 1832, as the choice of the Southern Conferences. He was never a favorite at the North. His election was urged by his friends on the ground that, while he was every way acceptable to the South, he was not embarrassed with the ownership of slaves, and consequently would not be unacceptable at the North. As we have already seen, these views of the matter were openly advanced by Dr. Capers in the council called to consult in regard to candidates. There never was a time when a slaveholder could have been elected bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. At the General Conference of 1832, a few Southern delegates, among whom Dr. W. Winans was conspicuous, did, indeed, take the position that slaveholding ought not to be a bar to any office in the Church; but the utterance was feeble, and seemed to find little favor, even among the representatives of the Southern Conferences.

Bishop Andrew was the occasion of the contest which divided the Church, and yet there is reason to believe that if he had been left to determine his own course, he would not have occupied this unenviable position. He had confined his official labors chiefly to the Southern part of the work, never once going the round of the Northern Conferences. He did not know the depth and power of the Northern feeling against slavery. Unwise counselors, perhaps as ill-informed as himself, clamored against his taking any step to relieve the difficulties of the situation. He was not aware of the gravity of his action when he deliberately implicated himself with an institution upon which the abhorrence of mankind was steadily gathering. When he began to awake to the disastrous consequences of his action, and was prompted to resign his office, and thus avert the catastrophe, his Southern friends relentlessly refused to allow him to resign. His bearing during the discussion showed an utter misapprehension of the facts connected with his election, and of the state of opinion in the Church. In some instances he exhibited a want of dignity, and in others the weakness of impatience. In one thing he never wavered: he was always a sectional Southern man, controlled by narrow views, blind to all beyond the line which separated the slave states from the free. Pitied for his weakness by some Northern delegates, and condemned by others for his recklessness, he was the idol of the Southern representatives, who honored him as a martyr.

The Rev. Henry B. Bascom, D.D., was the champion of the ecclesiastical secession. He was a wonderful man. Without the advantages of early education, he had become the prince of orators, endowed with an affluence of thought and language unsurpassed by the greatest names of this age. Fitted by nature to be one of the brightest ornaments of the Church and of the nation, he became the tool of a faction, and the special advocate of a doomed institution.

During, the General Conference of 1844, up to the time when a rupture was evidently threatening, he was silent, and occasionally seemed pensive. He manifested no interest in Bishop Andrew. He even conceded, in private intercourse, that the Bishop's conduct indicated a great lack of discretion. At one time there was a rumor that Dr. Bascom was about to propose a plan of compromise which might satisfy all parties; and the expectation was so strong, and apparently so well founded, that the Northern delegates were called together to hear his proposition. But the Southern delegates met at the same time in another place, Dr. Bascom being present. At the close of the Southern council he came directly to the meeting of the Northern delegates, and, being invited to state his plan of pacification, arose, and stood some seconds wringing and twisting about like one sensible of the awkwardness of his position, and then saying curtly that he "had nothing to propose," sat down.

The Rev. John Early then arose, and said that he wished it to be distinctly understood that Dr. Bascom was in full accord with the rest of the delegates from the South, and would act with them.

Dr. Bascom gave this declaration the assent of silence; and the next thing we heard from him was the famous protest. He made no speeches on the subject; indeed, he seldom spoke on any subject, but he became the grand scribe of the Southern faction. In addition to the Protest, which he read in his most impressive manner in the General Conference, he published two large pamphlets, characterized by remarkable strength of language and equally remarkable inattention to facts. These productions were saturated with wormwood and gall. All his wonderful powers of declamation and invective were enlisted for the occasion, and the venom of his pages spread far and wide through the South. Thus his splendid powers were abased to the fostering of sectional prejudice and hate. Thus

he applied his giant strength to push the nation toward the bloody chasm of fratricidal war. Six years afterward he was elected one of the bishops of the Southern Church, but died in September of the same year.

The Rev. William Capers, D.D., was famous during his earlier ministry for his powers in the pulpit, and even more noted for his ability on the floor of the General Conference. In 1820 he was one of the principal speakers in opposition to the election of presiding elders. During the session of 1824 he took part in many of the discussions, and was heard with profound respect. His delivery was fluent, his whole manner pleasing, his logic good. I always listened to him with pleasure. In the great debate of 1844, however, the unwelcome impression was made upon my mind that the silver-tongued orator lacked both depth and breadth; that he often was merely pathetic when he ought to have been convincing, and, where the occasion demanded the work of strong men, spent his efforts on the surface of things.

Dr. Capers was a good man. He really desired the peace of the Church. His heart was right, but he was in fetters, bound by his sectional associations. He regarded the prospective division of the Church as a misfortune, if not a judgment upon us, and looked forward to it with sighs and tears; but he lacked the needful courage and strength to lead in active resistance to it. He seemed to hope, almost to the last day of the session of 1844, that the catastrophe would somehow he averted; but at last yielded, and was swept along by the current of sectional influence. He was elected to the episcopacy by the first General Conference of the Southern Church in 1846, and died in 1855. In his early days Dr. Capers was what might be termed a handsome man, well formed, of rather small stature, with a beautiful black eye. His eloquence in the pulpit was engaging and persuasive; his conversational powers were rich. Time wrought changes in him; his brilliancy was less, but he was still good.

Dr. Lovick Pierce, of Georgia, was an independent thinker, a scholar, and a gentleman, but intensely southern in all his views and feelings. He made no set speech on the case of Bishop Andrew, but exercised as much influence as any other man. He was an eloquent preacher, albeit his style was somewhat peculiar. He was accustomed to deal in loose sentences, piling one great thought upon another, and closing with a climax, which was like the bursting forth of a volcano. In his best efforts he swept all before him, like a mountain torrent. He had the singular method of linking one sentence with another, holding upon the first till he began the second, and fusing the second with the third, and yet this did not affect the hearer unpleasantly. He passed through the debates of 1840 and 1844 without any loss of reputation as a Christian and a man of honor, even among those who differed from him in opinion.

Dr. William Winans, of Mississippi, was in many respects a great man. I heard him make his maiden speech in the General Conference of 1824, and listened, perhaps, to all he made, until the separation. He was a clear thinker and a logical reasoner. He was peculiar in dress, in manner, and in his style of speech. He never wore a cravat, and his collar, soiled with perspiration, generally hung awry. His speeches in General Conference were always delivered in a loud tone of voice, with the vehemence of a campmeeting sermon; but there were point and method in every thing he uttered. His attachment to slavery was strong, and his onslaughts on the abolitionists were ferocious. He was the first man who had the hardihood to take the position that the General Conference should protect

slavery, and honor it by conferring upon slaveholders the highest offices in the gift of the Church. This he declared to be the only basis of true peace between the North and the South. He represented the ultra-southern party. He always said what he meant, and meant what he said. He never courted the dark, nor concealed his aims. In his opinions on the subject of slavery he was a fanatic, but in every thing else he was a sober, honest, straightforward, hearty Methodist preacher. He made a characteristic speech in favor of Bishop Andrew, in which he explicitly declared that the action of the General Conference would result in the secession of the Southern Conferences.

The Rev. John Early, of Virginia, exercised unbounded influence among the Southern delegates. He was a man of courtly manners, and somewhat haughty in his bearing. In the General Conference he never made a long and elaborate speech, but spoke on almost every question, and always with the assurance of an oracle. His chosen work was to extol "the good old Discipline," and defend it against the attacks of Northern innovators. He generally contrived to get a seat near the president's chair. In speaking he was accustomed to saw the air with his right hand, bringing it down with an emphatic jerk at the end of every sentence. He was no favorite with the Northern delegates. He led his own party, and worried the other more by secret plots and combinations than by his arguments or eloquence upon the floor of the Conference. He was a Zealot for his section and its peculiar institution, and had a full share of the responsibility of the rending of the Church. He was the very ideal of a gentleman in his intercourse with his friends, and seemed made for a leader. He was elected bishop by the Southern Church in 1854, and died in 1873.

The Rev. William A. Smith, D.D., of Virginia, was first a member of the General Conference in 1832, and from the first was the most noisy and blustering defender of slavery with whom the North had to contend. He was bold, fluent, vehement, and often exceedingly offensive to those whom he opposed. He occupied more of the time of the General Conference of 1844 than any other man. He defended Mr. Harding and Bishop Andrew with a will. He had not the weight of many of the Southern delegates, but his confidence and readiness in debate made him a convenience to his party, and gave him prominence in the great discussion on the subject of slavery. His speeches were not characterized by strength nor ingenuity, but were made up of bold oratorical dashes, which excited the admiration of his friends and the contempt of others. Both in the pulpit and on the floor of Conference he was a thunderer, but produced more noise than rain. Without the mental grasp to estimate its far-reaching, disastrous consequences, he entered heartily into the project of severing the Church. Still, in his private intercourse he was agreeable; and though at times a little too presuming, he passed, even among Northern delegates, as a very pleasant companion.

The Rev. A. L. P. Green, of Tennessee, was a man of influence and talent, a kindhearted gentleman, not easily excited, but firmly holding his opinions, and strongly opposed to abolitionism. His speech in the case of Bishop Andrew was bold and defiant, and showed some originality and strength. His manner of speaking was somewhat monotonous, but the matter compensated abundantly for the manner. His influence in Tennessee was potent, the more so because of his quiet, dispassionate manner. Many of the old members of the Church were little moved by the boisterous declamations of agitators; but when Dr. Green arose in the assemblies which were called together to decide the question, and said, calmly, "Brethren, we had better go: the North will not let us stay on any terms: if we try to remain we shall be thrust out" — the opposition gave way; and, although

many did it with reluctance, they submitted to what they were taught to regard as inevitable. Dr. Green was a strong partisan, but nevertheless a highminded, honorable man.

The Rev. B. M. Drake, of Mississippi, was one of the noblest specimens of a Methodist preacher, a Christian, and a gentleman. He earnestly desired some adjustment of the Church troubles which would prevent division. While the leaders in the evil work were shouting, "To your tents, O Israel," and laboring to thwart every effort to restore harmony, his great heart bled. Through the whole contest he maintained amicable relations with his old friends of the North, but was finally overborne, and fell into line under the Southern leaders. He was a man of more real pulpit eloquence, of more polish and kindness of heart, than any of his compeers of the South. He made a short speech in the case of Bishop Andrew, but his remarks were free from acrimony. He, too, has gone to his reward.

The Rev. A. B. Longstreet, of Georgia, was a man of genius, and an out-and-out Southern man. He made a speech on the case of Bishop Andrew which abounded in references to ecclesiastical history, but was not particularly strong in argument. He held abolitionism in utter abhorrence.

"Brethren," said he to the more conservative Northern delegates, "you take us by the throat, and, in your paroxysms of love, choke us to death."

Lest his position should be misunderstood, and he be suspected of retaining a lingering hope of peace and union, he declared, with all emphasis, "I will never meet with you again." Judge Longstreet, as he was often familiarly called, was a man of ability and of influence, but sectional in all his views and purposes.

The. Rev. Thomas Crowder, of Virginia, was a plain, earnest, religious man. He pleaded in behalf of the colored people. He insisted that the Southern men were the only true friends of the slaves, and that while they were laboring for their salvation, the abolitionists threw obstacles in their way. He appeared to be a good man, only partially comprehending the great issues which were before us. His zeal for the interests of the slave, as he understood them, brought him out in earnest speeches in the General Conference which had but little effect upon the final result.

The Rev. Samuel Dunwoody was an old countryman, of Celtic origin. He made a long speech in defense of Bishop Andrew, in which he essayed a Scripture argument in behalf of human bondage, but produced more mirth than conviction. His homely eccentricities did something toward putting the body in good humor, but the great majority evidently deemed the time which he occupied wasted.

The Rev. Robert Paine, D.D., now one of the bishops of the Southern Church, was regarded as a man of very high character and great influence, especially in the State of Tennessee. He went decidedly, though without passion, with his section. In the General Conference of 1844 he was the chairman of the Committee of Nine, and reported what the Southern delegates at once named the Plan of Separation. He followed his report with a speech, which was conciliatory in language, and dispassionate in manner. His explanation of the report, and the mode in which it would be acted upon by the Southern Conferences, was in precise accordance with the views and intentions of the North. The plan was to be without effect until adopted by a constitutional majority of all the Annual Conferences. Secession was not a foregone conclusion. If it was ever inaugurated it must be by the

Annual Conferences. He declared that he loved and cherished the unity of the Church. The circumstances which threatened division were among the most painful events of his life. Nothing, he said, could exceed the depth of his feelings in regard to them but the pangs of conviction for sin when he was first awakened. This speech made a profound impression, and did much to reconcile Northern members to the adoption of the report. His declarations were accepted in good faith, no one dreaming that the Southern delegates would inaugurate secession before they left for home.

The Rev. George F. Pierce, D.D., of Georgia, now a bishop of the Church South, is the counterpart of his honored father, with a better elocution, more polish, less caution, and perhaps less impressive in manner. He delivered a speech in the case of Bishop Andrew which was remarkable for the beauty of its imagery and the power of its eloquence, but which, contained bitter passages denunciatory of New England. He said:—

"I prefer that all New England should secede, or be set off, and have her share of the Church property. I infinitely prefer that they should go rather than this General Conference should proceed to make this ruthless invasion upon the connectional unity and integrity of the Church. Let New England go, with all my heart. She has been for the last twenty years a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet us. Let her go, and joy go with her, for peace will stay behind. The Southern Church has nothing to fear, and she has nothing to ask on this subject. So far as we are concerned, sir, the greatest blessing that could befall us would be a division of this Union."

This passage sufficiently characterizes the speaker. It defines his position, it is an exponent of his policy, and a specimen of his style. It shows his estimate of the land of the pilgrims; the field where Jesse Lee toiled; the birthplace of Fiske, Hedding, and Soule. It also reveals his views in regard to the national Union. Although the orator was almost too bitter to be courteous during this stormy Conference, yet there were moments of sunshine, in which he exhibited good humor, and even playfulness. He is one of the men of whom the South has been proud, but whose counsels, nevertheless, history has already condemned.

Thus I have briefly described the Southern men who were most prominent in the great movements of 1844. It is very possible, in those times of conflict, when the North and the South found themselves in collision from which neither saw a way of escape — when prejudice was strong and passion not wanting on either side — that those who came before the public eye did not always show their best side — moral, religious, or even mental. It is possible, too, that even when they did themselves no injustice, those on the other side of the controversy would naturally tend to severe judgments of them. Such, however, were my impressions at the time, and they are given as they were formed.

Able speeches were made in favor of the proposed action of the General Conference; but I shall not attempt to trace the debate. Some of these speeches were exceedingly conciliatory, almost to the point of surrender; but the most of them were earnest, explicit protests against the innovation of a slaveholding episcopacy. J. B. Finley and Peter Cartwright handled the subject in their blunt, merciless way, saying many things which grated upon Southern ears. John A. Collins, one of the readiest debaters of the body, pressed hard upon the offending bishop, and met, with the facts of history and the deductions of sound logic, the arguments and apologies of those who sought to justify

his conduct. Dr. Durbin made a conclusive argument in favor of the contemplated action. Many others made speeches characterized by ability and by an appreciation of the difficulties of the case and of the magnitude of the interests involved.

The great speech of the occasion, however, was delivered by Rev. Dr. Hamline, at that time editor of the Ladies' Repository. He brought forward all his resources of legal knowledge, logical acumen, and beautiful elocution, fearlessly meeting the pretended constitutional difficulty, and effectually disposing of it. The Southern speakers had rung the changes upon the alleged unconstitutionality of disfranchising a bishop without charges, specifications, and trial. Dr. Hamline argued that the General Conference has all power — legislative, judicial, and administrative — limited only by the Restrictive Rules of the Church; and that, consequently, the office of a bishop may be taken from him for the time being, or permanently, if he should by any means render himself incompetent to exercise its functions to the profit and edification of the Church, and that he may be thus suspended or removed by the General Conference without the charge of malfeasance. He treated the constitutional question more at length than any other speaker, but did not neglect to discuss the expediency of the measures proposed. The argument was so clear and conclusive that nothing was left to be desired, and the reputation of Dr. Hamline was established as a master of forensic eloquence. This speech had much to do with his election to the episcopacy, only a few days after its delivery.

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Chapter 11
1844-48, METHODIST QUARTERLY REVIEW

Under the provisions of the report of the Committee of Nine, as explained by Dr. Paine, the chairman of the Committee, there was to be no severing of the Church unless the tendencies in that direction should prove invincible; and, even then, the measure was null and void until the constitutional majority of three fourths of all the members of all the Annual Conferences should favor it. In case of its ultimate adoption, the Churches on the border line between free and slave territory were to have the right to decide for themselves to which section they should belong. But, as we have seen, the Southern delegates, before they left New York, held a meeting and took action which assumed that separation was inevitable. Returning home, they proceeded to call public meetings for the purpose of explaining to the people the action of the General Conference, and evoking their judgment in the case. As might readily be inferred from the animus of the delegates themselves, the Southern Conferences all went one way. Delegates were elected to attend a General Convention, which met in the city of Louisville in May, 1845, and organized the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Along the border lay a broad belt of territory, where among the people all shades of opinion could be found, from extreme pro-slavery to ultra-abolition; and when the individual societies came to vote on the question of their future ecclesiastical relations there was strife and collision. Dr. Bond, editor of the (New York) Advocate, was from Baltimore. He was deeply interested in the action of the Churches on the border, and from his nativity, his ability, his former services in behalf of the Church, and his personal acquaintance with leading men, had great influence in that section. He took ground against the constitutionality of the measures which were being pursued, and labored hard to persuade the people not to follow the preachers into the secession movement He received communications daily from individual members of the Church, declaring their opposition to separation, and for a time he hoped that the project to divide the Church would fail. A fierce war of words was carried on between the Northern and Southern Methodist newspapers, and great agitation was engendered on both sides.

Dr. Bascom issued a pamphlet of one hundred and sixty-five pages, characterized by the same kind of logic which marked his "Protest," but far exceeding that document in virulence. It professed to be a review of the reply to the "Protest." I was requested by Drs. Elliott and Durbin to prepare a reply to Dr. Bascom's review, which I did, in a pamphlet of one hundred and thirty-nine pages, entitled "Slavery and the Episcopacy." Aside from this publication I took little part in the controversy. Bishop Hamline was anxious that I should go into the discussion in the columns of our Church papers, and wrote me a letter on the subject; but I saw no prospect of doing good sufficient to tempt me to launch upon the stormy sea of passion which was then raging.

A number of the leading men, ministers and laymen, of the Protestant Churches of various countries had been for some time discussing the project of a world's convention, to be composed of representatives of the various branches of the general Church, and to meet for the purpose of spending a few days in Christian communion. The meeting of this body, which assumed the name of the "Evangelical Alliance," was to be held in London in the month of August, 1846, and the Oneida and Black River Conferences elected me to represent them.

On the 15th of July I left my home, and the next day embarked at Boston on the steamer Britannia, of the Cunard line, our party consisting of President Emory and Professor Caldwell of Dickinson College, Dr. John Kennaday of Philadelphia, Dr. Roberts of Baltimore, the Rev. George Webber of Maine, and myself. We had about one hundred passengers, of various nationalities. On the third day out we were approaching the rock-bound coast of Nova Scotia, and were enveloped in so dense a fog that nothing could be seen a few yards from the vessel. The captain was evidently anxious, and the passengers began to be apprehensive. The engine was "slowed," and the lead thrown constantly; but in spite of all precautions the ship struck heavily upon the rocks, first on the bow, and then, as we slid off that obstruction, amidships, and then, as we swung around, on the stern of the vessel. The scene was exciting. There were one hundred and seventy souls on board, and, in case of wreck, the small boats would hardly suffice to save even the women and children. Some of the ladies began to cry with terror, and could not be comforted. Dr. Emory produced his life-preserver, and proceeded to inflate it, his example being followed by many others. William Lloyd Garrison stood in silent consternation in the midst of the confusion, and I noticed that he had under his arm a book which he had been diligently reading for the last three days — Sue's "Wandering Jew." Sundry profane, brandy-drinking gentlemen, whose faces usually bore the perennial blush which pertains to their habits, turned pale, notwithstanding the alcohol. A little boy clapped his hands with glee, and exclaimed, "I always wanted to see a wreck!" A schooner suddenly came out of the fog, and a voice hailed us. "Where are we?" shouted our officer.

"Don't know," was the reply; and the schooner vanished in the fog as suddenly as it came. A small boat was lowered, and by repeated soundings a way into deep water was discovered, and we once more got in motion. Night came on, a night of alarm and suspense. The steam pumps were in operation, indicating that the vessel had been damaged by the collision; but the event was better than our fears, and at sunrise the next morning we entered the harbor of Halifax.

It was the Sabbath, and our party went ashore and attended service in the Wesleyan Chapel. On our return to the ship we held a council in regard to the expediency of continuing our voyage. The port admiral had made an examination, and had found a part of the false keel gone, and discovered a large leak. Some repairs had been made, and we were notified that the vessel would sail the next morning. All decided to proceed except Doctors Roberts and Kennaday, who determined to return home, and did so, and again came near being wrecked on their way. Early on Monday we steamed out of the harbor, and once more plunged into the fog, which enveloped us day and night till we passed the banks of Newfoundland. There was still room for anxiety. The ship was leaking badly, and the coal in the hold prevented the water from reaching the pumps, so we were told, and therefore quantities of coal were brought up and piled on the deck. Slowly steaming along, with speed diminishing daily, we reached Cape Clear, on the fifteenth day from Boston, and the next day arrived

at Liverpool, grateful to God for bringing us safe to land after a succession of alarms and serious dangers.

We were, of course, waited upon by the Customhouse officials, and our baggage closely examined, with the usual experiences. One of our passengers, a devotee of the weed, had a private store of cigars laid up in a hat box. They were discovered, and a demand was made for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents due the British Government. "Hang your Government," said the wrathful Yankee. "Take the cigars, and much good may they do you." A huge trunk belonging to an old Frenchman was turned up from the bottom, and its contents were scattered over the pavement in a style which was immeasurably provoking to the owner of the chattels.

It was a gala day in Liverpool, Prince Albert visiting the city for the purpose of laying the foundation of a new dock, and the cornerstone of a Seaman's Home. We, however, were so occupied with the Customhouse business that we missed the sight, so we postponed exploration, and went to our lodgings. In the evening there was a splendid illumination. The next morning we looked at the town a little, and then took the train for Bristol, and passed through a beautiful agricultural region. On our arrival we engaged rooms at an hotel, and the same afternoon called upon the Rev. Dr. Robert Newton; who gave us a very cordial reception, and promised us an early introduction to the Wesleyan Conference, then in session at Bristol.

This favor was not granted, however, until our names and standing had been announced, and also our relations to the subject of slavery duly explained. This being done, one of the members of the Conference called upon us at the hotel, and conducted us to the place. We were invited to the platform, introduced to the president, and by him to the Conference, and then seated among the various dignitaries gathered there, ex-presidents, secretaries, and visitors of distinction. We found ourselves in the presence of a most talented and dignified body of ministers. They were generally ruddy, stout, healthy looking men, with a great deal of good nature exhibited in their words and manner, and no special lack of self-assertion. Dr. Bunting was the Nestor of the body, a beautiful speaker, an able debater, always pertinent, and always good-tempered and respectful. He watched the business carefully; spoke often, and his opinion was generally decisive. In person he was well formed, with a florid complexion, and was somewhat inclined to corpulency. Dr. Bunting was at the head of the conservative party of the Conference, and thus had the great majority with him. Dr. Beaumont led the progressives. He was a very ready debater, and spoke often, not hesitating to engage Dr. Bunting whenever he judged that opposition was appropriate.

