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*Reference*

**THE JOURNAL AND  
LETTERS OF  
FRANCIS ASBURY**

**VOL. III**

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

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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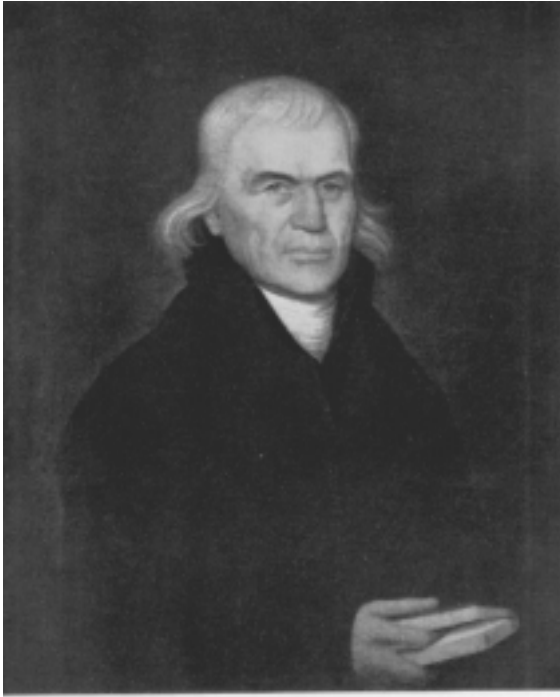
**The Journal and Letters of**

**FRANCIS ASBURY**

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Elmer T. Clark  
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*Illustrator*  
Erie Prior



## **FRANCIS ASBURY**

This original painting is in the World Methodist Building at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, U.S.A. It has been attested as contemporary by the experts of the National Gallery of Art and the Corcoran Gallery at Washington. It was probably, but not certainly, painted from life by John Paradise at New York in 1812. It was widely copied, and there are similar portraits in London, Philadelphia, and Madison, New Jersey.

*Frontispiece*

**The Journal and Letters of  
FRANCIS ASBURY**

*In Three Volumes*

VOLUME III

*The Letters*

ELMER T. CLARK *Editor-in-Chief*  
J. MANNING POTTS  
JACOB S. PAYTON

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## INTRODUCTION

IT is a tragic thing that relatively so little is known of Francis Asbury, though he traveled a territory much greater than John Wesley and left as his monument a Church in America which at this writing is more populous than any other Church. Too little has been written about him. There are a few outstanding works; but when one attempts to learn much about Asbury and his times, one is confronted at every step with difficulties and information is at a premium. The houses and churches which he visited have today largely disappeared. In whole states which he visited repeatedly, it is next to impossible to find a single place which is hallowed today by the associations of his life and preaching. About the only written thing that he left is his *Journal*. Very few copies of it are extant. It is little known, and until this effort it has never been annotated.

When one examines Asbury's letters and *Journal* minutely, one discovers that Asbury was a great student. He read the books of his day. He read his Hebrew and Greek Bibles daily. He knew Latin. He was familiar with the historians and the scholars. He was a learned man—and this in spite of his continuous travel over a period of forty-five years in America! He never had the advantage of a college education; however, he literally walked with the kings and princes of the then known educational world and was acceptable in many pulpits of other denominations. He knew and associated with every known condition of men. He knew President Washington, Governors Rodney, Tiffin, Bassett, Worthington, Dickinson,

Wright, and Lieutenant-Governor Van Cortlandt. He stayed in homes of the common people, and on occasion was entertained by the great.

Here was really a remarkable man. He had little time for writing. Much of nearly every day was consumed with his travels over vast distances, frequently with no place to write except in the open woods. When we compare him with John Wesley, we find that more than 2,600 letters have been collected which came from the pen of Wesley. An attempt has been made to estimate the number of letters Francis Asbury wrote. Certain it is that he wrote as many as Wesley. That was the only way he had of keeping in touch with the preachers and the people. On one occasion he referred to the fact that he wrote as many as a thousand a year. Frankly, this seems to be an exaggeration, though one would only have to write an average of less than three a day to make this figure. It is possible he did. However, in the first few years of his ministry he wrote relatively few. He did not know many people and he had not traveled very extensively. Also he had had few advantages of schooling, and the writing urge was evidently less developed in him. But as he went along, he did develop the urge.

Asbury had to keep in touch with the people. He was gradually creating an extensive ecclesiastical empire, and he must of necessity direct it and keep it going. The most tragic thing is that nearly all the letters have been lost. Frontier life knew paper to be one of the scarcest of articles. Witness the fact that Asbury's traveling companions, Whatcoat,

McKendree, Boehm, Bond, and others, mainly made their notes at the bottom of Asbury's letters, if there was any space left. The letters which have been preserved show how little paper they had. N.B.'s and P.S.'s take up every spare place in the letters and sometimes on the envelopes. The difficulties of deciphering what was said are greatly accentuated, not only by the poor handwriting but by the crowded condition of the lines and the fact that every inch was used.

The matter of collecting the letters has not been easy. My interest in them and in Francis Asbury has not been an overnight interest. I was born in a Methodist preacher's home. My father had a deep interest in Asbury. My grandfather, who for fifty-two years was a Methodist preacher, was born in 1831, fifteen years after Asbury's death. His parents were disciples of Robert Strawbridge and Francis Asbury in Loudoun County, Virginia. Nine Methodist preachers have come from this one family, with an aggregate ministry of more than three hundred years. My interest in history has been a lifetime interest. Years ago I became interested in charting the journeys of Asbury in the state of Virginia and in the accuracy of the statements made about Asbury. Asbury himself calls attention to the fact that there were many errors in his *Journal*. He never had opportunity to correct most of it. Those errors confront one in the study of the *Journal* and in the sources of information. Errors have been made and repeated by the historians, and it will be found by future historians perhaps that some have been made by this writer and group of historians. At times we have been led astray by what others have mistakenly written. For instance, Tipple and

others indicated that Asbury made 84 visits into the state of Virginia, which in Asbury's day included the present West Virginia. This study of the *Journal* and letters shows more than 120 visits were made in that total area. Some of them were simply crossings over the end of the state. However, Asbury spent more time in Virginia than in any other state. Early a great awakening took place there, and the revival of 1776 under George Shadford is said by Asbury and others to have added eighteen hundred in one year on the Brunswick Circuit. Many of the earliest leaders came from that state, such as Bishops William McKendree, Enoch George, and John Early; and Jesse Lee, the father of Methodism in New England and the historian of early Methodism.

Asbury was a tower of strength in the early church and nation. Sad to relate, the average Methodist in America has a hard time answering any questions about him. Few historical shrines exist, and not much is done to revere his memory. He slept in far more places than George Washington is reputed to have slept in, but try to find one today. Many of his letters have been lost, and his *Journal* was neglected for more than a hundred years.

An extended search has been made for the letters. Old books have been searched. *The Arminian Magazine*, *The Methodist Magazine*, *The Quarterly Review*, *Advocates*, and other possible sources have been examined and have yielded letters. Libraries have been contacted. Librarians have ably assisted in searching for originals or copies, All state libraries and many others within the area covered by Asbury were

requested to help. The response has been remarkable, and many letters have come to light. They are properly credited to the various institutions. Some of these letters have been printed in one place or another, thanks to the historical interest in them. But even some of these are in old books which are in a bad state of preservation. A good wind would blow them away. Drew University has performed a valuable service in preserving some of the letters on microfilm; but these are mainly the ones collected in the libraries of Drew, Garrett Biblical Institute, and the Baltimore Conference (Lovely Lane Museum).

This collection of letters represents a geographical distribution of interest which covers a large part of the United States and England. Many persons have been interested in the search for the letters. The collection in Drew University numbers about a hundred. These, however, are not all originals. No volume of Asbury's letters has ever been published prior to this one. Asbury had a feeling that he was the historian of early Methodism, as these letters indicate. He felt that it was necessary for him to collect a "focus," namely the records of the early preachers. He thought that this would be achieved and that they would be put into a volume. However, only a small number of these letters from preachers telling the story of advances in Methodism were ever published. During Asbury's day there were few newspapers. People to whom he wrote as a rule had no access to the newspapers. It was characteristic of Asbury that he felt he was responsible for spreading news, and he did it by writing letters.

A man is always known by his letters if he left any. It is natural to ask, "What did he say in those letters to his relatives, to his friends, to those who disagreed with him?" One wishes by some coincidence a trunk full of his letters could be found. However, so far no such trunk has turned up, and only a few more than three hundred letters have been discovered though the search has gone on for about five years. The letters which have been discovered have revealed far more of the real Francis Asbury than was known before. It has been repeatedly conjectured that he had never had any love interest. Without doubt he had at least one. However, little is known about this; but the letters reveal that her name was Nancy Brookes.

Asbury even had some people who despised him, and the letters give some of the history of these conflicts. Persons who have been lost sight of have come to life, and new friends have been found because they were the friends of Francis Asbury. Insights into his character are discovered, and the human Asbury comes out more alive. The greatness of the man is revealed in his human characteristics. One is reminded of Abraham Lincoln in that the human side is often the attractive side. As with Lincoln, the glorified side is frequently unhistorical, not human, and unattractive.

In order to see more of the real Asbury, a few letters which were written by others have been introduced into the correspondence. These are placed as a rule in chronological order to fit into the chronological development of Asbury's life. Some of these will enable the reader to see the other side

of the picture, and some throw more light on the human Asbury.

As said above, though Asbury became an extremely well-informed man, he was entirely self-educated. He became a highly educated man, but only because he was self-educated. His writings are not English classics. However, as a rule the letters were fairly well written. The earlier letters were rather crude, but he speedily improved. The most serious criticism that could be made of his letters would be of the length of his sentences. Frequently they had no end. However, his grammar was good, and there were not many mistakes. There was a quaintness about them which was characteristic of the times. He uses words which were in use in that day but are now archaic. These have been preserved in this printing of them. Sometimes he uses interesting play on names and words to carry his point.

He was exceedingly anxious about the way his written works would appear to posterity. He wanted them to appear grammatically correct. In a letter to Thomas Haskins on August 22, 1801, he says, "You will only say to Brother Cooper that you think I only 'wish good pointing, and a few words to make it explicit.' But it is not the Journal of Ezekiel Cooper, or any other but Francis Asbury, and as such I wish it to appear." Again, to Ezekiel Cooper he writes on December 31, 1801, "I have been taught to understand that a printer should point; and if he could not point he could not print. I do not choose to print any man's journal but my own. My language in preaching and writing is my own—good or



bad." To George Roberts on August 23, 1802, he writes, "I cannot blame Brother Cooper for my journals, first from my great affection to Thomas Haskins and high opinion of his literary abilities. I wished him to read, correct and strike out what was improper. Secondly, I desired Brother Cooper to print it as it was, except some pointings. I had stricken out many things; and oh that I had stricken out many more but I left chasms and incoherence in the copy. If I had left him (Cooper) at liberty it would have been done better." It can be seen from these statements of Asbury that he was exceedingly interested in having his sentences correctly "pointed." His directions were evidently followed out with the *Journal* and with the letters which were published in *The Methodist* and *The Arminian Magazines*. The originals of some of the letters have come to light, and one can see how they were edited by comparing them with the printed copies. Sometimes whole sections were left out.

When the question of how to print the letters arose, the problems had to be faced. Should they be printed as they appear in the originals? We would have preferred to have them printed just as Asbury wrote them. However, many of the letters could not be obtained in the originals. The printed copies are all that are extant. If the policy to print as Asbury wrote were followed, part would appear edited and the others would be copies of the originals. Asbury wished them to be edited if they were to be printed. He gave instructions to this effect when some were requested for printing in *The Methodist Magazine*; therefore his wishes were followed in the first printings. The above quotations of Asbury have

determined the policy of printing here. "My language in preaching and writing is my own—good or bad," he said; and Asbury's language has been preserved. Pointings have been put in as he desired and in conformity with the early printings of some of the letters. The letters here printed follow the pattern of the *Journal* as it was published by Hollingsworth and upon which several had worked as editors. The rule has been to let the writer speak his own mind and have his say. How we wish there were more of the letters! What we have makes us wish for more. Asbury comes more alive as one reads his correspondence.

A reader of the letters is at times exasperated because of the omissions of time between them. One wishes that the gaps could be filled. There are great chasms between the events. Fortunately, as a rule, the *Journal* supplies the information. However, when great issues are before Asbury and the Church, and one wishes to peer behind the scenes, he is frequently lost in the vacuum of no letters.

The letters present the real Asbury. They are the only source of his writing except the *Journal*, and it is largely done in an epitomized form. When one reads the *Journal*, he is exasperated at times because Asbury did not go into more detail. What there is of the letters is in more detail. Asbury had a real concern for the preachers. He had a concern for the homes, for widows and children, for his country, for the aged, and for animals. He loved scenery. He had no narrow view of religion. He was not narrowly sectarian in his viewpoint. As a rule, he loved preachers and was able to preach in pulpits of

pastors of other denominations. One marvels that he could travel in spite of the many illnesses to which he was heir. At times he seemed to have the complex of Paul. He rejoiced in being a martyr. He was sensitive to criticism. He felt driven to preach and to travel. He had a sense of duty which drove him to constant exertion. Within him there was a drive to be educated, and his growth in his intellectual life was most astonishing.

Asbury was a talented man. It was said of Wesley that he was a Method-ist. So was Asbury. He had a method for everything. He invented methods for the societies, the classes, the bands. He had methods for his daily travel, his sermons, the writing of his letters and *Journal*; methods for study, Bible reading, and prayer. However, he was so human that he was welcomed everywhere. He was called "Father" and became a Methodist saint among the people. He made enemies, but not many. The enemies he made were people who essentially differed from him on account of his policies of administration. They differed over the developing episcopacy. There were few differences with him over doctrines, though these letters refer to several who were accused of differences. Asbury was a man of humor. On some occasions he was accused of being too humorous. On Wednesday, December 11, 1782, he said:

I rode to Williamsburg—formerly the seat of government, but now removed to Richmond; thus the worldly glory is departed from it; as to Divine glory it never had any. I preached in James City court-house. The place has suffered and is suffering: the palace, the

barracks, and some good dwelling-houses burnt. The capitol is no great building, and is going to ruin; the exterior of the college not splendid, and but few students; the Bedlam-house is desolate, but whether because none are insane, or all are equally mad, it might, perhaps, be difficult to tell.

There was a frankness in his letters which was refreshing. When the occasion demanded it, he wrote directly, even critically, to a person who needed criticism. He was a born leader, and this gift of leadership showed itself strongly at times in dealing with his friends.

I am conscious of the fact that the letters sometimes conflict with the histories which have been written. For instance, many interpretations of the relationship between Asbury and Coke have appeared in print. The historians have not agreed. Frequently their disagreements have been violent. The editor of the letters has included the Coke letters in the volume with the idea of letting them tell their own story. They speak for themselves. The last word has not been said upon this and other subjects, nor will the last word be said here. Again one could wish that we had much more of the correspondence. Further light would certainly be thrown upon some of the mooted questions. However, there are enough letters here to tell a story that is more correct because much light has been discovered in recent years. Again it can be said that the human qualities of the "Prophet of the Long Road" stand out in that this remarkable man becomes more remarkable as his actual characteristics are more fully understood from his letters. No wonder that the United States

Government has paid tribute to this man, and no wonder that the National Historical Publications Commission is concerned that the *Journal* and the letters be published. It is hoped that the letters will create the kind of interest that will help writers in the future to write more perfectly of the real Francis Asbury.

An arbitrary rule has been adopted as to the text of the letters to be used in this volume. Wherever possible, the originals have been used—in fact, in every instance where originals have come to life. Sometimes there are copies of the originals in other places, and these have been examined. The credit line at the bottom of the letter indicates the source from which the letter was taken. It does not refer to places where the letters have been published unless so stated. In some cases letters have been published several times.

We are delighted to make acknowledgment of the help we have received from many persons and agencies which have co-operated to bring this volume to completion. To Frank Baker, secretary of the Wesley Historical Society of England, we are deeply indebted for his great interest in this enterprise. He has not only transcribed and provided a number of the letters but also provided notes which have given the English background of the letters. His contribution has been outstanding. We are indebted to Mr. L.E.S. Gutteridge of the Epworth Press, who has helped in providing materials and has transcribed the longest letter, that to Joseph Benson, January 16, 1816. William Warren Sweet has allowed us the privilege of using the letters from his collection of copies. This

prominent historian has placed his materials at our disposal. He has also been an invaluable source of historical information. Robert S. Dolliver, who for years has done work in this field, has loaned us his list of letters. He has provided some, and altogether has helped to make our list of letters complete. We acknowledge our debt of gratitude to Albert D. Betts, who has been of great assistance in providing information and transcribing some letters which have been found in South Carolina. He has searched in many places to give help. W.G. Smeltzer has likewise provided information and transcribed some letters with notes from the Pittsburgh Conference area. Lawrence Sherwood has assisted in many ways in research in reference to West Virginia and the surrounding areas, and has provided letters from various collections, including his own. He has also transcribed some of the letters. We are also indebted to Wallace H. Harris, who has provided photographs of letters and other information, and in addition helped with the materials in Pennsylvania. Arthur Bruce Moss has been most helpful in supplying information from New York and has repeatedly helped with the project. Herbert Hucks, Jr., Wofford College librarian, has been most helpful with some of the Asbury materials, including supplying copies of letters in the Wofford library. Robert B. Pierce has loaned the *Journal* of William Spencer, which has been a valuable addition to our study. Some of it is used in this volume. Mrs. Frederick Brown Harris has allowed the use of the letter from Francis Asbury to her distinguished ancestor Daniel Fidler. Mr. and Mrs. H. Carstairs Bracey have done much to locate historic names and places in several counties of Virginia and North Carolina. Miss Elizabeth

Hughey has provided copies of letters in the library of the Methodist Publishing House in Nashville and helped in our research.

A debt of gratitude is due to Gordon Pratt Baker, who has read the manuscript through and has made valuable contributions to it by suggestions in reference to the copy. It has been a great help to the editor to have the advice and the careful reading which have characterized his work with the copy. A debt of gratitude is also due to Harry Denman, the general secretary of the General Board of Evangelism of The Methodist Church, for his friendly interest in the project, and to D.E. Jackson, our business manager, and the staff of The Upper Room, who have taken such an interest in the project and helped in it in so many ways. Brooks B. Little, my editorial associate and the librarian of The Upper Room Devotional Library, has been of invaluable help. He has been indefatigable in his research, running down sources in libraries, discovering copies of letters, photographing them, collecting them, and in many other ways he has made his contribution. Over a period of about five years my secretary, Clarice Marie Winstead, has helped with the letters, studied them, typed them, and familiarized herself with them until she has become an authority on them. Likewise, her sister, Annie Lee Winstead, who has been called in to help over a period of months and who has lived with the letters through that time, has made an extraordinary contribution to the work. These ladies have had a most important part in the entire project. Mrs. Louise Stahl, Dr. Clark's secretary, has frequently provided information, copies of letters, and other materials,

and has made her contribution in a most worth-while way. Others who have helped with the copying of the letters are Willena Woodard, Katherine Campbell, Carrie B. Chenault, Sylvia Holloway, and Evelyn Butts.

We have also received help from Edward J. Fortney, formerly librarian at Drew University, who put at our disposal the resources of Drew library. Through him we have had much valuable advice and information. Kenneth R. Rose, pastor of Lovely Lane Methodist Church, Baltimore, has given us access to the historical collection there. It is an invaluable collection, and many of the materials have been used. Proper credits have been given to that library. Albert W. Cliffe, pastor of St. George's Church and the librarian of the Philadelphia Historical Society, has made available everything at St. George's Church. Many of the most valuable materials extant are in Old St. George's Church, Philadelphia; and much material in this volume has been placed here through the help of the pastor. We are grateful to Harold H. Hughes for his research.

This ministerial family of mine has been an unending source of help through these years as I have worked with the letters and *Journal*. My mother, Mrs. R.H. Potts, who in her eighties has been blessed with a remarkable memory, has helped in many ways. Especially do I owe my wife, Agnes, more than I can estimate for her constant encouragement as she has worked with the magnifying-glass in deciphering letters, gone with me to out-of-the-way places to find



materials, worked in libraries, helped with research, and with reading copy and proof.

Finally, we are indebted to many of the staffs of libraries and institutions which have provided invaluable help in locating, preparing copies, photographing, and helping in so many ways to provide materials for the volume. We also owe a great debt of gratitude to many persons across America who have had a particular interest in some one piece of historical material and have helped to point up that particular matter. To all these, and to many others, we are most indebted.

J. MANNING POTTS

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**BEFORE COMING TO AMERICA**

*October 26, 1768 - August 27, 1771*

## CHAPTER ONE

### BEFORE COMING TO AMERICA

October 26, 1768 - August 27, 1771

*This is the first Asbury letter which has come to light. He was still in England, and it was written to his parents to inform them of his removal from the Colchester Circuit to Wiltshire. His mother had evidently grieved greatly because of his leaving home. He admonishes her not to mourn. The most interesting thing in the letter is his reference to Nancy Brookes. Because he was a bachelor, it has been rather taken for granted that he was never interested in any woman. However, it would appear here that he had been. He was twenty-three years of age when this letter was written. In this letter he shows much of the burden for souls which characterized his ministry.*

WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND

October 26, 1768

[To his Parents]<sup>[1]</sup>

My dearly beloved in the Lord and also Parents Dear:

Being moved from the place I was in, I think it my duty to let you know and I hope you will not repine or be uneasy. I am now in health and strength and very well contented, settled upon my good behaviour in Wiltshire. There are two preachers of us in the round. We have many places and in general a loving good natured people, so I see nothing to complain of; there is no want of any thing, for our bread and

water are sure, only there is a great want in me of wisdom and grace for the work; but I hope my God will supply all my wants. We spend our Sundays at Portsmouth and Salisbury; there we have two large congregations and very large and good preaching houses. I had no choice this year, and now I think I am as well settled as I could desire. As to temporals, that is the least of my cares. If my heart is upright I shall not want them I am sure.

I hope, my dear Mother, you are more easy. Why will you mourn in such a manner? If you have given me to the Lord let it be a free will offering, and don't grieve for me. I have cause to be thankful that such a poor, ignorant, foolish, unfaithful, unfruitful creature should be called to the work, chosen of man, and I hope and trust, of God; though I have done enough to both to cast me off for ever.

I wonder some times how anyone will sit to hear me, but the Lord covers my weakness with his power. I trust you will be easy and more quiet. As for me, I know what I am called to. It is to give up all, and to have my hands and heart in the work, yea the nearest and dearest friends. And I am content and will do it. Nay, it is done. Christ is all to me. Let others condemn me, as being without natural affection, as being stubborn, disobedient to parents, or say what they please. It does not alter the case, for it is a small matter with me to be judged of man. I love my parents and friends but I love my God better and his service, because it is perfect freedom, and he does not send me away at my own cost, for he gives me to prove, as my day is, my strength is, and it is my meat and

drink to do his will. And tho I have given up all I do not repent, for I have found all.

I saw Mr. Pawson<sup>[2]</sup> at Stroud. He seems like a loving agreeable young man, sensible and understanding in the things of God. Give my love to him. Do tell Mr. Pawson to tell Mr. King where I am, and the people at Broadmarston, and any others to direct to me at the new chapel house in Salisbury. There you must direct. I am in very good health.

Nancy Brookes,<sup>[3]</sup> your manner of speaking made me to begin to think and wonder. I know very well that it becomes me to be without partiality and if you or any other will convince me of it I would be ashamed of it, and shake it off as I would the mire of the streets. I don't say but I may be guilty of it, but I do not know wherein and in regard to what [?] passed when I was over at Barr, I can't tell wherein, and it is a pity, but you had told me or would do it. My time was short. I was with all the people but you, I think, and also I was at your house but you were not at home. I could [have] been as glad of your company as any one at Barr, and wanted it but could not have it, but my dear heart, I shall think no more of it if you don't, tho it gave me some little pain. For who is offended, and I burn not. Dear child I have travailed in birth for you and never sought any<sup>[4]</sup> — God is my witness, but his glory and your good. And tho you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, you have not many fathers, for in Christ I have begotten you to a lively hope. My dear child, I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, lest as the serpent



beguiled Eve, you should be drawn from the simplicity of the gospel.

Watch and pray and pray for me and all will be well, dear father. I hope you love and cleave to Jesus. Have you victory over sin and that which has in time past most easily beset you? Oh dear father, labour to increase as with more of God, to be holy and without blame before him in love.

Sister Smith you have many trials, one upon the back of another, but you can't trust. Set up your Ebenezer and say hitherto the Lord has helped you, and he will if you look to him in every trial, and help you to keep your garments always white. Oh child contend for this. Don't give it up, sooner give up your life than this. I do and will affirm that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin, and if no one will stand with me I will stand alone. I was not taught it of man nor you either. If He was a man He might make us give it up, but the work is the Lord's. Oh live by faith in the Son of God every moment, and he will make way for you through the water and fire in all our temptation. Help keep us to prove his utmost salvation, his fulness of love. Pray, pray, watch and pray.

Friend Thomas Smith where are you? Yet out of Christ, host to Christ, shake yourself from the dust, arise and fly to Jesus, the City of refuge. Make haste my dear friend, make haste, the avenger of blood is at your heels. Oh cry earnestly and instantly, "Jesus thou Son of David have mercy on me."

Now Moley Sheldon also, there is nothing but complaining in your streets and maybe you are ready to say, ——<sup>[5]</sup> I doubt there never will be a child, your like, the woman with the bloody issue that spent all she had and now no better, —— But you perhaps have no spirit, —— or else you would fall upon Jesus, the last shift when you are lost under —— as in yourself. Then you will submit to come to Jesus and pray like her from behind, but if it is with this, if I may but touch him, I shall be well. Oh may you be driven by extreme want to Him and fall nigh.

To my friend Sheldon, Oh my dear heart where are you, tossed like a ship upon the ocean, here and there, but no rest. Return to Jesus weeping ——<sup>[6]</sup> to Him and give a devorce to your sins. He will receive you and comfort you with a sense of his love. See the Harbour, make for it notwithstanding it is high. He may put forth his hand as he did to Peter and save you if you reflect on Jesus. You cannot help but love him, but you may say, my heart is worldly, hard and unfeeling. He shall maybe this moment cast a look, melt it into love, thy love, thy flinty heart shall turn and get it.

See the victory, Mrs. Brookes. Do you find comfort in Jesus and stay your soul on Him? You may answer to this but I am very weak and the world follows and sticks close. Look to the strong for strength, He the Lord will free you from this plague of earth this moment. Oh cry to your God this moment.

To Mother Perkins, do you love Jesus? Do you increase with the increase of God? If so watch and pray and go home and prosper.

To Betty Willkes, are you following the humble Nazarene, Jesus the joy and desire of the whole Christ above and below? Oh go on, pray and watch, and hate the thing that is evil, and God, even you have God, shall give you his blessing and care for your soul and body.

To Sarah Weston, I hope it will be given you to go on through evil report and good and be a faithful follower of the Lamb which your soul wishes and desires and prays for you, my dear heart. We must learn to look from persons and things to the immovable, unchangeable God. He is a rock and his work is perfect. My love to John. I wish and desire and pray that he may have repentance and remission of sins, that both your souls may be bound up in the bundle of life. Farewell and prosper and that you may pray much.

To Sally Brookes, I hope to hear, dear child, that your hard heart is broken and that the hand of God presses your love, that you give up every vanity, over you be love and be wedded to the king's son and be brought into the banqueting house and his banner. That you must not expect me to write very often, it is so far, send me a letter quick.

Remember to tell Mr. Pawson you need only direct for me at the Chapel House in Salisbury. I cannot by any means come over till the Conference, so you must not desire it, but I hope

to see you then. I think if I can to go to the Leeds Conference, it will be in my way,

these from,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*This letter, like the first to his parents, shows Asbury's devotion to his mother and his concern for his parents' salvation. He has been moved since the last letter.*

TOWCESTER, ENGLAND<sup>[7]</sup>  
*November 6, 1769*

[*To his Mother*]

Dear Mother:

I am sorry that you should be so troubled on my account, seeing I am in health, and in the Lord's work. I hope you will be more easy for the time to come. I am glad you are in peace. I wish it may be real and lasting, and flow like a river. It is good to seek the peace of the Church, for in it you shall have peace. Dear mother, be diligent to be found of the Lord in peace, without spot and blameless; to be holy, and full of love. All our work for eternity must be done while the lamp of life is in; therefore let us mind our own business, and get our own work done, that is absolutely necessary to be done, that we may with joy face the messenger death, and sweetly remove to the Zion above the land of rest and pure delight. Give my duty to my father, and my love to all friends. I do find much of the goodness of God to my soul, so that he leads me on my way by his power, and enlarges my heart in his

work. Blessed for ever be his holy and dear name! You may send me a letter when you can, and let me know how you do. I have much work on my hands and am put to it for time to do what I want.

The bearer of this receive as myself. He is one that I esteem. Provide for him and his horse. That you meet together often and in love, and labour to keep one another warm, to stir up one another from day to day, and to build each other up in the holy loving faith. Keep close to our people and preaching, and keep at a distance from those that hold the —— tenets. Stand fast in the truth as you have been taught, and be sure that love is of God. He that loveth, is born of God. Holiness is of God. He that is holy belongs to God. So much holiness and love, so much religion.

From your son, in a measure dutiful, through grace,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*This letter indicates that Asbury was still at Towcester, though it was written from Weedon.*

WEEDON, ENGLAND  
*July 20, 1770*

[*To his Parents*]

Dear Parents:

I send these few lines to let you know that I am well, and that I had your last, though I have put off writing through the

hurry of business. At present I find myself a little at rest to write to you, though in past life various have been the exercises of my afflicted mind, and still I cry out, Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips. A want of holiness bows me down before God and man. I know that I am not what I ought to be, in thought, word, and deed. And O how hard to be borne is this, when well considered. Thou tellest another he should not speak evil. Dost *thou*? Thou that sayest another should have no unholy desires, hast thou such in thy heart? When I meet with fightings without and fears within, my heart trembles, my courage fails, my hands hang down, and I am ready to give up all for lost. I despair almost of holding out to the end, when I think of the difficulties I have to wade through. I can say with Job, I would not live alway. Or, O! that thou wouldst hide me in the grave! Or with Jonah, 'Tis better for me to die than to live. Oh! the peaceable dead are set free. The bliss that I covet, they have.

At this time I am in trying circumstances about the people and places; but sometimes I please myself that I shall go hence and leave these parts. But then I shall take my nature with me that starts at suffering, and the devil will be hard at my heels to tempt me; and if my trials are different, still they will and must come.

I do not expect to stay here another year. Where I shall go I cannot tell. Most that know you ask after you, and give their love to you,—Miss Tyers, in particular, and her mother, and Mrs. Spencer. I read those lines to Betty Gent and her husband, and both of them seemed much affected. I have been

most of my time in Bedfordshire since you left me. Mr. England's people are well. They have had the things you sent; not one broken. I hope both of you will keep on in the good way of God, and will seek to him, that you may increase with the increase of God. In so doing you will do well.

If you write, let it be quickly. Direct to Towcester. I believe I shall go to the Conference, and when that is over I will come home, unless something very pressing fall out. And if so, I will watch for an opportunity, and will take the first to come home. If I do come, it will be about the first Wednesday after the Conference. If I do not come, I will send a letter by some preacher. Give my love to all friends. I am glad to hear of your prosperity. May the Lord increase it a hundred fold in every soul, and among the people in general.

So prays your unworthy son, yet in dutiful respect,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*A Mr. Andrews had written to Asbury evidently asking him to find a schoolmistress. It occurred to Asbury that Mrs. Bright might be able to fill the position, and he wrote the following letter from Basingstoke. Asbury was admitted on trial in 1767. His appointments were Bedfordshire; helper to James Glassbrook, 1767; Essex, 1768; Bedfordshire, 1769; South Wiltshire, 1770. In 1770 Richard Whatcoat succeeded him in Bedfordshire.*

BASINGSTOKE, ENGLAND<sup>[8]</sup>

*May 1, 1771*

[To Mrs. Mary Bright<sup>[9]</sup>  
the Foundery, near Upper Moorfields]

My dear Sister:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you, so that you may be kept in the evil day and be upheld, by the everlasting arms, thro' all trials, inward and outward. I had a letter from a friend of mine, Mr. Andrews,<sup>[10]</sup> in Hertford, in it he gave me an account of a person he had had in his house for a school mistress, but he had turned her away and I judge he must want another. I think it would do for you. Observe that he is a person that has a school under his own roof, at his own expence, for boys and girls. He has a man to teach the boys and I suppose wants a woman for the girls. They are very spiritual people, they are well known at the Foundery. It (Hertford) is but 20 miles from London. You may write to him to know his mind and to know on what terms he will take you, and what your work must be, what the children must be taught, and then you will know whether you can do it. I have thought of it some time as I have been looking out for you, but I did not think you would have gone to London so soon but I take the first opportunity to write. You may make use of my name and tell him I directed you. The direction to Him must be thus: To Mr. Abraham Andrews, a Carpenter in Castle Street, Hertford.



From one that wishes you well and is your friend and  
Brother,

F. Asbury  
Christian Miscellany, 1864, 252. *Transcribed by Frank  
Baker*

A Letter to Mrs. Asbury  
from Four Affectionate Sisters, Parishioners of Francis  
Asbury

*The four members of Francis Asbury's flock in a letter to  
his mother express their deep regret over Asbury's decision to  
go to America.*

WHITCHURCH, ENGLAND  
*August 27, 1771*

[*To Mrs. Asbury*]

Dear Mrs. Asbury:

We have heard that your son is going, or is gone, to America. We expected he would call on us, to bid us farewell. But as the time is expired, we must give up our hope. So we have troubled you with a few lines, by way of inquiry if you were willing to part with him, and he willing to part from you? We think it must be an instance of much trouble to both, for indeed we were very much grieved when we heard Mr. Asbury was going there. The intent of writing this is to beg the favor of you to send us a few lines, as soon as possible, that we may be informed of the particulars of this long journey, if he is gone; for we can scarce believe he is so mad,

and to desire another letter from you the first time he writes to you from abroad. Indeed the Lord has made him a useful instrument to many here, and he will not be easily forgotten by us. Indeed, our dear sister, you have great reason to rejoice in the Lord, in that your son is also a son of God, and an heir with the Lord of glory. But this is no doubt a time of distress to you and your husband; and we in some measure mourn with you for the loss of him for so long a time. But we hope the Lord will restore him again in peace, to the joy of your hearts. We all<sup>[11]</sup> join in respectful love to you, and remain

Your affectionate sisters,

S. Faithorn

Mary Farmer

M. Butler

Elizabeth Web

P.S. Pray send as soon as possible. Direct to Mrs. Faithorn, Whitchurch, Hants.

*Drew University Library*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] This letter has been broken up at times and parts redated. It seems to be one letter. It was addressed on the envelope to Joseph Asbury at Mr. John Worleye's, Esqr., at Hampstead Hall, near Birmingham, Staffordshire. His mother's name was Elizabeth.
- [2] John Pawson was one of the early lay preachers. He was assistant on the Stafford-shire Circuit on which Asbury's parents lived. In 1785 Wesley ordained Pawson for Scotland. He was elected president of the fiftieth conference, which was held at Leeds, July 29, 1793. (See Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 109.)
- [3] See letter, June 7, 1784.
- [4] The letter is torn here.
- [5] Some words are effaced along here.
- [6] Letter torn.
- [7] This is the second letter which has come to light.
- [8] South Wiltshire Circuit.
- [9] A member of Wesley's household.
- [10] Andrews, a carpenter, presented the famous pulpit to City Road Chapel, London.
- [11] It is interesting to read the following letter written to Francis Asbury by the Rev. W. Orp (sometimes spelled Orpe) in 1766. In spite of what his superior thought of his start, Asbury had done well, as the above letter from the ladies proves. Orp was an assistant to Wesley, as the preachers were called in the early days, and was on the Staffordshire Circuit in 1766. The assistant acted as

preacher in charge, or superintendent; and the preachers associated with him were helpers. Orp was evidently a stern man and believed in discipline.

Darlaston, Staffordshire  
May 23, 1766

Dear Frank,

I take this opportunity of informing you, that I shall not be at those places, and shall expect you to see them supplied in due time. It is true another preacher is come; but he goes immediately into the low round; in the mean time I wish you would hearken to those verses of Hesiod:—

"Let him attend his charge, and careful trace  
The richt-lin'd furrow, gaze no more around:  
But have his mind employ'd upon the work."

Then I should hope to hear that your profiting would appear unto all men. You have lost enough already by gazing all around; for God's sake do so no more. I wish I could see you on your return from Hampton on Sunday evening. I shall be at Wednesbury if it please God. I have a little concern to mention. I hope you'll call.

I remain yours affectionately,

W. Orp  
The Methodist Magazine, 1831, 190-91

**PRIOR TO THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE**

*October 7, 1772 - December 6, 1784*

## CHAPTER TWO

### PRIOR TO THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE

October 7, 1772 - December 6, 1784

*Asbury sailed from England on September 2, 1771, and landed at Philadelphia on October 27. He wrote to his parents immediately, but the letter has been lost. Several other letters have been lost. This letter is the first that has been found written by Asbury after coming to America. It is addressed to Joseph Asbury. He and his wife were still at Hampstead in Staffordshire. Asbury was evidently somewhat homesick for home and England.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
October 7, 1772

[To his Parents]

My very dear Parents:

May grace and peace be multiplied to you, now and ever! I have now received two letters from you, and a third came to New York, and was lost. I was then in Philadelphia. But I think I have sent four letters to you. Have you had one, my first, from Philadelphia, dated about the latter end of October, which I wrote soon after I landed, and sent by the way of Bristol?

I am glad to hear you do not want the things of this life; for if you wanted these, it would trouble me much. I cannot comply at present with your request, as I think it is not the

order of God. You would not have me leave the work God hath called me to, for the dearest friend in life. If the flesh will, your spirit will not. However, you may depend upon it, I will come home as soon as I can: but he that believeth shall not make haste. As I did not come here without counsels and prayers, I hope not to return without them, lest I should be like Jonah. I have seen enough to make me sick; but if I faint in the day of adversity, my strength is small. I am under Mr. Wesley's direction; and as he is a father and friend, I hope I shall never turn my back on him.

I have found at length that Americans are more willing to hear than to do; notwithstanding, there is a considerable work of God. We have had a large opening in Virginia and Maryland, where Mr. Whitefield hardly ever preached with any success. The time to favor them I hope is come. Still old England for me. Yet this is a plentiful land; and if a poor man can live anywhere, he may live here. But my bread and water are sure, if I am faithful; and it is but little I want. I am not for making a fortune, but to convert souls to God.

'Tis one great disadvantage to me I am not polite<sup>[1]</sup> enough for the people. They deem me fit for the country, but not for the cities; and it is my greater misfortune I cannot, or will not, learn, and they cannot teach me. But as my father and mother were never very polite people, it is not so strange. And as I was not born so, nor educated after this sort, I cannot help it. Besides, I was in the wilderness till my showing to Israel. But I see the emptiness of human life, and am sick of the gaudy scenes of life. I cannot as yet seek great things for myself, for

I believe there will be, and now is, a dreadful consumption on the earth among people who call themselves Christians, because of their conformity to the world.

There is a decay of the primitive spirit of religion. Woe unto us! for we have sinned, and the plague is begun. There is a cry in the camp, and who will stand up to make the hedge, or stand in the gap? May I hope my father and mother will give their hearts to God, and aim at the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus? Strive to be holy as he is holy, so that you may finish well and in peace, that we may have sure and certain hopes of meeting in the kingdom of God together, to part no more. Labour to support the preaching; it will not always be in vain. Stir up the people to meet together. Let me know whether there is much spiritual prosperity in the societies about. Let me know what is become of my mare. I hope the Lord will bring us together in this world, to praise him; which we shall have great cause to do. Help me by your prayers, to be faithful to the grace given. My love to every inquiring friend; and am, as ever,

Your loving and dutiful son,

F. Asbury

P.S. Joseph Pirkins has been with me this morning and I see him often when in New York. We talk together about our own country. He is in a way to do well and would be glad to hear of his mother, how she does in temporals and in health and in soul. He gives his duty to her and love to all friends. He tells



me he has received a letter from young John Pirkins and has written an answer.

The Methodist Magazine, and Quarterly Review, 1831,  
197-98

*According to the Journal this letter was written on Monday, January 25. Asbury had been preaching in and around Baltimore. In the letter he begins to show anxiety for his beloved England. He was able to see that the Revolution was brewing. At the time when other preachers were getting ready to go back to England, he was more and more casting his lot with the colonies.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
January 24, 1773

[*To his Parents*]

Dear Father and Mother:

Grace and peace be with you now and ever! May it be the staff of your old age, and your consolation against the fear of death! These are to let you know I have not forgotten you; and though so many months absent, and so many miles distant, still my love and care are toward you. I often think of you, and many times pray for you. As to my own health of body and mind, I have not been so well I may say for months and years, through mercy.

I am now in Maryland, of which you have heard. 'Tis where they send the English convicts.<sup>[2]</sup> 'Tis about a hundred miles (that is Baltimore) to the southward of Philadelphia. The people in these parts, some few years back, were buried in sensuality; but God has wrought a wonderful change upon the hearts of many, and many are raised up to speak in his name. Poor Negroes have been deeply affected with the power of God. We have got one that will be fit to send to England soon, to preach. Here are Negroes who have astonished master of families, understanding men, when they have heard them pray; and if they were in England, they would shame their thousands. How many are there, rich and poor, who pretend to believe there is a God, yet never pray to that God, in private nor in public, nor in their families, no more than do their horses. Oh God! in the midst of wrath, remember mercy. Do not pour out thy wrath on these prayerless, Christless mortals.

I am concerned for my country, though I have nothing to gain or lose; but I fear God will contend with them in a way of judgment. As they have been favored with the Gospel, with peace and plenty, these mercies abused, as they have been, call for vengeance. Surely no nation under heaven has been blessed with the Gospel like England. Oh ye inhabitants of England! repent and turn from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. I fear the storm is gathering, and the cloud will break on my dear countrymen, whose present and eternal interest I have much at heart. I long for the salvation of their souls, that they may be brought home to the fold of Christ. Perhaps some may cast a heedless eye over

these lines; and no doubt they will esteem me as a poor ignorant fanatic,—fool as they know I always was,—and therefore all I could say had no weight, and consequently all I can write. But a fool may speak the truth sometimes, and then he should be heard; for truth is truth, come from whom it may.

May I hope there are a few of my neighbours who lay eternal things to heart, and do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All have need to stand on their watch, and not to think themselves safe till they get into heaven; and blessed is the man that feareth always. There are many rocks to split upon, and many by-paths to lead the soul from God; therefore watch, and remember how I have warned you for the space of three years, and God is my witness I sought nothing but the salvation of your souls. Ye were once the fruit of my labour, as I made your salvation the care and travail of my soul; for though you have ten thousand instructors you have not many fathers. But so it is sometimes, we call our fathers fools, so wise we grow. No doubt our younger sons will call us so.

I hope, my dear mother, you rest your soul, your all, into the hand of the Lord; and that you do not sorrow for me as for one without hope. Rejoice with me as one whom the Lord hath blessed in a strange land; as an ambassador for God and Christ. I want for nothing, and if I sought great things I might have them; but these I will not, cannot seek. I dare not take

more than what just supplies my need. It shall never be said this was my motive for entering into the ministry. I abhor that Demas spirit. I bless God that for these eight or nine years I have been in (the work as a local and travelling preacher), I have had only plain food and raiment; and I trust I shall never seek more; though I consider sometimes I am here in a strange land, nothing to depend on but the kindness of friends, am spending the best of my days, what shall I do when I am old? But then I am taught to trust in the Lord, and give body and soul to him who has cared for me hitherto, and he will care for me to the end of my life. But if the Lord please I think I shall breathe in my own air in a few years; but I cannot say when, as the call for preachers is great, and I cannot leave the work. But as many are raised up here, and some may come with Mr. Wesley in the spring, I may be spared soon. I desire to live and move in the will of God.

'Tis strange I have seen but one letter from you now these sixteen or seventeen months I have been in America; and as I am now so far from New York and Philadelphia where the letters come. If they come to the continent 'tis much, if they are not lost. But if you get mine, it is well, that you may be content. I can trust my parents, my all, into God's hands. Does my father give his heart to God? Has he victory over sin more than ever? Is his soul devoted to God? It is a trial for us to be parted; but what will it be for us to be eternally parted? Cutting, killing thought! O let us look out for an eternal habitation with God!

We have had exceeding fine weather to the middle of the month. We have had since some severe weather. I have a circuit of about two hundred miles, that I go round in three weeks. If some of our countrymen did but know how well they might live in this country, they would soon come, if they did as the Dutch, sell themselves and children for servants. There are many convicts who have served their time, and have made fortunes afterward. Here are many thousand acres of good land that may be had for clearing, or little more. If a poor man can live any where he may here. Salute all my old friends and neighbours.

Your loving and dutiful son,

F. Asbury

On envelope

To Mr. Joseph Asbury  
at Mr. John Worleye's, Esq.,  
at Hampstead Hall  
near Birmingham  
Staffordshire

*Drew University Library*

Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Asbury,

Whitchurch, Aug<sup>27</sup> 1771.

We have heard that your son is going, or is going to  
America. We expected he would call on us, to bid us farewell.  
But, as if time is expiring, we must give up our hope. So we  
have trouble, you with a few Lines, by way of enquiry  
we was willing to visit with him, and he willing to part  
from you, though I think it must be an instance of much  
tenderness to both, for indeed it was very much beloved when  
we heard Mr. Asbury was going there. <sup>we</sup> In token of writing to  
to you, in favour of you to send us a few Lines, as soon as  
possible, that we may be inform'd of your safety, of this long  
journey, & he is sojourner we can never leave he is so near, and  
to receive another letter from you of first time he writes  
to us, from America. Indeed it were his mind him of  
the same, & you are free, and so will not be a fully  
enough by us. Indeed, the <sup>more</sup> that you have great reason  
to believe ~~in~~ that your son is so  
that he will be an instrument of Love & Glory. But  
there is no such a word as <sup>to</sup> <sup>be</sup> <sup>left</sup> <sup>to</sup> <sup>you</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>your</sup> <sup>husband</sup>,  
and we in some measure mourn with you for your loss  
of him, for so long time, but we hope in Love will  
see, so him again, as you, to let Joy of your hearts.  
I am, Dear M<sup>rs</sup>, your affectionate Sister, and remain

Yours affectionate Sister, S. Fishburn  
Mary Ann M<sup>rs</sup> Buller  
The 4<sup>th</sup> Mrs  
Whitchurch, Hants.

The letter from four ladies at Whitchurch, England, written to Mrs. Asbury after Francis left his appointment there to go to America. (See letter, August 27, 1771.)

I am yours etc  
F. A.

I am with great love  
thine in Jesus  
Francis Asbury

I am your affectionate  
brother and  
Friend F. Asbury

I am as ever  
thine  
Francis Asbury

As ever  
thine  
Francis Asbury

As ever yours  
Francis Asbury

As ever  
thine  
Francis Asbury

I am yours in the Gospel  
Francis Asbury

Francis Asbury

Francis Asbury

Yours in Jesus  
F. Asbury

Truly yours in the Lord  
F. A.

Various closing phrases and signatures from Asbury's letters, some of which may not be originals. These show how differently Asbury closed his letters and signed his name.

*Asbury loved Baltimore. The Journal record for September 5 shows that it was Sunday and that he preached at the Point in the morning and in Baltimore in the evening to a large congregation. However, he observed that the inhabitants were much devoted to pride, idolatry, and every species of sin. Yet he asked the Lord to remember them in mercy.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
September 5, 1773

[To his Parents]

My dear Parents:

I long to hear oftener from you. I think I have had but two letters from you since I have been in America; but at such a distance we must expect long returns. I am at present stationed in Maryland, and shall stay until Spring. Then, if the Lord spare me, I shall go to Virginia,<sup>[3]</sup> and there continue till May, when our Conference will begin in Philadelphia.

Mr. Rankin<sup>[4]</sup> told me he saw [you], but I wonder you did not write. We —— the preachers and people in much —— order since the last preachers came over, and we have a prospect of much good.<sup>[5]</sup> I have much to do here, as I am in the greatest part of the work, and we have many country-born preachers and exhorters. I bless God for health, I think better than ever; and I do feel my heart taken up with God and his work. When I consider the order and steadfastness of my own country friends, I wish almost to be with them. But I trust the time will come when I shall see them. Indeed, if I sought any thing but the glory of God, I should think this the only place in the world to answer my purpose. But God, that knows my



heart, knoweth my desire is to spend and be spent in his service. I have had opportunities of pursuing fleshly ends, but I abhor them. Indeed, we have a land of plenty. We eat bread without scarceness.

I feel it my one great business to keep myself pure. The customs of a country are apt to stick to us without our notice. I see more and more every day what a preacher must be, and how he ought to live in public and private. I trust, my dear parents, you cleave to God, and both press on to a full conformity to the will of God, and the image of God,—holiness. Holiness becomes the house of God, whose house are ye. Let this be the mark for us, that Christ may be all. I am much taken up. Forgive the shortness of my letters. I have often to ride and preach twice in the daytime. My love to all friends. If I live, unless I should take a trip to the West Indies, I hope to be in England in less than two years.

From your obedient and loving son,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*This is the first of the letters in which Asbury deals with the appointments. These appointments do not agree with those listed in the Minutes for 1773-74. Asbury shows his care for the preachers and especially his desire for them to study. This day he had spent much time reading the works and meditations of John Brandon. (See Journal.) There is evidence here of the conflict which developed with Thomas Rankin.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

*March 4, 1774*

[*To William Duke*]<sup>[6]</sup>

My dear Billy:

If you have not had orders from Rankin<sup>[7]</sup> I would direct you to go into the Jerseys to Philip Gatch,<sup>[8]</sup> if Brother Strawbridge<sup>[9]</sup> comes away as I expect he will. Unless the stranger that is about the country should go or be sent into the Jerseys then you need not go, but otherwise you must go and stay until the Conference, and as you have been a quarter in Newcastle it may be better for you to move. If there is a call in Newcastle I can send Richard Webster. I would have Daniel Ruff and Philip Gatch change the 11th or 12th of April unless Mr. Rankin has given orders anyways to the contrary.

Now my Brother give your heart to God, be faithful to the gift of God that is in you, be much in prayer and reading the word and other profitable books that your profiting may appear to all. Keep your heart with all diligence. I believe your parents are well and after the Conference you will see them. Take every opportunity of getting knowledge and always consider yourself as ignorant and as having everything to learn. Stand at all possible distance from the female sex, that you be not betrayed by them that will damage the young mind and sink the aspiring soul and blast the prospect of the future man. I leave you to your Master and be sure you keep close to your faithful guide. I am as ever

Your loving friend and brother

Francis Asbury

*Drew University Library*

*Asbury was appointed to Baltimore in 1773. In 1774 he was appointed to New York, but to change with Thomas Rankin in Philadelphia in three months. Evidently the change had been made as this letter was written from Philadelphia. Edward Dromgoole was appointed to Baltimore in 1774, but seems to have changed to Kent Circuit before January, 1775, as the envelope is addressed to Kent County. Dromgoole had followed Asbury in Baltimore, and Asbury planned to go back. There was some misunderstanding between them. On February 17, 1775, Asbury records in the Journal that he had a letter from Robert Strawbridge saying, "Mr. Dromgoole concurred in sentiment relative to my going to Baltimore." On Saturday, February 25, 1775, Asbury packed to leave on Monday for Baltimore. He arrived on time and stayed until May. The Minutes show that Asbury was appointed to Norfolk in May, 1775; and Dromgoole was appointed to Brunswick, both in Virginia.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

January 9, 1775

[To Edward Dromgoole]<sup>[10]</sup>

My dear Friend:

Having this opportunity I send you a few lines to let you know that I am still the same, not offended, as you were afraid; but as my influence and fellowship among the young preachers<sup>[11]</sup> has been much suspected, as stirring them up against those they should be in subjection to. I have dropt writing for ye sake of peace. Be assured I wish you good luck in the house of the Lord.

Am glad you have got such a large field of action. If you would do good you must live to God and give up every idol and not let one stand in the Temple of the Lord; [may] your soul make the words of God your study day and night. Always account yourself a learner, only when you go to preach take care of trifling, if you are free, use your liberty, prize your freedom. Remember you have escaped as with ye skin of your teeth — but weak in body, hope my heart — has been for sometime.

I expect to stay here 2 months but know not where I shall go after. Give my kind love to all inquiring friends. Don't be discouraged that you are left alone, the Lord I hope will stand by you.

I am in much love and tender care as ever yours in the Best of Bond,

Fran. Asbury

On the envelope:

To Edward Dromgoole  
Kent County  
c/o Ed. Gibbs

*University of North Carolina Library*

*An examination of the Journal shows that Asbury was much concerned because of war. It was evident that he was trying to influence Richard Dallam. However, he was more concerned about Dallam's faith.*

SWAN CREEK, MARYLAND

*September 2, 1776*

[*To Richard Dallam, Esq.*]<sup>[12]</sup>

My dear Friend:

Having an opportunity and a desire to write I break through my natural aversion. As to the office you bear and work you are employed in I say nothing, doubt not but you think it right, and with this conviction will pursue your way through difficulties seen and unseen. I likewise believe if you should ever see your wrong you will soon change your way.