The entire body consisted of, perhaps, three hundred members. The "Legal Hundred," who form in law the Wesleyan Conference, sat by themselves next to the platform. Those who took part in the discussions were few in number, the great majority being content to listen and cheer. There was more disposition to express approbation and disapproval in a noisy way than is common on our side of the Atlantic in similar assemblies. We listened to what was to us a novel thing — the reading of the appointments for the consideration of the Conference. The secretary read rapidly. When a member heard his name in connection with some arrangement which did not accord with his judgment or desires, he would start to his feet, exclaiming, "Stop there!" The secretary would then pause, and the objector assign his reasons for opposing the appointment made, declaring, perhaps, that he was worthy of a better field of labor than the one named. Then followed a general debate, more or less

protracted, in which the advantages of the circuit and the claims of the preacher were discussed with a plainness of speech, and sometimes an asperity, which, in an American Conference, would be regarded with alarm as imperiling personal friendships and brotherly love. The debates were conducted in strict parliamentary form, and the speakers were ready and fluent, with no such hesitation and drawling as is sometimes represented as the prevailing English manner.

None of our company was honored with an invitation to preach on the Sabbath. This, however, must not be construed as indicating a lack of courtesy, inasmuch as the custom is to make the appointments for the occasion months beforehand. We heard Mr. Stanley, Mr. Atherton, Mr. Rowland, and Dr. Beaumont. I was especially impressed with the sermon of the doctor. His eloquence was peculiar, characterized by somewhat extravagant figures and violent gestures, but at times overwhelming. We saw the old chapel built by Wesley. It is a very plain structure, with high galleries, and for seats, oaken benches without backs. A staircase leads from the pulpit to an opening in the ceiling, communicating with a kitchen and bedroom up under the roof, where Wesley was accustomed to take his meals and sleep. We visited Clifton, and the Hot Wells, where Wesley once went for an affection of the lungs; we looked at Kingswood from a distance, and left Bristol for Ireland.

On Friday, August 7, we embarked on the "Shamrock," a clumsy and comfortless steamboat, landed the next day at Kingston, and took the train for Dublin. Having secured rooms at an hotel, we paid our respects to Mr. Grier, the pastor of the Abbey Street Society. We found the parsonage, like Wesley's rooms at Bristol, up in the roof of the chapel over the audience room, the way of approach being a narrow staircase.

Mr. Grier introduced us to the superintendent of the circuit, and on the Sabbath each of us preached morning and evening. We also attended service in St. Patrick's Cathedral; and took tea, Sunday evening, in the tea-room of Centenary Chapel, with the official brethren of that Society. These Sunday "class teas," as they are styled, are a sort of social religious gathering. Prayer is offered, speeches are made, and every person present is expected to repeat a passage of Scripture.

On Monday morning we were taken in charge by Mr. Carson, a very respectable member of the Wesleyan Society, and made a round of sight-seeing. Our conveyance was that peculiar Irish institution, a jaunting-car. We visited the Museum, the Bank, the old House of Lords, the University, the Castle, several old churches, and many other objects of interest. In the library of the University, which contains ninety thousand volumes and a multitude of curious manuscripts, we examined the *Codex Montfortii*, a Greek manuscript copy of the New Testament of unknown age, which is one of the authorities referred to in the debates concerning the disputed passage in I John v, 7. We called upon Daniel O'Connell, and were very kindly received, although Mr. Carson, before we were invited into the study of the great "Liberator of Ireland," was required to give assurance that we were not slaveholders.

We found Mr. O'Connell clad in a green blouse and cap. He was frank and free in conversation. We talked about American slavery, of course, and when we told him that, even in the Southern States, the majority of the white people owned no slaves, he was surprised, and asked with emphasis, "Do you say this of your own knowledge, or is it matter of report?" Our interview closed with a

touch of blarney all around, Mr. O'Connell assuring us that "he was very proud to be visited by such distinguished gentlemen from America." The same afternoon we looked in at a repeal meeting in Conciliation Hall, where we again saw him, with his son John, Smith O'Brien, Mr. Steele, and others. The next day we bade adieu to our friends in Dublin, where we had been entertained with generous hospitality, and directed our course toward Belfast. We made the journey from Drogheda by stage; and riding on the outside, had a good view of the country.

We saw a beautiful farming country, with a few splendid mansions, and a great number of cottages and shanties along the road. It was harvest time, and many men and women were at work in the fields cutting the grain close to the ground with sickles. In Ireland, the good and the bad, the sublime and the ridiculous, never separate. Palaces and hovels form a part of every landscape. Splendidly dressed gentlemen and ladies, and the raggedest of paupers, are seen with the same glance of the eye; and before the doors of fine churches, beggar women hold out their hands, beseeching "your honor, for the love of God," to give them a penny for their poor childers.

Arriving at Belfast we took a steamer for Scotland. A crowd of Irish laborers, men and women, perhaps two hundred in number, were our fellow-passengers, on their way to seek employment in the Scotch harvest fields. Night came on, with a drizzling rain, and this crowd had no rights anywhere except on deck, where they had no shelter or covering of any kind. But Irish humor is unquenchable. It was amusing to see the captain collect the fare. Not a few had no tickets, they had lost them, they said; or, "Pat had taken it, jist, and they would be afther getting it for his honor, in a hurry." Landing at Androsson, we took the train for Glasgow. I looked to see what became of the Irish laborers. They also got on the train, but took the third class cars, which were mere pens on wheels. They were as hilarious and noisy as ever.

We spent only a few hours in Glasgow, visiting the Cathedral, the University, and the Necropolis, and then set off for Loch Lomond. A small steamboat took us to Dumbarton, on the Clyde, whence we rode to the loch, four miles, in an omnibus drawn by three poor horses. Reaching the lake, we embarked on the little steamboat. It was a rainy afternoon, but we spent most of the time on deck, admiring the wild and beautiful scenery. The loch is about twenty-four miles long, dotted with islands and surrounded by mountains, affording, as says Walter Scott; "one of the most surprising, beautiful, and sublime scenes in nature." On the western shore, Ben Lomond, covered with verdure to its very summit, rises with a gentle ascent to the height of three thousand feet above the sea. The humidity of the air is such that even the slopes of the rocks, where moss or mold can find lodgment, are beautiful with grass and ferns.

We took rooms for the night at the little hotel at the head of the loch, and began the return voyage at five o'clock in the morning. After another brief stay in Glasgow we took the train for Edinburgh, where we found lodgings at the York House, a temperance inn. We visited Calton Hill, where several beautiful monuments are located. Ascending Nelson's monument, we had a splendid view of the city and its suburbs. We also ascended Salisbury Crag, resolved to see a sunset from Arthur's Seat, a rock on the summit. On the way two little urchins succeeded in fastening themselves upon us as guides. We stopped at St. Anthony's Well and drank some of the water, and glanced at the ruins of the old Monk's Chapel, hard by. The view from Arthur's Seat is magnificent. A large tract of country is

spread before the eye, embracing several towns and villages. The smoke of Dalkeith was visible on the south, and Sterling on the west

The next day we called on Alexander Hay to whom we had letters of introduction from his son, a Wesleyan minister in Dublin. Mr. Hay was a member of the city council, and, of course, had access to all the places of interest. We first visited Holy Rood, the old palace of Mary Queen of Scots. We saw the queen's private room, her bed, and chairs, and tables, Lord Darnley's boots and spurs, and what are said to be stains made by the blood of the murdered Rizzio, her secretary. We saw also the little handful of bones which Cromwell, in quest of material for bullets, turned out of their leaden coffins, and which are all that remains of the kings who reigned before the Commonwealth.

The Castle is one of the wonders of the city. There we saw the crown jewels of Scotland, which were long supposed to be lost. There was a tradition that they were somewhere in the Castle, inclosed in the masonry, but no thorough search had been made for them until Sir Walter Scott prevailed on George IV to command an investigation. They were found walled into the tower, inclosed in a strong iron-bound oaken chest, which is exhibited to the curious.

We visited the house which was once the residence of John Knox, and which bears on its corner an effigy of the sturdy Scotch reformer, with a Bible in his left hand, and the right extended, as if he were still thundering his denunciations against all who take away "the key of knowledge" from the people. After examining various places of interest, among them Heriot's Hospital for Orphans, established two centuries ago, and still doing its benevolent work, the Council Chambers and the Methodist Chapel, we took passage on the coach, and, after a beautiful ride, reached Melrose, and examined the ruins of the ancient Abbey by twilight. Enough of the structure is still standing to show that it cost a vast amount of labor and skill, and to impress upon the memory a vision of beauty. A statue of St. Peter, on the ruined wall, stands amid the desolation, still clutching the keys, much as his "successor" at Rome stands among the ruins of his ecclesiastical empire, proclaiming his own infallibility, and asserting his divine right to rule the nations which have revolted from him, never more to own his sway. The next morning we visited the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, which, like that of Melrose, dates back to the twelfth century, and was almost the equal of Melrose in beauty and grandeur. Here is the grave of Sir Walter Scott, surrounded by a railing, but without a monument of any kind. From his grave we went to Abbotsford, once his residence. When he took possession of the place it was simply a naked moor. It is now a beautiful park, showing everywhere the results of industry and refined taste. The house was built a part at a time, each addition in a different style of architecture, and contains relics of almost all ages and nations. His library was to us the greatest attraction. We seated ourselves in the chair which he was accustomed to occupy, and leaned upon the desk on which he wrote his famous works. The room contains many curious things: suits of ancient armor; Rob Roy's gun, (which is a clumsy matchlock;) Sir Walter's suit of tweed, in which he used to ramble over his fields with his favorite dog; also his spade, hoe, and pruning-knife. On his birthday, August 15, the same day on which his statue was set up with great ceremony in Edinburgh, we were walking thoughtfully through the apartments in which he had dwelt, and examining the rare and beautiful things which he had gathered. We left Abbotsford with increased admiration of the genius of Scott, but with regret that his splendid powers had not been devoted to still nobler themes, and left still more valuable memorials of his greatness.

From Abbotsford we took the coach for Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The day was rainy, and we had a very uncomfortable journey. The road, like all roads in England, Ireland, and Scotland, was very hard and smooth, and yet it led, for a considerable distance, over extensive moors — wild, uncultivated lands, kept in their present condition as the shooting grounds of the gentry to whose estates they belong. This land, now devoted to a not very refined or humane sport, would afford employment and food for thousands of the poor, over whose sufferings British philanthropy is in a constant worry, but whose numbers show no diminution. About half-past seven in the evening we reached Newcastle, wet and weary, and went to an inn. The next day was the Sabbath. In the morning we attended the Wesleyan Chapel, and heard a fair sermon. At the close of the service we went into the vestry, and inquired of the preacher where we would find Mr. Wesley's old chapel, which we visited. It was occupied as a Sunday School room. In the afternoon we heard a minister of the Church of England read a dry lecture in an old church, the pews of which had straight backs as high as the heads of the people who sat in them.

On Monday morning we took the train for York. By this time we had begun to understand the ways of the country. In America, when the traveler pays his regular bill at the desk of the hotel, he puts on his hat and gloves and departs in peace. In England, after the bill is paid, the traveler finds himself surrounded by a group of men and women, from five to ten in number, the employees of the house, who come forward with their most captivating smirk and ask to be "remembered," by which dainty phrase they divulge the fact that they expect a fee of a shilling or two. The cook, the waiter, the chambermaid, the bootblack, the porter, all desire to be held in remembrance, and seem to feel no humiliation in telling you so. The driver and the guard on the coach are also fearful that they will be "to dull forgetfulness a prey." To those not accustomed to it, these exactions seem a little meaner and more annoying than the outstretched hands and importunities of the street beggars. On this occasion we thought that we had squared accounts with the whole tribe, but when we rode to the next station the porter got on the box with the driver, took our one small trunk and three or four valises from the carriage, laid them on the platform, and again presented himself with outstretched palm.

At York we examined several objects of interest. The Minster is a fine specimen of the old English Cathedral. The old city wall, built by the Romans, is still standing. Leaving York we went on to Chesterfield, where we stopped long enough to ride out to Chatsworth House, a splendid palace belonging to the Duke of Bedford: Here we saw many objects worthy of note; among others, a greenhouse which is said to be the most magnificent in the world. Leaving Chesterfield we dined late in the day, and then took the train for London, which city we reached at five o'clock in the morning. At Mr. Randall's I found Mr. Willard Ives, from Watertown, New York, my fellow-representative from the Black River Conference; also Rev. Dr. S. Olin and lady, and several other Americans. At ten o'clock the same morning. a large committee met in Exeter Hall, consisting of delegates from every country represented in the movement of the Evangelical bodies.

We were now in London, the largest and most important city in the world. It was founded before the Christian era. It now numbers two and a half millions of people, and in it are seen the men, the manners, costumes, and habits of all nations. I devoted eight days to sight-seeing, but months would be none too much time for those who desire to see all. I was hospitably entertained during the session of the Alliance by Edward Corderoy, whose residence was on the Surrey side of the Thames, in Lambeth Terrace, near the palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Mr. Corderoy was a

distinguished member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. Through his agency I obtained access to public places under more favorable auspices than usually falls to strangers. We visited together the Bishop's Palace. Passing through the vast library, with its treasures of books and manuscripts, the picture gallery, where we saw the portraits of all the Archbishops of Canterbury, we ascended the tower and entered the Lollards' Prison. What a place, and what associations! Here, by the authority of Rome, the followers of Wycliff were imprisoned for reading the word of God, and teaching the doctrine of justification by faith. Here some of them died from the rigors of imprisonment, others were taken hence to the scaffold or the flame. The walls of the prison are lined with heavy oak plank; and the massive door, studded thick with the heads of iron bolts, groaned on its hinges as we entered. The rings to which the prisoners were chained yet remain in their places; and here and there, rudely carved upon the oaken walls, the blessed promises in which martyrs and confessors trusted in the hour of trial, such as these: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

We went up to the top of the tower for the sake of the view which it affords. The whole city was spread before our eyes, though the more distant parts were obscured by mist and smoke, from which the atmosphere of London is scarcely ever free.

"There," said my friend, "you see London to its utmost bounds."

"Yes," I replied, "and a magnificent spectacle it is. All it needs is an American sun to light it."

"An American sun!" responded he, in a tone which showed that he was a little annoyed by my impromptu suggestion. "Nothing is worth seeing except in the light of an American sun."

I, of course, disclaimed at once any intention to depreciate the English luminary. Several objects of great interest arrest the attention as we survey London from the tower of Lambeth Palace. The most prominent feature of the scene is St. Paul's Cathedral. It is of Grecian architecture, built, as were all the old cathedrals, in the form of a cross, and stands on somewhat elevated ground. Its length within the walls is 510 feet, the breadth 282; the interior circumference of the dome 300, the height from the lower floor to the cross 340. It was commenced in 1675, and was completed in thirty-five years, at a cost of a million and a half of pounds sterling. The next most striking object is Westminster Abbey, a Gothic structure, which was begun by Henry III, but which was so extensive and elaborate in its plan that the portions first erected began to feel the tooth of time before others were completed. A part of the work, indeed, has been added in comparatively modern times.

Westminster Abbey is full of the mementos of the past. The chapel of Henry VII was to me the most interesting part of the edifice. It was built for a royal burial place. Here are the graves of the English sovereigns, each tomb surmounted with an effigy, in a recumbent posture, carved in coarse stone, of the king or queen whose remains sleep below. Here are also the monuments of England's great men, her statesmen, her generals, her philosophers. The south transept is called the Poets' Corner, and here you see the sculptured names of Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Milton, Gray, Dryden, Thomson, Goldsmith, and others. Here, too, is seen the throne used on the coronation days of the kings and queens of England. It is simply an old oaken chair, the back of which has a pointed top. Here is also shown a heavy oblong stone, said to be the throne on which

the kings of Scotland were crowned. It was brought to England by Edward I. In the olden time of superstition it was believed to be the very stone on which Jacob's head lay, when he saw the wondrous vision.

Buckingham Palace, the ordinary residence of the royal family, is in full view from our tower. We afterward took a little stroll about the royal habitation, and were impressed with the beauty of the grounds and the fussy officiousness of their guardians. The English are pre-eminently a loyal, law-abiding people, with great respect for authority, and for all who wield it. The shadow which follows this luminous point in the national character is, that every petty functionary is morbidly pompous, anxious to show his authority, and never easy in his mind unless he is bullying somebody.

"Don't put your hand on that gate, sir;" "Don't lean on that pillar, sir;" "Keep away from the wall, sir;" said one and another of them to us as we walked around.

"Don't be alarmed," finally replied one of our party; "we don't intend to break into the palace."

The Tower of London, a stronghold built by William the Conqueror, is well worthy of a prolonged examination. It is not a single structure, such as its name would naturally suggest, but a series of buildings devoted to various purposes, and surrounded by a wall and moat, the inclosed space being an area of twelve or thirteen acres. Within, we find a church, the Old Mint, the Horse Armory, the Jewel Office, and sundry other curious places. The Horse Armory contains a series of figures clad each in the armor of the century which it represents, and mounted on horseback, Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, and various other kings and queens, are represented as they appeared on the field in grand reviews. In the Jewel Office, protected by an iron railing and a wire screen, are the imperial regalia worn on coronation days. Here is the crown which was placed upon the head of Victoria. It is said to contain the most valuable diamond in the world. The value of the crown-jewels deposited in this office is estimated to be ten millions of dollars.

We were shown the cell in which Sir Walter Raleigh was confined, and where he wrote his great "History of the World." Here is the block on which royal and noble offenders lost their heads, and the cruel axe with which the dreadful work was done. Two deep cuts in the wood show the force of the fatal blows. I looked at them and thought of Ann Boleyn, Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Wolsey, and others, and so many melancholy reflections thronged upon my mind that I was glad to turn away from the place.

But it would require a volume to do justice to the various objects of interest spread before the traveler who visits London. We turn, therefore, to the Convention, which tempted us across the ocean.

The Evangelical Alliance met in Freemason's Hall on the 19th of August, 1846. I thought it, morally, the grandest gathering of modern times. The entire number of delegates in attendance was nearly nine hundred. The United States sent seventy, of whom seventeen were ministers or members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. There were representative men, clerical and lay, of fifty different denominations, and from all parts of the world, assembled for the purpose of counseling together in regard to the cause of Christ, and strengthening the bonds which unite his followers. Great gravity

and decorum characterized the assembly, and the devotional feeling predominated. The permanent chairman elected was Sir Culling Eardley Smith, an Oxford scholar, an earnest Christian, and a man of excellent spirit, who presided with great propriety and urbanity. In mental grasp, and a knowledge of parliamentary usages, several other members of the Alliance excelled him. Among the distinguished men, Europeans, of the body were John Angell James, Dr. Wardlaw, the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, Horace Binney, Howard Hinton, Edward Bickersteth, Dr. Raffles, Dr. Bunting, and Adolph Monod. Among the Americans were Doctors S. H. Cox, Olin, Patton, De Witt, Dempster, Erskine Mason, and Edward N. Kirk.

The doctrinal basis agreed upon contains nine articles. One of these, which affirms the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the lost, occasioned considerable discussion. The French and the Germans were willing to draw the line so as not to exclude the advocates of universal restoration, and a few of the English agreed with them. In defense of the article in question, Dr. Cox made a brilliant speech, which the chairman pronounced the grandest specimen of eloquence which Freemason's Hall had ever witnessed.

The subject of slavery called forth much discussion, and occasioned great anxiety. The English and the Scotch were in favor of excluding slaveholders from participation in the Convention. The Americans agreed that the subject of slavery ought not to be brought into the deliberations of the Alliance. Drs. Cox and Olin, Dr. Smyth, of Charleston, and Dr. Morse, of "The New York Observer," took an active part in the debate. A compromise was finally effected.

Large portions of time were spent in devotional exercises, in addresses on Christian experience, and the essential units of all evangelical Churches. The speeches were extempore, always respectable, often brilliant, and of a most Catholic and brotherly spirit. They were grand exhibitions of intellect and heart. The style of delivery was easy, natural, with little to criticize. In regard to the conduct of the audience the European manner was in the ascendant; applause was quite common, signs of disapprobation not unknown, and occasionally what Americans deemed confusion reigned for a brief period. When the chairman found things getting amiss, he would call out loudly, "Order! order!" If this did not suffice to restore order, he would demand, "Shall the Chair be sustained?" Then would follow cries from all parts of the assembly, "Chair, Chair, Chair," and silence, a statement by the chairman of the state of the question, and then things would move on again.

During the session of the Alliance, several public meetings, held in Exeter Hall, were attended by vast multitudes of people, and made a fine impression. The rounds of applause which sometimes rose were overwhelming. Some singular scenes were witnessed. The speakers were each assigned a certain number of minutes, generally twelve, but it was not always easy to keep them to the limit. One evening Chief Justice Crampton, of Ireland, held on nearly half an hour, and the immense auditory began to murmur and stamp. Still the speaker held on, and the tokens of impatience grew more emphatic. Seeing the peril of the moment, Dr. Raffles rose, and with a stentorian voice cried out, "Hear him! hear him! He has fought the battles of Protestantism in Ireland; let us hear him in England." Silence was restored, and the speaker had at least a patient hearing. On another occasion the venerable William Jay was present, and was invited to take part in the meeting, but his physical force was evidently abated; he was tremulous and timid, and though importuned to speak, declined. The two Doctors Cox (of England and America) were appointed to speak together under the

twelve-minute rule. The American Cox, who came first, could not condense himself into so small a space, but occupied half an hour. As the speech progressed the other Cox became very uneasy, and at the close rose up and said, in a not very dignified or amiable manner, "My time has been used up; I will not speak at all." The audience called upon him to "go on." He attempted to do so; but had suffered himself to become irritated to such a degree that he was unfitted for the task, and so made a palpable failure.

Liberal provisions were made for the foreign members of the Alliance. We were all entertained with warmest hospitality in Christian homes, and as some lodged at a distance from the place of meeting, a dinner was served up daily for our accommodation in the grand saloon of the hall. These dinner hours were precious to us, in that they furnished opportunity for the cultivation of personal acquaintance. Now and then little passages at arms occurred which made all around hilarious. On one occasion a blow was given that hurt. The Rev. Tobias Spicer, of Troy, sat directly opposite an English Doctor of Divinity. There was wine on the table, and the Englishman helped himself to it quite liberally. As might be inferred, his potations did not increase his wisdom. Looking across at Father Spicer, be inquired, in a rather peremptory manner,

"Sir, what is the principal mark of difference between Englishmen and the Americans?"

Mr. Spicer did not consider the conversational opening very promising, and tried to evade the question. His interlocutor, however, was so mentally unhinged by the alcohol that he had lost his sense of propriety. He demanded an answer to his question.

"Well," said Mr. Spicer at last, "I think that you drink more wine than we do."

"Sir," replied the Doctor, "Sir, you insult me. Do you say I have drunk too much? I am not drunk, sir."

"I did not say that you were," responded the American. At this juncture friends interfered, and the conversation ended. The next day the two met at the door of the hall, and the Doctor, approaching Mr. Spicer, said,

"Sir, my friends tell me that I owe you an apology for what occurred yesterday."

"O, no!" responded Mr. Spicer, blandly. "I Understand it. You were not exactly yourself, or you would not have said what you did."

"Sir," replied the Doctor, in greater wrath than ever, "Sir, do you mean to say that I was intoxicated!" Friends again interposed to bring an unpleasant scene to an end. This affair created a deal of amusement, the English enjoying it as heartily as did the Americans. Mr. Corderoy, my generous host, heard the story from the Rev. William Arthur, and related it to me with great glee, begging me to take the first opportunity that occurred to point out Mr. Spicer to him.

The Alliance sat thirteen days in great harmony, and I trust with great profit. The doctrinal basis was adopted in the evening session of the fifth day. The next day the following proposition came

before us for consideration: "That the members of this Alliance earnestly and affectionately recommend to each other, in their own conduct, and particularly in their own use of the press, carefully to abstain from and put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, with all malice; and in all things in which they may, yet differ from each other, to be kind, tenderhearted, forbearing one another in love, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them, in every thing seeking to be followers of God, as dear children, and to walk in love, as Christ has also loved them."

Possibly in consideration of my pertaining to the editorial fraternity I was appointed to speak on the resolution; I take the liberty of subjoining a part of the brief speech which I made in response to the call:—

"It has been announced that persons engaged in the business of conducting the press have been chosen to speak on the resolution placed in my hands. I am not sure but that my American brethren have had something to do with my appointment to this duty. I have been drawn into various controversies in the course of my life, and very possibly it is thought expedient to commit me fully to the principles of peace before I go home; to bring me into circumstances which will compel me to promise to conduct myself hereafter according to the rules of Christian charity, the rules which bind this association together, and which, we trust, are ultimately to bind together the whole world. I am not averse to be brought to this issue. I should feel that I am unworthy to be placed in charge of a publication devoted to the interests of the Church of which I am a minister if I were not prepared today to pledge myself to the whole of this resolution. The religious press has much for which to answer. There is a record against it which must be put away by that repentance which brings amendment. It has given a thousand occasions for infidels and enemies to taunt us with our disputes and the bitterness with which we conduct them; with our lack of Christian love as well as of unity in doctrine. No controversies have been conducted with more acerbity than the religious controversies of the past and the present age, and the religious press is responsible for much of the evil.

"It is high time that 'charity, which is the bond of perfectness,' should pervade our religious periodicals and books; that the press should be sanctified, in order that our literature may partake of that spirit of union, of forbearance and Christian charity, with which we endeavor to imbue our sermons, our prayers, our private intercourse, all that we say, and all that we do in the character and capacity of Christians. Let the press be imbued with the spirit of brotherly love which pervades this Conference and the work is done. That consummation which is so devoutly to be wished, and for which we have so devoutly prayed, will have been accomplished. The Churches will be united, the world will be silenced, and God will be glorified.

"I most heartily commit myself to the doctrine of this resolution. I pray that God, in his infinite mercy, may help all those who are engaged in the great, work of informing the public mind, of disseminating knowledge through the medium of the press, especially the religious press, that they may, in the spirit of Christ, be ready to sacrifice prejudice and curb passion, so that all which is offensive to the most sensitive Christian conscience may be put away forever from among us. With these observations and views, very imperfectly expressed, I leave the resolution in your hands."

My friend Corderoy was a noble specimen of an Englishman liberal in his opinions as well as in his projects for my gratification. My sojourn in his house was exceedingly pleasant. He aided me much in my plans for visiting places of historic interest. Among the excursions arranged by him was one to Hampton Court, a famous old palace on the north side of the Thames, thirteen miles from London by land, and twice that distance by the river. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Corderoy and their two daughters; the Rev. Mr. Crowther, his wife and two other ladies; Dr. Corson, of New York, and myself. We went to the place by omnibus, and returned in a barge. Hampton Court was erected by Cardinal Wolsey in the sixteenth century, and was at that time the finest palace in Europe. It was the favorite residence of William and Mary, who left there many evidences of their taste. The Cardinal's room is still exhibited. His name is seen in the colored glass of the windows, connected with mottoes or legends, which at once attract the attention of the curious. When we entered the palace we were told that copying any of these was prohibited, unless we first obtained permission from the authorities. Forgetting the rule, I was copying some words, when the fellow who admitted us at the entrance rushed up, with an immense show of authority, and demanded what I was doing; "I told you not to copy any thing," said he. I afterward found them published in full in the guide-book. The incident illustrates the insane love of authority which prompts every petty functionary in the land to worry everybody within his reach. The picture gallery is quite extensive, and contains many works of great merit. Many of the pictures were painted by the Dutch artist, Vandyck, who came to England by the invitation of the Prince of Orange. The grounds now look somewhat neglected, but exhibit the fruits of the industry and good taste of bygone years. We saw a grape-vine seventy-eight years old, and covering twenty-two hundred square feet. There were upon it at the time thirteen hundred bunches of grapes, which we were informed, as usual, that we must not touch, not even the leaves. The fruit is a perquisite of the queen.

On entering our little barge we partook of an excellent collation, and then moved on down the river, admiring the beautiful scenery. Reaching Richmond, we landed, and made a brief visit to the Wesleyan Theological Seminary. Dr. Farrar, who was then presiding over the institution, treated us with great courtesy, and showed us the buildings, and their various arrangements. At Richmond is also an ancient palace, in which Queen Elizabeth died. It is made additionally interesting by Walter Scott, in his "Heart of Mid-Lothian." We gave a passing glance at the palace, but had no time to examine it further. This excursion was one of the most pleasant events of my sojourn in London.

Two other episodes of the Alliance are worthy of mention. Sir Culling Eardley Smith invited the foreign members to breakfast at his house. About forty were present, among them Americans, Germans, French, Irish, and others. Some of the most notable members of the Alliance were there, Mr. Justice Crampton; the Earl of Roden, Chevalier Bunsen, Adolph Monod, and other celebrities. Breakfast was served at nine or ten o'clock, as is the fashion on such occasions, and at the close there were speeches, of course. Sir Culling stated that one object which he had in view in this gathering was to invite discussion in regard to the propriety of forming an Association in London for the protection of foreigners. Chevalier Bunsen and the Earl both spoke in response. I was fully as much interested in the speakers as in the subject. The Chevalier had a very decidedly German physique and manner, but spoke good English. The Earl was tall, and dignified in his bearing, but he lisped, and mumbled his words. Both were men of simple manners.

The other pleasant event alluded to was a tea meeting, planned by Dr. Bunting, at the Wesleyan Mission House, in honor of the foreign Methodist members of the Alliance. The guests numbered about twenty. At the close came the inevitable speeches. Dr. Bunting complimented us all in a felicitous speech, and then the Rev. Mr. Cook, Wesleyan missionary at Lausanne, the Rev. Mr. Toase, missionary at Paris, Drs. Olin, Dempster, and Peck, responded. The Missionary Secretaries, and all the leading men of the Mission House, were present. It was an exceedingly pleasant occasion.

Several of the Americans had planned a little visit to the continent. Our company consisted of Dr. Emory, Professor Caldwell, Rev. J. B. Merwin, and myself. At eight o'clock in the evening of September 1st we embarked on a clumsy steamboat at Brighton, and early the next morning found ourselves at Dieppe, France. We had very little baggage, but it gave us great trouble. The Custom House officials seized upon everything, however small, which happened to attract their attention. I had packed in a hat-box what I needed for a few days' tour. The officer looked at it, and said, "Chapean," and passed on. Not being familiar with the French language, I did not attempt to explain. Professor Caldwell had a small valise; an officer laid hold of it, and the professor resisted. This excited the suspicion of the official, and the result was a vigorous struggle, in which the American proved victorious.

Having at length got through the ceremony of inspection, we took passage in a diligence for Rouen. The scenery was strange to American eyes. There were no fences, and even the landmarks which divide the diminutive farms were invisible. There were flocks of sheep watched by shepherds and dogs, the shepherd usually sitting upon the ground while his sagacious canine assistant ran along the boundary line of the pasture and drove back every trespasser, horses, wagons, carts, harness, every thing was different from what we had been accustomed to, and every thing looked to us clumsy, and behind the age.

At Rouen we dined, visited the cathedral and other interesting objects, and at six in the evening took the train for Paris, which city we reached at ten o'clock. After another babblement with Custom-house officials we reached the Hotel Bedford, which we made our home during the five days we spent in Paris. The next morning we secured a guide, one of the professionals who conduct travelers about the city, and began our round of sightseeing, which we kept up during our stay. We took our breakfast at the hotel, and then set forth for a day's exploration, taking our other meals where it was most convenient, and returning at night more weary than "quarry slaves." Thus we visited Notre Dame, St. Roche, the Pantheon, Chamber of Deputies, Hotel des invalides, Garden of Plants, Palais Royale, the Louvre, and many other places of interest, each of which is worthy of more space in description than can be devoted to all.

Notre Dame, the metropolitan church, is an edifice of great splendor and architectural beauty. It is said that this church occupies the site of an old heathen temple. A church was built here about the year 375, in the reign of the Emperor Valentinian. The foundation of the present structure was laid in 1160 by Pope Alexander III, but three centuries elapsed before it was completed. The two splendid Gothic towers of this church are visible from every part of Paris.

The Pantheon was at first the church of St. Genevieve, but it was desecrated by the authority of the National Assembly, and being made a burial place for the distinguished men of the nation,

received the heathen name which it bears. The tomb of St. Genevieve, however, is still seen in a dark part of the basement, with a number of little tapers burning before it, stuck on the sharp points of the iron railing. Here are buried Voltaire, Mirabeau, and Rouseau, three men who employed their genius to poison the mind of France, and lent their mighty influence to bring incalculable calamity upon her people.

The hotel des Invalides is a hospital for disabled soldiers, four or five thousand of whom find a home within its ample walls. In the chapel sleep the ashes of the great Napoleon. Here also are shown the crowns of Napoleon and Josephine, and a large number of flags of other nations taken in battle.

We made interesting excursions to Versailles and Fontainebleau. The former is about twelve miles from Paris. Louis XIII first built a palace there, which his son Louis XIV greatly improved and made his principal residence. Millions of money have been expended on the buildings and the grounds. The palace is now a grand museum of art. It is rich in specimens of the works of the great masters. The vast halls and galleries, measuring an aggregate length of seven miles, are filled with pictures and statuary. The battle scenes and memorable conclaves of Napoleon I are seen everywhere, the figures life-size. The parks and fountains are numerous and beautiful. The Great and the Little Trianon are two small palaces in the forest of Versailles, whither, in other days, kings and queens retreated from the cares of State and the laborious splendors of the Court, put on the dress of servants, cooks, and dairymaids, and for the time tried to fancy themselves rustics. It was here that the unfortunate Louis XVI and his queen were arrested, and carried to Paris in a common cart to perish beneath the guillotine.

Fontainebleau, a town of eight or nine thousand inhabitants, is thirty-five miles south of Paris, is surrounded by forests, and is famous for its splendid palace. It was once the favorite residence of Napoleon and Josephine, and still abounds in the baubles of royalty. Here, in the center of a fish pond, is a little summerhouse, where the Emperor was accustomed to hold confidential consultations beyond the reach of listening ears. Pictures and statuary abound in the palace, and much of the furniture is said to be the same as in the times of Napoleon. Part of it belongs to an earlier date, and part has been added since the days of the empire. The bed of Louis Philippe is something of a curiosity. One side of it is composed of feathers, the other is a hard plank, with a thin mattress upon it. The hard side was for his Majesty, who, it is said, learned to sleep on beds of that sort during his rambles in America. We saw a facsimile of Napoleon's abdication, and the little table on which it was written. There are still shown marks upon the surface of the table which he is said to have made with his penknife in the agony of his emotions. After a day spent amid scenes like these, we returned to the city late in the evening weary enough.

Leaving Paris we passed through Belgium, and came to Cologne, on the Rhine. Embarking on one of the steamboats which ply on that river, we spent the whole day among its famed scenery, its vine-clad slopes, its ancient castles, rich in historic associations as well as in natural grandeur and beauty. Late in the day we reached Mayence. Landing at this place we hastened on to Wiesbaden, where we spent the next day, which was the Sabbath.

Sunday morning we attended service in the chapel of the English Legation. Some two hundred people, chiefly English travelers or invalids, were present We dined at the Kursaal, one of the most magnificent hotels in Europe. A band played during dinner, which was an elaborate affair, lasting two hours. When it was finished the people scattered, some going out to walk in the garden, some hastening to the billiard room, others to the dancing hall, others still to the card-tables. On the colonnade the shops were open, and business and pleasure were pursued as at other times, except that there is more of gayety and dissipation on the Sabbath than any other day of the week. We had thus seen two Sundays on the continent, the first being spent in Paris. In neither case would we have suspected, from the demeanor of the people, that we were in a Christian land, although churches were around us on every side.

On Monday, September 11th, we turned our faces westward again. Embarking on the Rhine, we spent the remainder of the day and all the succeeding night in sailing down the river. Reaching Rotterdam at sunrise, we spent the day in that city. We ascended the tower of the Cathedral, from which the greater part of Holland can be seen. The Hague, Delft, and Dort, were distinctly visible. The next day we took a steamer for London, passed through the North Sea into the Channel, and thence into the Thames. Landing at Blackwall we took the train for London, where I was again cordially greeted by my friend Corderoy. Spending a day or two more in sightseeing, we visited Greenwich, the British Museum, the Thames Tunnel, and other noted places. Bidding adieu to my generous friend, I went to Liverpool, embarked for Boston, in due time entered its harbor, took the train for New York, and at nine o'clock in the evening of Saturday, October 3, reached my home.

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Chapter 12
CASE OF JOHN N. MAFFITT

Not long after my return home another important but not so pleasant, a duty was laid upon me. If I were sure that the matter is buried, no more to be heard of among men, it would be no self-denial for me to be silent. But more than one attempt at a resurrection has already been made, after considerable periods of silence, and I therefore deem it right to put on record an outline of the facts in the case.

John Newland Maffitt came from Ireland to America in 1819. Some years after he published an autobiography, in which he notes this fact thus: "From the romantic retreats of far-famed Erin, borne on the fickle winds of adverse fortune, a lonely stranger brings his mite of sorrow, and lays the dew-starred treasure at Columbia's feet." He was a tailor, and for a time worked at his trade in the city of New York. He first appeared as a preacher in New England, where his attractive manner drew multitudes to hear him. He found favor among the ministers as well as the people, and was admitted into the New England Conference. He became famous for his eloquence. His power over the human heart was wonderful, and his success in revivals almost without a parallel. Still, he was a creature of fancy, lacking prudence and weight of character. He had left in Ireland a wife and several children, who heard of his fame, and followed him to this country. His wife was a shrewd, eccentric lady, who had no sympathy with the religious labors in which he had won his popularity. Damaging rumors got into circulation, some growing out of alleged family feuds, others originating in his peculiar manners in the society of ladies. He prosecuted an editor for slander; but the suit neither replenished his purse nor improved his reputation. He undertook the publication of a magazine in the city of New York, but was not successful in his venture. Becoming involved in some trouble in his conference relations, he finally located, and began the independent life of a general evangelist.

Henceforth, Mr. Maffitt selected his own fields of pulpit labor, and fixed his own terms of compensation. He generally agreed to preach a specified number of sermons, in consideration of having the use of the church for public lectures, the proceeds of which were to be his own. On this plan he visited all the large cities from Boston to New Orleans, and gained unequaled celebrity. His lectures were not only well attended, but largely remunerative. He found many warm friends, both among the preachers and the people. His eccentricities and weaknesses did not escape notice, but they were borne with, in view of his apparent usefulness; still scandalous stories began to float about.

Mr. Maffitt came to New York in 1846, and preached and lectured in several of the churches. At the close of his engagements in the city he went into the western part of the State, to preach and lecture. Shortly after his departure, the family with whom he had boarded while preaching in the Madison Street Church communicated to their pastor, the Rev. Dr. Floy, certain details in regard to his conduct while an inmate of their house which had filled them with astonishment and grief, and which they did not feel at liberty to conceal. Dr. Floy communicated these details to several

confidential friends, who heard them with profoundest surprise and regret. As there was a rumor that Mr. Maffitt was about to return to the city to resume operations, Dr. Floy deemed it necessary to state in the Preachers' Meeting something of the charges made against him, and inquire what course ought to be pursued in reference to the matter. The opinion was unanimously expressed that Mr. Maffitt should be informed of the scandal, and have an opportunity to meet it before he began his labors in the city.

I was appointed one of a committee to confer with Mr. Maffitt, inform him of the allegations against him, and aid in securing a meeting of the parties, and, if possible, a settlement of the difficulty. This movement originated in no unfriendly feeling. All hoped that the alleged facts were capable of explanation; that Mr. Maffitt, if not wholly able to justify himself, would at least show extenuating circumstances, and that confession and penitence would justify the Church in refraining from further proceedings. When Mr. Maffitt returned to the city, with the expectation of occupying the Norfolk Street Church, the pastor, Rev. Stephen Martindale, informed him of the reports, and of the action of the Preachers' Meeting. Mr. Maffitt professed to be ready to meet the parties referred to, and to defend himself against every imputation. A meeting was accordingly appointed at the Book Room.

Mr. Maffitt and the gentleman at whose house the alleged misconduct occurred attended this meeting, and had some conversation; but the females of the family, who were the direct witnesses in the case, were not present. Mr. Maffitt, however, was informed of the things alleged against him, some of which he denied, and for others he apologized. As no satisfactory result could be reached in the absence of the main witnesses, another meeting was appointed. At this second meeting all the witnesses were present, but Mr. Maffitt was absent. The committee examined the witnesses, and made notes of their evidence. Mr. Maffitt, hearing of this procedure, called upon the witnesses, and first undertook to win them to silence by entreaties and flattery. He pleaded for mercy. He said that it would ruin him; and he begged them, "for God's sake," not to appear against him. Finding his blandishments vain, he became fearfully excited, and resorted to threats. He would prosecute them for slander; he would blast their reputation; he would make the thing cost them all that they were worth in the world. The family, however, were firm against threats as well as flattery, and the preachers, being satisfied that there were solid grounds for proceeding against him, requested Revs. G. Peck, D. Smith, and M. L. Scudder, to draw up charges and specifications, in accordance with the facts alleged against him.

Mr. Maffitt had become a member of the Norfolk Street Church, New York, by depositing with the pastor, the Rev. Mr. Martindale, his certificate of membership and official standing as local elder. Mr. Martindale was notified that on or before a certain day named formal charges would be prosecuted against Mr. Maffitt. On the specified day the charges were forwarded. The next day Mr. Martindale called at my office and informed me that Mr. Maffitt had gone West. He came to Mr. Martindale the day before the charges were presented, and stated that his business required him to be absent for some little time, but he would return and meet any charges which might be brought against him. To secure the objects of his visit at the West he said that he needed something of the nature of a certificate of character. Mr. Martindale gave him his old certificate of membership, with the words "Correct, S. Martindale," endorsed upon it. Mr. Maffitt did not go West, but went to

Brooklyn, and commenced preaching in the Centenary Church, of which the Rev. John C. Green was pastor.

A copy of the charges was sent to Mr. Maffitt, who named a day for the trial. Mr. Martindale summoned five local preachers to try the case, and at the appointed time the parties met. Mr. Martindale, as a preliminary to the proceedings, requested Mr. Maffitt to return the certificate of membership. Mr. Maffitt replied that the paper was in the hands of his other lawyer, but that he would certainly return it. This promise he repeated several times. Mr. Martindale, however, was not willing to proceed until the paper was restored, and the trial was adjourned to another day of the same week.

Instead of doing as he had promised, Mr. Maffitt sought admission to the Centenary Church on the strength of the old certificate by which he joined the Norfolk Street Church, and which he had again obtained on the plea that he needed something to vouch for him in his western tour. Mr. Green received this paper as a valid certificate, entered Mr. Maffitt's name on his Church record, and notified the complainants that he had selected a committee to try the case, before whom he cited them to appear, with their witnesses, on a certain day. The complainants at once notified Mr. Green that they did not recognize his jurisdiction in the case, Mr. Maffitt being a member of the Norfolk Street Church, and no other. Perceiving that the ends of justice were in danger of being frustrated by a contest in regard to jurisdiction, the complainants invoked the aid of the bishops.

Bishop Hedding, who had presided at the last preceding session of the Conference, and to whom, consequently, the supervision pertained, directed Mr. Green to stay proceedings until the question of jurisdiction could be examined. Coming to the city for the purpose, the bishop conferred with Mr. Martindale, Mr. Green, and the complainants, and decided that Mr. Maffitt was legally a member of the Norfolk Street Church. He therefore directed Mr. Green to erase the name from his record, and Mr. Martindale to recognize Mr. Maffitt as a local elder in the Church of which he was pastor. Bishop Janes was present, agreed wholly in the decision of Bishop Hedding, and affixed his signature to the paper which stated the results of the investigation.

Mr. Maffitt and his friends took umbrage at these proceedings, maintaining that Bishop Hedding had no right to interfere, and consequently his decision was legally of no effect. Mr. Maffitt's lawyer drew up a paper, and sent a copy to Bishop Hedding, formally denying his authority to interpose in the case, and protesting against any decision which might affect Mr. Maffitt's membership in the Centenary Church. The Rev. Dr. P. P. Sandford, presiding elder of the New York District, as well as Mr. Martindale, received notice forbidding the reception of any charges against Mr. Maffitt, or the utterance of any thing prejudicial to his character.

Upon the receipt of the decision of Bishop Hedding the complainants again presented their charges against Mr. Maffitt, and Mr. Martindale again summoned the committee and the parties to appear on a stated day. When the time arrived Mr. Maffitt was not present, but his lawyer was in attendance, with several of Mr. Maffitt's friends, and placed in the hands of Mr. Martindale an elaborately written protest, declaring that Mr. Maffitt would never appear before him, or perform any act which could be construed as an acknowledgment of his jurisdiction. Mr. Martindale then dismissed the case, on the ground that the Discipline of the Church makes no provision for the trial

of a local preacher in his absence. I then gave notice that the charges would be carried up to the Quarterly Conference of the Norfolk Street Church. Mr. Maffitt's lawyer asked:

"Dr. Peck, do you say that you will present charges against Mr. Maffitt to the Quarterly Conference of the Norfolk Street Church?"

I responded, "I do."

"Then," said he, "it becomes my duty to serve on you this notice."

The paper which he handed me, dated Brooklyn, February 12, 1847, and signed by John Newland Maffitt, notified the committee, jointly and severally, that if they presented charges against the said Maffitt before any body but the Rev. John C. Green, they would be held responsible "before any and all courts, judicatories, civil, criminal, ecclesiastical, or in equity, known and recognized in the State of New York, or in the United States, or in the Methodist Episcopal Church, to which he may have occasion to apply for redress."

Notwithstanding this fulmination, we went before the next Quarterly Conference, which met in March, 1847, with our charges, specifications, and witnesses. Mr. Martindale presented the case by reading the decision of Bishop Hedding, and the communication from Mr. Maffitt. The Presiding Elder, Dr. Sandford, decided that a local preacher removing from the Church of which he has been a member without a disciplinary certificate, and denying his membership in that place, forfeits all rights and privileges in the Church to which he belonged. By this ruling Mr. Maffitt, by his own voluntary act, was clearly no longer a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The decision of Dr. Sandford was carried up to the next Annual Conference, in the form of an appeal, according to the provisions of the Discipline in such cases, and the presiding Bishop, Dr. Hamline, affirmed the decision of the Presiding Elder. Thus, so far as Church action is concerned, the case terminated.

Meanwhile the matter got into the papers. An anonymous pamphlet, said to have been written by a member of the bar, also assailed Bishop Hedding's decision as both illegal and oppressive, and it was deemed best to make public, by means of the press, a correct version of the case. It fell to my lot to prepare these statements, and I accordingly replied in the Advocate to the attacks made on Bishop Hedding's administration. When Dr. Sandford's ruling in the Quarterly Conference was made known, rumors calculated to mislead the public were set afloat in the daily journals and otherwise, and the complainants determined to publish the history of the case, but without giving the charges and specifications, and without any expression of opinion in regard to the guilt or innocence of the accused. This paper is found in the Advocate of April 7, 1847. Mr. Maffitt was at that time in the southwest. On the 5th of May his lawyer caused a writ to be issued, under the authority of the Supreme Court, against G. Peck, D. Smith, and M. L. Scudder, the signers of the publication named, and also against Dr. Bond and G. Coles, the editors of the Advocate. The offense was denominated slander, and the damages claimed were fifty thousand dollars.

This prosecution was trumpeted as the forerunner of Mr. Maffitt's complete justification before the public, and the defeat and disgrace of his assailants. Proceedings were also had in Church law. When the Annual Conference met, the Rev. Mr. Green brought forward charges of falsehood against

the complainants in the Maffitt case. The matter was introduced in open Conference, the church where the session was held being crowded in every part. I arose and requested that the trial immediately proceed. When Mr. Green came to explain his charge, it turned out to be this: In our history of the case, we stated that Bishop Hedding's decision of the point of law had been read on a certain occasion, and that "upon the reading of this decision in the presence of the parties the Rev. Mr. Green announced his purpose immediately to erase Mr. Maffitt's name" from the records of the Centenary Church. Mr. Green alleged that the word "upon" implies that his announcement of his purpose was the next thing done, that it took place immediately, whereas, as he affirmed, some minutes intervened, and some conversation was had, before he declared his intention. We brought forward one witness, and read from Webster's Dictionary the various meanings of the redoubtable word in which the falsehood lurked, and the Conference decided, by a unanimous vote, that the charge was not sustained.