But to turn to a subject of greater importance, as my friend will confess, do you set God before you and often commune with your own heart? Do you find time and retirement for this? As to the speculative part of religion, of this you are not ignorant but have you the meek, pure, humble, self denying mind of Christ? You know anything short of this will not do. 'Tis a great work, a very short time for it, we have need to be doing with all our might waiting, watching, striving, praying. I often have and will pray for you that you may be kept and saved.

Have had a little conversation with Mrs. Dallam. I hope she is not without a desire for the salvation of her soul. May the Lord bring you both forward in the divine life speedily is the desire and prayer of him who is, my dear friend, your servant and friend in the best of bonds.

Francis Asbury

P.S. If you should see any of Mr. Wallace's<sup>[13]</sup> family please to remember me to them. Have found benefit by the Springs.<sup>[14]</sup> Am in good health. Fare well.

*Drew University Library*

*This is only part of the letter. The remainder has not come to light. The day and month are not known. It is important because it gives some information on the disagreements between Thomas Rankin and Francis Asbury.*

— 1777

[*To Joseph Benson*]<sup>[15]</sup>

It appeared to me that his<sup>[16]</sup> object was to sweep the continent of every preacher that Mr. Wesley sent to it and of every respectable traveling preacher of Europe who had graduated among us, whether English or Irish. He told us that if we returned to our native country, we would be esteemed as such obedient, loyal subjects that we would obtain ordination in the grand Episcopal Church of England and come back to America with high respectability after the war was ended.

[Francis Asbury]

*H.K. Carroll, Francis Asbury in the Making of American Methodism, 78*

*William Guirey, an early Methodist preacher, became a very severe critic of the episcopacy. He wrote a book entitled The History of the Episcopacy in Four Parts, from Its Rise to the Present Day. The book is not dated. There is a copy of a*

*short letter of Asbury's in the book which was included under a picture of the head of a bull with the title at the top The Baltimore Methodist Bull. The Bull was a critical publication which was printed for some time and was a thorn in Asbury's flesh. Asbury was referred to as the Baltimore Methodist Bull. This letter refers to the Virginia preachers who had met in 1779 and agreed to ordain their preachers. Guirey agreed with the Virginia preachers and considered Asbury to be most autocratic. He also used this letter to fortify his argument against the episcopacy. He led an O'Kellyite schism which became the Independent Christian Baptist Church. He later became editor of the Christian Sun.*

BALTIMORE, Md.<sup>[17]</sup>

April 24, 1780

[To whom?]<sup>[18]</sup>

We disapprove of the step our brethren have taken in Virginia, and we look upon them no longer as Methodists in connection with Mr. Wesley and us, till they come back. The only condition of our union with them shall be to suspend all their administrations for one year, and all meet in Baltimore.

Francis Asbury

*The following comment appears at the bottom of the letter and was evidently put in by the editor of the Baltimore Methodist Bull. He wished Asbury had gone back to England with the early preachers who had left America because of the Revolution.*

"Does this bull need any comment? Are any arguments necessary to induce every virtuous American to execrate it? Should not every friend to religion, liberty, and the Methodist connection, in America, lament that Mr. Asbury did not accompany the fugitive missionaries<sup>[19]</sup> to England?"

*Guirey, The History of the Episcopacy  
Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress*

*This letter to John Wesley is most important because it is the earliest extant letter to Wesley. However, it is clear from this that three other letters had been written in six months, and certainly he had written some before that. On September 3 and 4 he was at the home of Mr. Johnson in southern Virginia. On Sunday, the third, he refers to the day as the ninth anniversary of his sailing from Bristol to America. Evidently the other letters referred to the controversy over the ordinances. (See Journal, I.) This had been settled for the time being. However, there were some reactions in Virginia from M'Robert and Jarratt.*

VIRGINIA  
September 3, 1780

[To John Wesley]

Rev. and very dear Sir:

This is the fourth letter I have written to you within the space of six months, not without some doubt whether either will reach you. Since my last I have been travelling through the circuits in Virginia & North Carolina and according to my abilities have been confirming the souls of them which have



believed, that they may walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing. That violence for assistants introducing the ordinances is much cooled, but yet I must say our people are under great disadvantages,<sup>[20]</sup> tho not such as will vindicate an alternation of old Methodism and weak laymen acting as ministers. I think the want of opportunity suspends the force of duty to receive the Lord's supper. And it appears more and more plain to me that I ought to continue in the station of a preacher because God called me to and blessed me in this way, and not move one step forward or backward. I am oft time faint in body and mind, yet pursuing.

The climate, seasons and entertainment of this country make some difference with regard to my health, but still I keep God's glory in view and am ready to say all shall be alike to me if in my Lord I can live and die. I have been much blest in my own soul, for this six months past, nor could I have thought it possible for my frame to have stood such labours that I trust have not and will not be in vain in the Lord.

Many in the North and some in the South are daily coming home to God, and believers grow in grace, and that greatly under temptation and trials, this shall comfort us concerning our trial and sorrow. If we had an itinerant clergyman all our wants of ordinances would be supplied, but such a clergyman is a miracle; we have had but two in an age, yourself and Mr. Whitefield; the latter has left the world without a successor so I fear will the former. I hope, dear sir, if ever there should be peace between Britain and America, if you should live to see that blessed period, nothing will prevent your coming and

laying your bones in America as dear Mr. Whitefield has done. Be assured the people of God in America are dear to me. With them I have laboured much and long and hope with some success. The very afflictions and sufferings I have had among them endear them to me, strange as it may appear, and bind me to the continent.

You have enclosed a bill and a letter to the society as the first and best return I could make. It will take me sometime to collect, sell and realize the books, as some are very unsaleable; others sold in times past and now to be paid for in currency; but be that as it may it shall be your loss. If Mr. Magaw's bill is answered be pleased to pay or order the sum of ten pounds to my trusty tried friend and dear brother Shadford<sup>[221]</sup> as a discharge of part of the trust and care of the books and clothing left in my hands. To my Father or Mother, if in time, ten pounds, one and 7 1/2, as some small atonement for my neglect of personal and filial duty, and God is my witness. I constantly and faithfully remember them at the Throne of Grace, that nothing but the work of God that is clearer to me than life, and all things, persons and places, keeps me from them and you. May I print any of your books?<sup>[222]</sup> We are in great want. If ever the way should be open to send books, I would have none sent but the sermons in sets, old and new Testament notes—pocket volumes in sets, yours and Mr. Fletchers<sup>[23]</sup> Appeals and the Checks, the journals, in sets; as to the Plain Accounts and Rules, these may be printed here, and Hymn book. The last assortment was huddled and improper.

I hope you will let my parents know when you hear from me. I am yours in due respect and such bonds as death can only break. I want your friendly advice and shall receive it in love, both for myself and others while

Francis Asbury

N.B. I have sent the account at large of all you have here. Mr. Rankin's account will prove it just. Inclose and direct your letters to either W. Gressett Davis in Petersburg, Virginia, merchant, or to Mr. Jesse Hollingsworth of Baltimore in Maryland, merchant. You may address them to the care of Mr. Thomas Shore, merchant, in Saint Estalia——

*Randolph-Macon College Library in Virginia.  
However, the letter is a copy by W.G. Davis of  
Petersburg, Virginia, as shown on the letter.  
Copy also in the University of Virginia Library*

*Nothing is known about Stephen Donaldson. Evidently Asbury had had some word to the effect that Donaldson was thinking of leaving the Methodists. It seems that Donaldson had probably had some difficulties with the preachers as well as with some of the members.*

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA  
May 16, 1782

[*To Stephen Donaldson*]<sup>[24]</sup>

My dear Brother:

I was pleased to receive a letter from you but should have been much more to have seen you when I was in Leesburg last, or at this Quarterly Meeting. I did not intend to make Leesburg on my way to South Branch,<sup>[25]</sup> but my not seeing you, and the hint you give of stumbling out of Society will lay me under a temptation to come by you. Oh my brother—if you stumble out of Society you cannot tell where it may end; woe to him that is alone. When you come to be as well acquainted with the weakness[es?], want of religion, and loose walking, of the members of other societies, as you are with ours, you may see them as unworthy your fellowship as the Methodists, and yet I think it the indispensable duty of every man that fears God, to be a member of some religious society. You may be tried sometimes with yourself, and then Satan tries [tries—*sic*] you with others. Your trials I presume are only with the nominal preachers and people, not any real Methodists. Yet it is our misfortune to have some of these we disapprove; and find it hard to get rid of them; but this is a common calamity. Every one knows there are nominal Baptists, and Quakers, as well as Methodists, we may all look home.

I have heartily wished that some preachers and people had never been joined with us, and had I been present and consulted, they would not. I have not the exercise of the rod of discipline in every circuit but we must struggle along for a season, but hope not to be afflicted with the loss of my faithful Friends, when the spirit of division rages, and some we have put great confidence in rise up and draw away disciples after them. I hope you will consider well and not

hastily leave Society, nor be slack in your attendance. I am in much love as ever

Yours

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum).*

*Transcribed by Kenneth R. Rose*

*Asbury is bringing Shadford up to date on what has happened in Virginia. He had returned to England, and Asbury would like to have him return to America. The discussion of the ordinances had become a matter of argument in Maryland. It did not cease, however. In August, Asbury was in Pennsylvania.*

PENNSYLVANIA<sup>[26]</sup>

August —, 1783

[To George Shadford, England]<sup>[27]</sup>

Long has been thy absence; many, many have been the thoughts I have had about thee, and my trials and consolations in losing and gaining friends. We have about 14,000 members, between 70 and 80 traveling preachers, between 30 and 40 circuits. Four clergymen<sup>[28]</sup> have behaved themselves friendly in attending Quarterly Meetings, and recommending us by work and letter. They are Mr. Jarratt, in Virginia, as you know; Mr. Pettigrew,<sup>[29]</sup> North Carolina; Dr. Magaw,<sup>[30]</sup> Philadelphia; and Mogden<sup>[31]</sup> in East Jersey.

You have heard of the divisions about that improper question proposed at the Deer Creek Conference<sup>[32]</sup>: "What shall be done about the ordinances?" You know we stood foot by foot to oppose it. I cannot tell you what I suffered in this affair. However, God has brought good out of evil, and it has so cured them, that I think there will never be anything formidable in that way again. I hope if any preachers are to come over here at any future day you will be one. I admire the simplicity of our preachers. I do not think there has appeared another such a company of young devoted men. The Gospel has taken a universal spread. You have heard what great things God has done in the Peninsula, since about these eighteen months that I thought it most prudent to stay at Delaware. And an exceeding great work we have had there, and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. So that my labors were not in vain.

Since I have been ranging through Virginia, toward the Alleghany, and Maryland, Pennsylvania and East and West Jerseys, and the Peninsula, I enjoy more health than I have for twenty years back. I travel 4,000 miles in a year, all weathers, among rich and poor, Dutch and English. O my dear Shadford, it would take a month to write out and speak what I want you to know. The most momentous is my constant communion with God as *my* God; my GLORIOUS victory over the world and the devil. I am continually with God. I preach frequently, and with more enlargement of heart than ever.

O America! America! it certainly will be the glory of the world for religion! I have loved, and do love America. I think

it became necessary after the fall that Government should lose it. Your old national pride, as a people, has got a blow. You must abate a little. O let us haste in peace and love, where we shall know, love, and enjoy God and each other, and all the differences in Church and State, and among private Christians, will be done away.

F. Asbury

*Abel Stevens, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, II, 126-28. Stevens' note: "This letter was sent to America by Rev. Joseph Entwistle, of the Wesleyan Conference, and published in a periodical, the name of which has escaped my memory."*

*The conflicts in America between the Calvinist and the Arminian points of view are brought out here. Asbury was having his troubles with the preaching in other churches. He is pointing out to Wesley how necessary the ordinances are and how preachers are needed to administer them.*

WEST JERSEY

September 20, 1783

[To John Wesley]

Rev. and very dear Friend:

Since I wrote to you from [New] York,<sup>[33]</sup> I have been travelling through various parts of West Jersey. We have within these three years past made large strides in East and West Jersey. In the most public, and some of the extreme parts, a few hundreds have joined us, of different denominations. We are much beset with a mixed people,

warm for their own peculiarities in doctrines and forms. I could not have thought that Reformed churches had so much policy, and stubborn prejudices. No means are left untried to prevent us; but we know and feel that God is with us. I fear the prospects of peace and prosperity unnerve our zeal for God. There appeared to be a more visible work of God in the Jerseys, last year, than there is this; though I hope believers are in some measure faithful. It is a time of general sickness and mortality in most parts near the water.

I heard yesterday of the death of a man, who twenty years ago was a Baptist preacher. By something wrong in his conduct he was silenced, and backslided from God; yet retained his Calvinian principles, and disputed continually with our preachers and people. Last spring he died, recanted his opinions, and desired it might be written; but the people around him would not do it. He confessed it was his resting upon, and disputing about his notions, that prevented his seeking, and obtaining the restoring grace of God. I was told the Baptist minister refused to preach his funeral sermon, because he died a heretick to their faith.

I see clearly that the Calvinists on one hand, and the Universalians on the other, very much retard the work of God, especially in Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, for they both appear to keep people from seeking heart religion. Maryland does not abound with Calvinism; but in Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, the Baptists labour to stand by what they think is the good old cause. I think you ought always to keep the front of the Arminian Magazine<sup>[34]</sup> filled



with the best pieces you can get, both ancient and modern, against Calvinism: they may be read by future generations.

Is Methodism intended for the benefit of all denominations of reformed Christians? Can a Quaker, as well as a member of any other church, be in Society, and hold his outward peculiarities, without being forced to receive the ordinances? It is well known that all dissenters, when any of their members join us, turn them out. This is done out of policy, to get them from us altogether; but they will be tired of this, when they suffer by it.

I reverence the ordinances of God; and attend them when I have opportunity; but I clearly see they have been made the tools of division and separation for these three last centuries. We have joined with us at this time, those that have been Presbyterians, Dutch, and English, Lutherans, Mennonites, low Dutch, and Baptists. If we preach up ordinances to these people, we should add, "if they are to be had, and if not, there can be no guilt." If we do any other way, we shall drive them back to their old churches that have disowned them; and who will do all they can to separate them from us.

The friendly clergy are located and do but little for us. If young men of our connection should get ordained, it will not do well. No person can manage the lay preachers here so well, it is thought, as one that has been at the raising of the most of them. No man can make a proper change upon paper, to send one here, and another without knowing the circuits and the gifts of all the preachers, unless he is always out among them.

My dear sir, a matter of the greatest consequence now lies before you: If you send preachers to America, let them be proper persons.<sup>[35]</sup> We are now united; all things go on well, considering the storms, and difficulties we have had to ride through. I wish men of the greatest understanding would write impartial accounts; for it would be better for us not to have preachers, than to be divided. This I know, great men that can do good, may do hurt if they should take the wrong road. I have laboured and suffered much to keep the people and preachers together: and if I am thought worthy to keep my place, I should be willing to labour and suffer till death for peace and union.

If I should be spared, I purpose to write from Baltimore; and then I will send you a parcel of letters and papers, that you may see how that division arose, spread, and was healed. Please to write, and tell me your mind with great freedom; if your confidence is the same with respect to me as it formerly has been.

I am, as ever, yours in Christ,

F.A.

*Drew University Library*

*Here is an account of Asbury's labors in a section of America which he visited repeatedly. There had been a great revival here on the Brunswick Circuit in 1775-76 under the preaching of George Shadford. The Brunswick Circuit included most of this territory in North Carolina. Asbury is*

*anxious for Wesley to come to America. There is great need for preachers.*

HALIFAX, NORTH CAROLINA  
*March 20, 1784*

[*To John Wesley*]

Reverend Sir:

My last letter was from Edenton [North Carolina] in answer to one I had the pleasure of receiving from you. From that place I came to Bertie Circuit, which lies between Chowan and Roan-Oak-Rivers. There is not now such a prospect of religion as we saw in the beginning; but yet I trust there are some who continue faithful, while a few more are added to the societies.

My next remove was to Brunswick, the oldest and best circuit in Virginia. Many faithful people joined us at our first coming here; having been convinced by the powerful preaching of our worthy friend Mr. Jarratt.<sup>[36]</sup> I found the labours of those two men of God, James O'Kelly, and Joseph Cromwell, had been blest to the awakening and conversion of souls.

I next came to Mecklenburgh, [Virginia]; but the deep snow, and severe frosts prevented the people from attending. However, I was enabled to pursue my journey, and under the necessity of so doing, as my appointments were all made out long before. From thence I came to Halifax,<sup>[37]</sup> a Circuit newly formed. It lies between Dan and Staunton Rivers, which together form the great River Roan-Oak. Here some have

been brought to God; a few Presbyterians and Baptists lifted out of the Calvinian and Antinomian quicksands.

From thence I came to Caswell, in North Carolina. Here are a few souls who love God: and as it is in part a new-formed Circuit, there may be much good done. From Caswell I came to the Guilford Circuit, which lies up, and on both sides the Dan River. Here we had some revival of religion, and an ingathering of souls. The land is good, and may come to something great in time. But the present preachers suffer much; being often obliged to dwell in dirty cabins, to sleep in poor beds, and for retirement, to go into woods, but we must suffer *with*, if we labour *for* the poor. One thing may be said in their favour, they have very few Negroes [slaves], and they put their children early to work. I would have gone to the Yadkin River, but was prevented by an inflammation in my foot. However, in about a fortnight I was able to travel again.

I have formed a plan for the next year (if the Lord spares me) to stretch along to Salisbury, Pee-Dee, Santee, Charles-Town in South, and Wilmington in North Carolina. We expect the South will give up largely. I came to a place called New Hope [North Carolina], which I found to be a place of very small hope. From thence I went to Tar River, and spent eight days there very comfortably. The congregations were large. Some have found the Lord; and others are groaning for redemption. I am now in Roan-Oak-Circuit. The people here are much in the spirit of moving, to the new lands in Georgia. There are a few faithful souls among them but nothing great.

Dear sir, we are greatly in need of help. A minister, and such preachers as you can fully recommend, will be very acceptable; without your recommendation we shall receive none. But nothing is so pleasing to me, sir, as the thought of seeing you<sup>[38]</sup> here: which is the ardent desire of thousands more in America.

As to myself, I can say, the Lord gives, and wonderfully preserves my natural and spiritual health. My soul is daily fed: and I find abundant sweetness in God. Sometimes I am ready to say, he hath purified my heart; but then again I feel and fear. Upon the whole I hope I am more spiritual than ever I have been in time past. I see the necessity of preaching a full and present salvation<sup>[39]</sup> from all sin. Whenever I do this, I feel myself, and so do also my hearers. I find it is good to use frequent fervent prayer; without which a man cannot continue qualified to preach the Gospel. You know, Sir, it is not easy to rule: nor am I pleased with it. I bear it as my cross; yet it seems that a necessity is laid upon me. O pray for me that I may be filled with light and power; with zeal and prudence; and above all, with humility and in a single eye. In so doing you will greatly oblige,

Your dutiful son in the Gospel,

Francis Asbury

The Arminian Magazine, IX (1786), 680-82. Transcribed  
by Frank Baker

*The reader is amazed to hear that Asbury had not heard from his parents in seven years. However, it is necessary to*

*remember that the Revolutionary War had been on and that all communications had been stopped. One can more nearly imagine some of the loneliness of heart which was Asbury's daily lot. He brings his parents up to date in this letter describing the responsibilities which are his. It is interesting to note that, in giving his reasons for being a bachelor, he refers to his affair in England, evidently with Nancy Brookes. It is evident here that he had come to the place where his life was to be dedicated to America.*

PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY, MARYLAND

*June 7, 1784*

[*To his Parents*]

My dear Parents:

It gave me some comfort to hear of you, by the kind and friendly hand of Mr. Boon, the first direct account I have received from you these seven years. My anxiety of mind would have been great for this; and my seeming disobedient absence, was I not sensible of superior obligations to my Heavenly Father, and reconciled God; to whom I go under all my exercises. I am perfectly happy in the circumstances I am under; believing the hand of the Lord has been signally displayed, in bringing me to and preserving me in America. I find the judgment of our Revd. Friend and Father, in God, Mr. Wesley, heartily concurs in my continuing here at present. What obligations are we under to that wonderful man of God! Oh how has my native land, and church, been favoured with a burning and shining light. What would thousands give, or do, could they but get him here. The esteem and influence I have among the preachers I owe much to him. We have

upwards of eighty travelling preachers and near 15,000 members in society. Was I to leave America now, it would be against my own conviction that it is my duty to stay: and in this agrees the judgment of my best friends, on both sides the water.

You want to see me, I make no doubt, as I do you. My constitution is now remarkably seasoned to the country. I enjoy an uncommon share of health, under much labour of body and mind. I trust, my dear parents, you have not wanted yet. In my travels I visit the parents of preachers, and think so will others do to mine.

I sent a bill to Mr. Sause<sup>[40]</sup> of five pounds sterling, a few days ago. You should have received eleven guineas last fall, by the same hand. You should be more particular in writing to me about these temporal matters. It is true you may be both disabled for labour, and may need a larger supply than I have given, or shall give; but we must trust Providence. Some say, was I to be paid according to my labour, my salary would be great. I can tell you how it has been with me from the first entering into the Connexion. I had to provide myself with necessary clothing and books. When I came to America, the first four or five years of my being here, money was plenty. With what I received more than bought me clothing, (and I have been moderate in dress), I bought books. During the time of our late troubles, I sold my books, partly through want. My allowance from Conference is twenty four pounds currency, equal to twelve pounds sterling, (or a little more, about \$60) with my travelling expenses paid. I am concerned in the

selling off the remains of Mr. Wesley's and Williams'<sup>[41]</sup> books. This puts money into my hands; but I know not that I can call my one coat and waistcoat, and half a dozen shirts, two horses, and a few books, my own, if the debts were paid. 'Tis true if I were to marry a wife with a fortune, or was less liberal, I might have more money. Many things have inclined me to continue as yet in a single state. One, what once befell me in England.<sup>[42]</sup> Another, my parents,—That if providence should open the way for me to come to you I may have no impediment; and that what I can save may go for your supply. Besides, my circuit is so large, not less than 700 miles in length yearly, and in circumference I know not what.

I have thought much of your coming to me, when I found I could not come to you; but here I view great difficulties. If you were to come here, you must sell all you are worth to pay the fare, to come comfortably. Where I should procure you a house and necessaries I know not. I have one friend, a great man, who would, maybe employ my father, in the way he would choose, but it is too much like Hampstead Hall.<sup>[43]</sup> In short, I have a spirit that cannot easily bend to be dependent on any one man. I know how changeable human nature is, and how subject we are to lose the grace of God. I might add the difficulties of the sea. The climate and country might shorten your days. It would bring additional trouble on me that have enough already for my poor heart and weak head. But be assured I shall send you a supply. It might be larger; but I pass so many needy thousands in a year.



My dear Mother, live to God; press after holiness of heart; be much in prayer to the Lord. You think, "could I see my child again, I should be happy, and die in peace." Yes, if I could stay with you; but how painful to part. I am under some thought that America will be my country for life. If I ever had any ambition to be great, it is somewhat cooled; a less publick station would be more acceptable to me. A man may be suspected of pride and folly if he wants to rule. Upon the whole, I have reason to praise God, who has kept me from publicly dishonouring him, His cause, the Connexion I am in, and the calling I am of; and to enjoy more of His power and love to my soul, that I am not puffed up nor fallen into the condemnation of the devil. What great reason I have to praise God for what is done, in, for, and by me; that a life of labour and suffering is my paradise, while love divine, transporting love, daily fills my heart.

There is one thing that to me savors of human pride; and vanity, and expense (that is, to have my picture drawn) which I will have done if it would give you any satisfaction to send it to you; if it will remind you of me, and stir you up to pray that God may keep me; for there certainly never was a man of smaller abilities raised so high. I shall not wonder if some well meaning men should fear for me, this I do for myself. I have reason to bless God who hath made me, and doth make me, a center of union among preachers, and the people; and that he hath given me the hearts of both so much. But the Sons of *Zurmiah*<sup>[44]</sup> will always show themselves, whether thro' weakness or wickedness. Our last year's conferences

have been attended with great love and power and union; religion revives in the North and South of this continent.

My dear Father, cry to God for grace to conquer sin. Take abundantly more care of your soul than your body. I pray for, think of, Oh that I could weep over, you more. May God restore you to his favour, and image and glory. Live in love together; ripen fast for glory; that there I may see and rejoice with you forever. If you desire my picture send the word in your next.

I am as ever, your loving, tho' unworthy, Son,

F. Asbury

*Drew University Library*

### A Letter of John Wesley

*This letter of John Wesley to "Our Brethren in America" is an important link in the chain of letters as it gives authorization for the ordination of the Methodist preachers in America.*

BRISTOL

*September 10, 1784*

[*To "Our Brethren in America"*]<sup>[45]</sup>

1. By a very uncommon train of providences many of the Provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their Mother Country and erected into independent States. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress,

partly by the Provincial Assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch.

2. Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned from time to time to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace sake, but because I was determined as little as possible to violate the established order of the National Church to which I belonged.

3. But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction: in America there are none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's right by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

4. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be Joint Superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a Liturgy<sup>[46]</sup> little differing

from that of the Church of England (I think, the best constituted National Church in the world), which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's Day in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day.

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

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

John Wesley

*John Telford*, The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, VII,  
237-39

*This letter was dated December 6 but without a year. However, it was written shortly after the arrival of Coke and Whatcoat, who landed at New York on November 3, 1784. On the bottom of the letter, it was written by another that the letter was written after the ordination. However, Asbury was ordained at the Christmas Conference.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
December 6, [1784]

[*To his Parents*]

My dear Father and Mother:

I write a few lines to let you know I am in health. My soul more than ever waits for God, and is filled with zeal for his glory. I have seen the lightening down of the power of the Lord and expect to see greater things yet. I was thankful to God that I heard of your welfare by Brother Whatcoat<sup>[47]</sup> who is safe arrived to help us. I was made joyful above measure at the arrival of our British Brethren. We are greatly rejoiced that if we are not worthy to have Mr. Wesley, (whom our Preachers and people venerate if possible, more than the Europeans,) we are favoured with the man of his right hand, Dear Dr. Coke,—if only for a few months. I hope you cleave to God wholly, and are in great earnest about your souls. Oh may you ripen fast for glory! This is the wish and daily prayers of your unworthy son, and souls real friend,

F. Asbury

P.S. I hope to send a little supply about Christmas, in an order to Mr. Atlay, London. Hearing it is matter of grief to you for

me to write to others and not to you I shall write often and short.