The complainants then presented charges against Mr. Green for allowing Mr. Maffitt to preach for weeks in the Centenary Church after he had forfeited his membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church. We also charged him with giving Mr. Maffitt a certificate of good character after proceedings against him had been instituted. The Conference devoted nearly two daily sessions to an examination of the case, and then decided that Mr. Green had been guilty of high imprudence, and a degree of moral dereliction. The penalty affixed to this conduct was that he be suspended from his ministerial office for one year.

The Rev. Benjamin Griffen was appointed to succeed Mr. Green as pastor of Centenary Church, but before he reached his new charge the trustees and other official members met and resolved to declare themselves independent, reject the new pastor, and employ Mr. Green, who immediately notified his Presiding Elder that he had withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Griffen went to the church the next Sunday morning, but was met at the door by the trustees, who forbade his entrance. He secured a room for worship, where a part of the membership of Centenary Church assembled with him, and service was maintained till the next Conference. The case was taken into the courts, where it was argued by able counsel on both sides, and decided against Mr. Green and his friends, who were at once ousted from church and parsonage. Judge Edmonds, who presided, gave an elaborate opinion on the powers and rights of trustees, which he treats so intelligently and lucidly that his decision is of great and permanent value to all denominations.

I have dwelt upon this affair at some length, not merely because of its singularity, but because in its progress great principles were involved, and legal results of permanent value were reached. Mr. Maffitt's subsequent career was in sad contrast with his earlier ministerial life. He had been for years separated from his wife, and claimed that he had obtained a divorce from her in Missouri, on the ground of her having abandoned him and refused to return. He was quite attentive to the ladies, especially those who were young and handsome. He finally married a young lady of seventeen, who had been captivated by his eloquence while he was preaching in Brooklyn. The marriage took place in March, 1847, and created almost a riot. A crowd collected about the house and made no little noise, but committed no violence. Soon after this event Mr. Maffitt's first wife died in Galveston, Texas, much respected and regretted.

The second marriage proved unhappy, and the young wife left her husband, and returned to her parents. Finding the atmosphere of the East growing cold around him, Mr. Maffitt went West. He everywhere attempted to excite sympathy. He had instituted a suit for slander, as has been already stated, the defendants had filed their plea, which he was required to answer in October, 1847. His attorneys procured an extension of twenty days, and then one extension after another, until seven or eight months passed. Meanwhile Mr. Maffitt was pretending to wail piteously, because his "persecutors" were delaying the case. He had the effrontery to write thus to a friend at Pittsburgh: "The suit has been postponed by their reverences, for what reason I know not, unless it is to crucify me a little longer, and put me to more expense and trouble." His friends sought to enlist public sympathy in his favor, or at least delay public condemnation, by supplying certain newspapers with paragraphs bearing on the case, but generally false and grossly unjust to those who had deemed it their duty to arraign him. The time finally came when I thought that forbearance on our part could no longer be classed among the virtues, and I accordingly prepared a communication on "John N. Maffitt and his Sympathizers," which was published in the Advocate of February 23, 1848. Sydney Smith put away among his fugitive pieces a certain manuscript endorsed with the words, "I have always denied writing this paper." I signed my communication "Inquirer," but I never denied writing it. The article had the desired effect.

The young and beautiful wife was seldom seen abroad after her separation from her husband. Everything conspired to annoy and distress her. Her marriage to Mr. Maffitt and subsequent separation were the subjects of universal discussion, and comments wise and unwise, flippant, coarse, and malignant, continually reached her ears. The journals which make a specialty of criminal news, gloated over the case, and, anxious only to sell papers, dwelt upon it in endless repetition, with brutal disregard of the feelings of innocent sufferers. Mr. Maffitt, too, was guilty of the amazing folly and cruelty of seeking to defend himself by uttering insinuations against her character. Her health began to decline, and in November, 1848, her unhappy life ended. Some time before her death her father came to me, and invited me to his house, where I had an interview with his daughter. It is needless, now, to rehearse what she narrated to me in regard to the circumstances of her marriage, and her husband's conduct. It is sufficient to say that the facts stated had no tendency to lighten the shadows which hung around Mr. Maffitt, nor create in me any regret that I had consented to aid in calling him to an account.

Mr. Maffitt went to Little Rock, Arkansas, where he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and was licensed to preach. His strange history terminated in the city of Mobile, in May, 1859. He had gone thither to preach and lecture, as was his wont. About the time of his arrival there, one of the New York journals of crime had secured, how I know not, statements in regard to his conduct toward his wife, and copies, not only of the charges and specifications made against him, but also of a large number of letters which he unwittingly left behind, written to him by foolish and romantic girls. All this nauseous material was put into print, and papers containing it in full were sold in the streets of Mobile, and even around the doors where he was lecturing and preaching. His way was hedged up, and a few days afterward he died.

I give this history after a thorough review of all the publications upon the subject, and the numerous letters connected with it which I have preserved, supplying deficiencies from the resources of a memory which, considering the painful interest which I had in the details, ought to be reliable.

My aim has been, "nothing to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." I have had from the beginning of the matter till now no personal feelings to gratify nor personal ends to serve; but have sought only to secure the honor of God's Church and the interests of his cause. Nor am I conscious of having been betrayed into any act of persecution or undue severity against the unhappy man. I have in my possession ample documentary evidence of the truth of the narrative which I have given, but trust that hereafter there will be no occasion for appealing to it.

In the autumn of 1844 several brethren belonging to the Washington Street Church of Brooklyn, with a view to the organizing a new Church in that city, purchased a building in Pacific Street, which had been occupied for several years by a Presbyterian congregation, who were now building a church in the vicinity, and who stipulated for a partial occupancy of the edifice till spring. I was invited to take charge of the Church till the next session of the Conference, and did so, at some personal sacrifice, and wholly without compensation. I had, however, the satisfaction derived from a constantly increasing congregation and a growing general interest. A Sunday School was formed, and class-meetings and prayermeetings were regularly held, and the new enterprise prospered.

At the close of the conference year a communication was handed me from Thomas Kirk and others, the leading men of the little Society, "tendering their unfeigned thanks" for what they were pleased to call "unwearied and disinterested labors of love" among them, praying that "the blessing of that gracious Providence under whose guidance so happy a relationship had existed between us" might rest upon me; and proposing that I should remove my residence to Brooklyn, and that my son, Luther W. Peck, be their pastor the ensuing conference year. I yielded to their request, and my son was received on trial in May, 1846, and appointed pastor of the Pacific Street Church. It was a very pleasant year. We had a fine congregation, good meetings, and conversions. At the close of the conference year I returned to New York.

There was one member of this Church who is deserving of special mention. Thomas Kirk was a native of Ireland. When he was a boy his parents entertained John Wesley. Mr. Kirk often mentioned the fact that Mr. Wesley laid his hands on his head, and gave him his blessing. He was thus, as he playfully said, a Methodist in the regular succession. He had been a member of the firm of Eastburn, Kirk, & Co., printers and publishers of the olden time. Nicholas Murray, afterward the Rev. Dr. Murray, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, then a printer's boy in the employ of the Harpers, boarded in the family of Mr. Kirk at the time he experienced religion. [3]

Mr. Kirk was an ardent lover of good books, especially of poetry, and would often quote long passages from his favorite authors, Bryant's "Thanatopsis," for instance, with literal accuracy. A genial, simple-hearted, pure-minded man; a gentleman in person, manners, and all his tastes, a Christian in speech and action, he had the respect and confidence of all who knew him. His excellent wife was every way worthy of him, and the two, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. With him I canvassed our neighborhood for funds to establish our new enterprise, and saw how welcome he was everywhere, and with what respect he was treated. On returning once to his quiet home after a day spent thus, and sitting down at the table, he remarked with seriousness, after some moments of silent thought, "I am really sorry for the rich. How much money they have to raise to meet their obligations. How many expenses they have. How much it costs them for equipage, and to keep up their chosen style of living." He lived to see the little edifice

superseded by a beautiful and commodious stone church, and the handful of hearers become a thousand; but he and his faithful wife are now both gone to their reward.

I found the work of editing "The Quarterly Review" more easy and pleasant during my second term than it had been the first. The corps of writers which I had gathered was constantly increasing both in numbers and ability, and there was also a steady increase of the subscription list. The Review had gained some reputation abroad. We had sent a few copies to a house in London; these were bought up and read; and during my stay in England I found that many had become acquainted with the publication. I was not a little pleased by being told that it was considered one of the best in the English language. It was gratifying to know that the first Quarterly Review established under Methodist auspices had proved successful. I may add, that during the second term of my editorship the Review became self-supporting.

The New York Conference again elected me in 1848 to the General Conference. The session was held in Pittsburgh. The four years had been without precedent for stormy discussion and a spirit of revolution. During the whole period the Methodist papers, North and South, had been engaged in fierce controversies whose tendency was only to inflame and alienate. On the border, as it was termed, the war of passion raged till charity wept, and what had been a united, prosperous Church, now presented the appearance of two hostile armies. This conflict was at its height when the General Conference met.

The great problem which pressed upon the attention of the Conference was the report presented by the Committee of Nine, and adopted by the General Conference of 1844, and the questions which grew out of that action. This report the South hastened to name the "Plan of Separation," but the measures which it proposed were wholly hypothetical. It was assumed that a separation was possible, perhaps probable, and the paper provided that in case of a secession of the Southern Conferences, first, that the Conferences and Societies on the border should determine by vote whether they would remain with the North, or go with the South; secondly, that in the event of a secession, the proposition so to change the Restrictive Rules as to prepare the way for a division of the capital of the Book Rooms, should be submitted to the Annual Conferences.

The Northern Conferences which held their sessions soon after the General Conference of 1844 voted, with large majorities, for the change of the rule; but the violence and passion of the advocates of separation, and the discovery of the fact that the Southern delegates, before they left New York at the close of the General Conference, had determined to sever the Church, and took measures to consummate their purpose, changed the current of Northern opinion. So many proofs of what was deemed bad faith on the part of the South were presented that the idea began to prevail in the North that the provisional measure adopted partook of the character of a treaty, which had been violated by one of the parties, and, therefore, had ceased to be obligatory on the other; and the aggregate vote of the Northern Conferences showed a large majority against the proposed change.

In the organization of the General Conference of 1848 a committee was appointed, consisting of one member from each Annual Conference, and called the Committee on the State of the Church. I was a member, and the chairman, of this committee. We held daily sessions, and in the discussions which ensued upon the reports of our own sub-committees, and the resolutions which were offered,

the whole ground of the difficulty between the North and the South, as well as their present relations, was exhaustively debated. The final report, which was adopted by the General Conference, abolished the action of 1844, and thoroughly reviewed all the material facts upon which this action was based. No man, either of the North or the South, ignorant of the facts presented in this paper, can understand the merits of the case, or form a reliable judgment in regard to it. Thus the North and the South were left to shape their course independently of the action of 1844. The Rev. Lovick Pierce, D.D., was present, and announced himself as the representative of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, sent for the purpose of opening fraternal intercourse between the two bodies. He was not received, on the ground that the Church, South, had placed itself in a hostile attitude toward the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Commissioners of the Church, South, had made a demand on our Commissioners for a division of the capital of the Book Concern. Our Commissioners, Nathan Bangs, George Peck, and J. B. Finley, replied that, as the Restrictive Rule had not been changed, they had no power to act in the premises. The Southern Commissioners presented themselves at the General Conference of 1848, and renewed the demand, receiving in substance the same answer. Dr. Bascom was the leading spirit of the Southern Commission. The venerable Bishop Soule came into the General Conference, leaning upon the arm of a friend, and took his seat in the body of the church. It was an affecting sight to see those two great men, Bishops Hedding and Soule, companions and friends from their youth, and for twenty years co-laborers in the responsible office of the episcopacy, now sitting in the same room, but separated by an impassable, barrier.

The session of the General Conference of 1848 was harmonious. The Rev. Abel Stevens was elected editor of the (New York) Advocate, but declined to serve, and my old friend, the Rev. P. P. Sandford, arose and nominated me for the position, and I was elected.

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Chapter 13
1848-52, CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE AND JOURNAL

In taking my position as editor of the Advocate, I resolved to close the old controversies, and make the paper minister, as far as possible, to the peace of the Church and the improvement of the tone of religious feeling among the people. To carry out this purpose was not altogether easy. Several prominent men, my personal friends, had come into collision over the questions then agitating us, and looked to the columns of the Advocate as the proper battlefield in which to settle the points in controversy. Still I adhered to my resolve, and had the satisfaction of being abundantly sustained by the patrons of the paper.

My pacific determinations were somewhat interrupted occasionally by the hostile attitude of the Southern press. The Church, South, claimed their proportionate share of the capital of the Book Concern, and G. Peck and N. Bangs were appointed Commissioners in charge of the business. Soon after the adjournment of the General Conference of 1848, Dr. Bascom issued another ponderous pamphlet, entitled, "A Brief Appeal to Public Opinion, in a Series of Exceptions to the Course and Action of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from 1844 to 1848, affecting the Rights and Interests of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. By H. B. Bascom, A. L. P. Green, and C. B. Parsons, Southern Commissioners for the Settlement of the Property Question between the two Churches." Into this document the author infused all the asperity and gall of which he was master. He charged the Methodist Episcopal Church with "perjury and subornation of perjury, in addition to the high moral blame of acting the part of bad and dangerous citizens." "Hence," continues Dr. Bascom, "the right and the duty of resistance on the part of the Southern Methodists. We believe a perverted, factitious conscience, and a wild, ungoverned fanaticism, have fearfully led the party astray. The revelations of Heaven, and the Divine adjudications of Christianity, are no longer heeded. Want of reverence for the word of God is, in our judgment, the great productive source of the evils we depict." Northern Methodists are also charged with "bad faith," and with "deception utterly irreconcilable with any virtue belonging to the Christian character." I was urged to make formal answer to this pamphlet, but saw little prospect of effecting any good result. The "Brief Appeal" was written to "fire the Southern heart," and inspire hatred of the North; and in the haughtiness of its style and the venom of its spirit it fairly equals the valedictory speeches of the southern members of Congress at the breaking out of the rebellion. I did, however, give in a brief editorial my views of the bad spirit of the Appeal, and the utter inconclusiveness of its reasoning, and thus brought upon my head the storm of southern wrath.

The Book Agents and the Commissioners at New York had taken the best legal counsel which the country afforded in relation to their duties and powers. They were advised that neither they, nor the General Conference, nor the Annual Conferences, could legally perform any act to alienate the Book Concern, or its proceeds, from the purposes specified in the Discipline, without rendering themselves liable before the courts of the country. The funds being in the hands of the Agents of the

Conferences as trustees, for charitable purposes, they could only hold it in trust, for these uses, under the regulations of the Discipline of the Church. The Commissioners, therefore, could do nothing but await a legal decision before the appropriate tribunals.

The General Conference of 1848 had directed the Agents to take legal advice on the question whether they could submit the southern claim to a legal arbitration. In this action the Conference showed its desire to settle the question upon equitable principles. Should arbitration be pronounced consistent with the law, then the proposal to arbitrate was to be submitted to a vote of the Annual Conferences. The Agents were advised by their counsel that they could not thus arbitrate the question, as that would imperil their trust.

The Southern Commissioners commenced suits against the Commissioners and the Book Agents at New York and Cincinnati before the district courts of New York and Ohio. Our working counsel, E. L. Fancher, of New York, made answer to the declaration of the Southern Commissioners, and put in a plea. The Hon. George Wood, of New York, and the Hon. Rufus Choate, of Boston, were employed to defend the case before the court. Preparations for the trial were immediately commenced. The lawyers had to be supplied with the materials for their argument. Mr. Fancher, being a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was well acquainted with the history of the controversy and the form of our ecclesiastical organization; but Messrs. Wood and Choate knew little of either, and therefore needed full and accurate explanations in regard to our system and the pending questions. Mr. Fancher and myself accordingly proceeded to Boston, where we had a long interview with Mr. Choate. We found him strangely ignorant of our ecclesiastical economy, seeming not to know whether it was a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a democracy; whether the control was in the hands of the clergy or the people; but his lack of information at the beginning was not more remarkable than the rapidity with which he gained a mastery of the whole subject.

We also made a visit to the city of Washington, and had an interview with Mr. Ewing, the counsel of the Western Book Room. It is hardly possible for one who has never engaged in such matters to realize the laborious preparations which they involve. I spent weeks and even months of time in reading the journals and debates of the General Conference, and in examining the Conference records for materials.

The separation of the Canada Conference from the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1828, had been referred to by both parties. This made it necessary to place all the facts connected with that case in the hands of our counsel, and it fell to my lot to do the work. The Southern Conferences were just now wailing loudly over the injustice of the Northern Annual Conferences in voting against the change of the rule, and thus, as the South declared, clutching the property of the South, and depriving of their rights the superannuated preachers in that section, with their widows and orphans. Let it be remembered that although the Canada Conference separated from us in the most amicable manner, and for reasons the force of which was apparent, the Southern Conferences, each and all of them, voted against giving them any portion of the Church property, and thus prevented the Canada brethren from ever receiving any part of the common funds. Such is the influence of self-interest upon the reasoning processes of poor frail humanity.

The case was tried in New York before Judges Nelson and Betts, and was decided in favor of the South. The case in Ohio was tried before Judge Leavitt, and decided in favor of the North. These conflicting decisions would necessarily bring the case before the Supreme Court at Washington, unless settled by the parties themselves.

The Southern Methodist papers kept up a constant war against the North, and it became my duty to correct some of their more glaring misrepresentations. Our collisions were sometimes unpleasant. The contemptuous bearing of our assailants frequently furnished strong provocation, still I tried to avoid acrimony. The asperity of the Southern press, both religious and secular, was aggravated by a revival of the antislavery controversy. The abrogation of the Missouri Compromise, and the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, many of whose features were unjust and irritating, kindled anew the fires of controversy, and thoroughly aroused the North to a sense of the aggressive character of the slave power. Even the religious journals could not keep free from the agitation which pervaded the land.

As editor of the (New York) Advocate, I was placed in a difficult position. I had always hated slavery, and now fully sympathized with the people of the free states in their opposition to the encroachments of the South. While I shared the public indignation against the slave hunters, I believed that only evil would result from my admitting into the columns of the paper the discussion of the Fugitive Slave Law and kindred topics. The principal part of the subscription list lay in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. On what was called the border, the Churches which refused to secede with the Southern Conferences were compelled to struggle for existence against the fierce onsets of their enemies, and if the Advocate should enter into the controversies of the times, its utterances would be wrested into weapons for the destruction of our friends. In addition to this, the supporters of the paper were, as a body, apprehensive of coming evil. The hour was full of peril. There was danger, not that the nation would sink into slumber over a great wrong, but that the passions of men would hurl us into some great gulf of disaster. So far as our patrons were concerned, I well understood the situation. My correspondence from all parts of the country was voluminous, and I knew that I could at any time write an editorial of half a column which would not only wreck the Advocate, but intensify an agitation which was already sufficiently dangerous to the national peace. Thus, notwithstanding the clamor in some quarters in regard to my "cowardice" and "non-committalism," I steadily refused to be forced into measures, the results of which, so far as I could foresee, would be "only evil continually."

I had opinions upon public measures, and was free to express them on proper occasions, but as editor of an official journal I felt that I must not take any course which would deprive me of access to those whom I was addressing, and make the paper a financial burden upon the Church, unless I saw in the new measures proposed for me a promise of at least sufficient good to compensate for the evil. I took my position deliberately, knowing well what it would cost. The radical prints misrepresented me, charging me with favoring slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law. Many of my old friends in the Genesee, Black River, and Oneida Conferences, led by the "Northern Christian Advocate," then edited by the Rev. William Hosmer, gave me up for lost. The most senseless thing of all, and one which aroused my indignation, was, that on the border some of the very men for whom I had faced this storm of obloquy and labored so hard, set it down against me that I had lost my friends in the North.

I managed the Advocate through the four years term, my only assistant in the office being Stephen B. Wickens. All the editorials were written by me except one, and that one I felt constrained to repudiate the next week. I was sometimes absent from the city attending the Conferences, but in such cases always furnished a letter to fill the place of "leader." In the instance referred to I was absent a week, occupied with business which left no time for editorials, and so I engaged a friend to write one for me, selecting his own subject. It was soon after the invasion of Cuba by Lopez, and my editorial substitute had an intimate friend who took part in the raid. This friend he seized the occasion to eulogize in the Advocate, and grew so enthusiastic over his labor of love, that he seemed ready to endorse the filibusters and their doings in general. The readers of the paper opened their eyes in astonishment at the belligerent attitude of the editor, and I deemed it expedient at once to explain the matter.

On the 30th of September, 1848, my honored father died. He united with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1804, and maintained an unblemished Christian character for forty-four years. He was a man of solid judgment; stable, industrious, exemplary, universally respected, and exerting great influence in the community where he lived. He was useful in the Church. For years he was leader of the class at Middlefield Center, and afterward at Hamilton. Living in the country and on large circuits, where the preachers visited each little appointment only once in two or three weeks, he usually held class-meeting and prayer-meeting on the Sabbath. He was a fine singer, a perfect master of the old melodies of Methodism, and his gift of holy song made the services which he conducted attractive, and increased their power for good. His meetings were attended by the unconverted, and often crowned with revivals, so that when the preacher came he found numbers of converts who had thus been led to Christ, and were waiting to be received into the Church. In the absence of the preachers he was often called to attend funerals, where his simple service of hymn and prayer was very acceptable. By industry and economy he maintained his large family, and lived to see his five sons in the ministry, his six daughters members of the Church, and all his children, except the two who died in their youth, comfortably settled in life. He departed in great peace in the eighty-second year of his age, and his remains rest in the burying-ground at Hamilton, with those of his daughters Elizabeth and Mary, and my Uncle Isaac Collar.

During the latter part of my four years the discussion on the subject of lay representation in the General Conference was revived. A convention was held in Philadelphia, composed of laymen from different parts of the Church, and created considerable excitement. The measure had, even at that date, a very respectable body of friends; but, like many other causes, had some imprudent advocates, and there was a diversity of opinion among our wisest men, both lay and clerical. I admitted but little into the Advocate on the subject, but being assailed as an opponent of the principle, made some little defense, and let the matter pass. As the session of the General Conference drew near, Dr. Bond, who had been silent for four years, not writing a line for the paper, came out with two strong articles against lay representation, which I published in the Advocate. These communications made considerable impression, and, while they did not change the final result of the discussion, revived the partialities of the border Conferences in favor of their author.

At the session of the New York Conference in 1852, I was again elected a delegate to the General Conference, having become a member of the New York Conference in 1840 by virtue of the rule which made Editors and Agents at New York members of that body. I had been thus elected three

times in succession, and this last time by the highest number of votes. This I had a right to consider especially complimentary and indicative of confidence, and it was the more grateful to me seeing that I had been engaged in controversies sufficient to create opposition.

Just before the session of the General Conference the venerable Bishop Hedding, my fast friend, and [I] take him all in all, one of the greatest men of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was called to his reward. Several times during his last illness I visited him, and found him rapidly maturing for immortality. Only a few days before his death I went to Poughkeepsie, in company with Bishop Janes, and had what proved to be our last interview. I described that final interview in the Advocate, and the description will be found in the "Life and Times of Bishop Hedding," by Bishop Clark; but I could not then, I cannot now, adequately delineate the emotions of admiration, of veneration, of awe, and devout gratitude which the visit inspired. We remained nearly two days, and thus enjoyed the fullest opportunity of conversing with him. From the beginning to the end of the period named all his expressions were in the same vein — love for God and his Church, warm attachment to old friends, patience under the severest sufferings, complete triumph in his mental conflicts, bright anticipations of heaven. Hope, joy, and peace were apparent in his countenance, his words, his happy tears, and there seemed to be almost a halo of glory about the scene. The place seemed indeed "quite on the verge of heaven." On the 12th of April, 1852, in company with a large number of ministers, among whom were Bishops Waugh and Janes, Dr. Bangs, the venerable William Thacher, and Marvin Richardson, I attended his funeral as a pallbearer, and saw the remains of this saint of God and prince of our Israel consigned to their last repose.

The General Conference of 1852 held its session in Boston. It had never before met in New England. In addition to the usual business of the body, there were several matters which had a spice of novelty. Among the rest was an appeal case from the Ohio Conference. A church had been erected in Cincinnati, and the pews made the private property, severally, of those who united in the enterprise. This was contrary to our prevailing customs. The pastor was understood to favor the peculiar arrangement, and for this offense was arraigned by his Conference on a charge of "disorderly conduct," tried, and found guilty. He appealed to the General Conference, and under this appeal the whole subject of the renting and the owning of pews was debated. The discussion was earnest and prolonged, and terminated in action which left the question whether pews should be free or otherwise to be decided by each Society as local circumstances should render the one plan or the other expedient.

A committee, of which I was chairman, was appointed to consider the subject of slavery. In due time we presented a report, which was left to sleep on the table, there being little apparent disposition to discuss the subject.

A deputation from the Lay Convention of Philadelphia presented a memorial from that body to the General Conference. A large committee was appointed, before whom the deputation appeared, and were heard at length, after which a sort of half-and-half report on the subject was presented to the Conference, and adopted, closing with the declaration that lay delegation was inexpedient.

In the great lawsuit between the North and the South, the Supreme Court for the District of New York had given a decision in favor of the South, and had recommended an amicable division of the

property without any further litigation. The Book Agents at New York reported to the General Conference of 1852 that, in according with the instructions given them in 1848, they had taken legal advice upon the question whether they could submit the claims of the Southern body to a voluntary arbitration, and had been advised that they had no legal power to do it. The Bishops, acting on the conclusions of 1848, proceeded to lay the matter before the Annual Conferences, but before they had gone far the South commenced the suit, with the result already stated. The question, as it presented itself in 1852, was whether the General Conference would still look to the civil law, or seek an amicable adjustment of the matters in dispute. After much consideration the General Conference appointed a Board of Commissioners, to whom the whole business was referred, with power to settle it as justice and the interests of the Church required. The Commissioners were the Book Agents at New York, George Peck, John Davis, and John S. Porter.

Levi Scott, Osmon C. Baker, Matthew Simpson, and Edward R. Ames, were elected bishops. Dr. Bond was elected editor of the Advocate. He died in the fourth year of his official term.

The city authorities of Boston treated the General Conference with great courtesy, giving the members access to all the public institutions, and inviting them to a steamboat excursion. The attentions bestowed upon us seemed to surprise somewhat the more southern and western men, who had been taught to regard the New Englanders as stoical, and not over ceremonious. The session of 1852 was short and pleasant. In addition to my duties as one of the Commissioners having charge of the business connected with the Book Room suits, I was appointed a member of the Book Committee.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

Chapter 14
1852-3, WILKESBARRE — 1854, WYOMING DISTRICT 1855, BINGHAMTON DISTRICT — 1856-7, SCRANTON

I now returned to the regular work of the ministry. The General Conference of 1852 divided the Oneida Conference, and constituted the southern portion of it, lying chiefly in Pennsylvania, a new Conference, giving it the classic name of Wyoming. My home, so far as an itinerant may be said to possess a permanent earthly home, was in the famous valley. Some of my earliest friends in the ministry were members of the new Conference; many of my old friends among the laity lived in its territory, and I hardly needed the repeated assurances which I received that a hearty welcome awaited me. At my request I was transferred to the Wyoming Conference. The time intervening between the adjournment of the General Conference and the session of the Wyoming Conference I spent at Kingston.

The Wyoming Conference began its first session on the 7th of July, 1852, Bishop Scott presiding.

The first duty which devolved upon me was to act as counsel for the Church in trying a member of the Conference on the charge of heresy, he having adopted all the follies of what is called Spiritualism, and disseminated them in his sermons and by the press. He was found guilty, and by a vote of the Conference was deprived of his ministerial office. He fixed his residence at Kingston, and continued to preach where ever he got a chance, and even married those who applied to him under the impression that he still had authority to perform the ceremony. Being still a member of the Church, he was arraigned for disobedience to the orders of the Church, and was deprived of his membership. He then went to Carbondale and continued his operations, gathering a little handful of followers. The "spirits" communicated with him very freely, and finally informed him, in a confidential way, not to be divulged except in certain cases, that so far as he was concerned the seventh commandment had been repealed. He soon came to the conclusion that he had better leave Carbondale. He next went to New York, where he ingratiated himself into the favor of a prominent Baptist clergyman, joined that Church, was duly immersed, received license to preach, and went West, where he was operating when I last heard from him, his deliverances being chiefly notable on account of their assaults on the Methodist Episcopal Church.

I was appointed pastor of the Franklin Street Church, Wilkesbarre, which was then the only Methodist Episcopal Church in that town. I was appointed to preach twice every Sabbath in Wilkesbarre, and once in two weeks in the afternoon at the Plains, which was then included in the pastoral charge.

The first time I entered the pulpit after my appointment I was attacked with ague, and passed from the chilly stage to fever while proceeding with my discourse. This was the beginning of an illness which lasted for weeks, and brought me to the verge of death. My mind was for some time in a

dreamy state. For days all seemed to be dark around me. Strange visions passed before my mind, some of which made so vivid an impression that I still recollect them. Now and then came a lucid interval, during which I had much communion with God in prayer. One evening I heard the physician say, "By tomorrow morning I shall be able to tell how it will go with him." That night I seemed to be in a land of shadows. My life was trembling in the balance. I had no gloomy forebodings. My heart from its very depths said, "I am the Lord's, his will be done." In case the verdict of the physician in the morning was adverse, I determined to call my family around me and utter my last words to them. In all this I felt calm and peaceful, leaving all things with God.

When morning came, and the physician entered the room, he glanced at me, and exclaimed, in a kind of rapture, "Better, better, better!" From this time I slowly but steadily recovered. Almost the first piece of intelligence which greeted my recovery was the sad news of the death of my dear friend, the Rev. Bartholomew Creagh, who died of the very disease which had prostrated me so long. Two more of my valued friends soon followed, the Revs. William K. Stopford and Daniel Smith. They were all good men and true. With them I had often taken sweet counsel, occupied their pulpits, aided them in revival services, and sat with them at the firesides. "The memory of the just is blessed."

After an absence of one month from my pulpit I again began to preach to my people, though still weak, and able to do little. In September I attended a campmeeting held on the grounds of Mr. Heft, west of Kingston Mountain. Many souls were converted, and many believers were built up in their holy faith. I had not yet recovered my full strength, but the beautiful scenery, the pure mountain air, and, above all, the success which crowned the preaching of the word, were better to me than medicine. I preached several times, and returned home with new strength and courage for my pastoral work.

I greatly enjoyed my return to the work of the ministry. Studying God's word, preaching Christ and him crucified, conducting prayermeetings, visiting the Sabbath School, visiting my people, constituted my entire business, and were the delight of my soul. During the twelve years of my editorial life I had almost forgotten what it is to feel myself a free man. Now, no more editorials, no more insatiate demands for "copy," no more conflicts with assailants without, "wiser than seven men that can render a reason;" no more collisions over public matters with friends, wise or otherwise; no more weary hours spent in the drudgery of a newspaper office. I was free.

The congregation increased in numbers and interest. On New Year's day we began a protracted meeting which continued three months. For two weeks there was no movement among the unconverted. The first one who presented himself as a penitent was a young man who is now a member of the Oregon Conference. About one hundred were converted. Some of the converts belonged to families connected with other branches of the Church of Christ, and united with the Churches of which their parents were members. Still, not only was the membership of my own charge greatly and permanently strengthened, but also the spiritual life of the whole body was visibly quickened.

But there are shadows even upon the path of the pastor whose business is with high and holy things, and there are painful scenes upon which he must look. A boy of only sixteen years of age

committed a deliberate murder in our vicinity. His object was money. He was well acquainted with his victim, whom he decoyed into a field, shot him with a pistol, and robbed the body. The bloody deed was traced to its author, and he paid the penalty of his crime. I visited him several times before his trial. He seemed pleased to have me come to see him, but appeared very hard. After his sentence he began to relent, and finally made full confession, with the condition that it should not be published till after his execution. He became penitent, and gave such evidence of sorrow for his crime that I baptized him, and administered to him the Lord's Supper, and he died, earnestly praying for mercy, on the ninth of September, 1853.

One painful scene I shall never forget. The widow of the murdered man wished to see Evans, and I was present at the interview, which occurred the day before the execution. As she entered the cell, her black eye lit upon the murderer and seemed to pierce him through. He quailed under it, and turned away to avoid her gaze.

"Evans," said she, "why did you kill my husband? Had you any spite against him?"

"No!" he replied. "Not any. I did very wrong. I hope that you will forgive me."

The next question revealed the motive which had brought her to the cell of the murderer. She fondly hoped that he could tell her some last expression, some final word, which the dying man uttered in regard to his family.

Did he say any thing? Did he say any thing about me? Did he say any thing about the baby?"

"No!" he answered, sadly. Her cherished hope was disappointed. There was no final word of the husband and the father, to be treasured up in loving hearts, for evermore.

"O, Evans!" exclaimed she, in the bitterness of grief, "what made you do it? You play with my baby, and then kill his father!"

Evans was perfectly overwhelmed by this appeal. "I do not want to talk about it," said he; "will you forgive me?"

"Well," said she, "I must forgive you. If I refuse, it will do no good. It will not bring back my husband. Good-bye, Evans." And with a heavy sigh she turned away and left the cell.

The Hon. John McLean had opened a correspondence with the Southern Commissioners, on the subject of an amicable settlement of their claims. There had been a decision in Ohio in favor of the North, and another New York in favor of the South; but neither decision was final, there being still the right to appeal to the Supreme Court at Washington. He advised a stay of legal proceedings, and a conference of the Commissioners, of the two parties, with a view to a friendly adjustment of the matters in dispute. The Southern Commissioners had been consulted, and had agreed to meet us, in the presence of Judge McLean, who wrote to me urging the adoption of the measure, and tendering his services in securing such an adjustment of the business as would be both just and legal. The Book Agents at New York and those at Cincinnati agreed in the opinion that the proposed negotiations

should cover both suits, and all matters at issue, in regard to the Book Room property. In May, 1853, Bishop Waugh called the Commissioners and the Book Agents to meet at New York for consultation before our final action was taken. After thorough discussion of the case in its various aspects, I was directed to prepare an answer to Judge McLean, stating the principal features of a plan of settlement, and indicating our willingness to meet the Commissioners of the South, and negotiate on that basis.

In July, the Commissioners and the Book Agents, both of the east and western branches of our Book Rooms, met at Pittsburgh. Here we found a difference of opinion. The western suit had been decided in our favor, and the western men were confident of success, and favorable to a continuance of the legal contest. The eastern men were equally sure that if we risked another suit it would only result in defeat. It was finally agreed that the eastern Commissioners and Agents should settle their part of the business, in their own way, while the western suit was proceeding in the courts. The eastern suit was consequently withdrawn from the courts, and the business was put in the way of adjustment on amicable terms, while the western suit went before the Supreme Court at Washington. Thus our part of the great contest came to an end, so far as the courts were concerned.

On my way home from the Pittsburgh consultation I took a circuitous route, and attended a family gathering at Cazenovia. Five brothers and two sisters, with thirteen of the next generation, met and spent four or five days together. The anniversary exercises of the seminary occurred at the same time, Dr. J. T. Peck delivering the annual address, and Rev. Luther W. Peck the poem at the festival of the Alumni. On Sunday, Dr. J. T. Peck preached in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Luther W. Peck and myself preached in the Presbyterian Church. We also attended the funeral of John Williams, a noble man, and most estimable citizen. It seemed a strange providence, that, after so many years' absence from the place, I should be there just in time to look once more upon the loved face of my old and valued friend.

The Wyoming Conference met at Brooklyn, Pennsylvania, (once called Hopbottom,) July 27, 1853, Bishop Waugh presiding. On the Sabbath of the session, by request of the Conference, I preached a memorial sermon in reference to Revs. Marmaduke Pierce and John W. Safford, who had died during the year. The former was "a prince and a great man" in those early times; the other was "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."

I was re-appointed to Wilkesbarre, and again engaged in earnest labors for the good of souls. It was a year of success.

In September a campmeeting for the district was held five miles west of the village of Wyoming, on the grounds of Samuel Durland. I preached the first sermon from the text, "The people had a mind to work." A goodly number of souls were converted, and the Churches represented were much quickened.

While we were engaged in this meeting an event occurred which had a marked effect upon public opinion in the valley, and which I narrate as necessary to a faithful picture of the times. In one of the hotels of Wilkesbarre there was a Negro who was suspected of being a fugitive slave. Geographically, the town was on one of the main lines of the famous "underground railroad," and not a few of the fugitives tarried there for a season. There was doubtless some mean fellows in the

place, who made a business of worming their secrets out of the Negroes, and selling the intelligence to their masters. A number had been arrested in a more or less secret manner, and carried back to slavery. Wilkesbarre had the reputation of being decidedly conservative, their patriotic devotion to the Union impelling some of the people on one occasion to ride on a rail a very respectable citizen guilty of the crime of being an abolitionist.

In this rather dangerous latitude Billy Thomas, the alleged fugitive, was sojourning. He was a tall, athletic man, intelligent, active, efficient in his place in the hotel where he was employed. His master heard of him, and took measures to reclaim him. Early one morning five ruffians, hired for the purpose in Philadelphia, and duly clothed with the dignity and power of deputy marshals of the United States, came to Wilkesbarre, and attempted to seize this misguided Negro and drag him away from the horrors of freedom back to the innocence and bliss of the patriarchal institution. Armed with clubs and pistols, the five rushed upon Billy, knocked him senseless, and falling upon him, were proceeding to put him in irons. Regaining his senses, he saw in a moment the meaning of the murderous attack. With the strength which is born of desperation he rose up, dashing his assailants from him, and darted from the house in the direction of the Susquehanna, on whose banks the hotel stood. The marshals followed in close pursuit, firing their revolvers at the fugitive. Billy ran into the river, wading out till the water was at his chin, and when summoned to return, declared that he would drown before he would surrender. The slave-catchers stood upon the shore, cursing the obstinacy of the "nigger," and firing their pistols at his head.

Meanwhile the news of what was going on spread through the town, and an angry crowd was rapidly gathering. The marshals saw scowling faces, and heard muttered threats on every side. Becoming alarmed for their own safety, they abandoned their murderous work in haste, hired a carriage and a pair of fast horses, and fled over the mountain with all possible speed. Thomas remained in the river till assured of the departure of his enemies, and then crept to the land, and, exhausted, bleeding from his wounds, and in an almost dying condition, lay upon the shore till some kind hand assisted him to a place of refuge. As soon as he was able to travel he left for Canada.

This affair made more abolitionists in an hour than all the antislavery lectures and publications had done in years. It showed the real character of the institution of slavery, and illustrated the brutal measures inseparable from its maintenance. It created also general alarm among the colored people of the place, and made them increasingly watchful and cautious. There was in the town a very pious colored man, who would never tell his name, nor the place of his former residence. Somebody gave him the title of Uncle Tom, and this was all the name he bore. The spies of the South sought in vain to draw his secret from him. When he was plied with the question:

"Where did you come from?" he made the shrewd reply:

"Now, boss, that question's no 'count, no 'count at all. It makes no difference where a man comes from. The great question is, Where is he going to?"

In September occurred one of the most afflictive incidents of my whole life. I was one day on my way with my wife to visit her sister, Mrs. Myers, near Kingston. Certain men were digging a cellar near the road, and blasting the rocks which they encountered. A charge exploded just as we were

passing. Our horse took fright, became utterly unmanageable, and ran furiously down the hill; the carriage made a sudden lurch, and Mrs. Peck was thrown with violence to the ground. Arresting the career of the frightened animal, I at last ran back to the spot where my wife had fallen, and there found her lying insensible, her head mangled and bleeding, and one of her limbs broken. It was months before she could even walk across her room; but, by the blessing of God an a strong constitution, she finally recovered her wonted health and strength.

In November the Commissioners having in charge the New York Church suit were summoned to meet Judge McLean and the Southern Commissioners, and complete the business committed to their hands. At the very beginning, wide differences of opinion appeared between the representatives of the North and the South, and a week of discussion was required to find common ground. Our intercourse with the Southern Commissioners was, however, characterized by a good spirit, and in time we succeeded in harmonizing our views, and fixing terms which were satisfactory to both parties.

In concluding my history of this famous suit, I am constrained to say that, in my judgment, the law was clearly in favor of the North. The legal doctrine in regard to trusts is clearly defined and well established, and it does not allow seceders any portion of charitable funds held by the original body and guarded by constitutional restrictions. The ground upon which Judge Nelson based his opinion in favor of the South was, that the General Conference of 1844 had divided the Church into two ecclesiastical jurisdictions, and that two Methodist Episcopal Churches had been constituted, having equal claims to the common property. This ground assumes what is not true, and the opinion based upon it is wholly fallacious. If this style of reasoning were generally admitted, it would unsettle all ecclesiastical and charitable foundations. Still there were cogent reasons why we should pursue the matter no further in the courts. The New York Commissioners were confident that the Cincinnati case, which had been appealed, would be decided in favor of the South, and the next year, 1854, it was so decided at Washington. Public opinion, too, which is not devoid of influences even in the decisions of courts, was divided in the North, and unanimously against us in the South, and the sense of justice among our own people would be better satisfied by an amicable settlement made by the parties themselves than by the results of litigation, however successful on our part. Without waiting, therefore, to see the result of the western suit at Washington, the New York Commissioners adjusted the matters at issue on what both parties deemed the principles of justice and honor, and had no occasion afterward to regret the course which they had taken. If the reader wishes to examine all the details of this famous case he will find an accurate account of it in Dr. C. Elliott's history of the "Great Southern Secession," pp. 779-815.

In February, 1854, an extraordinary revival commenced at the Plains, where I was preaching Sunday afternoons, in a little old church. The locality was formerly called Jacob's Plains, from the name of an Indian chief who once inhabited it, with his people. In later times it was settled by the Searles, the Abbotts, the Starks, the Carys, and others, old pioneers and heroes of the Revolution, whose descendants are still numerous. A class was organized here long ago when the Methodist preachers first entered the valley, but it was still small in numbers. When I came to the appointment three brethren — James Stark, John Cary, and Jacob Sanders — constituted the active force of the little Society, with a few women, as devoted as those who labored with Paul in the Gospel, and "whose names were in the book of life."

For a long time the three named often constituted the entire congregation at the weekly prayermeeting. James Stark, whose health was impaired, was sometimes absent, and then the meeting consisted of two. One evening in the latter part of the month named these three met. They were alone. They prayed, each in turn, and were powerfully blessed. They prayed again, each in his order, and the tide of holy emotion rose still higher. They all prayed the third time, and their joy became rapture. Thus they worshipped, and wept, and shouted together. As they were about to separate one of them said, "I cannot wait a week for another such meeting; let come again tomorrow evening." The others gladly assented, and the meeting was even more joyous than the first had been.

Some of the neighbors, the second evening, saw a light in the schoolhouse, an unusual thing on that particular evening, and wondered who was there. As they approached they heard the voice of holy song and fervent supplication. Looking cautiously through the windows, they saw the brethren and stood still, looking and listening. They heard an agreement made to meet again the next evening. The next day the neighborhood was full of rumors of the wonderful meeting, and when evening came the house was full of people. Nor were they mere idle spectators. The profoundest solemnity prevailed, several persons requested that prayer be made in their behalf, and numbers were awakened to a sense of their danger. This was on Saturday evening. Sunday afternoon, Father Moister, a venerable local preacher of Wilkesbarre, preached in the little Church to a crowded congregation, and a large number of penitents presented themselves for prayers.

A messenger came to tell me the good news and request my presence. The meetings continued for three weeks, and the Church was crowded every evening, notwithstanding heavy storms and unfathomable roads. From the mines and the slopes of the East Mountain came people who had not attended any religious services for many years. Penitents, numbering from ten to twenty, presented themselves every night. The little Society received many accessions and became strong. The next year the Church at the Plains was organized as an independent charge, and so remains. I write this brief history for the encouragement of God's people where they are few, and the discouragements many. Thus, with times of refreshing, closed my pastoral term in the Wilkesbarre charge.

The Wyoming Conference met at Waverley, New York, June 21, 1854, Bishop Janes presiding. Nothing specially worthy of note occurred during the session. On Sunday the services were held in a large tent provided for the occasion, the church being too small to accommodate the people. I was appointed presiding elder on the Wyoming District.

I fixed my residence in the village of Kingston. and began my work at once. I found the district very large, as these things are now estimated, demanding labor sufficient to tax the strength of a vigorous man. It was a year of prosperity on the district. We had a successful campmeeting on the grounds of Mr. Durland, commencing the thirtieth of August. About seventy-five souls were converted, and good influences spread to many of the surrounding Churches. The chief trial of the year was the repeated attacks of chills and fever, to which I and my family were subject, and for which there seemed to be no effective remedy.

The Wyoming Conference commenced its session June 20, 1855, at Wilkesbarre, Bishop Ames presiding. I was again elected a delegate to the General Conference. I expected, of course, to return to the Wyoming District, but intended to remove my residence to some other point in it, in order to

escape from the ague, which prevailed at that time in the valley. Learning this fact, the Bishop concluded that a removal still farther north would be no hardship, and appointed me to the Binghamton District.

On the fourth of July I set out for my new field of labor, which was the more interesting to me from the fact that it embraced a large part of the circuit which I traveled during my first year in the Conference. Indeed, I found that, with some changes of the boundaries, Binghamton District was merely the Broome Circuit of other days. Great changes, however, were apparent on every side. The hills and the rivers were there, but most of the people whom I knew in 1816 had been gathered to their fathers. Here and there was one, standing like an aged oak among the luxuriant growths of later times. These few surviving friends welcomed me as I went around the district, and the greetings were often a pleasant feature of our quarterly meetings.

There was a scheme on foot for the establishment of a Conference Seminary. Binghamton had been selected as the location, and a school building erected on an eminence west of the town. My predecessor in the eldership had been one of the leading spirits of the enterprise, but I was assured that my appointment to the district would lay upon me no responsibilities in regard to the affair. No sooner had I arrived upon the ground than I was elected one of the trustees, and gradually drawn into what proved to be a very unfortunate project. The location alone was fatal. Methodism possessed little local strength. The town was well supplied with public and private schools. Patronage from the surrounding country came slowly. The institution lacked capital. From these and other causes it was a failure from the start. It opened its doors with feeble hopes, and in six months or so closed them again in despair. The affair involved me in care, labor, mortification, and pecuniary loss. Our own people in Binghamton lost heavily by the operation; and some of the citizens of the place, not connected with our Church, who had generously come to our aid, shared our chagrin and our losses.

The labors of the year, aside from the school project, were pleasant, and not unsuccessful. In September we held a campmeeting five miles above Binghamton, near the forks of the Chenango. The attendance was large, the order good, the preaching able, and there were a number of conversions, which gladdened the hearts of the Church, and gave a new impulse to the cause of religion. The Rev. William Arthur, of London, my friend and correspondent, paid us a visit, and saw, for the first time in his life, a campmeeting. Compared with some of the campmeetings of a later date, with their pleasant locations, elaborate equipments, and worshipping hosts, it was rather a small specimen of this effective means of reaching the people. But our Wesleyan brother surveyed the scene with the greatest interest, shared cheerfully the primitive accommodation of our life in the forest, and preached for us a beautiful and impressive sermon, which, I doubt not, is remembered by many to this day with pleasure and profit.