*Drew University Library*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Word has changed. Formerly refined or cultured.
- [2] Although the larger part of the English colonists came to America for the purpose of securing religious freedom or to better themselves in the social and economic scale, others were sent because the mother country wished to be rid of them. "The overseas possessions were valued . . . as supplying an appropriate outlet for the energetic, the dissident, the oppressed, the debtors, the criminals and the failures of old England."— G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England* (Doubleday & Co.), II, 234. "It was men out of work or unfit for it who chose to go to America; and not men of the countryside so much as discredited idlers and would-be adventurers of the towns."—Woodrow Wilson, *A History of the American People* (Harper & Bros.), I, 45. "If a good many (though not many in comparison with the total) of the immigrants in the first century were taken from English jails, it does not mean that they were criminals. They had been jailed mostly for debt, vagrancy, or trifling thefts, at that time cruelly punished."— James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America*, 49. "Decidedly less welcome were the murderers and other really vicious characters whom the English authorities insisted on dumping in the colonies, particularly in Maryland and Virginia. Frequent colonial protests were raised against the practice, but it was never completely abandoned throughout the colonial period."—Nelson Manfred Drake, *A Short History of American Life* (McGraw-Hill Book Co.), 9. "Some writers have estimated the number of

convicted criminals sent to the colonies by the British Government at from ten thousand to twenty-five thousand, most of them being sent to Maryland and the middle colonies. See Scharf, 'History of Maryland,' Vol. 1, p. 371."—Footnote from James Wilford Garner and Henry Cabot Lodge, *History of Nations*, "United States" (P.F. Collier & Son, Corp.), XXIII, 130. (Russell Q. Chilcote.)

[3] He did not get to Virginia until May 29, 1775, when he landed in Norfolk by boat, having come from Philadelphia by way of Chester and Cecil Court House, from which place he embarked. Cecil Court House is the present Charlestown, Maryland.

[4] Thomas Rankin, the preacher.

[5] This sentence is partly illegible in the original, in consequence of a portion of the letter having been torn off with the seal.

[6] Preacher in Newcastle, Delaware. He desisted from traveling in 1779 and later became an Episcopal minister.

[7] Thomas Rankin.

[8] One of the early preachers.

[9] Robert Strawbridge, the Irish preacher who started Methodism in Maryland.

[10] Dromgoole was one of the earliest of the preachers. He had come from Ireland and appears in the *Minutes* in 1774 when he was admitted on trial. His greatest work was in Brunswick County, Virginia. Here he preached with George Shadford in the Great Awakening. He traveled from 1774 to 1780 and from 1783 to 1786 and located in Brunswick. He retained his local preacher's license and preached regularly. He accumulated some wealth and



reared a family, some of whom became distinguished. The collection of Dromgoole's papers in the University of North Carolina Library is one of the outstanding early Methodist collections. This and two other letters of Asbury are in that collection as well as letters from John Dickins, John Hagarty, Devereux Jarratt, John Wesley, and others to Dromgoole. (See *minutes*.)

- [11] Those who like Strawbridge wished to perform the ordinances.
- [12] Paymaster-general to the Flying Camp, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- [13] Probably Burton Wallace, a member of St. George's Church, Philadelphia.
- [14] Bath Springs, now Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.
- [15] Joseph Benson, the preacher in England, became editor of *The Methodist Magazine*.
- [16] Reference is to Thomas Rankin. (See letter to Benson, January 15, 1816.) Rankin returned to England, siding with England against America.
- [17] Though the place is not given, it can be supplied from the *Journal*.
- [18] It is not known to whom it was written.
- [19] Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were sent as missionaries to America by John Wesley. They sailed from England April 9, 1773. Rankin was a Scotsman. He was appointed by Wesley to be the superintendent of Methodism in America. The two missionaries landed in Philadelphia on June 3 and commenced work there. Asbury heard Rankin preach the night after his arrival. Rankin and Asbury went together to New York. Asbury

went to New Rochelle, but returned to New York on the twenty-third and found Rankin "well employed in settling matters pertaining to the society." A revival of religion was in progress, and Rankin and Asbury were not of the same mind in reference to revivals. Strickland, *Life and Times of Francis Asbury*, 100, says, "Rankin manifested an opposition to the spirit of revivals, asserting that they tended to disgrace religion by the destruction of order. In this he was promptly met by Asbury, although he conceded that some enthusiasm and extravagance might occasionally exist in time of revival, yet deemed it injudicious to animadvert with severity on those exhibitions of passionate excitement which more or less accompanied deep and lasting revivals of religion." Rankin and Asbury were constitutionally different. Rankin was thoroughly British, and Asbury had already become American. Differences developed between them. Bangs, in his *History*, I, 86-87, 115-66, speaks of the differences. Asbury thought that Rankin assumed too much authority over the preachers and people. Rankin relayed some of these differences to Wesley, and Wesley's mind became prejudiced against Asbury. On March 1, 1775, Wesley wrote to Rankin:

"Dear Tommy,

"As soon as possible you must come to a full and clear explanation both with Brother Asbury and with Jemmy Dempster. But I advised Brother Asbury to return to England the first opportunity."

On April 21, 1775, Wesley wrote: "Brother Asbury has sent me a few lines and I thank him for them but I do not advise him to go to Antigua. Let him come home without delay."

On May 19, 1775, Wesley wrote Rankin again: "I doubt not but Brother Asbury and you will part friends. I hope I shall see him at the conference. He is quite an upright man. I apprehend he will go through his work more cheerfully when he is within a little distance from me."

On August 13, 1775, Wesley wrote to Rankin: "I am not sorry that Brother Asbury stays with you another year. In that time it will be seen what God will do with North America, and you will easily judge whether our preachers are called to remain any longer therein." (See James M. Buckley, *History of Methodism*, I, 206-7, for portions of letters.)

Not being able to take test oaths or to sympathize with the colonies, Rankin returned to England. He says, "The British being in possession of Philadelphia, I left Maryland in September, and through divers dangers got safe into that city in the month of November. I spent the winter there, and left the Capes of Delaware on the 17th of March, 1778, and arrived safe at the Cove of Cork on the 15th of April." (*The Arminian Magazine*, II, 197, quoted by Buckley, 216.)

The letter to Joseph Benson, January 15, 1816, shows without doubt Asbury carried with him to the end of his

life a feeling that Rankin had been responsible for the differences between Wesley and himself.

<sup>[20]</sup> See the following excerpts from correspondence between M'Robert and Devereux Jarratt in Virginia.

PROVIDENCE  
*July 13, 1780*

*[To the Rev. Mr. Devereux Jarratt]*

Rev. and Dear Brother,

The methodists are a designing people, void of the generous and catholic spirit of the gospel—and so entirely under the influence of Pope John—and countenance so many illiterate creatures void of all prudence and discretion that I have no expectation of any good and lasting effects from their misguided zeal. Their professed adherence to the church is amazingly preposterous and disingenuous, and nothing but policy either in England or here. Your most affectionate brother,

Archibald M'Robert  
*The Life of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt, 149*

BATH [Parish, Va.]  
*August 2, 1780*

*[The Rev. Archibald M'Robert]*

Rev. and Dear Brother,

I observe what you say with respect to the methodists, and concur with you in opinion, with regard to the countenance given by them to ignorant and indiscreet men to be public preachers, &c. And to this I impute not a little

of that contempt, which is cast on the institutions of religion at present. I believe Mr. Wesley to be a wise and good man, and think his plan of methodism well devised for the promotion of vital piety. But surely his preachers in Europe are not such lame hands, as those among us.—You think their profest adherence to the church amazingly preposterous and disingenuous, —I have thought there were methodists sincerely attached to the church: but from some late movements, there is too much reason to call the sincerity of their profession of adherence into question<sup>[\*]</sup>—I shall never forget these movements. I am your most affectionate brother, D. Jarratt?

[\*] What I refer to is Philip Gatch, &c. who undertook to be priests.

P.S. When I wrote this letter to Mr. M'Robert, I still thought there were some methodists sincerely attached to the church: for they still continued to profess themselves to be so, and I could not be so censorious as to harbour a suspicion, that men, who made such high pretensions to religion, could be so disingenuous as to profess to be, what they in heart were not.—But it appears, from what has since happened, that Mr. M'Robert's judgment of them was more accurate than mine.—How to reconcile such palpable insincerity to Christianity, I know not, nor shall I attempt it: and yet I cannot but hope that a number of them are good men, notwithstanding Mr. M'Robert, perhaps, very justly attributed their professed adherence to the church to nothing but policy. I feel myself disposed to put the most

favourable construction on all their movements, which the nature of things will bear. Mr. Asbury is certainly the most indefatigable man in his travels and variety of labours, of any I am acquainted with: and though his strong passion for superiority and thirst for domination may contribute not a little to this, yet I hope, he is chiefly influenced by more laudable motives. However if I err in this, I have this satisfaction, that it is an error founded in charity.

I am yours most respectfully,

D. Jarratt

*The Life of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt, 156-59*

[21] George Shadford, the preacher who had been the flaming evangelist of the awakening in Virginia on the Brunswick Circuit, had returned to England, as did Thomas Rankin. In the *Minutes* of 1779, Section 12, is "Ought not brother Asbury to act as General Assistant in America? Answer—He ought: 1st on account of his age: 2nd because originally appointed by Mr. Wesley: 3rd being joined with Messrs. Rankin and Shadford, by express order from Mr. Wesley."

[22] Asbury is referring in this letter to the controversy over the printing and sale of Wesley's books. Robert Williams, the preacher, had some printed without Wesley's approval. The *Minutes* of 1773 say "None of the preachers in America to re-print any of Mr. Wesley's books, without his authority (when it can be gotten) and the consent of their brethren, and Robert Williams to sell the books he has already printed, but to print no more unless under the above restrictions." Williams soon died in Virginia, and Asbury had to settle his accounts.

- [23] The Rev. John Fletcher, the theologian of early Methodism.
- [24] There were two Donaldsons who lived in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1782—William, who had a family of eight, and Andrew, who had a family of four. Stephen was probably a son of one of them since he is not listed in *Heads of Families of Virginia*, 16-17. Stephen Donaldson's post office was Leesburg. The letter was addressed there.
- [25] South branch of Potomac River.
- [26] Written by Asbury about three months after the 1783 conference or about August, 1783.
- [27] George Shadford, one of the earliest Methodist preachers. His greatest work was on the Brunswick Circuit, Virginia. (See note 19, Chapter II.)
- [28] Established Church ministers.
- [29] Charles Pettigrew (1743-1807), a Pennsylvanian who befriended Francis Asbury while serving parishes in North Carolina. He was elected bishop of the diocese of North Carolina. (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [30] Samuel Magaw (1759-1812), rector of Protestant Episcopal Church in Dover, Delaware, and of St. Paul's Church, Philadelphia. For help given Asbury see Hallman, *History of Asbury Church*, 116. (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [31] This name "Mogden," evidently Mr. Ogden, the Rev. Uzel Ogden. (See *The Methodist Magazine*, IV (1822), 424.) (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [32] Deer Creek Conference, Maryland. The issue of the ordinances was getting more serious. Settled at Christmas Conference, 1784. American preachers were allowed to administer them.

[33] Before the War of American Independence, Wesley's chief correspondent in the American colonies was Thomas Rankin. On April 5, 1783, Asbury "heard the news that peace was confirmed." The report was premature. There began a new era of British-American Methodist cooperation; but now Francis Asbury was the correspondent-in-chief, and the colonies soon became the United States. Asbury asked Wesley's advice on the new situation, but at the same time made it clear that it was not possible to take up just where things had been left off before the war. Already before the receipt of this letter Wesley was convinced that in Asbury he had a man upon whom his blessing could rest as the leader of American Methodism. Three days earlier he had written to Edward Dromgoole in Virginia: "I am persuaded Bro. Asbury is raised up to preserve Order among you, and to do just what I should do myself, if it pleased God to bring me to America." On October 3 Wesley sent a directive to the American preachers (through Jesse Lee), which contained the phrase, "I do not wish our American brethren to receive any who make any difficulty of receiving Francis Asbury as the General Assistant." This letter would only confirm Wesley's certainty that this was the man he needed, revealing as it does Asbury's charity, his catholicity, his Arminian theology, his tact and shrewd administrative ability, and above all his glowing spirit of evangelism. The fact that Wesley knew that such a man as Asbury was available was undoubtedly a crucial factor in his epochal ordinations the following September. (Frank Baker.)



[34] *The Arminian Magazine: consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption*, a monthly magazine first appearing in 1778. As its title implied, it was in origin a theological weapon, directed chiefly against such Calvinist periodicals as *The Spiritual Magazine* and *The Gospel Magazine* (of which Augustus Toplady was editor). Although the Methodist emphasis on universal salvation continued to be stressed, the scope of the magazine was gradually (and wisely) broadened. In actual fact "future generations" still read this work, not (as Asbury anticipated) for the light it throws on theology, but on historical figures such as Asbury himself. (Frank Baker.)

[35] Wesley's concern for the intake of suitable preachers from the Old Country had already been shown in his letter of October 3, 1783, to Asbury. He could not have received Asbury's letter in so short a time.

BRISTOL

*October 3, 1783*

Dear Brother,

1. Let all of you be determined to abide by the Methodist doctrine and discipline published in the four volumes of *Sermons and the Notes upon the New Testament*, together with the *Large Minutes* of the Conference.

2. Beware of preachers coming from Great Britain or Ireland without a full recommendation from me. Three of our travelling preachers have eagerly desired to go to America; but I could not approve of it by any means,

because I am not satisfied that they thoroughly like either our discipline or our doctrine. I think they differ from our judgment in one or both. Therefore, if these or any other come without my recommendation, take care how you receive them.

3. Neither should you receive any preachers, however recommended, who will not be subject to the American Conference and cheerfully conform to the Minutes both of the American and English Conferences.

4. I do not wish our American brethren to receive any who make any difficulty of receiving Francis Asbury as the General Assistant. Undoubtedly the greatest danger to the work of God in America is like to arise either from preachers coming from Europe, or from such as will arise from among yourselves speaking perverse things, or bringing in among you new doctrines, particularly Calvinism. You should guard against this with all possible care; for it is far easier to keep them out than to thrust them out.

I commend you all to the grace of God; and am  
Your affectionate friend and brother,

John Wesley

The Letters of John Wesley, VII, 191

[36] Devereux Jarratt, the Established Church preacher, great friend of the early Methodist preachers.

[37] This is Halifax County in Virginia as Asbury was between the Dan and Staunton Rivers. However, he had come through Halifax, North Carolina, and returned to North Carolina. The Halifax, North Carolina, Circuit first appears in 1784. The two areas seem to be confused here.

[38] In 1769, the year when the first preachers were sent to America from the English Conference, Wesley had written: "It is not yet determined whether I should go to America or not. I have been importuned some time; but *nil sat firmi video* ('I see nothing sufficiently strong'). I must have a clear call before I am at liberty to leave Europe." The matter had frequently been on his mind since that time. In his *Journal* for September 30, 1784, however, he tells how a returned preacher, John McGeary, "vehemently importuned me to pay one more visit to America before I die," to which Wesley replied, "Nay, I shall pay no more visits to new worlds, till I go to the world of spirits." (Frank Baker.)

[39] Asbury here and elsewhere echoes the advice so dear to Wesley about preaching *full* salvation, or as it is variously termed, Christian perfection, perfect love, or holiness. To Wesley this doctrine was "the grand depositum which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chief he appears to have raised us up." (Frank Baker.)

[40] Richard Sause was the first person to board Wesley's missionaries in America. In 1772 he traveled with Asbury. (John Lednum, *A History of the Rise of Methodism in America*, 37, 38.)

[41] Robert Williams was called the first Methodist preacher in Virginia. He had been selling books. (See above, Note 22.) Preachers may have been in northern Virginia before.

[42] See reference to Nancy Brookes in letter of October 26, 1768.

[43] Joseph Asbury had been employed at the English estate Hampstead Hall. Reference is probably to Mr. Gough of Perry Hall, Maryland.

[44] See II Samuel 3:39.

[45] A part of this letter was left out in the *Minutes* of 1784 and 1785. It was published in full in the British *Minutes* of 1785, in Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, and in Drew's *Life of Dr. Coke*, and is the same in all. The part left out begins, "And I have prepared a Liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national church in the world) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the Litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on the Lord's day." It is clear that those who were in authority in that day did not favor the recommendation of Wesley in reference to the liturgy. (For a discussion of this matter see M'Caine's *Letters*, 83-85.)

[46] Since the tendency in America was to drift farther away from the Episcopal Church, it became the natural thing to reject liturgical practices. Wesley published two editions, those of 1784 and 1786; but they were little used. (See Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress.)

[47] Richard Whatcoat, later bishop.

**EARLY YEARS OF THE METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

*January 3, 1785 - December 8, 1789*

## CHAPTER THREE

# EARLY YEARS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

January 3, 1785 - December 8, 1789

*At the Christmas Conference, which was held in Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, beginning December 24, 1784, one of the first acts of the newly formed Methodist Episcopal Church was to provide for the beginning of Cokesbury College. They took up a collection for the college, receiving 45 pounds and 16 shillings. Thus Coke and Asbury drew up the following plans for erecting the college.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

*January 3, 1785*

A plan for erecting a college, intended to advance religion in America, to be presented to the principal members and friends of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

The College is to be built at Abingdon, in Maryland, on a healthy spot, enjoying a fine air and very extensive prospect. It is to receive for education and board the sons of the elders and preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers and of other friends. It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the college, will, if they be able, to pay a moderate sum for their

education, and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow it, clothed, gratis. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service. A teacher of the languages, with an usher, will be provided, as also an English master to teach with the utmost propriety both to read and speak the English language; nor shall any other branch of literature be omitted which may be thought necessary for any of the students. Above all, special care shall be taken that due attention be paid to the religion and morals of the children; and to the exclusion of all such as continue of an ungovernable temper.

The college shall be under the presidentship of the Superintendents<sup>[1]</sup> of our Church for the time being; and it is to be supported by yearly collections, throughout our circuits, and any endowments which our friends may think proper to give and bequeath, consistently with the laws of the respective States in which they are made. The buildings, if it please God, will be begun in next June, and the subscribers are desired to send in their subscriptions, as far as it is convenient, to any of our ministers or preachers in the intermediate space; but wherever it is inconvenient we will most cheerfully wait the subscriber's time.

Three objects of considerable magnitude we have in view in the erection of this college.

The first is a provision for the sons of our married ministers and preachers.

The wisdom and love of God have now thrust out a large number of laborers into his harvest; men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things are willing to minister to them of their carnal things; so that they *have food to eat and raiment to put on*, and are content therewith.

A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married preachers, and an allowance over and above for their little children.

Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they are grown too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this is one motive that induces us to lay before our friends the present plan; that these little ones may have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body.

In this view, our college will become one of the noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the institution? Is it fit that the children of those who leave wife and all that is dear to save soul or body? Ought we not to supply what the parent cannot, because of his labors in the Gospel? How excellent would be the effect of this institution? The preacher, eased of this weight, can the more cheerfully go



on in his labor, and perhaps many of these children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall *rest from their labors*.

The second object we have in view is the education and support of poor orphans, and surely we need not enumerate the many happy consequences arising from such a charity. Innumerable blessings center in it. Not only the immediate relief of the objects of our charity, but the ability given them, under the providence of God, to provide for themselves through the remainder of their lives.

The last, though, perhaps, not the least, object in view is the establishment of a seminary for the children of our competent friends, where learning and religion may go hand in hand; where every advantage may be obtained which may promote the prosperity of the present life, without endangering the morals and religion of the children through those temptations to which they are too much exposed in most of the public schools. This is an object of importance indeed, and here all the tenderest feelings of the parent's heart range on our side.

But the expense of such an undertaking will be very large, and the best means we could think of at our late Conference to accomplish our design was, to desire the assistance of all those in every place who wish well to the work of God; who long to see sinners converted to God, and the Kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

All who are thus minded, and more especially our own friends who form our congregations, have an opportunity now of showing their love to the Gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that ever was set on foot in this country. Do what you can to comfort the parents who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good paymaster. And you know in doing this you lend unto the Lord; in due time he shall repay you.

Thomas Coke

Francis Asbury

*John Atkinson, Centennial History of American  
Methodism, 187-90*

*This letter served as a preface to the book that Asbury edited and had printed. There is no date. In the letter to Ezekiel Cooper of December 31, 1801, Asbury refers to books he had published. This was probably one of those. It was called The Causes, Evils and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions.*

———[1785]<sup>[2]</sup>

*[To the ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church]*

Dear Brethren:

In the course of my reading, some years ago, I met with an old book, written by a worthy pastor in the church, Mr.

Jeremiah Burroughs, on *Heart Divisions, the Evil of our Times*. Feeling at that time the pain of a partial separation in spirit and practice from some who were as my brethren and sons in the gospel, that book proved as a balm and a blessing to my soul. I saw so clearly the evil consequences of a division, and how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, that I began to abridge my obsolete, but valuable book,<sup>[3]</sup> and earnestly wished, prayed, and strove for unanimity.

Soon after, I met with another old book, entitled *The Cure of Church Divisions*; written by that venerable servant of God, the John Wesley of his day, in wisdom, affection, zeal, and a pacific spirit; I mean, Mr. Richard Baxter, of precious memory. Being highly pleased with his evangelical sentiments, I concluded to make an extract from both, not doubting but it might be of great service to the church of Christ.

And now I recommend it to all ministers of the gospel, and professing Christians of every denomination, into whose hands it may come, beseeching them to read it carefully, and with much prayer, that they may cultivate a spirit of unity and brotherly love.

I remain, dear brethren, your servant for Christ's sake,

Francis Asbury  
The Causes, Evils, and Cures of Heart and Church  
Divisions, *Nashville Public Library*

*Asbury shows his usual concern for his parents. He was deeply moved for their spiritual welfare as well as for their physical well-being. They were always in his prayers.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*January 14, 1786*

[*To his Parents*]

My dear Parents:

If Providence will so dispose of us as that we shall not see each other in time, let us live for eternity, and labour to meet in Glory. I comfort myself that while the Doctor [Coke] lives, and remains in England, I shall insure you a friend. O that you would each of you live to God, and press after holiness; that your title and qualification for heaven may be good.

I enjoy great health for this climate, and my labours. I love my European friends. I cannot write to them all; but salute them in the Lord. At the earnest request of the Doctor, and for Mr. Wesley's Magazine, I have been at the trouble to have my picture<sup>[4]</sup> drawn. I intend to send it to the Doctor to be engraved, and then to be returned to you. I should have thought this high vanity in me, had it not been done on these considerations. Remember for many years, I lived with, and laboured, and prayed for you. I, at this distance of time, and place, care for, and send to your relief, and cease not night and day to pray for you, who am as ever your most unworthy, but dutiful son in the Lord,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

I am dear Cousin your most affectionate  
Friend and Brother Francis Pickens

<sup>never of course</sup>  
I am in duties and all fine & wish I was in brief  
to tell me teach and give) I wish to see you & study

I am, whether present or absent,  
as ever in love to, and constant concern  
for your welfare Francis Pickens

may the Everlasting Arms  
surround you, now and ever  
your Brother, Brother, and Friend,  
Francis Pickens

I am with the  
same thy Friend and Brother  
Francis Pickens

in attendance, and we are now for many years  
do it to the Cooper, of both when home.  
I am with great respect as ever thine  
Francis Pickens

Signature on the behalf of the Commission  
this fourth day of October 1845.  
Francis Pickens  
Richd. Whatcoat

More extracts from the closings of letters, some of which are evidently copies of originals.

*Wm. M. Hanson*  
LECTURES

*St. Joseph's*  
Moral Philosophy.

JOHN MACPHERSON.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED BY ZACHARIAS BOULSON, JUNIOR, No 30,  
NORTH FOURTH-STREET, NEAR THE UNIVERSITY.

A N  
ADDRESS  
TO THE  
ANNUAL SUBSCRIBERS

FOR THE SUPPORT OF

Cokesbury-College,

AND TO THE

Members of the METHODIST SOCIETY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, THE

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE COLLEGE.

BY  
THOMAS COBB, L. L. D.

AND

FRANCIS ASBURY,

*Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY W. ROSS, IN BROAD-STREET  
M.DCC.LXXVII.

Title-pages of two pamphlets from a bound volume of pamphlets in the private library of George Washington. The collection is in the Athenaeum Library in Boston.

*There are two letters to George Washington, one before he became President and the other afterward. Asbury had friendships among many of the notables of his time. He was a visitor in the homes of several governors and senators.*

ALEXANDRIA, VA.

*April 24, 1786*

[*To His Excellence*]<sup>[5]</sup>

*General Washington*

*Mount Vernon*]

Honoured Sir:

Give me leave to present you with one of our Prayer Books, and another to your Lady. Please to accept the Sermons also to your candid perusal. Receive them as a small token of my great respect and veneration for your Person—  
who am your most obedient friend and servant

Francis Asbury

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*Little is known of the offer of John Dickinson. The letter is interesting in that one wonders what it was.*

COKESBURY, MARYLAND

*December 10, [1786]*<sup>[6]</sup>

[*To John Dickinson*]<sup>[7]</sup>

Dear Sir:

I have seriously considered your generous offer in favour of Cokesbury and judge that to grant bargains and sell would be the readiest way. Thomas White,<sup>[8]</sup> Allan McLane,<sup>[9]</sup> and

Francis Money<sup>[10]</sup> will purchase from you at any time and give a special bond to myself and another or two members of the Conference, to apply the money arising as they shall be directed.

We have upon the charitable part of the institution two young men grave and pious, one that acts as a teacher, who lost by accident one of his legs, and who promises to make a valuable teacher; the other a backward youth after smoothing his language, may be of publick service, only learning to speak the English. One son of a preacher, whose father is in the vineyard. One so poor orphan, the son of a very pious man and woman that I must rest from their labours,<sup>[11]</sup> We meet with many difficulties at this time. I do expect that we shall enter very largely into the charitable design, we only want to be just and then we wish to be very generous. I hope this will prove the noblest charity that ever presented itself to your view. This letter comes by the hands of one of my presbyters that will deliver it himself. I am with great respect, your sincere friend and servant.

Francis Asbury

P.S. We have a second orphan son to a local preacher family of New York.