The winter was cold, with abundance of snow. I traveled the district in my own conveyance, and it was sometimes difficult for me to make my way through the deep drifts and reach my appointments. Still, I enjoyed the work. The quarterly meetings were "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord," and the protracted meetings at various points were seasons of power.

The General Conference of 1856 held its session at Indianapolis, Indiana.

We found the city quite large, containing many very fine buildings, but evidently new. The site was at that time wet in certain seasons of the year, and the faces of the inhabitants hinted possible chills and fever. I do not desire to speak evil of the goodly town where I was greeted so hospitably; but I was attacked by the malady named, and suffered from it nearly all the month of the session. This fact is probably a sufficient excuse for my seeing indications of malaria in the little ponds of stagnant water here and here, as well as in the sallow faces of the people.

On the second day of May the British delegates, Rev. Dr. Hannah and the Rev. Mr. Jobson, were introduced and made appropriate addresses. Dr. Hannah was a delegate to the Conference of 1824, the first of which I was a member, and the intervening thirty-two years had made visible impress. He was then a young and vigorous man; now his head was gray, his face wrinkled, and his motions tremulous. He preached, however, with power and unction. Mr. Jobson was a fiery preacher, and made a sensation whenever he occupied the pulpit or the platform.

As usual, the question of slavery was debated, and the discussion this time was long and spirited. My old friends, Drs. Chamberlain and Dempster, entered with great zeal into the contest, the one dealing in the most scathing denunciations of the great abomination, and the other demonstrating by formal and labored argument, that the institution is "only evil continually." I felt constrained to examine the subject from another point of view. The General Conference needed not to be convinced of the evil or the wrong of slavery. On that point we were a unit. But our Church on the border was suffering fearfully in the collisions of the North and the South, and between these upper and nether millstones was being ground to powder. New action on the part of the General Conference would only inflame passions already sufficiently excited, and increase perils already sufficiently great. The border Churches which still adhered to the North could scarcely hold their ground under the most favorable circumstances. Extreme measures on the part of the Conference would be fatal to them. The representatives from Baltimore, Western Virginia, and Missouri, implored the General Conference to refrain from new action on the subject, and not make the ownership of a slave a bar to membership, under the circumstances, in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

I sympathized with these brethren in their sore trials. I felt no abatement of my convictions in regard to slavery; yet I deemed it right to use caution and forbearance in pressing measures which would place crushing burdens upon the very brethren who were risking all things by their opposition to slavery and their fidelity to their convictions. The Wesleyan Methodists had not overlooked these considerations in the West Indies. The primitive Church did not overlook them in dealing with the evils of its own times.

The speakers were limited to one hour each, but I was interrupted four or five times with questions and explanations, and did not complete my argument before the limit was reached. The General Conference closed its session at midnight the 3d of June. It had been to me a period of considerable labor, performed under very disadvantageous circumstances.

On reaching home I found affairs at the seminary by no means improving. The principal, Mr. Carver, managed his school well, but the number of students was small, and the expenditure exceeded the income, and he was worn with anxiety and overwork. To give him a little respite I

performed his official duties while he took a vacation of some two or three weeks, but I resolved that my connection with the institution should end with the Conference year.

The Wyoming Conference met at Binghamton July 2, 1856, Bishop Morris presiding.

I requested the Bishop to release me from the presiding eldership, and give me some minor appointment within the bounds of the Wyoming district, and I was accordingly appointed to the Scranton Mission.

On taking possession of my new field of labor I found a little Society consisting of about forty reliable members, and an equal number of nominal ones. The Scranton Iron Company had given us, ten years before, a lot on the main street, upon which a little frame church had been built. The services were still held in this little edifice, which was the first church built in the Lackawanna Valley. The Society, however, had ventured into what was deemed a very ambitious project. A new lot had been secured on Adams Avenue, and the church now standing there had been begun, and the work prosecuted until the basement was nearly ready for occupancy. But the means of the feeble Society were exhausted, and the enterprise was burdened with debt. This was the condition of things at the time of my appointment.

On Sunday morning, July 19, I preached my first sermon in the old church to about thirty people. In about a month the basement of the new edifice was completed, and the presiding elder of the district, the Rev. William Wyatt, dedicated it to the worship of God. The sum of one hundred and fifty dollars was received on the day of dedication. Things did not look encouraging, We had a good room for worship. but the congregation filled only about a third of the space. It was clear that we needed, first of all, a congregation. Prayer-meetings, and class meetings too, had been held only at irregular intervals. I felt that I had a great and difficult work in hand, but I began it in faith and hope. My predecessor, the Rev. Mr. Schoonmaker, had been active and laborious, but much of his time and effort was spent in seeking donations abroad, and the internal affairs of the Society had suffered during his absence. I preached with all my strength, I visited the people, and strove in all worthy ways to build up the Society. Our congregation continued steadily to increase. In the winter we held special services for two weeks, which benefited our members, but brought us no additions to the Society. Still, the year closed with signs of progress in all our interests. Financially, as well as otherwise, it was yet the day of small things. We received four hundred dollars from the Missionary Society, and the society raised in sundry ways the sum of one hundred and sixty dollars, making a total of five hundred and sixty dollars for my support during the year. I give these facts and figures that it may be seen from what feebleness the Church at Scranton has risen to its present importance.

The Conference met at Abington, May 6, 1857, Bishop Scott presiding. I was re-appointed to Scranton. This year our congregation crowded the lecture room, and we began to feel that the larger room above, as yet unfinished, was greatly needed. I opened a subscription and secured a thousand dollars for the completion of the church, about half of that sum coming from the Society, and the balance being donations from my personal friends in New York and elsewhere. The work was resumed, and went on without interruption, but the audience room was not opened till after my term of service had expired.

In November a deep religious interest began to manifest itself in the congregation. We held special services for about three months, and there were sixty conversions. Nearly all the converts joined our Church and became valuable members.

In the spring of 1858 we were blessed with another outpouring of Divine influence. There were powerful revivals in various parts of the country. Daily prayermeetings were held in various cities. The Presbyterians of Scranton commenced a daily prayermeeting in Odd Fellows Hall, calling it the "Union Meeting," but carefully abstaining from sharing with others the burden of its management. My people did not attend it in any great numbers, and I resolved to commence evening meetings in our own church. Not wishing to do any thing which seemed illiberal, I consulted Colonel Scranton, the leading man of the Presbyterian Church, and he counseled me to proceed. Twenty-five persons professed conversion, and were added to the Church. Thus my term of service in Scranton closed.

During these two years I spent fragments of time in gathering up the traditions and examining the history of the Valley of Wyoming, and finally concluded to publish them. The work was published by the Harpers in the spring of 1858, and is entitled: "Wyoming: its History, Stirring Incidents, and Romantic Adventures."

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Chapter 15
1858-61, WYOMING DISTRICT — 1862-3, LACKAWANNA DISTRICT

The Conference began its session at Pittston, May 6, 1858, Bishop Baker presiding. As we were pressed for time, the appointments were made out, and the list sealed up on Saturday evening. On Monday morning the Bishop departed, having directed me to take the chair and complete the business. At one o'clock the appointments were read, and the Conference adjourned. I was made presiding elder on the Wyoming District.

This year was marked by few events worthy of special note. In May we had a family gathering in Cortland, N. Y. My brother, Jesse T. Peck, had been appointed to a Church in San Francisco, and desired to see us all before he left for his new field of labor. We spent two days in each other's society, and then separated, some, probably, to meet no more on earth.

During the year I officiated at the funeral of two venerable local preachers.

Samuel Griffin, of Kingston, had been for many years a local elder in the Church, and was a man of great force of character, integrity, and piety. He was an excellent preacher, laborious and useful, many souls having been converted under his ministry. He was much beloved and respected, and at his death was greatly lamented.

Jacob Rice, of Truxville, was deeply pious, and strongly attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church. His hospitable dwelling was long the home of the preachers, where they always received a most cordial welcome. His wife was a model woman, kind in her manners, and a pattern of neatness and good order. In this Christian home I spent many pleasant hours, which I can never forget.

In September, 1858, the Church at Scranton was dedicated by the Rev. Pennell Coombe, of the Philadelphia Conference. From this time the Society there has had a beautiful and commodious place of worship, and has prospered.

This year I also built a house, and moved into it. This, as nearly as I can estimate the number, was about the fiftieth removal which we had made since our marriage in 1819. During the previous thirty nine years I had occupied but three regular parsonages. The rest of the time I was generally compelled to rent a house, and pay the rent myself.

The work on the district prospered, though there was no general revival among the Churches.

On the 6th of May, 1859, I received information of the death of my esteemed friend, the Rev. George Lane. He died in Wilkesbarre, his early home, where I first met him, and to which he had

returned about a year before his death. He was a man of deep and earnest piety, of undoubted integrity in all matters of business, and firm in his friendships. On Sunday, the 8th of May, I preached the sermon at the funeral of this venerable man of God, and we consigned his remains to the tomb in the beautiful cemetery on the banks of the Susquehanna.

The Wyoming Conference convened May 12, 1859, in Newark Valley, N.Y., Bishop Ames presiding.

By the request of the Conference I repeated before that body the sermon which I preached at Wilkesbarre at the funeral of the Rev. G. Lane, the text on both occasions being the words, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith."

To me, personally, the great event of the session was meeting my old and much valued friends, the Revs. Loring Grant and Elisha Bibbins. While I was preaching the memorial sermon, and Mr. Grant was sitting with me in the pulpit, I saw Mr. Bibbins in the congregation, and the presence of those two brought back the thrilling scenes and events of my early ministry with such force as almost unfitted me to proceed with my discourse. I invited Mr. Bibbins to take part in the services with Mr. Grant. My old friends were personally known to few present on the occasion, but their names had long been household words, and all knew their history, their sacrifices, labors, and successes in every part of the Conference territory.

I was re-appointed to the Wyoming district, and began the labors of another year, official and voluntary. I had already made considerable collections of material for a history of early Methodism within the bounds of the old Genesee Conference.

The old residents and members of the Church in Wyoming Valley gave me much valuable information. The journal of the Rev. William Colbert, one of the early pioneers, supplied me with data which I could find nowhere else, of the bounds of circuits and the names of places and persons in Northern Pennsylvania, and Southern, Central, and Western New York, where he so long and so faithfully labored. While I was studying the lines of missionary work on the Hudson and the Mohawk, conducted by Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, in 1788, and deploring the incompleteness of the records of the times, the veteran Bibbins came to see me. His parents and one of his brothers were among the first fruits gathered by the young preachers who thus ventured into the wilderness.

We talked incessantly for hours, a part of the time in my study, and a part of it as we went to call upon one of his old friends. As we were on our way Mr. Bibbins paused several times, standing with his hand upon his side, as if in pain. On one of these occasions he remarked quietly, "Doctor Everett tells me that I have disease of the heart, and will die suddenly. I am trying to be prepared." Returning to my house, we spent the evening in calling up reminiscences, grave and gay. My old friend laughed heartily over the recollection of some of the scenes narrated, and yet there was an unusual pensiveness in his language and manner. About ten o'clock we retired to rest.

About three o'clock the next morning I was awakened by his calling my name. Procuring a light, I went to his room, and found him coughing, raising blood, and complaining of being cold. We at once kindled a fire, did what we could to make him comfortable, and sent for a physician. When the

physician arrived Mr. Bibbins said to him, in response to an inquiry in regard to his general health, "The old machine is nearly worn out." The doctor administered some medicine and departed, his patient being apparently free from pain, though still unable to lie down. We placed him in a large chair, and wrapped him up warm. "There," said he, "that is just right. Now, brother, lie down and rest, you must be tired." Seeing no reason for apprehension I laid down in the same room, and after a time fell asleep. When I awoke it was morning. I looked at Mr. Bibbins. He seemed not to have stirred a finger, and I thought at first that he was in a sweet sleep. Placing my hand upon his I found that my dear old friend was gone. "The fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?"

Funeral services were held in the church at Scranton, Dr. Paddock preaching a brief discourse, and I following with an account of the life and character of this aged minister of Christ. The remains were conveyed to Orwell, where a second service was held, and I preached a funeral sermon to a large and deeply-affected congregation.

Elisha Bibbins was in many respects a remarkable man. The sources of his great usefulness were his deep piety, his great zeal for God, the wonderful power of his exhortations and prayers, the melting pathos of his singing, and the warmth of his great heart. These things, under God, made his ministry very successful. The Rev. George Landon, making an address at his funeral, said, as he pointed to the coffin, "There lie the remains of the man who did more toward forming my character and the history of my life than any other, for he led me to Christ." Multitudes could say the same thing.

In August Madison F. Myers, my brother-in-law, died so peacefully, so triumphantly, that I deem his departure worthy to be here recorded. He had been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church since 1836, and for many years filled the office of steward and trustee. He was greatly respected and greatly beloved. His last illness was protracted, and during its progress I saw him almost daily. I was with him when he breathed his last. Such a death is seldom witnessed. Sometimes he seemed in an ecstasy of joy. Once he called upon us to "sing, sing praise." We began to sing the well-known hymn:

"Come sing to me of heaven,
When I'm about to die."

And with big tears of holy rapture falling from his eyes he joined in the chorus, "There will be no sorrow there." He summoned to his bedside, not only the members of his own family and his relatives, but every person in his employ, that he might take them by the hand, and give them kind words of advice and his last blessing. A little while before he died he seemed to be transported with the most sublime conceptions of the other life, and the utter insufficiency of the things of this world. With intense emotion he exclaimed, "O what should I now do, what can any one in my condition do, without hope in Christ? Millions of gold, millions of acres, are worthless, and I count them as dross!" He died the death of the righteous. May ours be as peaceful!

In the latter part of August we held a campmeeting on Everhart's Island, a beautiful place near Pittston. The gathering was unusually large, and from the beginning deep religious feeling prevailed.

On the Sabbath it was estimated that ten thousand people listened to the preaching, and yet the order was complete. There were about forty conversions.

In November I made a little journey to visit some old friends, and gather additional materials for my history of Early Methodism. At Mile Center I spent three days with the venerable Loring Grant, who was the means of my entering into the ministry in 1816. At Clifton I spent a day with Rev. Gideon Draper, another of the veterans of the Church. Dr. F. G. Hibbard, whom I also met at Clifton, gave me valuable aid in my researches; as did also the Rev. Dr. De Puy, with whom I spent some time at Buffalo. At Clarence I visited the Rev. Glezen Filmore, at Camillus called upon the Rev. George Harmon, and at Syracuse met the Rev. Charles Giles, three more of the early heroes of Methodism, whose memories were rich in the unwritten chronicles of the past. The aid which I received from the brethren named gives additional value to the volume which I was preparing, and with pleasure I here note my obligations to them. The work was published in the spring of 1860.

My labors during the year had been arduous, and yet not burdensome. I had preached every Sabbath since the session of the Conference, and attended to all my official duties. It was a year of peace, and of some progress on the district, and at its close I felt that I could "thank God and take courage."

The Wyoming Conference held its session at Scranton, beginning April 19, 1860. Bishop Scott presided.

Not being able to reach the place in time, Bishop Scott telegraphed to me to open the Conference and proceed with the business. He arrived in time to preside the second day of the session. I was sent to Ithaca to transact some business with the trustees of the Oneida Conference, then in session. Returning to Scranton on Tuesday, I was informed that the election of delegates to the General Conference had taken place, and that I was one of the members.

The General Conference of 1860 assembled in the city of Buffalo. The debate on slavery occupied much time, and reached some valuable results. The delegates from the border Conferences deprecated all new action on the subject, and among them were a very few who were ready again to rend the Church in case any new advance was made. There seemed to be in the minds of some an impression that the conservative Conferences, so called, would be ready, in case new action was taken, to separate themselves from the North, and holding aloof from both North and South, form a central Methodist Episcopal Church, which should occupy the border territory, and hold the same position in regard to slavery which it was claimed that the Methodist Episcopal Church had held previous to the General Conference of 1844. The discussion was not characterized by extraordinary ability, nor did it bring any new light. Not a few of the speeches were repetitions of addresses and orations which had done duty elsewhere, and whose arguments and ideas were familiar to all. Indeed, the discussion, as I remember it, did not bring forward a single new thought.

Two measures were proposed, the one adding to the Discipline a new section declarative of our sentiments on the subject of slavery, the other inaugurating the Disciplinary process for such a change of the General Rules as would exclude from the Church all who held, in the eye of the civil

law, the position of owners of slaves. While these measures were pending, and it had become evident that at least one of them would be adopted, an attempt was made to inaugurate a new secession.

A meeting of the delegates of several Conferences, whose territory lies in the middle States, was called in the Pearl Street Church, the call, however, not specifying the object. Some thirty or forty assembled. Dr. Slicer, of the Baltimore Conference, was invited to preside. On taking the chair, he remarked that he did not understand the object of the meeting, and that he would be glad if any one present who did would explain it. The Rev. John A. Martin, also of the Baltimore Conference, arose and presented a paper, which he proceeded to read. The document proved to be a recital of the burdens laid upon the Church along the border by the extreme measures constantly urged by Northern ultraists. It declared that the pending measures, if adopted, would render it impossible for our Church in certain sections of the work to hold its ground, and closed with an emphatic protest against any new action as being both needless and ruinous.

As he finished the reading, Mr. Martin said that there was no need of discussion. The facts were known; the paper spoke for itself; all that was now necessary was that the brethren should come forward at once and sign it. And he placed the document on the table for that purpose. No one moved. The delegates sat in blank silence for some moments. Dr. Crane, of the Newark Conference, then arose and denounced the whole movement as a deliberate attempt to rend the Church a second time. He declared that if those present put their names to the paper before them, they would commit themselves to a plot for a new separation; that this was the aim and intent of the paper before them, and would be the inevitable result if they should sign it; that if a general disintegration of the middle Conferences was to be the order of the day, as the paper argued, he would prefer that the New Jersey Conferences should adopt measures that would take them wholly out of the controversy; that they should anchor by themselves and wait till the storm was over. Little more was said, and the meeting broke up in confusion. Of this affair, however, I knew nothing at the time. The history is of interest now only as an illustration of the universal agitation which, in less than a twelvemonth, ushered in the war of the rebellion.

I had come to the Conference wholly unpledged to any particular measure. I hold that pledges are seldom expedient. It cannot be known in advance what light will be thrown upon a subject by a thorough discussion of it, or what shape the question will finally assume. I was ready to vote for such a change of the General Rule in regard to slavery as would render it more stringent in its provisions and a more emphatic declaration of our abhorrence of human bondage; but I did not believe that it would be constitutional for the General Conference, without changing the rule, to adopt measures which would have the same legal force as a change of the rule. But when the section as now found in the Discipline was proposed, I saw in it a full and accurate declaration of the sentiments which I held on the subject. The country was on the verge of civil war. If the General Conference should adopt the new section its action would be final. If it should inaugurate a change of the rule, the proposition must go the round of the Annual Conferences, a flaming firebrand of strife and passion. Viewing the matter in this light, I voted in favor of the new section on slavery, and against a change of the General Rule.

At this General Conference the subject of lay delegation made important advances. A committee reported a plan for the adoption of the principle, to be submitted to a vote of the laity. During the

discussion, the part containing the plan was stricken from the report. This left nothing for the people to vote upon except the bare principle. Not approving of the matter in this shape, I moved to lay on the table what was left of the report, but my motion did not prevail. The report was adopted, and the measure was submitted, as a "glittering generality," to the vote of the laity, and defeated, as I expected that it would be.

Nazaritism, as it was called, also occupied the attention of the General Conference. Several members of the Genesee Conference had become alienated from the rest. They complained that they were neglected and oppressed, and professed to believe that the influence of secret societies was potent in the management of the affairs of the Church in that section. So zealous did they become in their opposition to secret societies, that they organized a secret society for the express purpose of making war against them. They also professed high regard for old style Methodism in its purity and power. In time came an open rupture, with collisions on the floor of the Conference, and a war of newspapers and pamphlets outside. Four or five ministers were tried under various charges growing out of the troubles, and expelled from the Church. They then organized what they named the "Free Methodist Church," and sought to form societies wherever they could, relying for materials chiefly upon discontented members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or those in whom they could create discontent. Notwithstanding they had united in an attempt to found a new denomination, they appealed to the General Conference for a reversal of the action by which they had been expelled from the Genesee Conference. The General Conference referred the matter, as it did all the appeal cases, to the Court of Appeals, a large committee selected for the purpose. Here the cases of the Nazarite appellants were carefully considered; and it being ascertained that they had utterly disregarded the authority of the Church, by which they had been deprived of their ministerial office, and that they had also organized a society openly hostile to the Church, they were adjudged to have forfeited their right to an appeal, and the cases were dismissed. From that time the ministers and members of the new society have been untiring in their labors to establish it upon a permanent basis; but the narrowness of their views and the acrimony of their spirit are a very heavy load with which to start in a race. Perhaps, as the years pass on, these will be modified, and in the end, good come out of what seemed unmitigated evil.

The General Conference adjourned on Monday, June 4, and I returned to my home and my work. In August we had another campmeeting on Everhart's Island, which was well attended and successful. Shortly after I was attacked with inflammation of the eyes, which proved of so serious a character as to almost wholly prevent me from reading and writing for the space of two years. The abuse of the most perfect physical powers involves retribution.

This year, 1860, will be ever memorable in the history of our country. The suicidal arrogance and folly of the slave power were approaching their culmination. Day by day the political sky grew stormy. The presidential campaign was characterized by a bitterness hitherto unknown, and the very air seemed full of foreboding. When the election came, and the Republicans were victorious, the joy of the victors was mingled with apprehension. None could tell to what desperate measures the slave power — blind, furious, and remorseless — might resort.

The Wyoming Conference met at Owego, April 11, 1861, Bishop Simpson presiding.

The session had scarcely begun before the telegram began to bring startling intelligence from the South. On the 13th the news reached us that the war had commenced, and the bombardment of Fort Sumter was in progress. The excitement was profound and universal, and every true heart flamed with patriotic fire. The business of the Conference indeed proceeded with some degree of regularity, but all minds were full of the great subject which continually thrust itself upon our attention; and in the bishop's council, the arranging of the appointments was often interrupted, that we might hear the latest news.

I was re-appointed to the Wyoming district. The war spirit now ran high; and in my quarterly visitations I found not a few Christian men who were earnestly canvassing questions of patriotic duty. This led me to discuss national questions in the pulpit where I saw fitting opportunity. The South, in its madness, had plunged the nation into the horrors of fratricidal war. The only alternative left us was either to resist with all our strength, or be torn in pieces. I saw no way to escape national destruction but by the most vigorous and determined resistance. Consequently, everywhere upon my district, I denounced the crime of the South, and explained what I held to he the duty of the Christian citizen.

In May a fall came near terminating my life. No very serious visible injury was inflicted, but my nervous system received a heavy shock. I rested one Sabbath, and then resumed my work, but soon found indications of worse injury than I had expected. My memory was not so trustworthy as before, my mental processes generally were slow, and there were symptoms of coming paralysis. By the advice of my physician I left my work, and spent a month visiting in New Jersey and New York, and at the end of that time returned home much improved in health.

This year closed the disciplinary term on the Wyoming District. They had been four years of success. The cause of religion had prospered at all points, and the interests of the Church generally had advanced. At the close my health was fully restored, and I felt no hesitation in accepting any new field of labor which my brethren in their wisdom might designate for me.

The Conference met at Wilkesbarre, April 9, 1862, Bishop Scott presiding.

I was continued in the presiding eldership, being appointed to the Lackawanna district. It contained twelve appointments only, which enabled me to arrange my labors after the primitive Methodist style, giving an entire Sabbath to each quarterly meeting. The territory was familiar to me. A part of it had been included in old Canaan Circuit, on which I traveled in 1820, and all of it was included in the Susquehanna district, on which I labored in 1839. I found much enjoyment in reviving the friendships of those earlier days. Our quarterly meetings were seasons of spiritual refreshing.