P.S. Anything desired as to time and place of preaching near your mansion house in Little Creek or wherever it may be, please to communicate to Thomas Foster (who I suspect will reside in Wilmington for sometime), the bearer of this letter. I am now hasting to Georgia. I am with kind respects to your



lady and well wishes of your family. I ask pardon for not taking time of notice of your kind letter.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*In some ways this letter represents the issue over which American Methodism broke with John Wesley. Wesley still felt he had the right to tell the American preachers what to do. It is clear here that Asbury still accepted his authority and wrote to Whatcoat advising him. However, the outcome at the General Conference was decidedly different than Wesley and Coke expected. The conference did not elect Whatcoat.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

March 25, 1787<sup>[12]</sup>

[To Richard Whatcoat]

My dear Brother:

Hereby I inform you<sup>[13]</sup> that Mr. Wesley has appointed you a joint Superintendent with me. I can, therefore, claim no superiority over you: the way will be for you to come after me through the whole continent if called, but through the States without all doubt. The best method will be to go out to the Ohio, upon a plan I have laid out for myself, and return to the Springs; there I will meet you and form a plan for our future work. The mode of appointment is not approved of, though many of us by no means object to the person. I am, with respect,

Yours as ever,

Francis Asbury

*William Guirey, The History of the Episcopacy in Four Parts, 338-39, Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress*

A Letter of James O'Kelly  
to an Unnamed Person

*This letter from O'Kelly to an undesignated person is most important. Asbury makes no mention in the Journal of why the conference, which had been listed in the Minutes of 1786, to be held at Petersburg, June 19, 1787, was not held there. On that date he was in New York State; however, the conference was held at Rough Creek, Virginia, at William White's on April 19. Three thousand people were said to have been present for the meeting on Sunday. Some kind of meeting seems to have been held in Richmond on April 25 or 26. O'Kelly refers to Richmond.*

*Coke had written to O'Kelly before this. At the General Conference of 1787 Coke was accused of "writing improper letters to some of our preachers, such as were calculated to stir up strife and contention among them." Coke had been relaying information to Wesley. The issue of Wesley's control of American Methodism was at stake. For most often years when O'Kelly was in Southside, Virginia, a large part of which he was presiding elder, he was the antagonist of Asbury. However, he was supporting Asbury at the time of this letter. Wesley had given an order to convene all the preachers in Baltimore, May 1, 1787; and this accounts for*

*the fact that the regular conferences were not held on the dates set.*

*Asbury makes slight reference to the Baltimore Conference in the Journal. "We had some warm and close debates in Conference, but all ended in love and peace. After much fatigue and trouble, our Conference ended on Monday the 6th of May." When the conference opened, Coke was in the chair. He opened the new commission from Wesley and read it. The conference had been convened by order of Wesley, and he recommended that Richard Whatcoat should be ordained a superintendent for America and that the appointment of Freeborn Garrettson as superintendent for Nova Scotia and in the British Dominion should be recognized. It was already seen that the issue was one of British control.*

*Whatcoat's Journal, Lee's History, and O'Kelly's Apology give information on the debate. O'Kelly says that the matter was opened at Rough Creek, Virginia, and that he opposed the ordination of Whatcoat as superintendent. O'Kelly says, "The chief speakers on the subject were Thomas Coke and James O'Kelly." Asbury was opposed to Wesley's order but kept himself in the background. O'Kelly says, "I spoke after this manner: that the free people of America were exceedingly jealous of the growing body of Methodists, because of the European heads. Moreover, I did not consider the person [Whatcoat] adequate to the task because of his age; and that also he was a stranger to the wilderness of America, etc. Above all I urged that two heads would produce two bodies.*

*Francis [Asbury] prepared for the Baltimore Conference to decide the dispute."*

*At the General Conference in Baltimore, Coke pressed the order of Wesley. The preachers were strongly opposed. After much discussion and some heat a motion was made to remove Wesley's name from the roll. It was carried. Then they criticized Coke. Coke agreed to sign an instrument of abdication (see the instrument at the end of the letter). Wesley's name disappeared from the Minutes. O'Kelly's argument carried in reference to Whatcoat, though Asbury had already notified Whatcoat in the above letter that they would meet at Warm Springs in Virginia "and we will make out a plan for your route through the continent." As a result of the conference Asbury really became, as Atkinson says, "the governing mind of American Methodism." Jesse Lee says, "We then wrote a long and loving letter to Mr. Wesley, and requested him to come over to America and visit his spiritual children."*

*In 1789 Wesley's name was reinstated in the Minutes but not as before. It was in answer to the first question, "Who are the persons that exercise the Episcopal offices in the Methodist Church in Europe and America? Answer, John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and Francis Asbury, by regular order and succession." However, this question was followed by another, "Who has been elected by the unanimous suffrage of the General Conference to superintend the Methodist Convention in America? Answer, Thomas Coke and Francis*

*Asbury." This is recorded by Stevens in his History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

*The O'Kelly letter is an important link in the whole story of O'Kellyism and the Methodist Church, and throws considerable light on the conference of 1787 though it was written in April before the conference in May.<sup>[14]</sup> The letter is badly defaced.*

*April —, 1787*

My dear Brother:

Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied unto thee. I thank my God upon every remembrance of our dear zealous faithful elders, who have a good report from every quarter. You are called not only to be a saint but a shepherd to feed the church of God. May the Lord give us one mind and way.

Since I received the Doctor's letter with a copy of Mr. Wesley's likewise, so many alterations of conference occasioned thereby, my fluctuating mind hath been like the troubled sea. Our sudden and unexpected call to Baltimore<sup>[15]</sup> to confer on a point predetermined, causes the cogitations of my head to rob me of many moments of quiet rest that nature lawfully demands. Surrounded with ideal difficulties I stand, sensible of the agreement and disagreement of my ideas, but the difficulty lies in the —— station. Often have felt my —— judgment —— Reasoning called for discerning ideas, yet my judgment (as final) undetermined. Desire that my mental ideas may be really understood by you my brother. Hope you

will make the matter in debate, a matter of your deep meditation and prayer to the fountain of light. My dear, our work is not temporary but for future ages, yea even for eternity. Man is fallible, his brain capable of a collection of different ideas which are but speculative, difficult to determine on responsible —. Therefore it will not be [line badly defaced] who is ready to judge the quick and dead; respecting sheep whom we've begotten by the word; over whom the Holy Ghost hath made us (not the preachers in Britain)<sup>[16]</sup> ourselves. I say we cannot trust any man's opinion in matters so important without a reasonable inference.

When matters are thus confused and ideas complex, my council is, to listen to the voice of reason, yea where Revelation is silent, listen to the [voice of] God. Here are men of understanding, let reason — Good Heavens! Who can be able to account for — from a little —.

What may men be — hearkens to others without consulting their own reason. Even to believe man to be infallible and bread and wine to be real body and blood. Reason—O, what a gift to fallen man? This is the light that dear Jesus gives to all born into the world; if they live to be capable of using of it they find it arising with the light of nature as ideas of good and evil appear.

My dear, I am no great proficient in reasoning, but it needs no great Logician to judge plain matter of fact. Inferences can be filled without a Syllogism at all.

The want of consistency is a proof to me that the inference is not right. When we, by the directions and consent of our conference commenced a church—we gave to our presidents a sort of kingly power, viz. A negative; which is able to oppose our strong affirmative. We hitherto have acted obediently, as sons. I have not abused our liberty nor opposed theirs. The question is, Shall we give all the power incorporated in us and agree that if the Doctor and Brother Asbury [agree] it is enough, putting nothing to vote if possible, to help —— (I suppose) that unless you two are suted[?] [your] conferences no vote or voice. Mr. Wesley, whom he foreknew, him<sup>[17]</sup> hath he predestinated, called and chosen without any further approbation. If this is given up, then (as D. Coke said) away to thy tents dear American preachers, after a long struggle thro' wars and famine, peril and naked, feeding a few frightened sheep driven about. You've no lot in the matter while our elder Brethren are planning beyond the water, we may be in our circuits waiting for further orders: and, for our consolation, they may say by us as the oppressors do by the slaves, "They have nothing to do but work eat and sleep. We take care."

As to the reason arising from —— said, am not at a loss to see, but the consequence that may follow taxes my mind. When I consider dear Mr. Wesley as the general parent under God of the Methodists so called: (only —— look back ——<sup>[18]</sup> to their parent[?]). Lo for a bit of bread and a —— providence of God, hath brought us to be priests as the shepherd made a way for the sheep in the wilderness. O, how

loath to gain say or in the least to grieve his righteous soul.<sup>[19]</sup>  
But what must we do?

The Lord direct.

1. Does he look upon our country preachers to be men of so low breeding as not fit to govern?

2. Or does he think that we are a class of novices, fond of popularity, and so out of love to us, aims to keep us out of the snare of the devil?

3. Or does our dear Father conclude that we are prone to revolt or what he may call rebellion?

4. Or is there any political scheme in it?

If all my propositions are groundless; the Lord deliver me from such surmisings.

Who are capable of managing our affairs and our children under God ——? Who has stood by them in perils and dangers? Who can endure hardship better than the Americans? Who will be better received here than ourselves? Let Conference chuse and if dear brother Whatcoat is their choice well. For my part would gladly sit at Mr. Wesley's feet, cleaning his boots, hearing his gracious words. But expecting his time, in time to be short [?] and to give up both ends of the staff, who can tell what will follow?



Am perfectly willing if Brother Asbury thinks well to chuse one or two superintendents as the work is too great for Brother Asbury to act in conjunction with him as the younger; and all in subordination to Conference, but let our dear preachers have this liberty, to choose their master.

It depends much upon the elders, as many of our dear young faithful preachers would not wish to say much. I intend to contend for the simple faith once delivered to the dear Methodists [God saw] Israel was a child, God loved him. — and humble sacrifice — and faithful. I — the cause of the poor and oppressed at the — of my life. Yet hope always to take counsel in order to add to my courage, knowledge and in all points confer with my dear Brethren. I ever observe that prudence dwells with wisdom and so finds out witty inventions. Altho I was defeated in my aim at Richmond,<sup>[20]</sup> yet am not out of head nor out of breath. Know there was good done respecting of it there.

I still love God, as the first day I knew him. I have with pleasure seen Zion in great bloom. Have sacrificed my little all, and the tenderest pledges of God's love on earth as to earthly comforts, viz. my tender wife and children. I count not myself dear to myself so that God will make [?] us useful. Whether it be — — or zeal, God knows. I hope God hath cleansed my poor heart from unrighteousness; and God wants a servant to labour in the word. Here is poor old Brother O'Kelly. Large add. of 40.<sup>[21]</sup>

Farewell dear brother. Write a few lines to me.

[James O'Kelly]<sup>[22]</sup>

Coke's Instrument of Abdication [referred to above in introduction]:

I do solemnly engage by this instrument that I never will, by virtue of my office as Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal church, during my absence from the United States of America, exercise any government whatever in the said Methodist church during my absence from the United States. And I do also engage that I will exercise no privilege in the said church, when present in the United States, except that of ordaining according to the regulations and laws already existing or hereafter to be made by said church, and that of presiding when present in Conference, and lastly that of travelling at large. Given under my hand, the second day of May, in the year 1787.

Thomas Coke

Witnesses John Tunnell, John Hagerty, Nelson Reed

*Edward J. Drinkhouse*, History of Methodist Reform and  
Methodist Protestant Church, I. 328

N.B. You may show my thoughts and give my love to any of our preachers if you chuse.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
(*Lovely Lane Museum*)

*This printed letter, or address, is in the Miscellanea Volume of Pamphlets from the private library of George Washington. The collection is now housed in the Athenaeum Library in Boston, Massachusetts. Without doubt Asbury had sent this to General Washington. Asbury had visited Washington in 1786, and he visited him again in 1789. The address has great interest because it is a charter of the philosophy of Coke and Asbury in reference to education. The document goes into detail as to how the college should be run and how the students should behave. The references to play and exercise are rather humorous. The emphasis on Christian education is what might be expected. It would be interesting to know whether Washington contributed to Cokesbury. Since the little volume was preserved so carefully in Washington's library, it is probable that he did make some contribution. Asbury held Washington in great esteem.*

NEW YORK  
May 18, 1787

An Address to the Annual Subscribers  
for the Support of Cokesbury College<sup>[23]</sup>

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

Through the Assistance of our generous Friends, to whom in behalf of the Conference and ourselves, we return our most grateful Thanks, our College is under cover, and will, we trust, be opened for the Education of Youth, by next Christmas at farthest. The Debts we have contracted by the considerable Exertions that have been made (notwithstanding

the great Benevolence of the Subscribers) oblige us for the present to confine ourselves to a contracted Plan, and to begin with a President, two Tutors and sixty Students. The Students will be instructed in English, Latin, Greek, Logic, Rhetoric, History, and as soon as the proper instruments or Apparatus can be procured, in Geography, natural Philosophy and Astronomy. To these Languages and Sciences shall be added, when the Finances of our College will admit of it, the Hebrew, French, and German Languages.

But our first Object shall be, To answer the Design of Christian Education, by forming the Minds of the Youth, through divine Aid, to Wisdom and Holiness; by instilling into their tender Minds the Principles of true Religion, speculative, experimental and practical, and training them in the ancient way, that they may be rational, scriptural Christians. For this Purpose we shall expect and enjoin it, not only on the President and Tutors, but also upon our Elders, Deacons and Preachers, to embrace every Opportunity of instructing the Students in the great Branches of the Christian Religion.

And this is one principal Reason why we do not admit Students indiscriminately into our College. For we are persuaded that the promiscuous Admission of all sorts of Youth into a Seminary of Learning, is pregnant with many bad Consequences. For are the Students likely (suppose they possessed it) to retain much Religion in a College where all that offer are admitted, however corrupted already in Principle as well as Practice? And what wonder, when (as too

frequently it happens) the Parents themselves have no more Religion than their Offspring.

For the same Reason we have consented to receive Children of seven Years of Age, as we wish to have the Opportunity of "teaching their young ideas how to shoot," and gradually forming their Minds through the Divine Blessing, almost from their Infancy, to Holiness and Heavenly Wisdom as well as human Learning. And we may add, that we are thoroughly convinced with the great Milton (to whose admirable Treatise on Education we refer you) that it is highly expedient for every Youth, to begin and finish his Education at the same Place: that nothing can be more irrational and absurd, than to break this off in the Middle, and to begin it again at a different Place, and perhaps in a quite different Manner. And on this Account we earnestly desire that the Parents and others who may be concerned, will maturely consider the last Observation, and not send their Children to our Seminary, if they are not to complete their Education there, or at least make some considerable Proficiency in the Languages, and in the Arts and Sciences.

It is also our particular Desire that all who shall be educated in our College, may be kept at the utmost Distance, as from Vice in general, so in particular, from softness and effeminacy of Manners.

We shall therefore inflexibly insist on their rising early in the Morning; and we are convinced by constant Observation and Experience, that this is of vast Importance both to Body

and Mind. It is of admirable Use, either for preserving a good, or improving a bad Constitution. It is of peculiar Service in all nervous Complaints, both in preventing and in removing them. And by thus strengthening the various Organs of the Body, it enables the Mind to put forth its utmost Exertions.

On the same Principle we prohibit Play in the strongest Terms: and in this we have the two greatest Writers on the Subject that perhaps any Age has produced (Mr. Locke and Mr. Rousseau) of our Sentiments: for though the latter was essentially mistaken in his religious System, yet his Wisdom in other respects and extensive Genius are indisputably acknowledged. The Employments therefore which we have chosen for the Recreation of the Students, are such as are of the greatest public Utility, Agriculture and Architecture; Studies more especially necessary for a new settled Country: and of consequence the instructing of our Youth in all the practical Branches of those important Arts, will be an effectual method of rendering them more useful to their Country. Agreeably to this Idea, the greatest Statesman that perhaps ever shone in the Annals of History, Peter the Russian Emperor who was deservedly stiled the Great, disdained not to stoop to the Employment of a Ship-Carpenter. Nor was it rare during the purest Times of the Roman Republic, to see the Conquerors of Nations and the Deliverers of their Country, return with all Simplicity and cheerfulness to the Exercise of the Plough. In conformity to this Sentiment, one of the compleatest Poetic Pieces of Antiquity (the Georgics of Virgil) is written on the Subject of Husbandry; by the Perusal of which, and Submission to the

above Regulations, the Students may delightfully unite the Theory and the Practice together. We say delightfully for we do not entertain the most distant Thought of turning these Employments into Drudgery or Slavery, but into pleasing Recreations for the Mind and Body.

In teaching the Languages, care shall be taken to read those Authors, and those only, who join together the Purity, the Strength and the Elegance of their several Tongues. And the utmost Caution shall be used, that nothing immodest be found in any of our books.

But this is not all. We shall take care that our books be not only inoffensive but useful: that they contain as much strong Sense, and as much genuine Morality as possible: as far therefore as is consistent with the foregoing Observations, a choice and universal library shall be provided for the Use of the Students.

Our annual Subscription is intended for the Support of the charitable Part of the Institution. We have already in our former Address enlarged so fully on the nature and Excellency of the Charity, that little perhaps need be said upon it at present. The relieving our travelling Ministers and Preachers by educating, boarding and cloathing their Sons, is a Charity of the most noble and extensive Kind, not only towards the immediate Subjects of it, but also towards the Public in general; enabling those "Flames of Fire," who might otherwise be obliged to confine themselves to an exceedingly contracted Sphere of Action for the Support of their Families,

to carry the Saviour of the Gospel to the remotest Corners of these United States.

We are not certain whether our Friends in Abingdon will include the Article of Washing for the Students in their Board at 20/. a Year: but we engage to furnish sufficient and convenient Rooms in the College as soon as possible for the Students, that the whole Expence, either in or out of the College, may be reduced to as reasonable a Standard as the Circumstances of Things will allow.

The 10/. a Year for Tuition, we are persuaded, cannot be lowered, if we give the Students that finished Education which we are determined they shall have. And though our principal Object is to instruct them in the Doctrines, Spirit and Practice of Christianity; yet we trust that our College will in Time send forth Men that will be Blessings to their Country in every laudable Office and Employment of Life, thereby uniting the two greatest Ornaments of intelligent Beings, which are too often separated, deep Learning and genuine Religion.

We are not able to determine at present with minute Exactness the State of our Expences; but we compute that the Debt on the College will amount to a Thousand Pounds at the Time of opening it; and it will require Two Thousand more to complete and furnish it fully, and to lay out the Land which appertains to it, in proper Order.



The Rules and Regulations with which you are here presented, have been weighed and digested in our Conference: but we also submit them to your Judgment, as we shall be truly thankful for your Advice, as well as your Prayers for the Success of the College, even where the Circumstances of Things will not render it expedient to you to favour us with your Charity: and for this End we shall desire our Elders, Deacons and Preachers, to read this Address and the Rules of the College, to all our Societies through the States. And we shall esteem ourselves happy, if we be favoured with any new Light, whether from the Members of our own Church or of any other, whereby they may be abridged, enlarged, or in any other way improved, that the Institution may be as near Perfection as possible.

We are,

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Your obliged Friends,

And most humble Servants for Jesus' Sake,

Thomas Coke

Francis Asbury

### **General Rules Concerning the College**

1st. A President and two Tutors shall be provided for the present.

2dly. The Students shall consist of

1. The Sons of Travelling Preachers.

2.The Sons of annual Subscribers, the Children recommended by those annual Subscribers who have none of their own, and the Sons of Members of our Society.

3.Orphans. But,

1.The Sons of the annual Subscribers shall have the Preference to any others, except those of the Travelling Preachers.

2.An annual Subscriber who has no Sons of his own, shall have a Right to recommend a Child; and such Child so recommended shall have the Preference to any other, except the Sons of Travelling Preachers and annual Subscribers.

3.As many of the Students as possible shall be lodged and boarded in the Town of Abingdon, among our pious Friends; but those who cannot be so lodged and boarded, shall be provided for in the College.

4.The Price of Education shall be 10/. per Ann. Maryland Currency.

5.The Price for Lodging and Boarding shall (if practicable) not exceed 20/. per Ann.

6.The Sons of the Travelling Preachers shall be boarded, educated and cloathed gratis, except those whose Parents

according to the Judgment of the Conference are of Ability to defray the Expence.

- 7.The Orphans shall be boarded, educated and cloathed gratis.
- 8.No Travelling Preacher shall have the Liberty of keeping his Son on the Foundation any longer than he travels, unless he be superannuated, or disabled by want of Health.
- 9.No Travelling Preacher, till he has been received into full Connection, shall have a Right to place his Son on the Foundation of this Institution.
- 10.No Student shall be received into the College under the Age of Seven Years.

### Rules for the Economy of the College and Students

- 1.The Students shall rise at five o'Clock in the Morning, Summer and Winter, at the ringing of the College-Bell.
- 2.All the Students, whether they lodge in or out of the College, shall assemble together in the College at six o'Clock, for public Prayer, except in Cases of Sickness; and on any Omission shall be responsible to the President.
- 3.From Morning-Prayer till Seven, they shall be allowed to recreate themselves as is hereafter directed.

4. At seven they shall Breakfast.
5. From Eight till Twelve, they are to be closely kept to their respective Studies.
6. From Twelve to Three, they are to employ themselves in Recreation and Dining:—Dinner to be ready at One o'Clock.
7. From Three till Six, they are again to be kept closely to their Studies.
8. At Six they shall Sup.
9. At Seven there shall be public Prayer.
10. From Evening-Prayer till Bed-time they shall be allowed Recreation.
11. They shall all be in Bed at Nine o'Clock, without fail.
12. Their Recreations shall be Gardening, Walking, Riding and Bathing, without Doors; and the Carpenter's, Joiner's, Cabinet-maker's or Turner's Business, within Doors.
13. A large Plot of Land, of at least three Acres, shall be appropriated for a Garden, and a Person skilled in gardening be appointed to overlook the Students when employed in that Recreation.

14. A convenient Bath shall be made for Bathing.
15. A Master, or some proper Person by him appointed, shall be always present at the Time of Bathing. Only one shall bathe at a Time; and no one shall remain in the Water above a Minute.
16. No Student shall be allowed to bathe in the River.
17. A *Taberna Lignaria*, shall be provided on the Premises, with all proper Instruments and Materials, and skilful Person be employed to overlook the Students at this Recreation.
18. The Students shall be indulged with nothing which the World calls *Play*. Let this Rule be observed with the strictest Nicety; for those who play when they are young, will play when they are old.
19. Each Student shall have a Bed to himself, whether he boards in or out of the College.
20. The Students shall lie on Mattresses, not on Feather-Beds, because we believe the Mattresses to be more healthy.
21. The President and Tutors shall strictly examine from Time to Time, whether our Friends who board the Students, comply with these Rules as far as they concern them.

22. A skilful Physician shall be engaged to attend the Students on every Emergency, that the Parents may be fully assured that proper Care shall be taken of the Health of their Children, without any Expence to them.
23. The Superintendents shall examine by themselves or their Delegates, into the Progress of all the Students in Learning, every half Year, or oftner if possible.
24. The Elders, Deacons and Preachers, as often as they visit Abingdon, shall examine the Students concerning their Knowledge of God and Religion.
25. The Students shall be divided into proper Classes for that Purpose.
26. A Pupil who has a total Incapacity to attain Learning, shall, after sufficient Trial, be returned to his Parents.
27. If a Student be convicted of any open Sin, he shall for the first Offence be reprov'd in private; for the second Offence of the same Nature, he shall be reprov'd in Public; and for the third Offence of the same Nature, he shall be expelled; except in the following instance, viz. if any Student is convicted of striking another, he shall be put under Confinement for a Day.
28. But if the sin be exceedingly gross, and a Superintendent see it necessary, he may be expelled for the first or second Offence.

29. Idleness or any other Fault, may be punished with Confinement, according to the Discretion of the President.
30. A convenient Room shall be set apart as a Place of Confinement.
31. We prohibit *Whipping* and *Striking*.
32. The President shall be the Judge of all Crimes and Punishments, in the Absence of the Superintendents.
33. But the President shall have no Power to expel a Student without the Advice and Consent of three of the Trustees: but a Superintendent shall have that Power.

## FINIS

*Above preface is in Miscellanea Volume of Pamphlets from the private library of George Washington. The collection is now housed in the Director's Room in the Athenaeum Library, Boston, Massachusetts.*

*Jasper Winscom, a shopkeeper, later a preacher of Winchester, England, was an old friend of Asbury. They had known each other when Asbury was pastor on the Wiltshire Circuit. Evidently he had had some connection with Robert Williams' book business which had become a matter of trouble to Asbury and Wesley. Asbury makes an appropriate reference to Wesley by calling him "dear old Daddy." There*

*had been a disagreement between Wesley and Asbury over some engagements for Thomas Coke. Other differences are discussed. A reference to Thomas Rankin is another interesting feature.*

BATH, VIRGINIA<sup>[24]</sup>

August 15, 1788

[To Jasper Winscom]<sup>[25]</sup>

My dear Winscom:

I take it kind in you to send me a letter, for perhaps I have been tardy through a multiplicity of persons and things. I beg you will not fail to send me a letter once a year and inform me of all my old friends:—Is Mr. Lacy<sup>[26]</sup> dead, and Mr. Marsh?<sup>[27]</sup> I expect to realize what property I expect to get hold of, that was formerly the claim of Robert Williams;<sup>[28]</sup> in the space of a year, it will be about 100 pounds: an hundred and fifty is sunk by his last marriage, the family being insolvent. Shall I put the sum to interest and send it every year? It will come to something in an age. What I have procured are the copies of "Saints Rests and Patterns" I have collected, and bound, and sold; these should have been the profits of the society or mine for trouble and care. What he had in hand, and some debts that were commanded, his wife and step-children have secured and now they have nothing.<sup>[29]</sup> Mr. Rankin took home books to pay Greenwood's debt. I shall be obliged to you to give these matters a serious turn in your mind and write me what you think is best to be done.

Our borders are enlarging daily, multitudes of souls converted to God in a sudden powerful manner. I expect not



less than ten thousand will be added to the church in about these fifteen months last past. Nine states out of thirteen begin to flame with the glory of God. I begin to feel as I felt when first sent out to preach the Gospel, and expect to see souls converted to God every meeting, and to feel light and life and love.

My circuit is large, about 1000 miles from north to south and 6 to 700 from east to west.

I am a bishop and a beggar, our connection is very poor, and our preachers on the frontiers labour the whole year for 6 to 8 pounds. I have opened an house<sup>[30]</sup> for the education of youth that will require 4000 pounds to complete it, and this burden lies chiefly on me: so that I can hardly command the one coat on my yearly allowance. I find it hard work to do a little for my dear old friends. I have health and labour, as I visit the extremities of my charge, and to where danger threatens; from one grand division of the work to the other. We find it highly needful to hold 10 or a dozen conferences directed by presiding elders where I attend; by this means our preachers can all meet in conference and all be within two days ride of the place. The arrangement of these conferences as to time and place to be fitted to the Doctor's<sup>[31]</sup> movings was the only cause of the swelling of old Daddy<sup>[32]</sup> and me. I have been prevented from visiting some circuits that have been formed 3 or 4 years that have wanted my pastoral care: and as we are now fitted to meet the Doctor's coming I can only see these once in two years, whereas if I was wholly at my own disposal I should see them all in the space of 12 or 15

months. You think liberally that "punctilios ought to be dispensed with" and perhaps if you were standing as I do you would see it more so.

There is not a man in the world so obnoxious to the American politicians as our dear old Daddy, but no matter, we must treat him with all the respect we can and that is due to him.