We held our annual campmeeting on Everhart's Island, the Wyoming and the Lackawanna districts uniting. It was well attended, and productive of good results. My year on the district was as fruitful of good as could have been anticipated, considering the state of the country. War was raging with all its horrors. The Government called continually for men to fill the ranks of our armies, and multitudes of our youth were hurrying to the field of strife, many to return no more. Many homes

were sad because of the sudden bereavements which every victory and every defeat brought in its train.

The Wyoming Conference met at Susquehanna, April 8, 1863. Bishop Janes presided, and the business proceeded with usual harmony and dispatch. There was, however, some difficulty in appointing two or three preachers, who were charged with political heresy. Popular sentiment was strong in favor of the Union and the war for its preservation, and the excitement was so great in many of the charges that the slightest suspicion of sympathy with secession was sufficient to close every door against a preacher, however unexceptionable otherwise. Even silence on the subject could scarcely be tolerated. Under the pressure one of the members of the Conference not long afterward withdrew from the Church. The Conference closed its session on Monday evening. The Bishop requested me to address the Conference, just before the reading of the appointments, on the usages of the olden times, which I did, so far as my own experience and observation gave me light on the subject I was re-appointed to the Lackawanna district.

In August we held our campmeeting on Everhart's Island. An attack of illness had laid me aside from my work nearly all the month of July, and I came upon the ground only partially recovered, but consoling myself with the reflection that Dr. Nelson, the efficient presiding elder of the Wyoming district, would take the burden of the management. What was my consternation on arriving at the island to learn that two of the buildings of the Wyoming Seminary had been consumed by fire the night before, and that my colleague in labor would hardly be able to be present at all. The preachers, however, lent me most efficient aid, and I daily gained, instead of losing, strength. A large number of persons were converted. On Sunday morning I preached to a vast congregation on the signs of the times, (Matt. xvi, 3,) taking occasion to review the aspects of the moral and political horizon. [4] Some of the audience complained that I "preached politics," but I had not only the approbation of my own conscience, but the clearest evidence that a very great majority of the listening multitudes were entirely and enthusiastically in sympathy with the sentiments of the sermon.

These were indeed days of fiery trial to Christians and patriots. The second battle of Bull Run had taken place. The Government was loudly calling for volunteers, and a draft had also been ordered. Cowards were flying from their homes to escape from military duty. The stoutest hearted and most patriotic were sad, even while they rose to a sterner determination and loftier sacrifices. The blind party fanaticism which demagogues cultivate so carefully for their own profit, began to bear its legitimate fruit. The July riots of 1863 occurred, and added a new horror to the agony through which the nation was passing. In our own vicinity there was talk of armed resistance to the draft; and a body of men actually fixed upon a spot among the mountains, which they tried to fortify for a refuge.

This state of things was known at Washington, and vigorous measures were taken in reference to it. While our campmeeting was in progress the solemn services were interrupted by the sound of a bugle, and a regiment of United States' cavalry were seen marching by in plain sight of the congregation. This regiment, with part of a regiment of infantry, was quartered at Scranton for months. Our town was like a camp, military music and parades being the most prominent objects of attention in our streets.

Toward the close of this year a fearful epidemic, called the black fever, raged in the northern part of my district. At Carbondale four hundred persons died. At Clark's Green, a village of five or six hundred inhabitants, one third of the people fell victims. In most cases the disease did its fatal work swiftly, often in the space of a few hours. It reminded me of what was called the Cold Plague of 1812, which it strongly resembled, if indeed it was not the same malady. I remember well the terror inspired by the epidemic of 1812, and the fearful ravages which it made. The alarm of the people of Carbondale and the surrounding country was intense, and the Churches of my district suffered the loss of many members.

The Conference met at Waverley, N.Y., March 23, 1864, Bishop Janes presiding.

The business of the Conference was delayed two whole days in an attempt to find places where two or three unacceptable preachers would be likely to do the least harm. From this source come the worst cares and anxieties which burden the superintendency of the Church. These men are to be blamed as well as pitied. They ought to locate. The blame, however, is not wholly theirs. The Conference sometimes receives men hastily, without evidence of their probable usefulness and success. And presiding elders, who have such material on their hands, sometimes fail to be as candid and outspoken as their duty to their brethren and the Church demands; and a doubtful man, unsuited to the work, is suffered to drag his slow length along till he is so far advanced in life that to set him aside involves very serious injury. The question ought to be settled while the man is young, and fields of honorable employment, other than the ministry, are open before him.

I was again elected a delegate to the General Conference, which met this year in Philadelphia. Arriving in the city on the 30th of April, I found that the home assigned me was the residence of the Rev. T. K. Peterson, whose grandfather, Thomas Kelley, was my hospitable entertainer during the General Conference of 1832. My comrades then were George Pickering, Peter P. Sandford, and George Harmon. Those of 1864 were Bishop Morris and Jesse T. Peck [his brother — DVM]. All my recollections of the month spent in the hospitable home of Mr. Kelley are pleasant.

The General Conference organized on Monday. May 2. I was appointed a member of the Committee on the Episcopacy, and was made chairman of the Committee on the German work. I was in favor of the organization of German Conferences. A long and earnest discussion was had over this question in the committee, terminating in the adoption a report recommending separate organization. This report was adopted by the General Conference, and the plan was inaugurated. On Tuesday the delegate of the British Wesleyans, Dr. Thornton, made an able address. Friday, the 6th of May, was observed as a day of fasting and prayer for the nation, General Grant had begun his advance movement in the campaign which decided the fortunes of the rebellion, and every patriot heart was throbbing with hope and fear. For many days every prayer offered in the General Conference commended to God the cause which we loved so well.

In the Committee on the Episcopacy, strong efforts were made to secure action in favor of dividing the work into districts, and assigning a bishop to each for the term of four years. After much time had been spent in discussion, a resolution in favor of the measure was laid on the table by a majority of two.

A committee, consisting of Bishop Ames, Joseph Cummings, George Peck, Charles Elliott, and Granville Moody, was appointed to bear to President Lincoln an address, assuring him of our sympathy with him in the great responsibilities laid upon him, and pledging our prayers "for the preservation of our country undivided, for the triumph of our cause, and for a permanent peace, gained by the sacrifice of no moral principle, but founded on the word of God, and securing righteousness, liberty, and equal rights to all." The committee went to Washington on Tuesday, May 17. Colonel. Moody sought a preliminary interview with the President, and furnished him which a copy of the address. Mr. Lincoln named the hour of ten o'clock the next morning for the formal interview. The Committee waited upon the President at the time designated, and were introduced by the Secretary of State, Mr. Seward. We were received with great courtesy. Dr. Cummings read the address. At its conclusion, Mr. Lincoln picked up a paper from the desk near which he was standing, and said, "I have already been made acquainted with the character of this address, and have prepared the following reply." He then read as follows, in a clear, distinct voice, and with an air of heartiness which seemed to say that, with him, It was more than mere formality:

"GENTLEMEN: In response to your address, allow me to attest the accuracy of its historical statements, indorse the sentiments it expresses, and thank you, in the nation's name, for the sure promise it gives.

"Nobly sustained, as the Government has been by all the Churches, I would utter nothing which might in the least appear invidious against any. Yet, without this, it may fairly be said that the Methodist Church, not less devoted than the best, is, by its greater number, the most important of all. It is no fault in others that the Methodist Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospitals, and more prayers to Heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church — bless all the Churches! And blessed be God, who in this, our great trial, giveth us the Churches!

(Signed,)
"A. Lincoln"

The President read the last sentence with a reverence which seemed to indicate deep religious feeling.

At our request he presented us with the autograph of his reply. We were invited to be seated, a brief conversation ensued in regard to public affairs, and we then withdrew. I turned to look at Mr. Lincoln as we went out. He was already seated at his desk, with his pen in his hand. While he was listening to our address, and making his reply, he stood before us straight as an arrow; but the moment he sat down to his work his shoulder fell, his back bent, and he was the very impersonation of a care-worn, weary man. I had seen him before. I never saw him again.

We called upon Secretaries Chase and Stanton, and also visited the hospitals, where the wounded were arriving from the battle fields of the Wilderness. Some had suffered the amputation of legs and arms, but not a murmur was heard. When we took the train for Philadelphia we found a large number of wounded men in the cars, on their way to hospitals farther north. When we entered Baltimore, we met a train laden with recruits on their way to the army, and hearty cheers were exchanged. The

enthusiasm was contagious, and I was almost ready to say, "Would that I were young again, that I might join this band of heroes, and face the storm of war on the plains of Virginia."

When we went into the Conference the next morning, proudly bearing the President's reply to the address, we were taken aback by discovering that it had been published in all the morning papers, and everybody had read it, and knew all about the affair. In fact, it had been telegraphed at once to Philadelphia, and was going into type before we left Washington.

Lay delegation came again before the General Conference, and I was placed on the committee to consider it. Governor Wright, of Indiana; Dr. Strong, of New York, and others, came before the committee as the representatives of the friends of the measure, and urged immediate action by the General Conference. I replied, that the measure had been submitted to a vote of the laity in 1862, and the majority of votes was against the measure. The total vote was indeed small, and the popular decision thus given might not be the final judgment of the Church, but the General Conference, in the face of that decision, ought not to establish lay delegation without some new declaration of the wishes of the people. The General Conference finally submitted the question anew, this time with a plan for the introduction of lay delegates into the Conference.

At this General Conference, I found myself, for the first time, placed formally among the fathers of the Church. Dr. Elliot and myself were invited by vote to take our seats on the platform with the bishops; and we were also appointed, with Dr. William Nast, editor of "The Christian Apologist," to visit the Canada Wesleyan Conference, bearing the salutations of the body that we represented.

On Friday, May 27, the General Conference adjourned. It had been, emphatically, a session of hard work, and had done, what none of its predecessors so far as I know had ever done, — it had acted upon every thing which had been brought before it, and had cleared the table of every report and every resolution, great and small. This may have been due in some degree to the fact that it was now no longer necessary to inquire, "what shall be done for the extirpation of the evil of slavery?" Lincoln's proclamation had "proclaimed liberty throughout the land, to all the inhabitants thereof," and the vexing questions originating in slavery were no more.

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Chapter 16
1864-5, LACKAWANNA DISTRICT — 1866-7, PROVIDENCE 1868, DUNMORE — 1869-72, WYOMING DISTRICT

Family reunions have become an institution with us. As my brother Jesse must soon return to California, we arranged to meet at Cortland, New York, on Friday the 10th of June. At the time appointed the five brothers and two sisters, with seven or eight children, assembled, and spent two or three days together. By-gone scenes and events were recalled, and the character and history of the departed were reviewed. A part of our circle belong to the family above; and as we pronounced their names, we rejoiced in the hope of another gathering, which should number all these precious ones now absent.

The Sabbath was a day of deep religious interest to us. Jesse T. Peck, Luther W. Peck, and myself, preached in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Cortland; and the last day of our family meeting was spent in the worship of God, and the relation of Christian experience; and we separated with devout gratitude to God for the past, and a good hope through grace of life in heaven.

The General Conference had resolved to celebrate, in 1866, the conclusion of the first century of the history of Methodism in America. It was deemed wise so to shape the celebration that it would not spend itself in fruitless words, but leave behind it useful and substantial memorials of our grateful joy. Arrangements were therefore made for the appointment of a large committee of ministers and laymen, who should assemble after the adjournment of the General Conference, canvass the whole subject carefully, and decide what plans of benevolent enterprise should be laid before the Church in connection with the Centenary services. I was honored with a place on this committee, which consisted of the bishops, twelve other ministers, and twelve laymen. The committee met at Cleveland, Ohio, on the 22d of February, 1865, and subsequently held another meeting in the city of New York, and, I believe, performed their onerous duties wisely, and to the satisfaction of the Church.

All through the war, as has been already said, I had availed myself of fitting occasions to discuss the principles of Christian citizenship, and the duties devolving upon us in connection with the fearful trial through which we were passing. Some of these sermons had been published by the local journals at the time of their delivery, and my friends often asked me to publish others. I resolved to issue a volume, and accordingly prepared the notes of fifteen sermons with this design. The work was issued in the spring of 1865, and I had three copies beautifully bound or presentation to President Lincoln, Secretary Seward, and Secretary Stanton, with a letter accompanying each. But Mr. Seward, the very day I wrote my letter to him, was thrown from his carriage and nearly killed, and a few days afterward the lamented Lincoln fell by the hand of an assassin.

Our Conference met at Carbondale, April 12, 1865, Bishop Baker presiding.

On Saturday, the 15th, the startling intelligence reached us of the murder of President Lincoln, and the attempt on the life of Secretary Seward. When the telegram was read in the Conference all faces grew pale, and many wept. Sunday was a day of darkness. The church was draped in mourning, and the crowded congregation sobbed in deep distress. Never before, not even when George Washington died had this nation felt so bitter a sorrow. All tongues were eloquent in praise of our noble leader in these times of peril, and all hearts throbbed with grief at "the deep damnation of his taking off." The Conference appointed a committee to draft a paper expressive of our sentiments on the occasion. The report was read on Monday, and impromptu speeches were called for. The large church was filled to its utmost capacity, and it was an occasion of thrilling interest.

The Conference adjourned on Monday evening. I was re-appointed to the Lackawanna district. On my return home the next day I found that arrangements had been made in Scranton for holding a memorial service in honor of the lamented President, and that I had been selected to deliver the address. I did so in the Presbyterian Church. A vast crowd assembled, only part of whom were able to find places in the church, those who could not get in standing outside in reverent silence till the service ended.

In June Dr. C. Elliott and myself proceeded to Canada to visit the Wesleyan Conference, according to the action of our General Conference. The session was held in London, Canada West, which place I reached, in company with my son, Luther W. Peck, on the 6th, and we were met by the Rev. Mr. Jones, the president of the Conference, and conducted to the residence of Samuel Glass, where we received a cordial welcome, and found a delightful home while we remained in London. Mr. Glass is a large-hearted Canadian, and his wife a fine specimen of a Yankee lady.

The session of the Conference was opened on Wednesday morning. Dr. Elliott, accompanied by Rev. Dr. T. M. Eddy, had arrived. We were received with great cordiality, and a special meeting was appointed to hear our communication. On Thursday evening, the time fixed upon for the occasion, an immense congregation assembled, and every evidence of good feeling was exhibited toward us as the messengers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and as Americans. Dr. Elliott spoke first, the main body of his address being a labored argument against the legitimacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. Whatever may have been the logical force of his speech, the propriety of it was not clear. Our Church was in fraternal relations with the Canada Methodist Episcopal Church, and the General Conference had appointed delegates to represent us at their next session, and we were under no obligations to debate the local questions which belong to our neighbors.

I also addressed the Conference, and the following, from the "Christian Guardian," is a report of my closing remarks:—

"I am happy to say that; notwithstanding the national troubles during the last four years, and the vast discount on exchanges, our missions have been carried on with vigor and success, and the treasury, like the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil, has always had something in it. Last year was raised and paid into the treasury the sum of five hundred and fifty-eight thousand dollars, and for the present year the General Missionary Committee has estimated six hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, and it will be raised.

The Society has a new field open for its cultivation in the Southern States. The way is open there for the reconstruction of Methodism in that desolated country. Rebellion has done its worst to desolate one of the fairest portions of our heritage, but allow the Yankees room to stand on and they will move the world.

The four millions of colored people who were lately in slavery are now within the reach of a pure Gospel. Learning to read has become a passion with the old and the young. If one of these poor creatures finds a scrap of paper in the road with letters upon it, it is taken up and spelled out. We now have hundreds and thousands of them, young and old, receiving regular instruction in school. They see "Massa Lincoln's army" — they run after them — they shout — they sing — they jump — they kneel and pray — they sit down upon the ground and read — they go to school — they attend meeting — they march — they turn soldiers and fight, and join in the chorus —

"It must be now dat de kingdom is a coming,
And do year of Jubilo."

I have come so near to our great national troubles that I am sure you will not require me to proceed without giving them a passing notice.

The Southern rebellion was inaugurated for the ostensible object of securing liberty, but its real object was that of building up a great slave empire. There was no cause of complaint — it had long been in contemplation — it commenced in robbery, theft, and murder — it culminated in the assassination of our excellent President. I would say something of his character, but cannot do justice to the subject.

Finally, our common object is to preach Methodism — original, aggressive, progressive Methodism — that Methodism which is like our grand primeval forests, that bathe their tops in the clouds; like our broad prairies, beautified with flowers and fruitage; like our grand old mountains that stand so wondrous strong; like the extended, progressing, cumulative, irresistible Mississippi, which pours its vast volume into the sea; like our sublime Niagara, mighty, majestic, overwhelming, darkening, roaring, thundering on till lost in the great ocean. There is but one Niagara. I was about to say that Niagara belongs to the States and to Canada, but it is the common properly of all. So with Methodism. It is not to be restricted to time or place. It belongs to the world. It is the heritage of the ages to come. And now, Mr. President, allow me to say, in conclusion, that we join hands with you in prosecuting this universal mission of Methodism, and its glorious consummation, when it shall stand in the end of all things among the most honored and successful instruments of the Infinite Mind for the redemption of the world.

Friday was devoted to the reception of young men as members of the Conference. Seven candidates for admission, as is the usage of the Canada Wesleyans, as well as of the parent body in England, related their religious experiences, and their call to the ministry. Their addresses were highly interesting, and some of them deeply affecting. In listening to them I thought, as I had thought years before, when I was present on a similar occasion in England, that we might adopt the custom with advantage. We have, indeed, at every Conference a long address made by the Bishop to the candidates for admission; but as it must needs come annually, repetition is unavoidable, and the

warm, simple stories of the young men themselves would touch us more deeply, and perhaps do as much good.

On Saturday afternoon we attended a reception of the Mayor of the city. The leading men of the Conference were present, and the occasion was exceedingly pleasant. Here, and everywhere in Canada, I was impressed with the fact that the Wesleyan ministers have the respect of the best classes of society in the Province.

The business of the Conference was conducted in a manner similar to that of the English Wesleyans. The discussions were able and animated, and often punctuated with the clapping of hands and the stamping of feet Christian courtesy seemed to characterize all the proceedings, and great deference was paid to the old and leading men, and especially to the presiding officer. The financial system of the Canada Wesleyans is admirable, and we might even adopt some of its features, particularly the Children's Fund, and the fund for the Support of Disabled Ministers. But in regard to one of the main features of the Wesleyan organization, both in England and Canada, the appointment of chairmen of districts, I could not avoid the conclusion that our own system of presiding elders is preferable.

On Sunday I preached in the morning, and Dr. Eddy in the afternoon, to crowded congregations. In the evening Dr. Ryerson, of the Canada Conference, preached an able and eloquent sermon on the death of the late president of that body. On Monday Drs. Elliott and Eddy took leave of the Conference in brief addresses. In the evening L. W. Peck preached. The next morning we also took our leave. "The Guardian" thus notices the matter: "At eleven o clock the Rev. George Peck, D.D., delivered a very pleasing and affecting farewell address. The Rev. L. W. Peck, son and associate of Dr. Peck, also addressed a few words of affectionate parting to the ministers present before leaving for his home in the United States. At the close of the remarks made by these honored brethren, words of kindly response were spoken by the Rev. Mr. Carroll, Dr. Nelles, and Dr. Ryerson."

Our visit to the Canada Conference increased our respect for that body. We had a more perfect view of the great work which Methodism has accomplished in British America. We saw some of the valuable results of their missionary enterprises; we had an evidence of the success of their educational efforts in the growth of Victoria College; we witnessed the deliberations of a large and well-trained body of ministers; we heard reports from the various charges, their progress, and their contributions in aid of the benevolent agencies of the Church, and could hardly believe that the handful of young and inexperienced men, who left us in 1828, had attained this greatness and power for good. "What hath God wrought?" After taking an affectionate leave of our host and his excellent lady we departed, and in due season reached our homes in safety.

Having engaged to preach the annual sermon before the Missionary Society of the Wesleyan University in July, I set off, in company with my son, the Rev. George M. Peck, who was a member of the Committee of Examinations, and arrived in New York city just in time to see Barnum's Museum in flames. A seal which escaped from the ruins, or at all events was said to have come from that quarter, was sporting in the river as we went on board the steamer.

Reaching Middletown, we were cordially welcomed to the house of Professor Johnston. I performed the duty which brought us hither, witnessed a part of the Commencement exercises, and was present at the meeting of the joint board of Trustees and Visitors, where for the last time I looked on the face of the patriarchal Laban Clark.

The Wyoming Conference met at Owego, April 18, 1866, Bishop Thomson presiding.

The Conference had passed, the year before, a resolution requesting me to preach before them in 1866 a semi-centennial sermon, as I would then complete fifty years in the itinerant service. While we were holding our session at Owego, the Oneida Conference, of which I had been a member from 1828 to 1840, was in session at Ithaca, only some thirty miles distant. The Oneida Conference proposed a reunion meeting of the two Conferences at Ithaca, and requested also that my sermon should be delivered at that time. The arrangement was made, and on Friday the reunion occurred. The place of assembly was the Town Hall, a spacious edifice, which was filled with a dense crowd.

The Rev. Dr. Comfort, in behalf of the Oneida Conference, delivered an address of welcome. By request of the Wyoming Conference, Bishop Thomson responded for us. Both addresses were able and interesting. Bishop Thomson's was in an especially happy vein, and one of the Oneida brethren, who had never seen him before, and who took him to be a member of our Conference, remarked, "That little Wyoming fellow is as keen as a razor. He beats our man all hollow!" His speech was, indeed, a fine specimen of sentiment, wit, and humor.

After the welcome and the response came the sermon, an hour and a half long. The day was excessively warm, and the audience uncomfortably crowded, but they listened to the end with a degree of enthusiasm hardly to be expected under the circumstances. At the conclusion the fathers were called out to give their reminiscences of the early times. Then some of the younger ministers made eloquent speeches, and the scene closed with universal handshakings and congratulations. The people of Ithaca opened their doors to the visiting Conferences, and gave them a sumptuous dinner. I was the guest of my old and esteemed friend, Judge Dana, whom I then saw for the last time. He was a noble Christian gentleman, who "being dead, yet speaketh." In the evening we returned to Owego, greatly pleased with the events of the day.

On Sunday I preached in the Presbyterian church. In the evening the Conference Missionary Society held its anniversary, and Bishop Thomson made a grand speech, contrasting the moral and religious condition of Christian countries with that of heathen and Mohammedan nations, and drawing his illustrations from his own personal observations. The Conference adjourned on Tuesday, the 24th. Having completed my four years' term on the Lackawanna district, I was appointed pastor of the Church at Providence.

The principal matters which interested the Church this year were connected with the general celebration of the centennial anniversary. I had special right to be interested, seeing that the year which terminated the first century of Methodism in America closed my half century of ministerial work. By far the greater part of the progress of the Church in the visible elements of power had been made during my own ministerial life, and under my own observation.

In September we held our family reunion in the village of Vermillion, New York. The five brothers and two sisters were present, nor were the junior branches without representation. The time was spent in relating reminiscences of the past, in converse and devotion. On Sunday Brother Jesse and I preached in the morning, and in the evening attended a centenary celebration in the village of Mexico, and made addresses in the place of certain speakers who had been engaged for the occasion, but who failed to appear. We had a large congregation, and much interest was manifested. We separated on Tuesday, with devout gratitude to God for his infinite goodness.

In the autumn, centenary celebrations were projected in all the Churches. I began the campaign by preaching to my people a series of sermons on the "History, Polity, Doctrines, and Progress of the Methodist Episcopal Church," closing with a celebration, the most prominent feature of which was an able discourse delivered by the Rev. Dr. Nelson. I also preached a centenary sermon in Stroudsburgh, where a gracious revival of religion was in progress.

The Conference met at Hyde Park, April 17, 1867. There being no bishop present at the hour named for the opening of the session, I was elected, according to the provisions of the Discipline, to preside until his arrival. Bishop Simpson arrived in time to take the chair on the second day of the session. On Sunday, which was Easter, the Bishop preached on the resurrection of Christ, before a vast congregation in Washington Hall, Scranton. It was one of his happiest efforts, thrilling the audience with his vivid description and conclusive logic. In the afternoon he delivered an address at the ordination of elders, in the church at Hyde Park. The effect was wonderful; sobs were heard, and shouts arose from every part of the assembly, and there descended a baptism of power which those present cannot forget. The Conference closed its session on Monday, and I was re-appointed to Providence.