The famous Duche,<sup>[33]</sup> the Oracle of Philadelphia, native of the City, Rector of Christ Church, and who would have been the Bishop of Pennsylvania, was unhappily taken in the British lines during the last war, and wrote through fear, a letter unfriendly to the interests of America. He was sent into banishment, never! never! to return. Poor man, he was fixing up to return, but no! his dearest friends had to inform him it would not do for him to return. We may form a friendly treaty with England, and new model our government to look more like monarchy and aristocracy. Still there will be a jealousy. I write you as my confidential friend: my real sentiments are union but no subordination, connexion but no subjection. I am sure that no man or number of men in England can direct either the head or the body here unless he or they should possess divine powers, be omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. That one thousand preachers traveling and local; and thirty thousand people would submit to a man they never have nor can see, his advice they will follow as far as they judge it right. For our old, old Daddy to appoint conferences when and where he was pleased, to appoint a joint superintendent with me, were strokes of power we did not

understand. He told me he would not ask the preachers' consent as to whom he should appoint. What security was left for them, whether he should be a wise man or a fool, a good or a bad man? Who was to remove him but he that appointed him?

I hope we shall live in peace, but you may be sure I have had it on all sides and I believe Diotrephes<sup>[34]</sup> has got the ear of old Daddy too. He sometimes prates against me with malicious words because I was bold to stay when he like a coward ran away, not only through fear, but hope of gaining preferment in the church or state.

I know also there are very few of you English men but what have a great deal of national pride. I know how you all feel, for I have felt the same. But we must bear one with another. When a Continental Captain and other great men informed me Mr. Wesley had written so and so, I told them I wished he had not so written, and I knew not that he had written such books, but be that matter as it would brother Wesley was in England and I was in America. He thought it his duty to support that, and I my duty to support this Government, and altho' I had respected his religious creed, I did not think myself obliged to adopt his political creed. I found such sentiments as these were satisfactory to the judicious and candid. But oh, I want to live in love and peace with all mankind and seek and save all the souls I can. We have a number of Captains and Colonels and men that are deep in the policy of their country and they will examine the policy of our CHURCH, to see if it is sound. We enjoy real

liberty here, no denomination hath any pre-eminence over another, and I hope never will have. I wish we may all stand on equal ground. Now my dear friend be more than ever engaged with God for your own soul, and the souls of others. If you print your book do send me one.<sup>[35]</sup>

I am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Mission House, Marylebone Road, London.*

*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

### A Letter from John Wesley to Asbury

*The Journal of Asbury refers to this letter. On March 15, 1789, he says, "Here I received a bitter pill from one of my greatest friends. Praise the Lord for my trials also! May they all be sanctified!" It was the last letter he had from Wesley.*

LONDON

September 20, 1788

[To Francis Asbury]<sup>[36]</sup>

My dear Brother:

There is, indeed, a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the Americans and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists: I am under God the father of the whole family. Therefore I naturally care for you all in a manner no other persons can do. Therefore I in a measure provide for you all; for the supplies which Dr. Coke provides for you, he

could not provide were it not for me, were it not that I not only permit him to collect but also support him in so doing.

But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the Doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little: you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school: you a college!<sup>[37]</sup> nay, and call it after your own names! O beware, do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and "Christ be all in all!"

One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called Bishop?<sup>[38]</sup> I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me Bishop! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart. And let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am Your affectionate friend and brother,

John Wesley

*John Telford, The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, VIII, 91*

*Asbury in this letter to Ezekiel Cooper shows his remarkable insight into the work of the pastor and preacher. Asbury himself had the heart of a pastor and preacher, and he yearned for his preachers to be likewise.*

WOOLARD'S, VIRGINIA<sup>[39]</sup>

*December 24, 1788*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[40]</sup>

My dear Brother:

I have had my solitary hours since I left Baltimore. I wish you to be blessed with health to do your duty. If possible visit from house to house, and that regularly once a fortnight for no other purpose than to speak to each in the family about their souls, that they may be ready for your help. Appoint preaching every other night, if able visit the classes every other week. Take some one of the poor Negroes and also the children. Remember the sick. The pastoral charge is very great. Whether our circle is large or small we may find work. The society should be put under bands. I wish something might be done to revive the work in town and keep it in motion; these people I know, I feel, will settle on their lees. Sermons ought to be short and pointed in town, briefly explanatory and then to press the people to conviction, repentance, faith and holiness.

I am sure the whole method of preaching will be changed as we come near the golden age. So shall we speak not so much by system but by life and application in the heart, little illustration and great fervency in the spark of life.

We have cold weather but we may have warm hearts, faith to head to mountains of sin and rivers of ice.

I am in much love thine

F. Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

The Arminian Magazine was named after Arminius, whose doctrine of free will became one of the cornerstones of Methodist theology. The following is a preface to The Arminian Magazine, Vol. I, published in Philadelphia, 1787. In this preface Asbury is arguing against the doctrine of election. Over against this he expounds the Methodist doctrine that God loves every man and that Christ died for all. He also criticizes the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The Arminian Magazine, first Methodist periodical in America, was launched by Asbury and John Dickins at the conference held at McKnight's meeting house in North Carolina on April 10, 1789. Dickins, who had lived near Halifax, North Carolina, became the first book editor and publishing agent of the church. (See Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina, 140, 141.)

NORTH CAROLINA

April 10, 1789

[To the Subscribers for The Arminian Magazine]

Brethren and Friends:

We are not ignorant that the Gospel has been preached in the eastern and northern parts of these United States, from the earliest settlement of the country; but this has been done chiefly, though not entirely, through the Calvinistic medium:<sup>[41]</sup> the consequence of which has been, that the religious books in general which have been circulated in those parts, and in some measure through the southern states, have more or less maintained the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation—that "GOD is" not "loving to every

man," and that "his mercy is" not "over all his works"; and consequently, that "Christ did" not "die for all," but only for a small select number of mankind; by the means of which opinions, Antinomianism has insensibly gained ground, and the great duties of self-denial, mortification, crucifixion to the world, and all the other severe but essentially necessary duties of religion, have been too much neglected and despised.

Indeed, we are persuaded there are many professors of religion, who think it exceedingly strange, when any appear as preachers or writers, who believe not the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation, and, what follows of course, the infallible and unconditional perseverance of all that ever have believed in Christ. However, in this Magazine very different opinions will be defended. We maintain that "GOD willeth all men to be saved," by speaking the truth in love: by arguments and illustrations, drawn from scripture and reason: proposed in as inoffensive a manner as the nature of the thing will permit: and founded on the wisdom, goodness, mercy, justice and truth of the Almighty, the nature and fitness of things, and the learned and faithful testimony of some of the greatest writers of different ages and nations. Not that we expect it will be read by men of warm spirits and rigid principles. Our title-page alone will be more than enough for such. We wish not to enter the lists of controversy with any particular person. What we aim at, is the benefit and instruction of those for whom we both write and publish, the members of our own society, and the truly-serious and candid of every denomination; as well as to shew from the sentiments of many ancient and modern divines on these



polemical points of divinity, that John Wesley, who has so eminently distinguished himself as a writer on the Arminian side of the question, was not more the first maintainer of these doctrines, than George Whitefield was of the doctrines of unconditional election and reprobation, and their consequences.

To this end our Magazine shall contain some of the most remarkable tracts that have been written on the universal love of GOD, and his willingness to save all men from all sin. To these will be added original pieces, written either directly on this subject, or on those which are equally opposed by the patrons of particular redemption.

We know nothing more proper to introduce a work of this kind, than a sketch of the life and death of Arminius: a person with whom those who mention his name with the utmost indignity, are commonly quite unacquainted. It is true, there is no such account of his life extant, as one would expect to be given of so great a man; (at least, none such has come to our knowledge:) but even an imperfect account is better than none, and may serve to remove abundance of prejudice from candid and impartial men.

We desire to guard against all unkind and unchristian reflections nor would we even use the appellation of Calvinist, if it was not for the sake of distinction. Indeed we believe the Calvinistic system has passed its meridian,<sup>[42]</sup> and is declining in the Christian church. If we are rightly informed by those who have the greatest opportunity of knowing, it is

far from being so popular as some narrow minds would suggest. Whatever was the case in times past, very few now receive it even in Holland. In Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and Geneva itself, it is generally rejected: and the case is the same with a large majority in England and Ireland.

That the subscribers may not purchase polemical divinity at too great an expense, we shall insert in each number an original sermon<sup>[43]</sup> on subjects curious, critical, interesting and elegant, written by our well-known and much-respected friend John Wesley, (all of them since he has passed the age seventy, and some of them within the last year:) which may convince those who are ignorant of him, that he is not, as some have falsely advanced, in his second childhood; and that his exercising the episcopal office for the forming of our church in America, was not the fruit of infancy in him or in us. And in order to afford our readers a still greater variety, we shall, in the course of our publication, introduce remarkable events, the lives of eminent persons, letters, journals and poetry.

The difficulty of communication on this extensive continent obliges us to move on slowly: we shall therefore only publish a volume every other year. And as we find that the universalian system, which is as different from ours as the particular, and is only the velvet part of Antinomianism, (being the unconditional salvation of the whole as the other is the unconditional salvation of a part), has found its numerous votaries, we shall deliver our sentiments on this subject in the course of the work.

But if, after all, any should prejudice us, and esteem our Magazine as a pernicious publication, we beg they will be so kind as to examine every Scripture and argument with justice, reason and revelation, and weigh them faithfully in the balance of the sanctuary, instead of falling on the authors and compilers, while they leave the arguments and scriptures untouched.

We do assure the subscribers that the work is undertaken purely to promote the glory of God, and their edification. The profits arising therefrom shall be applied as the wisdom of the Conference shall direct; in carrying on, for instance, our plan of Christian education, or in sending missionaries among the Indians and opening schools for their children. This will we do, if God permit.

But above all, we exhort you to seek truth for its own excellence, as a guard against unchristian tempers and practices. The height of our ambition is to be found in doctrine genuine in experience, holy in our conversation, patient in suffering, and frequent and fervent in prayer. That you may concur with us in these things, is the wish and prayer of your servants for Christ's sake.

Thomas Coke,  
Francis Asbury  
The Arminian Magazine (*Philadelphia, 1787*), I

*Seeing the need for a new church in New York, Asbury and Coke wrote the following orders to Thomas Morrell. In the*

Minutes, *Morrell is listed as elder along with Freeborn Garrettson as presiding elder. Morrell for a while traveled with Asbury and was with him and Coke when, together with John Dickins, they called on President Washington in 1789. (See introductions to letters of May 29, 1789.)*

NEW YORK, N.Y.  
May 20, 1789<sup>[44]</sup>

[*To Thomas Morrell*]

Thomas Morrell is appointed and ordered by the Bishops and conference to raise a subscription in the city of New York, in order to erect a new church<sup>[45]</sup> on a convenient spot at the north or northeast part of the city; and shall call to his assistance any person or persons recommended by the bishops or conference, or, in their absence, any person he shall judge proper for his assistance. The bishops and conference do also order, that all the subscriptions and collections that shall be raised from time to time in the new church, when erected shall be applied for the benefit, support, and interests of the new church; and they do also give Thomas Morrell authority to appoint trustees for the said new church.

Thomas Coke,  
Francis Asbury

*J.B. Wakeley, Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism, 346*

*This is not the first letter to George Washington. On April 24, 1786, a letter was written from Asbury at Alexandria to George Washington. This was before he became President.*

*Coke and Asbury visited Mount Vernon on June 26, 1785. When Washington was elected President, Coke and Asbury, with Morrell presented a letter to Washington in New York. Major Thomas Morrell<sup>[46]</sup> had served under Washington in the Revolution. He later became a Methodist preacher.*

The Address of the Bishops of the Methodist-Episcopal  
Church.

NEW YORK, N.Y.

May 29, 1789<sup>[47]</sup>

To the President of the United States  
Sir:

We the bishops of the Methodist-Episcopal church, humbly beg leave, in the name of our society collectively in these United States, to express to you the warm feelings of our hearts, and our sincere congratulations, on your appointment to the presidentship of these states. We are conscious from the signal proofs you have already given, that you are a friend of mankind; and under this established idea, place as full a confidence to your wisdom and integrity, for the preservation of those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of GOD, and the glorious revolution, as we believe, ought to be reposed in man.

We have received the most grateful satisfaction, from the humble and entire dependence on the Great Governor of the universe which you have repeatedly expressed, acknowledging him the source of every blessing, and particularly of the most excellent constitution of these states,

which is at present the admiration of the world, and may in future become its great exemplar for imitation: and hence we enjoy a holy expectation that you will always prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine, vital religion—the grand end of our creation and present probationary existence. And we promise you our fervent prayers to the throne of grace, that GOD Almighty may endue you with all the graces and gifts of his Holy Spirit, that may enable you to fill up your important station to his glory, the good of his church, the happiness and prosperity of the United States, and the welfare of mankind.

Signed in behalf of the Methodist-Episcopal church,

Thomas Coke,<sup>[48]</sup>

Francis Asbury

*Washington papers, Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress*

### Answer of George Washington to Asbury and Coke

*The New York Conference of 1789 ordered an address to be presented to the recently inaugurated President Washington. John Dickins and Thomas Morrell were appointed to wait on him and request him to designate a day for the reception of the bishops. May 29 was appointed. Morrell says, "Asbury with great self possession read the address in an impressive manner. The President read his reply with fluency and animation. They interchanged their respective addresses; and, after sitting a few minutes, we departed."*<sup>[49]</sup>

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
*May 29, 1789*

To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the  
United States

Gentlemen:

I return you individually, and through you to your Society collectively in the United States, my thanks for the demonstration of affection and the expression of joy offered in their behalf on my late appointment. It shall be my endeavor to manifest the purity of my inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desires to contribute whatever may be in my power toward the civil and religious liberties of the American people. In pursuing this line of conduct, I hope, by the assistance of the Divine Providence, not altogether to disappoint the confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me.

It always affords me satisfaction when I find a concurrence of sentiment and practice between all conscientious men, in acknowledgements of homage to the great Governor of the universe, and in professions of support to a just civil government. After mentioning that I trust the people of every denomination who demean themselves as good citizens will have occasion to be convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion, I must assure you, in particular, that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers to the throne

of grace for me; and that I likewise implore the Divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community.

George Washington  
*Washington papers, Manuscript Division, Library of  
Congress*

*Several important documents have come to light which give information on Cokesbury College. This is one of them. This is a report of the progress at Cokesbury and also an appeal for support for the college. It seems that a large percentage of the students were orphans. Cokesbury College burned down in December, 1795, and was not rebuilt.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
May 29, 1789

To the Friends of Cokesbury College

Dear Brethren:

It is hardly possible for you to be sufficiently sensible of how great Difficulty and at the same Time of what Importance it is, to bring up Youth in the various Branches of Learning and pure Religion. To attain this valuable End in our Seminary of Learning, we have drawn the Reins of godly Discipline closer and closer, even to the Expulsion of one unruly young Man. Our President (Dr. Hall) displays Learning and Piety, and convinces us by his own Performance and those of his Pupils, that he is a Scholar.



We had the Pleasure at our last Visitation, to observe several of the Youths displaying Strength of Memory, and Propriety of Pronunciation in their public Speeches delivered in their Mother-Tongue; others discovering a considerable Knowledge of the Latin and Greek Classics, and others a mathematical Genius. The Industry and Efforts of three of the Youth's in Gardening, gave us no small Satisfaction. Each of them chose his little Spot in the rude State of Nature, fenced it, cleansed it, formed it into little Beds and Walks, and raised therein a Variety of pleasing Plants and Vegetables. Above all, several of them have been, and now are, under gracious Impressions, and some truly converted to God. Four are boarded, and they and three more educated, *gratis*.

But one Thing is still wanting,—some warm Exertions in behalf of our College at this Time. The Building we hope will be completed this Year; for the accomplishing of which, and discharging all our Debts, about Two Thousand Pounds (Maryland Currency) will be necessary. We hope that at least two Thirds, if not three Fourths, of the Benefits of our Institution will be of a charitable Nature, and then it will be blest indeed! It will be so much devoted to the pure Service of God, and the Benefit of the States, and our Society in particular, and be conducted to so disinterested a Manner, that we may safely depend on the Blessing of God, and in a great Measure on the Obedience of the Scholars.

We thank you most sincerely for all that you have done; and have every Reason to confide in the Benevolence of your Hearts for the future. The Cries of the Fatherless and the

Widows prevail, yea, they must melt, and move your Affections, and you cannot but help us in the present Instance,—and God, even your own God, shall give you his Blessing.

We remain, dear Brethren, as ever,  
Your faithful Pastors,  
and devoted Servants for Christ's Sake,

Thomas Coke,  
Francis Asbury

*Printed copy in Drew University Library*

*Morrell, after commencing the work in New York, met with such serious opposition that he wrote to Bishop Asbury for counsel. The bishop replied.*

NEW YORK STATE  
June, [1789]<sup>[50]</sup>

[*To Thomas Morrell*]

My very dear Brother:

It is impossible for me to give any decided advice in the critical circumstances of your case, and the fickle tempers you have to deal with, that may tack and change more frequent than the wind. In brief, I advise you to do the best you can, *but build the house*. I will cancel your obligation to the conference and myself. I wish you to be under no shackles on our side. I would not have you outdone. I think those who trouble you will soon be cut off, etc. You will take my few hints, etc. I am, with great respect, thine,

Francis Asbury

*J.B. Wakeley, Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early  
History of American Methodism, 347-48*

*A letter to Morrell soon after the 1789 conference  
adjourned. Asbury's directions to Morrell were explicit to go  
ahead, evidently in spite of opposition. The singing must have  
been very bad.*

RHINEBECK N. Y.  
June 19, [1789]<sup>[51]</sup>

[*To Thomas Morrell*]

My dear Brother:

If you can only erect and cover, with seats, windows, and doors, the new church by the first of December, all will be well, I hope. O brother, piety, patience, courage, zeal, and industry will carry you through. I am in faith, hope, and prayer that God will revive his work in [New] York. Do, brother, strive and reform the singing a little in our Church. I am thine in much esteem,

Francis Asbury

*J.B. Wakeley, Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early  
History of American Methodism, 347-48*

*Morrell had great success in building the church and  
received the appreciation of Asbury.*

[PHILADELPHIA, PA.]<sup>[52]</sup>

October 3, 1789

[To Thomas Morrell]<sup>[53]</sup>

My dear Brother:

I am pleased you have made out so wonderfully. I can figure in my own mind the difficulties you have had to struggle with. The hints you gave are very just as to the management of temporalities. The members are welcome to act, but who are to appoint them is the question? I find it hard if a preacher cannot draw a collection for a mission, or conference, or station, without complaint. I have nothing at all to complain of, and it would have been impossible to have carried your great design into execution without your method. My appointments are made through East Jersey, where I have not been for this two years past. Was it not for this you should see me in [New] York next Sabbath week.

The Lord is glorious throughout the continent. Baltimore, the work goes on rapidly indeed; we have eight hundred in society. I expect an earth quake of the Lord's power will go from east to west, and from north to south; but few circuits but the work revives. I am, with great respect, thine,

Francis Asbury

*J.B. Wakeley, Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism, 348-49*

### A Letter of John Wesley

*John Wesley was evidently chagrined because of the action of the General Conference of 1787 in refusing to accept*

*Richard Whatcoat as superintendent. It is evident that he blamed Asbury for the refusal.*

LONDON  
October 31, 1789

[To Mr. ———]<sup>[54]</sup>

I was a little surprised when I received some letters from Mr. Asbury affirming that no person in Europe knew how to direct those in America. Soon after he flatly refused to receive Mr. Whatcoat in the character I sent him. He told George Shadford, "Mr. Wesley and I are like Caesar and Pompey: he will bear no equal, and I will bear no superior." And accordingly he quietly sat by until his friends voted my name out of the American Minutes. This completed the matter and showed that he had no connexion with me.

John Wesley  
*John Telford, The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, VIII,*  
183

*The Council as a governing body was adopted in 1789 and lasted until the first General Conference in 1792. It was made up of the bishops and the presiding elders. It was to be called at such time as the bishops decided it should be held. The first meeting was held in Baltimore on December 3, 1789. Philip Bruce and James O'Kelly<sup>[55]</sup> were delegates from Virginia. Their districts covered most of that state. O'Kelly was the chief "malcontent." However, Bruce was loyal to Asbury. Bruce had the larger district,<sup>[56]</sup> including all the territory from the Chesapeake Bay to and including what is now*

*northern West Virginia, and from the Maryland line on the Potomac River to the York River. The southern boundary followed that river west until it turned north from King William County to the Rappahannock River. The boundary followed the Rappahannock River to its beginnings on into West Virginia. James O'Kelly was ever stirring up opposition. His antagonism was now venting itself against the council.<sup>[57]</sup> Asbury felt that O'Kelly was behind the whole movement to incorporate the church. Many of them had been deeded to Asbury and the Methodist preachers for their use and none others and for the preaching of the gospel as incorporated in Wesley's four volumes of Sermons and his Notes on the New Testament.*

*Evidently the idea to incorporate churches tied into the plans of some of the "malcontents" to strip Asbury and the Connection of its power. Asbury sees the plan as that of ministers rather than laymen. This was an early fight between those for and against the connectional system.*

FISHING CREEK [DORCHESTER COUNTY], MD.

*November 16, 1789*

*[To Ezekiel Cooper]<sup>[58]</sup>*

My dear Brother:

I am of opinion that the Act of Incorporation will probably stand a prosperous poll. If any thing can be done to let it, I wish you to move every spring against it. You have just ideas of this political scheme. It will not do for us. We have no church property but our churches; who will contend with us for these, or put us out of the possession of them? I am

persuaded that many of the members of these churches who pray for incorporation, when they feel the effects, will cry out against it. You can do something with the Eastern Shore<sup>[59]</sup> members, and you may use all your influence if it is not too late. God has been wonderfully with us at all our quarterly meetings. I think we shall have wonderful times.

I am thine in haste and much love,

F. Asbury

P.S. It may plainly be declared what this bill is: that it is a Jesuitical plan. Why did not the people form and present this bill, and not the ministers? I doubt not but that the people will feel properly when it comes into operation, and they will cry under their burdens.

If you could be spared to go to Philadelphia.<sup>[60]</sup> I should be glad, for Satan is strongly fortified in that city. There is heavy work, you may be sure. I was thinking we should see more about these matters at the Council.<sup>[61]</sup>

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*This is the preface to the second volume of The Arminian Magazine, which was published in 1790. The preface to the first volume, printed in 1789, which is also included in this volume of letters, deals with the Arminian theology; whereas this preface deals largely with the first part of Asbury's Journal. A part of the Journal was printed in Volume II of The Arminian Magazine, and Asbury in this preface is pointing out some of the differences between his Journal and the*

*Journal of John Wesley. Asbury refers here to the article on the life and death of the Rev. John Fletcher which is in the magazine.*

BALTIMORE

*December 8, 1789*

[*To the Subscribers for The Arminian Magazine*]

Dear Friends and Brethren:

The former volume of this work, like all other human compilations, has both its excellencies and defects. But as we intend to aim at an improvement every year, we shall carefully attend to any judicious remarks, which our candid readers may think proper to suggest. In this volume you have more experimental pieces and letters. Bishop Asbury's journal enlarged may have its use to his own heart, by reminding him of some of the most painful and pleasing circumstances of his life. And as it may quicken his own soul on review, it may likewise remind his old friends of some useful matter; that they may compare the past with the present, and either weep or rejoice, as occasion may require, when they measure their present with that past experience. As no other satisfactory account can be procured, this journal will be the more acceptable to many, as it contains a brief relation of the progress of Methodism, step by step, through the continent of America.

The journal of our venerable friend, John Wesley, needs no recommendation at all. It abounds with the most pleasing and simple accounts of many remarkable places and events in the three kingdoms of Great Britain; which are very acceptable



both to Americans and Europeans. But what renders this journal most profitable, is his faithful circumstantial account of the work of God; and the instruments employed both for and against it.

In this volume, you also have the life and death of our almost inimitable friend, John Fletcher; which, considering the compiler and the matter, brings its own recommendation.

It is worthy of observation that, in time, this Magazine may form a complete American Library; as most of our publications will be included therein. Unbound tracts are soon damaged or lost; but here all is secured in good binding. And this magazine may serve the next generation.

Great care will be taken to keep up the goodness of the paper, printing and binding; and to render the whole work as acceptable and useful as possible.

Signed in behalf of the council,

Francis Asbury

The Arminian Magazine, *II* (1790), *iii-iv*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Asbury and Coke.
- [2] Not certain as to date. Glendinning refers to it in 1794; therefore, it was written before that date.
- [3] A note to "A Sermon on the Unity of the Christian Church" by William Glendinning in 1794 says, "Soon after I had written this Sermon, there fell into my hands a small treatise on the *Causes, Evils and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*, extracted from the writings of two great divines of the last century, and published by Mr. Francis Asbury, and by him earnestly recommended to the Methodists. In which recommendation I most heartily concur, with this difference only—that whereas he recommends it to the Methodists in particular, I would, with equal warmth, recommend it to all professing Christians of every denomination. And especially would I wish every reader to pay a particular regard to what is contained in the fifth *Direction*, which begins in Page 90, and concludes in Page 106. Here he will meet with the same sentiment, I have just touched on, treated more fully—and which gave rise to this Note in the margin." (See also references in Asbury's *Journal*, November 11, 1780; October 27, 1781; November 16, 1782.) The book was not included in the list of books published from 1790-94 (Phoebus, *Beams of Light*, 263) and therefore was earlier. There was a great interest in publishing books after the conference of 1784. (See Phoebus.)
- [4] Asbury had several pictures made.

- [5] This was written to General Washington before he became President. The sermons may have been those of Wesley. Asbury distributed these. Asbury evidently passed near Mount Vernon coming from Petersburg by Manakintown, Virginia. He preached on Sunday, the twenty-third, in Alexandria in the courthouse and in the evening in the Presbyterian Church. While in Alexandria he set on foot a subscription and drew a plan for a meeting-house. (See *Journal*, April 23, 1786.)
- [6] Date of year, evidently, 1786, as Thomas Foster was presiding elder that year.
- [7] Layman, Wilmington, Delaware. John Dickinson (1732-1808), son of Samuel Dickinson, was born in Maryland and is called "The Penman of the Revolution." His "brilliant legal mind and eloquence were prime forces in the establishment of the American nation." He helped to found Dickinson College, which was named for him. He studied law at Middle Temple in London and was a lawyer in London. In pamphlets before the Revolution he appealed to reason to avert a break with England. He voted against the Declaration of Independence and declined to sign the document. However, when the decision to fight was later made, he took up arms with America. He later served as president of Delaware and later as president of Pennsylvania. (Delaware was formerly part of Pennsylvania.) He was a powerful influence in the Continental Congress of 1787. He had been a slave owner but became opposed to slavery and freed his slaves. He was a Quaker and is buried in the Friend's Meetinghouse yard at Fourth and West streets, Philadelphia. (From

*Delaware, a Guide to the First State*, Viking Press, 1938.) (Jacob S. Payton.)