I addressed myself with much earnestness and prayer to my work, and prepared more new sermons than I had done for years. The eight years previous to my coming to Providence had been spent in the eldership; and in resuming the position of a pastor, I felt the change, and saw how I could very easily have prepared myself to feel it still more. It was new work for me to look over the Church record, and search out the delinquent and the neglected. It was a new thing to canvass for subscribers for our Church periodicals, and arrange for the multiplied conference collections. But to preach two sermons every Sabbath to the same congregation was not burdensome, because during the years of my presiding eldership I had not ceased from study, or lost, in any degree, my mental discipline. On a district, a few sermons, endlessly repeated, may be made to answer all purposes, and an indolent man may cease to study, cease to prepare any thing new, and at the end of his term be confirmed in habits of indolence, and unfitted for all vigorous, acceptable service in the pastorate. He who would not deteriorate must keep at work.

I found great enjoyment in proclaiming the Divine message, and great hope that my labor would not prove in vain in the Lord. In January, during the week of prayer, I held meeting every evening, and looked for tokens of good, but there was no special revival in the Church or congregation. I fancied that the abundant snow and good sleighing which characterized the winter diverted the attention of our young people, and even some of the older ones, from serious things, and kept them from the house of God.

Conference met in Binghamton, April 7, 1868, Bishop Kingsley presiding. I was again elected a delegate to the General Conference, and was appointed to Dunmore.

The General Conference met in Chicago, where I was entertained at the house of my nephew, Philip Myers. The Conference is rendered memorable by the passage of measures preparing the way for the introduction of lay delegates into the General Conference. After much earnest discussion a plan for the election of delegates was prepared, to be submitted to the people for their adoption. In fact, few opposed lay delegation in the abstract. The great difficulty was to determine the due proportion of lay delegates, and the best mode of electing them.

The General Conference of 1864 had authorized the bishops to organize one or more new Conferences in the Southern States and "in the Territories." If this had been all that was done, there would have been no place for doubt and debate; but the curious part of the story is, that two different resolutions, one reported by the Committee on Boundaries, and the other by the Committee on Missions, were passed, giving the bishops the authority to organize Conferences in new territory, and the two resolutions were not of the same tenor. The geographical spaces referred to were indeed the same, but the trouble was this: one resolution, passed May 23, provided that the Conferences thus constituted should not be represented in the General Conference, nor vote on constitutional changes in the Discipline, nor should the disabled members of the Conferences, their widows or orphans, have any claim, upon the proceeds of the Book Concern and the [General] fund, which restrictions were to continue [until the next ensuing] General Conference after the [organizational] Conferences, and then lapse, unless new [action was taken]. The other resolution, passed May [25,] had restriction whatever, and totally ignored the action of two days before. Several new Conferences had been organized under this action, and had elected delegates to the General Conference. When these delegates presented themselves, the question of the legality of admitting them was at once raised, and occasioned a vigorous four-day debate. The ground was taken that the restrictions laid upon the new Conferences prevented the reception of their delegates. The restrictions were to "continue until the next ensuing General Conference." The Conferences had assembled, and consequently the restrictions, by the very terms of the resolution which gave them being, were now dead. Nevertheless, a great battle was fought over these null and void restrictions, like the tremendous fight of heroes over the dead body of Hector on the plains of Troy. The position taken by some was, that the restrictions laid upon these new Conferences were similar to those laid upon Mission Conferences, consequently, the design of the action of 1864 was to constitute Mission Conferences; consequently, to admit their delegates now would be to change the whole plan and purpose of such action.

Many able speeches were made in the course of the prolonged debate; and when the vote was reached, an overwhelming majority (205 to 17) voted to admit at once the delegates of the new Conferences. Not only was this done, but the restrictions of the Mission Conferences were removed, and their delegates admitted.

This General Conference made an important change in the boundaries of the Wyoming Conference, by which two whole districts, the Otsego and the Chenango, were given us from the Oneida Conference. We had not asked for this addition to our strength, but accepted it with all readiness. While we were in session the National Republican Convention met in Chicago, and

nominated General Grant and Mr. Colfax. This gave us an opportunity of seeing many of the political celebrities of the times.

The General Conference adjourned June 2. The session was harmonious, and its action on several important points will, doubtless, be of permanent value to the Church.

Returning home, I resumed my pastoral work. My people were very kind, manifesting great interest in the services of God's house, and bestowing upon us many substantial tokens of their regard; but the pastoral work of the charge was somewhat taxing to my strength. Still, it was a year of harmony, and not without success. The people of Dunmore, and the seasons of refreshing which we enjoyed among them, will never be forgotten.

The Wyoming Conference met at Honesdale, April 15, 1869, Bishop Ames presiding.

The session was characterized by the greatest good feeling among the ministers, and a powerful religious influence among the people. At its close I was appointed for the fifth time to the Wyoming district. My field of labor was large and important, and I felt a special interest in my work, from the fact that I was everywhere traversing familiar ground, and daily meeting old friends; the four previous terms, however, only amounting to eight years in the aggregate. At our District Preachers' Meeting the question of holding a campmeeting was introduced, and a resolution was passed requesting the [presiding] elder to select ground for the purpose. A campmeeting was accordingly held on the Bethel ground, at Dunning's, commencing August 18. There were about forty conversions reported. Revivals followed in various Churches, and throughout the district it was a year of prosperity. In June, our Golden Wedding was duly celebrated. A friend furnishes the following account of it:

"June 10, 1869, was the fiftieth anniversary of the marriage of Dr. George Peck and Mary Myers, which took place at Forty Fort, in the famous valley of Wyoming, June 10, 1819. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. George Lane, and the certificate signed by him and by Thomas and Harriet Myers, both of whom were living and present at this interesting anniversary. A large concourse of friends were assembled in the Methodist Episcopal Church of Scranton. Hon. Lewis Pughe was appointed to preside, and in a few well-chosen remarks opened the exercises of the day. The following members of the family were present: George Peck, seventy-two years of age; Mrs. Mary Myers Peck, seventy-one; Luther H. Peck. seventy-six; Andrew William, and Dr. Jesse T. Peck, Mrs. Annie Crowell, and Mr. Smith, and Susanna Smith, his wife. Children [of George and Mary Peck] present: George M. Peck, Luther W. Peck, Mrs. Sarah M. Peck, Mr. and Mrs. Dr. J. T. Crane, W. F. Peck and wife, and three grandchildren — George, Louise, and George Luther, the latter being the youngest of the family present. The seven hundred and seventh hymn was sung, 'And are we yet alive.' Prayer was offered, and Rev. Dr. Nelson, principal of Wyoming Seminary, [who] then addressed the assembly in a very happy manner. He said Dr. Peck had traveled a circuit larger than this Conference before most of them were born. He had been principal of Cazenovia Seminary, editor of the 'Quarterly Review' for years with distinguished ability, and editor of the 'Christian Advocate and Journal.'

" 'We delight to honor him for his goodness, his greatness, his distinguished abilities, and large attainments. He has been consecrated to the cause of God and the Church during a long life of trial and sacrifice.' He closed with a prayer that God might spare Dr. Peck yet longer to his family, the Church, and the world.

"Dr. Jesse T. (now Bishop)) Peck spoke in a feeling and impressive manner. He said all the brothers and sisters looked to brother George as the living head of the family. He said, The fourth generation is represented here. There were eleven children in all; four sisters had gone up higher. Five brothers and two sisters were present, and the loved departed might be looking down from heaven on their honored brother who had beheld the country during his eventful career marching onward in the development of a grand Christian civilization to become the future theater of God's great glory. When he was too young to be without direction he owed his training and introduction to the great field of action in life to this elder brother, and it was to him a dear remembrance of his childhood.

"Addresses were also made by Rev. G. M. Peck, Rev. L. W. Peck, Dr. W. F. Peck, and Dr. J. T. Crane. James Gaylord Clark sang with great impressiveness, "Where the rose ne'er shall wither." Mrs. C. A. Bergtold also sang "John Anderson, my jo, John," accompanied by Mr. L. B. Powell on the piano, bringing tears to many eyes. Mr. J. C. Nobles, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Scranton, read a beautiful poem by "Stella," the last stanza as follows:—

" 'Friendship hath woven today a new chain,
Binding our twining lives earthward again;
If there be joy in this sin-blighted sphere,
'Tis the warm sympathy greeting us here.
If there shall be gladness like that born above,
'Tis the communion of those that we love;
And we forget all the sorrow and strife
In this sweet ending of fifty years life.'

"Among the gifts was a gold watch and chain, presented by R. H. McKune, with the inscription, "Presented to Rev. George Peck by the citizens of Scranton and Wilkesbarre." Also a gold-headed cane of the California yew, identical with the cedar of Lebanon, presented by Dr. J. T Peck. Fifty dollars in gold was presented by the family to Dr. Peck, and fifty to Mrs. Peck.

"The closing remarks were by Dr. Peck. He said he wished he was worthy the high encomiums which were heaped upon him by Dr. Nelson, his brothers, his children, and friends. He looked back on the last fifty years with wonder. He was astonished at himself and the kind forbearance of the Church and the public. He never thought himself to be very much in the Church or the world as a Christian worker; but he had done his part without complaining. He started out with diffidence, thought he could not preach, but had succeeded by trying all his life to do by God's command what he knew he couldn't do without Divine assistance. He had seen stupendous changes, but if he had his life to live over again would not change its grand direction toward humanity, the Church, and heaven.

"The age of the relatives of the family met on this occasion aggregated five hundred years, the preachers present aggregating two hundred and fourteen years.

"An ample dinner and collation was served in the basement to the family and a large number of ministerial friends and friends of the Churches.

"The closing scene, so sacred, holy, and influential, where prayer, and praise, and heart-communing made the hours most memorable of any spent on earth, was on the last evening of the meeting, and in it the spiritual welfare of no member of the family was forgotten. The public was strictly excluded, and God was invoked not in vain, as we hope eternity will show.

"The following is from a poem written for the occasion by Rev. L. W. Peck, and was sung at the closing exercises by Mr. Charles A. Hurlbutt, the audience joining in the chorus:—

" 'Ring out the solemn greeting o'er river, tower, and town;
Let love, like golden sunlight, shower its blessings down;
And may the hearts so glowing when ages hence have flown
In glory still be one.' "

The next Conference met at Wilkesbarre, April 12, 1870, Bishop Janes presiding.

I was re-appointed to the Wyoming District. In August we had another campmeeting on the Bethel ground, which resulted in a goodly number of conversions. On our way home, with a great crowd of preachers and people on the train, we had a very narrow escape. Another train ran into ours from behind, breaking the platforms of the cars, prostrating the passengers by the violence of the shock, and causing wild alarm, but happily doing no more serious injury. The narrowest escapes and the worst perils were those of persons who lost their presence of mind, and came near losing life in attempting to save it.

The Wyoming Conference of 1871 met April 5, at Norwich, New York, Bishop Janes presiding in place of Bishop Clark, whose health had failed. The Bishops who were still effective were doing double service, and we were compelled to hurry our session to a close at a little past the midnight of Monday.

This season I attended the campmeeting on the new ground purchased by the Newark Conference, at Denville, New Jersey. The grounds are beautiful and well located, and the arrangements, projected and begun, were admirable; but copious rains were falling nearly all the time I was there, compelling the people to hold their services in tents, and greatly reducing the numbers in attendance. Still, I was more impressed than ever with the propriety of securing permanent places for the holding of campmeetings. A project of the kind had been for some time under consideration on my district, and the committee appointed for the purpose finally selected and purchased a location for our annual Feast of Tabernacles. The spot chosen lies on the western slope of the Susquehanna Mountain, five miles from Wyoming depot. By strenuous efforts the ground was cleared and put in tolerably good condition by Wednesday, September 6, the day appointed for the opening. The meeting was successful. The preaching was able, the prayermeetings were spirited, and souls were saved. We

closed about midnight on Thursday, the 14th. The final scene was picturesque and impressive. After the sermon the Lord's Supper was administered, and then succeeded a procession around the circle, after the olden fashion, with sacred song and chorus, and shouts of praise.

The district was greatly blessed during the year, many souls were converted, and the work was greatly enlarged.

The Wyoming Conference met at Owego, April 3, 1872. Bishop Scott had been appointed to preside, but was prevented by illness from attending the session. I was elected to preside, and soon learned that I should be called upon to perform all the duties of the Episcopal office except that of ordination. Bishop Simpson was presiding over the New York Central Conference at Cortland. We telegraphed to him, informing him of the illness of Bishop Scott, and he came to our Conference, and spent a few hours, ordaining the candidates for orders, and making three appointments and one transfer. I was re-appointed by him to the Wyoming district. The business proceeded harmoniously, and the appointments in general were well received by the preachers and the people. I was elected a delegate to the General Conference, making the thirteenth time I had been thus honored without a break in the succession.

On the first day of May the General Conference began its session in the city of Brooklyn. The lay delegates were formally admitted, and thus a new era in our legislation was inaugurated. The laymen thus added to the body were men of great respectability and influence. Among them were judges, members of Congress and of State Legislatures, and general in the army of the United States. The business of the General Conference was, in many important respects, aided by this reinforcement from the people; and the bearing of the new members, the fidelity with which they applied themselves to the matters committed to their hands, and the ability and efficiency which they manifested, abundantly vindicated the introduction of the lay element into the chief council of the Church.

Many important questions came before the body, and some that were unusual. Among the latter was the inquiry concerning the management of certain departments of the Book Concern at New York. A committee, embracing some of our ablest laymen, thoroughly investigated the whole matter, and brought in an elaborate report, which passed without debate, and brought the agitation to an end.

During the previous four years, four of the Bishops, Thomson, Kingsley, Clark, and Baker, had died. Their death had laid heavy burdens upon the survivors, and scarcely one of them came to the General Conference in good health. It was evident that there must be a large addition made to the Episcopal force. After much discussion it was determined to elect eight men to the office, and Messrs. Bowman, Wiley, Harris, Merrill, Foster, Andrews, Haven, and Peck, were chosen. In the ordination service I was called upon to present my brother.

This General Conference was noted, among other things, for the number of delegates who came to us from other branches of the Christian Church, the ability and eloquence of their addresses, and the warmth of the fraternal feeling which they expressed.

Returning home at the close of the session of the General Conference, I resumed my work on the district, laboring with about the same ease and success as had characterized the previous three years in the same field. In August we held the second campmeeting at Mountain Grove, the ground which we had purchased for permanent occupation. Considerable improvements had been effected; the avenues were in part graded, and several public buildings and a number of cottages had been erected. Our Sunday congregations were very large, and yet the order was perfect. In the evening I preached with unusual liberty, but before I completed my sermon a sudden thunder storm swept through the forest, and scattered the people to their tents and all places available for shelter. About seventy-five souls were converted during the meeting. During the succeeding autumn and winter there were gracious revivals at various points on the district, and the year was one of success.

Our District Conference met at Pittston, on the 19th of March. I had repeatedly expressed my desire to retire from the effective ranks at the close of this year, and the brethren with whom I was associated seized the occasion to give me multiplied tokens of their kind regard. At this session of the District Conference the brethren of the district presented to me an elegant and costly easy-chair. and a series of resolutions, beautifully engrossed on parchment, and set in a gilt frame. These resolutions were as follows:—

Preamble and Resolutions adopted by the Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the Wyoming District, Wyoming Conference, March, 1873.

Whereas, Rev. George Peck, D.D., is about to complete his term of service as presiding elder of this district; and,

Whereas, He, after rendering effective service for fifty-seven consecutive years, is about to retire from the active work of the ministry; and,

Whereas, it is eminently proper that we should indicate in some manner our estimate of such unwonted service, as well as our esteem for our beloved and venerable friend; therefore,

Resolved, 1. That we, the ministers of the Wyoming District, devoutly acknowledge and glorify that gracious Providence which has sustained his honored servant, and enabled him so efficiently to serve the Church for so many years.

Resolved, 2. That we heartily express our high appreciation and grateful recognition of the ability, pre-eminent labors, and success or Dr. Peck in the various positions of honor and responsibility which he has from time to time been called to fill, and that as educator, editor, author, and minister of Christ, he has done so much for the elucidation and defense of evangelical truth.

Resolved, 3. That the industry and consecration which have marked the public life of our venerated father in the Gospel furnish a commendable example and inspiration to those who, younger in years, are engaged in the responsible work of preaching the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

Resolved, 4. That we hereby convey to the venerable Doctor the assurance that we shall ever revere his character and memory, and earnestly pray that the consolations of Divine grace may be the perpetual joy and support of his remaining days, that he may "come to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season," and finally receive the plaudit of the Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The Conference of 1873 met at Waverley, N.Y., Bishop Ames in the chair. I attended to my duties as presiding elder as usual, and on the last day of the session made a request for a superannuated relation, the first request I ever made to an Annual Conference. I was not conscious that I was wholly worn out. I felt that I could still preach twice on Sunday, attend the weekly prayermeeting, and visit a few families daily, but I had reached the age of seventy-five years, and to do all that a pastoral charge needs to be done might prove burdensome, or even impossible, and I deemed it unwise, both for me and the Churches, to hazard the experiment. The occasion stirred my heart to its lowest depths. How good God has been to me all these years, and what kindness and enduring friendship I have found among his people! In response to my request, the following resolutions. were offered, and unanimously adopted:

Whereas, The Rev. George Peck, D.D., a member of this body, after fifty-seven years' service in the effective itinerancy, now asks, in view of age and infirmity, to be released from the special duties of the pastorate; therefore,

Resolved 1. That we render devout thanks to the great Head of the Church for continuing the life, health, and usefulness or our venerable brother for so many years as a watchman upon the walls of Zion.

2. That we do most cordially thank our venerable brother himself for his unshrinking fidelity as pastor, teacher, editor, author, and presiding elder, and especially that for a period so unusually extended he has persistently resisted every temptation to turn aside from the great work to which, in early life, he was divinely called.

3. That while we will earnestly try, in our several spheres, to follow the example of fidelity he has thus set us, we do now and hereby assure him that our sympathies and prayers shall attend him to the end of his earthly pilgrimage, which, for the sake of the Church, we trust will be reached only at a distant day.

4. Finally, that we now comply with his request, and assign him a superannuated relation.

Z. Paddock
R. Nelson
H. Brownscombe

Thus ended an active itinerant ministry of fifty-seven years. With what emotions I began the long journey on that, to me, memorable first day of April, 1816, when I left my father's house to go to my first circuit! How great and holy seemed the work in which I was about to engage! How unprepared for it, how unworthy of it, I felt! How sadly I looked back and saw tearful faces lingering at the door

watching me as I rode slowly away! There was the beginning; here is the end. The eyes which then gazed after me have long been closed in their last sleep. The lips which then breathed benedictions on me have long been silent in the dust. The rapid years have fled. The swift morning of life long since gave place to noon; noon has come and gone, and the shadows of the evening are lengthening about me. But there is no gloom in their depths. Beyond the gathering darkness lies the brightness of eternal day. With humble gratitude to God for all his lovingkindness to me and mine through all these years, I bless him for the past, and, with unfaltering trust, look forward to the future.* [Beneath the Endnotes, see the life sketch of George Peck, which gives the date of his death. — DVM]

THE END

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF GEORGE PECK

Written By

Himself

ENDNOTES

1 Peck Genealogy, by Ira B. Peck, of Rhode Island.

2 The father of Rev. Luke Hitchcock, D.D., of the Western Book Concern. My friend, the doctor, was then an active and somewhat noisy boy or two or three year's of age, whom I well remember as being no particular help to me when engaged in my attempts to study.

3 This is doubtful. Dr. Murray was not only an apprentice of the Messrs. Harper, but was also a resident of the family.

4 This sermon may be found in the volume of sermons entitled, "Out Country: its Trials and its Triumphs," p. 36.

*[The following sketches were taken from the 1882 edition of the Cyclopedia of Methodism. I have included also the sketch of George Peck's brother, Jesse Truesdell Peck. Some readers may be interested in knowing that J. O. Peck was apparently not closely related to George and Jesse Peck. One may also find J. O. Peck's sketch among those from the 1882 Cyclopedia of Methodism that we have published. — DVM]

*PECK, George D.D. — a distinguished minister of the M. E. Church, was born in Middlefield, Otsego Co., NY, Aug. 8, 1797. His mother was an amiable woman, eminently pious and devotional, and gave five sons to the Methodist ministry. He united with the church in 1812, and in 1816, at the age of nineteen, entered the ministry. Studious, diligent, and successful, he was, in 1824, appointed presiding elder of the Susquehanna district, then containing all the territory of the Wyoming Conference as constituted in 1868, and as much more in the New York and Genesee Conferences. He was a member of every General Conference from 1824 to 1872. In 1835 he was elected principal of the Oneida Conference Seminary. Though peculiarly adapted to the education of the young, after four years he returned to the active duties of the ministry, and was again appointed presiding elder of the Susquehanna district. In 1840 he was elected editor of The Methodist Quarterly Review, which position he filled for eight years; and in 1848 he was elected editor of The Christian Advocate, where he remained for four years. He was also delegate to the first Evangelical Alliance in London, and took a leading part in its deliberations. Returning to the pastorate in 1852, he filled some of the most important appointments in his Conference, and was also presiding elder of the Lackawanna and Wyoming districts. He was superannuated in 1873, and died May 20, 1876.

One of his contemporaries wrote concerning him, "I view him as one of the most remarkable men of our times, — one whose genius and piety are indelibly stamped on the ecclesiastical polity and wonderful growth of the church, — whose wise counsels and Herculean labors are interwoven in its development. For the past fifty years of his whole life he has been distinguished by a devoted love

to the church and unswerving loyalty to honest convictions of truth." He was plain in his manners, humble in his deportment, genial in his intercourse with both ministers and members, a diligent student, and a successful minister. He published a number of works, among which may be mentioned "Universalism Examined," "History of the Apostles and Evangelists," "Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection," "Rule of Faith," "History of Wyoming," and "History of Methodism within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference."

PECK, Jesse Truesdell, D.D. — [Brother of George Peck] — one of the bishops of the M. E. Church, was born in Middlefield, Otsego Co., NY, April 4, 1811. His parents were of Puritan stock, and both his grandfathers were Revolutionary soldiers. Before he was sixteen years of age he professed faith in Christ and united with the church. He was educated under the direction of his brother, the late Dr. George Peck, and was a student in Cazenovia Seminary, teaching during the winters. He was licensed to preach in 1829, and joined the Oneida Conference in 1832. He continued in the pastoral work until, in 1837, he was elected principal of a high school, which became Governor Wesleyan Seminary. In 1841 he accepted the office of principal of Troy Conference Academy, Poultney, VT. In 1844 he was elected delegate to the General Conference, and took part in the memorable debate in the case of Bishop Andrew. From 1848 to 1852 he was president of Dickinson College, after which be entered the pastoral work, and was two years at the Foundry church, Washington City In 1854 he was appointed secretary and editor of the Tract Society, to fill out the unexpired term of Dr. Abel Stevens. In 1856 he became pastor of Greene Street church, in New York, and at the expiration of his term he was transferred by the bishops to California. where he remained eight years in Powell Street and Howard Street, San Francisco, and Santa Clara and Sacramento and on San Francisco district. He served several years as president of the board of trustees of the University of the Pacific, and was also president of the California State Bible Society. Returning East on account of his wife's health, he was pastor of churches in Peekskill, Albany, and Syracuse, where he labored actively in the interests of Syracuse University, being president of the board of trustees and chairman of the building committee until, in 1872, he was elected bishop. Since that time he has traveled extensively throughout the bounds of the church, laboring diligently and earnestly. He is the author of "The Central Idea of Christianity," "The True Woman," "What must I do to be Saved?" and "The history of the Great Republic."