- [8] Judge Thomas White in whose home near Whitleysburg, Delaware, Asbury found sanctuary. (See *Journal*, November 9, 1778; Lednum's *History of the Rise of Methodism*, 267-71.) The judge was among the ten laymen appointed chartered trustees of Cokesbury. (See Armstrong, *Old Baltimore Conference*, 89.) (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [9] Allan McLane, a resident of Smyrna before he moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where he became a prominent layman during Asbury's visit there. (See Hallman, *History of Asbury Church*, Wilmington, ed. John D. C. Hanna, 1889, 116.) (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [10] Francis Money, unknown.
- [11] He would help the old people with their burdens.
- [12] Though this letter has been dated 1789, it is evidently March 25, 1787. Asbury was not in Charleston on March 25, 1789; but he was there in 1787.
- [13] Wesley in a letter to Coke, September 6, 1786, says, "I desire that you would appoint a General Conference of all our preachers in the United States, to meet at Baltimore on May 1st, 1787, and that Mr. Whatcoat may be appointed superintendent with Mr. Francis Asbury." (Jesse Lee's *A Short History of the Methodists*, 124.) Coke invited the preachers from the West Indies. Coke indicates (*Journal*, 1793) that on reaching the country in March, 1787, he was coolly received by Asbury. On arriving at the conference he was rebuked by the preachers. He had to pledge himself to "do so no more."

- [14] See Edward J. Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, xxvi, xxvii, for his account of these facts.
- [15] Ordination of Richard Whatcoat, which did not occur.
- [16] The reference to the British preachers is rather sharp.
- [17] Richard Whatcoat. O'Kelly uses strong language.
- [18] Part of letter torn off.
- [19] John Wesley. O'Kelly is objecting strenuously to Wesley's propositions and lists his reasons.
- [20] O'Kelly was evidently opposed to calling the General Conference.
- [21] Evidently refers to new members.
- [22] Not signed.
- [23] *An Address to the Annual Subscribers for the Support of Cokesbury-College, and to the Members of the Methodist Society to Which Are Added, the Rules and Regulations of the College*, by Thomas Coke, LL.D., and Francis Asbury, Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (New York: Printed by W. Ross, in Broad-Street. M.DCC.LXXXVII.)
- [24] Now Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.
- [25] Jasper Winscom was a shopkeeper of Winchester, who, influenced by Wesley's writings, formed a Methodist group in that cathedral city. He became a local preacher. Thomas Webb preached in his home and was the means of converting Winscom's thirteen-year-old daughter. At the conference of 1788 Wesley accepted him as a full-time itinerant, family man though he was. Shortly after Wesley's death, however, he was snubbed for "meddling with things that belong only to the Assistant," and retired from the

itinerant ministry. Asbury had been associated with Winscom while he was stationed in the Wiltshire South Circuit. (Frank Baker.)

[26] Probably Mr. Lacy of Salisbury, and later of Bath, whose son, Jeremiah, after fighting in the War of American Independence, became a Methodist preacher. (See "Memoirs of the Life of Jeremiah Lacy," *The Methodist Magazine*, 1802, 443-49, 487-92, 531-36.) (Frank Baker.)

[27] Mr. Marsh appears in John Furz's account of the early days of Methodism in Salisbury, which were overshadowed by the infidelity of Wesley's brother-in-law, the Rev. Westley Hall. After the scandal had died down, Furz preached in Hall's chapel and described how "Mr. Marsh then took part of the house adjoining to it, for me to live in, and to receive any of Mr. Wesley's preachers that could find time to call." (See *The Arminian Magazine*, 1782, 632.) (Frank Baker.)

[28] Robert Williams came to America from England as a local preacher in 1769, paying his own expenses, shortly before the first itinerant preachers, Boardman and Pilmoor, were sent out by the English Conference. He spent most of his time as the "Apostle of Virginia." He published some of Wesley's writings, until the first conference in 1773 resolved that no preacher should do this without the approval of both Wesley and the American preachers. (See Note 22, letter, September 3, 1780.) John Wesley wrote to Thomas Rankin on December 4, 1773: "I have written to Robert Williams and given him leave to print the *Notes* on my account; nothing on *his own*. I never knew he did till afterward." Shortly after this Williams married and located

somewhere between Portsmouth and Suffolk, Virginia. Asbury's phrase about his "last marriage" seems to hint a previous marriage. Williams evidently married a widow with children. On September 26, 1775, he died; and Asbury preached his funeral sermon. Long after his death his publishing activities were still causing difficulty, as is shown by this letter. Williams' reprints of Wesley's editions of Baxter's *Saints' Everlasting Rest* and Thomas à Kempis' *Christian's Pattern, or, A Treatise of the Imitation of Christ* were still lying about in loose sheets, and Asbury had them bound for sale. But it was difficult to decide whether they should be regarded as the property of the family or of the conference— or even of Asbury himself. The affair was not too important. Williams was the father of Methodism in Virginia and a great pioneer preacher. (Frank Baker.)

[29] Thomas Rankin also had had dealings with Williams' publications. He returned to England in 1778 and "took home some books to pay Greenwood's debt." Williams had galloped from Castlebar to Dublin on hearing that Ashton was on the point of emigrating to America, sold his horse to pay his debts, and depended on Ashton's generosity for his passage. It seems likely that in his haste some of his debts were overlooked, of which Rankin heard and took the best method he could think of to put the matter right. (Frank Baker.)

[30] Cokesbury College.

[31] Thomas Coke.

[32] John Wesley was now eighty-five years old. That this was really quite an affectionate nickname is seen more clearly

in Asbury's reference a little later when he speaks of "our dear old Daddy." (Frank Baker.)

[33] Jacob Duche was born in Philadelphia in 1737. He graduated from the college of Philadelphia and studied at Cambridge University. He was given license by the Bishop of London to preach in America. He became rector of Christ Church. He opened the first session of Congress with prayer on September 7, 1774. For three years he was chaplain. It was at this time that he wrote a letter to Washington urging him to capitulate to the Redcoats. George Washington laid the letter before Congress, and Congress declared Duche a traitor. He fled to England, where he was chaplain in an orphanage and wrote some books. He married a sister of Francis Hopkinson, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. (Jacob S. Payton.)

[34] For Diotrephes, one seeking pre-eminence in the church, see III John 9, 10. Diotrephes is evidently Thomas Rankin. According to Rankin's autobiography Wesley was dissatisfied with the leadership of American Methodism and therefore "determined to appoint me superintendent of the whole." This was in 1772. Until the conference of 1773 Asbury's name was placed above those of Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor. On Rankin's arrival Asbury had to take second place once more, and to be subject to strict discipline, against which he rebelled, even from a man nine years his senior. Rankin seemed determined to act the part of a new broom sweeping clean, and the clash of strong wills led to frequent friction in which each felt the other was to blame. Soon after the outbreak of the war, Rankin announced his view that it would be best for them



to return to England, but was apparently shamed into staying by Asbury's vehement objections. (See Asbury's *Journal* of August 7, 1775.) Eventually (1778) Rankin did go, stealing away without a farewell. Asbury looked upon this as rank desertion, and Rankin's silence in his autobiography about his departure suggests that he himself looked upon it as an inglorious retreat. (For Rankin's autobiography see Thomas Jackson, ed., *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, 4th ed., 1872, V, 135-217. Cf. W.C. Barclay, *Early American Methodism*, I, 39-43. For a lengthier summary by Asbury of his thorn in the flesh, see his letter of January 15, 1816. See Asbury's letter to Joseph Benson, January 15, 1816.) (Frank Baker.)

[35] Winscom's book does not appear to have been published. (Frank Baker.)

[36] This letter did not see the light of day for nearly forty years after the death of Wesley. It was published by Henry Moore after Coke had died. M'Caine says, "This letter alone, we think, is sufficient to settle the matter of Mr. Wesley's recommendation of the Episcopal form of church government with every intelligent and disinterested person; . . ." (*Letters*, 54.) M'Caine did not agree with the ideas of American Methodist episcopacy, and was most critical. The letter has been published several times.

[37] Cokesbury College.

[38] Quotation from Charles Wesley. He created the following poems on Coke and Asbury, the first on Coke:

So easily are Bishop's made,  
By man's or woman's whim;

Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,  
But who laid hands on him?

Now the one on Asbury:

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

Edward J. Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 259 M'Caine's *Letters*, 79  
Guirey, *History of Episcopacy*, 332

Guirey quoted Bradburn, who said that he was present when Wesley wrote the lines.

[39] Asbury was evidently at Mrs. Woolard's in the northern neck of Virginia (territory between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers). He seems to have spent Christmas there. The Woolards were early friends and Methodists. She was now a widow.

[40] Pastor at Light Street Church, Baltimore. (See *Minutes*, 1788.)

[41] The Established Church, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Reformed, and Baptists were as a rule more or less Calvinist.

[42] Asbury was a poor prophet on this point.

[43] "The sermons that were to be inserted had been lately published in Europe, but none of them in America." (This note was put in by the editor of *The Arminian Magazine*.)

[44] Though the letter is dated May 20, Asbury did not get to New York until later. (See *Journal*.)

[45] The conference approved the purchase of the land and the construction of the new church "at the north or north-east part of the city." Seven lots were purchased on Forsythe Street near Division Street from George Workheart (deed dated August 17, 1799). Building began promptly. The structure was enclosed, floored, and ceiled by November 8, the date of its dedication. It met Asbury's hope that it could be finished by December. It was generally called Forsythe Street Church, though Asbury sometimes calls it Bowery Church. Usually John Street is called "Old Church" and Forsythe Street "the New Church." There was one board of trustees for both churches. Morrell remained in charge until the conference of 1790. (Arthur Bruce Moss.)

[46] See Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, III, 144.

[47] Though this letter has been dated May 19, it must have been written on May 29 at the conference in New York.

[48] Drinkhouse has questioned Coke's part in this letter. (*History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, 382-85.)

[49] Quoted in Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, II, 501.

[50] It is clear that this letter was written in 1789, though the year is not on the letter. (See Note 17 under letter of December 10, 1790.)

[51] This letter clearly follows the preceding letter to Morrell.

- [52] Though the letter does not state the place, the *Journal* shows he was in Philadelphia.
- [53] Pastor in New York.
- [54] Not known to whom written.
- [55] Philip Bruce, presiding elder of the North District, and James O'Kelly, presiding elder of the South District.
- [56] Thomas Scott in his *Journal* comments on the large size of Bruce's district. (Thomes Scott's *Journal*. Property of Lawrence Sherwood.)
- [57] Asbury and Coke presented the idea of the Council to the conferences of 1789. Jesse Lee says, "The Bishops said that they had made it a matter of prayer; and they believed the present plan was the best they could think of. After some opposition had been made to the plan, and there had been much debating about it, a majority of the preachers agreed to the following plan, which was published in the minutes." (Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists*, 146-47.)
- [58] Pastor in Annapolis.
- [59] Eastern Shore of Maryland, of which Cooper was a native.
- [60] Asbury evidently planned to move Cooper to Philadelphia. Actually he was moved to Annapolis, Maryland. (See *Minutes*, 1789.)
- [61] At this time Methodism was overseen by Asbury's Council, which soon went into disuse. The council was made up of the bishops and the presiding elders. (See page 87.)

**PERIOD OF O'KELLY SCHISM**

*January 12, 1790 - December —, 1792*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PERIOD OF O'KELLY SCHISM

January 12, 1790 - December ——, 1792

*The Council was adopted as the governing body of the church in 1789 and lasted until the General Conference in 1792. It was made up of the bishops and presiding elders. It was to be called by the bishops at such times as they determined. James O'Kelly led the first great split in American Methodism. He was opposed to the episcopacy. He went out with others in 1792 and started the Republican Methodist Church in Surry County, Virginia, which in 1794 became the Christian Church. O'Kelly was much opposed to the Council from its beginning. This letter seems to refer to the letter Asbury received from James O'Kelly on January 12, 1790. Asbury says, "He makes heavy complaints of my power, and bids me stop for one year or he must use his influence against me." This letter is only part of a letter. The appended excerpts from letters of Jarratt to the Rev. John Coleman are informative.*

BRUNSWICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

[January 12, 1790]<sup>[1]</sup>

[To James O'Kelly]

Thy letter<sup>[2]</sup> greatly alarmed me. But pray who boldly demanded my negative? My negative is my own. I never have received such a check from any preacher in America.<sup>[3]</sup>

[Francis Asbury]

*William Guirey, The History of the Episcopacy in Four  
Parts, 75.  
Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress*

*This preface to the Discipline is taken from the sixth edition of the Discipline, published in 1790. The last three paragraphs were first printed as the preface to the fifth edition, printed March 20, 1789. Four editions of the Discipline were printed before this one, the first in 1785; but no preface appeared until 1789.*

— 1790

To the Members of the Methodist Societies in the United  
States

Dear beloved Brethren:

We think it expedient to give you a brief account of the rise of Methodism (so called) both in Europe and America. In 1729, two young men, in England reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, they saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified: But still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out, to raise an holy people.

And during the space of thirty years past, certain persons, members of the society, emigrated from England and Ireland, and settled in various parts of this country. About twenty years ago,<sup>[4]</sup> Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New York; and formed a society

of his own countrymen and the citizens. About the same time, Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick county, in the state of Maryland, and preaching there, formed some societies. In 1769, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, came to New York; who were the first regular Methodist Preachers on the continent. In the latter end of the year 1771, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright, of the same order came over.

And we humbly believe that God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists in America, was to reform the continent, and spread scriptural holiness over these lands. As a proof hereof, we have seen, in course of 22 years, a great and glorious work of God, from New York through the Jersies, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia; as also the extremities of the Western Settlements.

We also esteem it our duty and privilege most earnestly to recommend to you as members of our church, our Form of Discipline, which has been rounded on the experience of 50 years in Europe, and of 20 years in America; as also on the observations and remarks we have made on ancient and modern churches. We have made some little alterations in the present edition,<sup>[5]</sup> yet such as affect not in any degree the essentials of our doctrines and discipline. We think ourselves obliged to view and review annually the whole order of our church, always aiming at perfection, standing on the shoulders of those who have lived before us, and taking the advantage of our former selves.



We wish to see this little publication in the house of every Methodist, and the more so as it contains our plan of Collegiate and Christian education, and the articles of religion maintained more or less, in part or in the whole, by every reformed church in the world. We would likewise declare our real sentiments concerning the scripture doctrine of election and reprobation; as also on the infallible unconditional perseverance of all that ever have believed, or ever shall; and lastly, on the doctrine of Christian perfection.

Far from wishing you to be ignorant of any of our doctrines, or any part of our discipline, we desire you to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the whole. We know you are not in general able to purchase many books: But you ought, next to the word of God, to procure the Articles and Canons of the church to which you belong. This present edition is small and cheap and we can assure you that the profits of the sale of it shall be applied to charitable purposes.

We remain your very affectionate brethren and pastors, who labour night and day, both in public and private, for your good,

Thomas Coke  
Francis Asbury

*A Form of Discipline, 1790. Property of J. Manning Potts*

*Asbury came to Charleston on February 10. Here he evidently received considerable mail and mentions the good news that had come from Baltimore and New York. He says*

*on the tenth that he had been writing letters to Europe and many parts of the continent. Here is some evidence of the large correspondence he carried on and, on the other hand, how little is preserved. This is the only letter for these days at Charleston. The Conference began on the fifteenth. The fourteenth was Sunday.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*February 14, 1790*

[*To his Parents*]

My dear Parents:

My mind is at rest with respect to your temporalities, from the assurance I have had that brother Coke will supply you at my desire. O that your souls may grow in grace and that you may make sure work for eternity. My head and hands and heart are all full. Being so continually on the stretch in traveling, I have little time to write to my dearest friends.

Glory be to the LORD, we have a glorious work. Hundreds are coming home to God:—east, west, north, and south. I praise God I ever was born to see the glory of God in this new world. My dear children, and their children, the poor Indians, are the subjects of my charge. If God's people throughout the world would begin to pray for and strive to believe that the Lord would awaken thousands, it would soon appear in every town, country, parish, house, and individual. O that God may make his power known in my poor native land, and break like thunder and lightning on the people that have long been sleeping in the form of sentiments of religion.

I am not pleased at our Wednesbury friends, if they have received my letter, for not writing. I wish you would get some person to write to me, a large satisfactory account. Where is aunt Sarah Rogers? Where is uncle Nathaniel Rogers? Where is his son John Rogers? Where, what, is Joseph Groves? Tell me the whole.

I am as ever, your dear son,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Asbury's great feeling of kinship in spiritual things for the Quakers is shown in this letter. There were Quaker meetinghouses in many of the states. Penn had settled in Pennsylvania, and his followers had been in Pennsylvania and in the other states. The famous John Woolman had traveled extensively in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, New England, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and North Carolina in the 'forties, 'fifties, and 'sixties. An early map of the Eastern states shows the Quaker meetinghouses. There was a strong settlement of the Quakers at this time in Loudoun County, Virginia, not very far from Asbury.*

NEWTON, VIRGINIA<sup>[6]</sup>  
*Seventh Month, [July,] 1790*

[*To a Quaker*]<sup>[7]</sup>

My very dear Friend:

If I have a partiality for any people in the world except the Methodists, it is for the Quakers, so called. Their plainness of dress, their love of justice, and truth, their friendship to each

other, and the care they take of one another, render them worthy of praise.

Would it not be of use for that society that make it a point not to come near any others, whether good or bad, to try all means within themselves? Would it not be well, thinkest thou, for them to sit every night and morning and, if they find liberty, to go to prayer after reading a portion of God's word? As epistles are read from the Friends, would it not be well to introduce the reading of some portion of the Scriptures at public meetings? Would it not be well to have a congregation and a society—an outward and an inward court? In the former let children and servants, and unawakened people come; in the inward let mourners in Zion come.

The Presbyterians have reformed; the Episcopalians and the Methodists; why should not the Friends? It was a dark time one hundred and fifty years back. We are near the edge of the wilderness. If this inward court or society were divided into small bands or classes, and to be called together weekly by men and women of the deepest experience, and appointed for that work, and asked about their souls and the dealings of God with them, and to join in prayer, one or two or all of them that have freedom, I think the Lord would come upon them.

I give this advice as the real friend of your souls, as there are hundreds and thousands that never have nor will come near others. These might get more religion if your people were to hear others; they might get properly awakened, and if

you had close meetings for speaking they would not leave you. You must not think that G. Fox and R. Barclay<sup>[8]</sup> were the only men in the world. I am sure there must be a reform, if you could move it in quarterly and yearly meetings for family and society meetings, and adopt rules for these meetings!

Would it not be well, thinkest thou, to preach against covetousness? God has blessed Friends: they are a temperate, industrious, and frugal people. Tell them to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and always feel for the spirit of prayer at such times. Would it not be well to deliver a testimony at other places, if Friends felt freedom, and allow others to come into their meetings without forbidding them? Our houses are open to any that come in a Christian spirit.

I wish Methodists and Friends would bear a stronger testimony against races, fairs, plays, and balls; I wish they would reprove swearing, lying, and foolish talking; watch their young people in their companies; instruct them in the doctrines of Christ; call upon them to feel after the spirit of prayer, morning and evening, and strive to bring them to God! If I know my own heart, I write from love to souls; and although it is the general cry, "You can do nothing with these people," I wish to lay before you these things, which I think are not contrary to the ancient principles of Friends, and I am sure that we are taught them in the word of God. Think upon them. My soul pities and loves you. You may fight against God in not inculcating these things.

I am, with real friendship to thee and thy people,  
Francis Asbury  
*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
(Lovely Lane Museum)

*The first meeting of the Council was held in Baltimore on December 3, 1789. The second meeting was in Baltimore on December 1, 1790. This letter was written before the second meeting. It was probably written in the early autumn. At the Virginia Conference in Petersburg in June, 1790, the preachers under O'Kelly's influence had unanimously voted against the form of government set up by the Council. Asbury said, "Ye have all spoken out of one mouth. Henceforth you are all out of the union." He gathered up his papers and left. O'Kelly said that they had all been expelled from the union. However, regardless of this the preachers went to their appointments.*

[Autumn, 1790]<sup>[9]</sup>

[To the Virginia Preachers]

I advise you all to meet in conference among yourselves, and if you will submit to the new plan of government, send your delegates<sup>[10]</sup> to the council. The council shall concern only with the temporalities of the church. You have my last will and testament.

[Francis Asbury]

*William Guirey, The History of the Episcopacy in Four  
Parts, 366.*

*Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress*

*Ezekiel Cooper, best known later as the Book Agent of the church, was at this time pastor of Annapolis (Maryland) Circuit. Asbury had been down the Peninsula as far as Accomack Courthouse, and on the way back he preached on Friday to a full house at Bolingbroke, in Maryland.*

BOLINGBROKE, MARYLAND

November 12, 1790

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[11]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am fully agreed that you should write as you dictate. We have been labouring by heavy strides through the Peninsula,<sup>[12]</sup> with some living, others very dead. It seems as tho' the work will go on in Accomack<sup>[13]</sup> in spite of Satan and the B——nts. We have a little stir in some part of Somerset.<sup>[14]</sup> I am fully convinced of the necessity of a constant Spirit of prayer in private in families, societies and publick. Strive my dear to push all you can to prayer. I am in hopes we shall collect \$200 or near this trip for the college<sup>[15]</sup> but I shall want near \$400. Our house will fill swiftly and hope we shall see matters in a more promising state. Many poor are pressing upon us and this is my greatest consolation. I have had my pleasing prospects of employing a teacher or two if I am not disappointed. We have had a perfect unanimity in all the Conferences, and great peace. The work revives in New York, and goes on in Jersey. In the latter state it is thought that not less than six hundred souls have been converted in six months, and it still goes on.

My soul is in peace, my breast is pained. Long rides, large congregations, quarterly meetings every day.

Peace be with thy spirit! As ever thine,

F. Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Because of the damaged condition of this letter, at the top there is no name of the person to whom written, no place from which written, and no date. However, because of its internal evidence it is quite clear that it was written to Thomas Morrell and that it may have been written on December 10, 1790. Jesse Lee was presiding elder on the New England District in 1790. He was moved in 1791. Thomas Morrell was presiding elder on the New York District in 1790. His parents lived in Elizabeth Town (now Elizabeth), New Jersey. On several occasions he was sick and went home. (See Journal, July 27, 1795.)*

*Robert Cloud was pastor in New York in 1790 but was made presiding elder in upper New York in 1791 (names of districts not in Minutes at that time). If Morrell was sick, then Cloud would naturally be called upon to help out with the district. This experience would put him in mind for the presiding eldership, and it did. Asbury refers to Jesse Lee calling for help in New England District. The Minutes show that Matthias Swaim, who was in New Rochelle, New York, was moved to the New England District. Asbury also refers to the Council which was held recently and which Morrell missed. That was held in Baltimore on December 1, 1790.*



*Early in 1791 Asbury took Morrell with him as his traveling companion. They went down to the South. Morrell had overtaxed his strength, and Asbury took him to save his life.*<sup>[16]</sup>

[BALTIMORE, MD.]

[December 10, 1790]

[To Thomas Morrell]<sup>[17]</sup>

My very ——

No news from yourself gives me painful fears of your disposition of body and retiring no doubt to Elizabeth Town under the wings of a tender parentage. Oh how sickness and death disappoint our expectation. Should your sickness and inability continue I have written that it would be expedient for the elders as it can be made convenient to visit the quarter meetings. Brother Lee calls aloud for help. If you can send a supply to him it would be well. The work of God in our view has suffered for want of laborers, many sick, disabled, dispirited and dead. I know how you will feel. I was dumb for many months and at death's door, given up by my friends, lost to the church and the world, but God almighty raised me up. You will feel dejection and suffer more in mind than body. Should you live, a southern and softer air might be obtained could you be removed there to. I was where, in England, the winters cold and the northern states likewise, an heavy cough and continual tickly frequent sore throat, rheumatic complaints; these are almost gone by going southerly every year.

My dear brother, give yourself to God. You cannot judge of your state, not laboring or having his benefit of religious society—will so deject your soul. I feel indeed that you will feel in reality my love to you, great expectations from you, your sagacity will soon discover. You are ready to the utmost and beyond your power, the Lord lets! not to see you in Council, then to hear of your being obliged to go home. Although I have written to Brother Cloud it is with submission to you. If able to go or order, who shall attend Quarter meetings and circuits?

Yours as ever

Francis Asbury

*Thomas Morrell Collection, Friends of the Middle Border  
Museum, Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South  
Dakota*

*Little is known about this letter. Asbury was evidently writing back home some of the admonitions that he had worked out in America. The date is suggested as 1790. The letter seems to be kin to the letter of July, 1798, to the Quaker. The letter shows that Asbury had not lost any of the methods which characterized the Methodists, for which they were so called in the beginning.*

To the most loving and best beloved, the servants of Christ in Taunton, grace and peace.<sup>[18]</sup>

Most dear and tender friends:

Whose I am, and whom under God I desire to serve; to build you up in holiness and comfort hath been through grace my great ambition. This is that which I laboured for; this is that which I suffer for: and in short, the end of all my applications to you, and to GOD for you. How do your souls prosper? Are they in a thriving case? What progress do you make in sanctification? Both the house of *Saul* grow weaker and weaker, and the house of *David* stronger and stronger? Beloved, I am jealous of you with a godly jealousy, lest any of you should lose ground in these declining times: and therefore cannot but be often calling upon you to look to your standing, and to watch and hold fast, that no man take your crown. Ah! how surely shall you reap in the end, if you faint not! Take heed therefore that you lose not the things you have wrought, but as you have begun well, so go on in the strength of Christ, and give diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end.

Do you need motives? 1. *How much are you behind hand?* Oh, the fair advantages that we have lost! What time, what sabbaths, sermons, sacraments, are upon the matter lost! How much work have we yet to do! Are you sure of heaven yet? Are you fit to die yet? Surely they that are under so many great wants, had need to set upon some more thriving courses.

Secondly, *Consider what others have gained, whilst we, it may be, sit down by the loss:* Have we not met many vessels richly laden, while our souls are empty? Oh, the golden prizes

that some have won! While we have folded the hands to sleep, have not many of our own standing in religion, left us far behind them?

Thirdly, *Consider you will all find little enough when you come to die:* The wife among the virgins has no oil to spare at the coming of the bridegroom; temptation and death will put all your graces to it. How much ado have many had at last to put into this harbour! *David* cried for respite till he had recovered a little more strength.

Fourthly, *Consider how short your time for gathering in probably is?* The Israelites gathered twice so much manna against the sabbath as they did at other times, because at that time there was no manna fell. Brethren, you know not how long you have to lay in for. Do you ask for marks, how you may know your souls to be in a thriving case?

*First, If your appetites be more strong.* Do you thirst after GOD and grace, more than heretofore? Do your cares and desires after the world abate? And do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Whereas you were wont to come with an ill-will to holy duties, do you now come to them as hungry stomach to its meat?

*Secondly, If your pulses beat more even.* Are you still off and on, hot and cold? Or is there a more even spun thread of holiness through your whole course? Do you make good the ground from which you were formerly beaten off?

*Thirdly, If you do look more to the carrying on together the duties of both tables.* Do you not only look to the keeping of your own vineyards, but do you lay out yourselves for the good of others? and are ye filled with zealous desires for their conversion and salvation? Do you manage your talk and your trade, by the rules of religion?

Do you eat and sleep by rule? Doth religion form and mould, and direct your carriage towards husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants? Do you grow more universally conscientious? Is piety more diffusive than ever with you? Doth it come more abroad with you, out of your closets, into your houses, your shops, your fields? Doth it journey with you, and buy and sell for you? Hath it the casting voice in all you do?

*Fourthly, If the duties of religion be more delightful to you.* Do you take more delight in the word than ever? Are you more in love with secret prayer, and more abundant in it? Cannot you be content with your ordinary seasons, but are ever and anon making extraordinary visits to heaven? And upon all occasions turning aside to talk with God in some short ejaculations? Are you often darting up your soul heavenwards? Is it meat and drink for you to do the will of GOD? Do you come off more freely with GOD, and answer his calls with more readiness of mind?

*Fifthly, If you are more abundant in those duties which are most displeasing to the flesh.* Are you more earnest in mortification? Are you more strict and severe than ever in the

duty of daily self-examination, and holy meditation? Do you hold the reins harder upon the flesh than ever? Do you keep a stricter watch upon your appetites? Do you set a stronger guard upon your tongues? Have you a more jealous eye upon your hearts?

*Sixthly, If you grow more vile in your own eyes.* Do you grow more out of love with men's esteem, and set less by it? Are you not marvellous tender of being slighted? Can you rejoice to see others preferred before you? Can you heartily value and love them that think meanly of you?

*Seventhly, If you grow more quick of sense, more sensible of divine influences, or withdrawals.* Are you more afraid of sin than ever? Are your sins a greater pain to you than heretofore? Are your very infirmities your great afflictions? and the daily working of corruption a continued grief of mind to you?

I must conclude abruptly, commending you to GOD, and can only tell you that I am

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

F.A.

The Arminian Magazine, II (Philadelphia, 1790), 251-54

*Coke was again on the way to America, but his vessel had been wrecked, and he was late in arriving. Asbury is giving a report of the progress of the "church in the wilderness." Of special interest is his account of himself.*

GEORGE TOWN, S.C.  
*February 12, 1791*

[*To Bishop Coke*]<sup>[20]</sup>

Reverend, and most dear Sir:

If yet in time,<sup>[21]</sup> this brings greeting. Rejoice with me that the last has been a year of general blessing to the church of God in this wilderness. We humbly hope two thousand souls were born of God, one of which is well ascertained in New Jersey and New York. East, west, north and south the glory of God spreads.

I have served the church upwards of twenty-five years in Europe and America. All the property I have gained is two old horses, the constant companions of my toil, 6 if not 7,000 miles every year. When we have no ferry-boats, they swim the rivers. As to clothing, I am nearly the same as at first; neither have I silver, nor gold, nor any property. My confidential friends know I lie not in these matters. I am resolved not to claim any property in the printing concern. Increase as it may, it will be sacred to invalid preachers, the college, and the schools. I would not have my name mentioned as doing, having, or being anything but dust.

I soar, indeed, but it is over the tops of the highest mountains<sup>[22]</sup> we have, which may vie with the Alps. I creep sometimes upon my hands and knees up the slippery ascent; and to serve the church, and the ministers of it, what I gain is many a reflection from both sides of the Atlantic. I have lived long enough to be loved and hated, to be admired and feared.

If it were not for the suspicions of some, and the pride and ignorance of others, I am of opinion I could make provision by collections, profits on books, and donations in land, to take two thousand children under the best plan of education ever known in this country. The Lord begins to smile on our Kingswood school.<sup>[23]</sup>

One promising young man is gone forth, another is ready; and several have been under awakenings. None so healthy and orderly as our children; and some promise great talents for learning. The obstinate and ignorant oppose among preachers and people; while the judicious for good sense and piety, in church and state, admire and applaud.

I am, with most dutiful respect as ever,  
Your son in the Gospel,

Francis Asbury

*Samuel Drew, Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.,*  
234-35

*An argument for doing away with the Council and substituting the General Conference as the court of the church is going on. It is evident that all is not quiet in the church. Asbury was agreeing to the substitution with great reluctance.*



PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA  
*April 19, 1791*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[24]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am comforted to hear the work goes on in Annapolis, in your absence, that you revive a little in Alexandria, and your house in better order. I heard by a young man that you were doing well. Brother Ward<sup>[25]</sup> has lost his reason, great exertions,<sup>[26]</sup> may wreck the System. If possible we shall be in town for evening meeting on the Sabbath. We must enter fully into business on Monday morning. You perhaps have heard of the General Conference which is to meet instead of the next sitting of the council.<sup>[27]</sup> A letter from Mr. Wesley, the reappointment of Brother Whatcoat,<sup>[28]</sup> the strange spirit of murmur here, and what can be done to amend or substitute a council, and perhaps to implead me on the one part, and a presiding elder and conference on the other. No court is sufficient but a general Conference; and perhaps such a trial may make me and others take care how they take such rash if not unwarrantable steps. You are a thinking prudent man. A word to the wise, let it rest in thy heart.

I am as ever yours,

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

## A Secret Letter of Bishop Coke to Bishop White

*Because of its extreme importance this letter of Bishop Coke to Bishop White of the Protestant Episcopal Church is included among these letters. On February 23, 1791, at Charleston, South Carolina, Asbury recorded in the Journal, "Long looked for Dr. Coke came to town: he had been shipwrecked off Edisto. I found the Doctor's sentiments, with regard to the council quite changed. James O'Kelly's letters had reached London. I left perfectly calm, and acceded to a general conference, for the sake of peace." Coke had lined up with O'Kelly. In Charleston Coke fraternized with William Hammett. The next year Hammett split the church in Charleston.*

*Asbury left Coke in Charleston and proceeded north. Coke caught up later. He probably prepared the letter on the way. He dated it at Richmond. Coke carried the letter in his pocket and mailed it probably at New Castle, Hanover County, Virginia. A few days later they heard of Wesley's death, and Coke hastened to get off to England. There has been much historical argument as to whether Wesley knew of Coke's approaches to Bishop White and Magaw. Coke was most anxious for a reunion of the churches. He was trying to see Bishop White. He had two interviews with him before he left America. The letter was made public by Bishop White fifteen years later. In a letter to James O'Kelly written from Washington, D.C., May 4, 1791, Coke urged O'Kelly to be resolute in his position opposing the Council and substituting*

*the General Conference. It is clear here in this letter that Coke did not see eye to eye with Asbury. However, nothing came of the overture to Bishop White.*

RICHMOND, VA.

*April 24, 1791*

[*To Bishop White*]

Right Reverend Sir:

Permit me to intrude a little upon your time, upon a subject of great importance.

You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that church. For many years I was prejudiced, even I think to bigotry, in favor of it; but through a variety of causes and incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went further in the separation of our church in America than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place. He being pressed by our friends on this side the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few clergy of the Church of England in the states), went farther, I am sure than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am certain of, that he is now sorry for the separation.<sup>[29]</sup>

But what can be done for a reunion, which I wish for, and to accomplish which, Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people, is very strong toward him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily, and to the utmost, be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to reunite.

It is even to your church an object of great importance. We have now above 60,000 adults in our society in these states; and about 250 traveling ministers and preachers; besides a great number of local preachers, far exceeding the number of traveling preachers, and some of these local preachers are men of very considerable abilities; but if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their church, viz., by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship, they will make a larger body than you possibly conceive. The society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average, to give us our stated congregations, which will then amount to 300,000. And if the calculation, which I think some eminent writers have made, be just, that three-fifths of mankind are unadult (if I may use the expression), at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults, which form our congregations in these states amount to 750,000. About one-fifth of these are blacks.

The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia; and in breadth, from the Atlantic to Lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holston, Kentucky, Cumberland, etc.

But there are many hindrances in the way. Can they be removed?

1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I do not think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a reordination, if other hinderances were removed out of the way. I must here observe that between 60 and 70 only, out of the 250, have been ordained presbyters, and about 60 deacons (only). The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2. The preachers would hardly submit to reunion if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended upon the present bishops in America. Because, though they are all, I think I may say, zealous, pious, and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides they would argue, if the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a reunion is so sincere and earnest, that these difficulties make me tremble; and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success; for though my influence among the Methodists in these States, as well as in Europe, is I doubt not increasing,

yet Mr. Asbury whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply; nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.

In Europe, where some steps had been taken tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday, the 17th of May.<sup>[30]</sup> If this be agreeable, I'll beg of you just to signify it in a note directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market Street, Philadelphia; or if you please, by a few lines sent me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers', Esq., in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw; and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge upon the subjects.

I am conscious of it that secrecy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops, and Mr. Wesley, be circumstantially known. I must, therefore, beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw, till I have the honor of seeing you.

Thus you see that I have made a bold venture on your honor and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subjects as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

I have notwithstanding been guilty of inadvertences. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt,<sup>[31]</sup> which gave him great satisfaction; and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew.

When I was last in America I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our magazine, indeed almost everything that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, entreating him that no part of them might be printed which could be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the magazine, for which I am very sorry; and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgements more public, though Mr. Jarratt does not desire it.

I am not sure whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw of the use of one of your churches, about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of our plan of separation from the Church of England. If I did offend, (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said to Mr. Richard Dallam of Abingdon,) I sincerely beg yours and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I'll endeavor to amend. But, alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor: that if you have no thought of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter and take no more notice of it, (for it would be a pity to leave us entirely alienated from each other if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent wishes desire), but if you will further negotiate business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the meantime permit me, with great respect, to subscribe myself, right reverend sir,

Your very humble servant in Christ,

Thomas Coke

P.S. You must excuse interlineations, etc. I am just going into the country and have no time to transcribe.

*Edward J. Drinkhouse, History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church, I, 398-400*

*Daniel Fidler, one of the early preachers, was on the Ohio Circuit in 1790 and on the Redstone Circuit in 1791. May 1 was a historic day in the lives of Asbury and Coke. They received information of Wesley's death. Coke determined to leave for England. (For account see Journal, Friday, April 29-May 1.)*



ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA  
May 1, 1791

[*To Daniel Fidler*]

My very dear Brother:

Grace and peace be with thy spirit. It is with some pain I am obliged to be absent from your conference, but I hope the Eldership will do all things well, and our dear young brethren will cheerfully consent to their supplying my lack of service. I have directed the stations. My call this year appears to be easterly where I have long wished to go, and now providence calls loudly. I do not expect if God prolongs my life to be absent again from you. I have made a new arrangement of Conferences. Give your own soul wholly to God. You must be holy. Expect this every moment and preach it faithfully and constantly to others.

I am ever thine,

F. Asbury

*Original property of Mrs. Frederick Brown Harris of  
Washington, D.C., great-grand-daughter of Daniel Fidler*

### A Letter of Bishop Coke to James O'Kelly

*It is easy to see that Coke was collaborating with O'Kelly and that Coke was very much in favor of the General Conference as against the Council.*

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

May 4, 1791

[*To James O'Kelly*]<sup>[32]</sup>

Dear Friend:

I have written a letter of a sheet and a half to you, but on consideration I believe I shall not send it to you till I reach Europe: then I shall probably write as much again to you. By this time, you probably have been informed of our great loss, in the death of Mr. Wesley.<sup>[33]</sup> I am hastening to Europe at this important crisis. You may depend on my being with you, God willing, at the General Conference. I think no step will be taken during my absence, to prevent the General Conference; it would be so gross an insult on truth, justice, mercy, and peace, that it will not be, I think, attempted. If it be, and successfully, we will call a Congress. I expect you to be faithful. But as Mordecai said to Esther, think not with thyself that thou shalt escape more than others; for if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Oh, be firm, be very firm, and very cautious, and very wise, and depend upon a faithful friend<sup>[34]</sup> in

Thos. Coke

*Alexander M'Caine*, Letters on the Organization and Early  
History of the Methodist

Episcopal Church, 119. *Vanderbilt University Library*

*Here we see some of the insights which Asbury had into the evaluation of his preachers. In the letter he deals with their*

*abilities in a more intimate way than he does in the Journal. Many criticisms had arisen in reference to Coke's absence from America. As usual, Asbury is giving advice as to conduct.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
May 29, 1791

[To Nelson Reed]<sup>[35]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am not at all disappointed in McClasky.<sup>[36]</sup> Unstable as water thou shalt not excell. You will see what you have to pay him and discharge the poor creature; I expect he cannot retrieve his character.

I was solicited to preach Mr. Wesley's funeral sermon in both churches from one text, 2 Timothy 3rd ch., 10, 11 verses. We have had a blessed conference and large, with great searchings of heart. I have sent for Jeremiah Cosden. But Martin Dale is a poor afflicted man. If he will not do you must employ ——[?]. Mr. Hammet will stay sometime as a stranger, but let the discipline and government be with Brother Pryor, whom I have ordered to be sent. Poor Baxley, I am afraid, will lose not only his senses but his life.

Be prudent how you speak and act when spies may be about. My soul is in peace. I can trust God with his work. If we have anything to object to Dr. Coke, we must tell him to his face and not backbite him. If the American Preachers stand together, no man, good or bad, angel or fiend, can hurt them.

Next Wednesday we go towards New England, full sail. I am home at [?]. I live in the sight of eternity and feel myself in the presence of God, and my soul is love. Oh my dear Brother, drink deeper into God, and push on the blessed work more and more. Oh stir up that wrestling agonizing spirit more and more, after justifying and sanctifying grace; without this the souls of the people will die, even the souls of believers. Preach ever sermons pointedly and close on this head. Show the promises and excite the souls of believers [?].

Examine your preachers at every two months, like a conference, of their growth in grace, and walk with God and be very particular to know how the classes' meetings are, and establish bands. I wish you to take about a day in conference or a day when the people are gone. Call the leaders, stewards and local preachers and exhorters, know the state of their souls and their classes. Inquire of local preachers about their congregations and the work under them, let them speak of the exercises of their souls. Every circuit wants a conference, as well as every district, and get all your men together, let them witness for or against each other. If you have any doubts of an exhorter or local preacher desire him to bring a recommendation from the society where he lives, of his piety, and do not proceed to authorize any unless recommended, if doubtful. If the societies have to complain, let them send their witness or sign their letters of complaint to the elder. Any local deacon, or elder, must come before such a court, if unfaithful. It would not be amiss to list their names, and if they do not appear inquire if they stand clear, so you must judge Israel as Samuel did.

Push prayer meetings. You have always obeyed and we must keep good order and close discipline. I want to improve daily for the better souls time, heaven is precious. Go on my dear Brother with great courage and diligence and prudence, Thine

F. Asbury

P.S. Till General Conference, if I can rid myself then, I beg you will push the finishing of the College. I want to quit building. I think we shall be able to answer all demands and have [?] sway.

*Drew University Library*

*When did Asbury find out about Coke's letter to Bishop White? Drinkhouse, a most unfriendly critic, has the following theory that Asbury knew about the letter when he said good-bye to Coke at New Castle, Delaware. White's reply was sent to Philip Rogers, and he handed it to Asbury. Asbury evidently thought he had the right to open an important letter addressed to Coke. Drinkhouse thinks that Asbury knew of it before Coke left because he did not return to Baltimore until the end of November. However, Coke says in 1808 that he told Asbury at New Castle, Delaware, before leaving for England. (Letters, 383.)*

Summer, 1791<sup>[37]</sup>

[To whom (?)]<sup>[38]</sup>

I cannot confide in ecclesiastics passing through the degrees and intrigues of a university, as I trust to a ploughman.

[Francis Asbury]<sup>[39]</sup>

*Edward J. Drinkhouse, History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church, I, 259*

*The concern of Francis Asbury for the education of the youth is shown repeatedly in the Journal and the letters. Here is more concrete evidence of what he wished to see done. It is clear that so far as he was concerned, it was to be Christian education. This appeal was printed with the Minutes of 1791.*

NEAR SALEM, NEW JERSEY  
September 16, 1791

To the Brethren in the united societies of the Methodist  
Episcopal Church in America

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

I rejoice to see so many thousands of the present generation, happy subjects of knowledge and grace. A real concern for the rising offspring and the children yet unborn, has been very weighty on my mind for many years. We have been at no small expense to provide a house<sup>[40]</sup> for refined education to serve whose wealth and desires lead them to improve the minds of their children. This will not extend to

all, neither will it meet the ideas and wishes of those who have personal and located interests. What I now recommend, as your duty and privilege is to give the key of knowledge in a general way, to your children, and those of the poor in the vicinity of your small towns and villages.

It is submitted to your serious consideration, providence and charity, whether a plan of Christian education may not be brought into execution. In every large society, where the members are able and willing, to build a school-house for your sons, and to appropriate land, to employ a single, skilful, pious young man of the society; fix his salary according to that of a travelling preacher; or if a married man, the same with that of a married preacher. The worship of God in the school-house should be reading the word of the Lord, singing and prayer, every morning and evening. Playing strictly prohibited. A lesson in the instructions weekly committed to memory, to enjoin manly exercises, as working in the garden or field, or walking, reading, or speaking in public, or bathing. To admit the children whose parents are not in our society, by paying and submission to the rules, to take as many poor of our own, and others as you can. To build a separate school for your daughters, and put these under a gracious woman of abilities, to learn to read, write, sew, knit, mark and make their own clothing, to have their religious exercises and instructions the same as your sons, to expel the false obstinately wicked and incorrigible of either sex. The elder can spend a day in the school once in two weeks to see how both parts of education are attended to. It might be well to elect and appoint three men, wise, good and willing, as

trustees or stewards, to serve a year; in order to manage the temporalities, visit at set times, admit or expel, after consulting the elder; and three very discreet, godly women for the daughters, who shall do the same.

The school may be erected and finished, clear of debt or rent, for one hundred pounds. Some pious people will probably, at their death, leave legacies; and annual subscriptions should be opened through the society and for any others that will assist. A charity sermon once a year, and public collections may be necessary; perhaps sixty or seventy pounds will be sufficient for the annual expense. The sisters must collect amongst their own sex, and also see how the mistress performs her duty.

These schools may be open on Sabbath days, two hours in the morning, and two hours in the evening, for those that have no other time. We have but small hopes of coming properly at the lambs of the flock, till you have schools of your own rounding, and under your direction, that neither yourselves nor the teachers may be under any restraints from refractory men. If what I have advised, with any improvement, shall be found acceptable, it will give rest and joy to my mind. I have served you almost twenty years. I can only say they are your children I want taught, and can assure you it is in my heart to live and die with and for, both the parents and children.

Your Brother, Friend and Servant, for Christ's sake,

F. Asbury



## Recommendatory Caution

Mark Well!

OUR brethren and friends, are desired to be more cautious how they receive strange preachers; especially to preach; unless their names are on the minutes or they can shew a parchment or a certificate from the presiding elders, or some elder in the district they may say they came from.

Minutes of the Methodist Conferences, *annually held in America from 1773 to 1794 inclusive.*  
*Copy owned by J. Manning Potts*

*It is clear that Asbury is concerned for the New York churches. Thomas Morrell had started the new church under Asbury's direction. Now Asbury is concerned for John's Street and the new church.*

SWEEDSBOROUGH [N.J.]  
*September 17, 1791*

[*To Thomas Morrell*]<sup>[41]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am brought hitherto in great love and mercy. If you should be able to come, I hope it will be for the glory of God and my comfort. So unstable are all things here. Will you put up two or three dozen of [?] cases<sup>[42]</sup> and an equal number of concordances? I expect my horses will be in ease, and we can go till you can fit yourself. I feel the want of closer communion with God and a steady walk with the Lord. It will be well to put matters upon as good a train as you can;

temporalities and spirituals; we must try to help forward the concern in John's Street.<sup>[43]</sup> I have great faith to believe God will do great things for us this year. Your horse is excellent for drawing,<sup>[44]</sup> if you can sell him, it will be best. My time is short and am in company. Peace be with thy spirit.

As ever thine in Christ

F. Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*It is clear that Asbury went a long way to try to get O'Kelly straightened out. It is suggested by Alexander M'Caine and others that he and Coke were afraid of O'Kelly. O'Kelly was a powerful antagonist to the episcopacy; and Asbury's many references to him in the letters show that Asbury, even to his last days, was conscious of O'Kelly's influence against him.*

[September 21, 1791]<sup>[45]</sup>

[To James O'Kelly]<sup>[46]</sup>

Let all past conduct between thee and me, be buried, and never come before the Conference, or elsewhere,—send me the dove. I saw thy face was not towards me in all the council, therefore did not treat thee with that respect due to one who had suffered so much for the cause of truth and liberty. I wrote to the Doctor that if he came here again he would see trouble.

[Francis Asbury]<sup>[47]</sup>

*Alexander M'Caine, Letters on the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 118*

*Cokesbury College was one of the chief concerns of Asbury as long as it existed. After it had burned, he indicated that a great load had been lifted.*

CHESTERTOWN, MARYLAND

November 12, 1791

[*To Jacob Hall*]<sup>[48]</sup>

Dear Sir:

Should Mr. Armour [?] call here please to give entertainment in the college till I come, as he hath spoken to me of his intention to travel with me to the south for his health. He is a man of learning and great modesty and will not take any notice of the exercises of the house unless desired by you. It is very possible he will make a good examiner if present at the visitation.

I am yours with respect,

F. Asbury

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*William Glendinning, or Glendenning, was a very odd person. He had preached in the traveling connection for about ten years but had to give up because of mental aberrations. Evidently he worked to get back into the active ministry, as this letter indicates.*

[LANES, VIRGINIA]  
[December 23, 1791]<sup>[49]</sup>

[To William Glendinning]<sup>[50]</sup>

I write in the presence of, and by the consent of Conference, to inform you that we do not look on you as being in connection with or under any direction from us. We cannot therefore make appointments for you, in our societies, or advise our people to hear you, knowing you are not under any legate authority but your own; and should you obtain countenance and authority from another denomination, it will not be ours.

Yours,

Francis Asbury

|               |                  |              |
|---------------|------------------|--------------|
| James O'Kelly | Jn. Wynne        | John Metcalf |
| Ira Ellis     | Josiah Askew     | Archer Davis |
| John Paup     | Dan. Stringer    | W. McKendree |
| John Easter   | Hubbard Saunders | Philip Cox   |
| Wm. Spencer   | John Baldwin     | Thos. Easter |
| John Fore     | Rice Haggard     | John Buxton  |
| Dan. Southall | Benja. Barnes    |              |

*W. Glendinning*, The Life of William Glendinning,  
Preacher of the Gospel, 65-66

*Edward Dromgoole was an old friend of Asbury. One of his sons, Thomas, was now at Cokesbury College and was later to become a local preacher. Reference was made to Glendinning and Jarratt, with whom Asbury had disagreed.*

*Asbury makes some comment on British Methodism and on Bishop Coke.*

LANE'S, VIRGINIA<sup>[51]</sup>  
December 24, 1791

[To Edward Dromgoole]<sup>[52]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am now sitting in a crowded conference, men and business. As to your son and Cokesbury, we are about one thousand pounds indebted, five hundred pounds on charity, all sources cut off, only from Maryland, and I promised some to quit begging shortly. The determination of the trustees had nearly been to send the charity boys home; however, at last they resolved I had better cease begging, and admit no more wholly on charity. Our board is twenty pounds in College, seven pounds education Maryland Currency.<sup>[53]</sup> I will board your son at 15 pounds Maryland and give him his education. We have 4 excellent teachers, a society of proud lads in the house and some youths of great talents.

As to Glendinning,<sup>[54]</sup> I believe Satan is in him and will never come out. I expect he would come too and act like himself, go where he pleased, and be subject to no authority. As to Mr. Jarratt,<sup>[55]</sup> he is like himself, and I would not lose sight of my work a minute to speak write or think about him in controversy. A little while ago he wrote against Pottels, [?] now he has done the same.

I have received three letters from Doctor Coke. There has been great commotion. They<sup>[56]</sup> are settled, in my opinion, as

a Presbyterian Synod, have divided England into 18 districts who govern in the recess of conference, 7 men form a committee for stationing the preachers. Thompson,<sup>[57]</sup> President, Doctor Coke, secretary and visitor in England, and Ireland, the West Indies; Also the Doctor<sup>[58]</sup> has made most humiliating concessions for his conduct at Charleston, Petersburg, and Baltimore, and promises nothing but peace, if he comes here.

All is peace with us from east to west, north and south. I am in peace with all mankind and as far as I know they love and are united to me. To conclude, if in a future day our collegiate circumstances are better we will do more for your child. We have vast openings eastward, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts Bay, Hampshire. Province of Maine is waiting for us. Quebec will be our field here after. I am as ever thine

F. Asbury

*Added to letter dated December 24, 1791:*

"Letter of direction or recommendation from an Elder will give admittance to College or you may write to me or meet me at Carolina Conference."

*Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library*

*The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., is the depository of Haskins' Journal. This letter is included in his Journal. Asbury is defining some of the powers of the district*

*conference. It is not clear what is referred to in Haskins' description of a bishop.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

*January 1, 1792*<sup>[59]</sup>

[*To Thomas Haskins*]<sup>[60]</sup>

My very dear Son:

You will be pleased to observe the district conference must say who are proper superannuated preachers. Almost every irregularity is charged upon me if done in conferences by displeased men. In this city it is said I was partial to a Dickins,<sup>[61]</sup> and a Willis,<sup>[62]</sup> the same may be said respecting you. I am willing the matter should rest with the men it is committed to. It is not safe for me to interpose what I think will be hidden. Why did not you get a place for your description of a Bishop? I think the ideas [were] just and wish they had been sent abroad. My greatest concern is to see you grow in grace, and extend in usefulness. As to having a seat in a district conference, there can be no great danger, as laws are not made there; it is only the liberty of speaking and voting for an elder or deacon. I am going to Georgia and hope to return about the middle of February. Shall be pleased to hear of your welfare. My dear Sister, I hope will live to be perfect in love, and through suffering. I have powerful impressions of a great work this year through all the states; help, Brother, help. The devil's spell and charm is broken greatly from the conferences. Oh let us live and love and pray

the Lord will be with us in a manner we have not seen here before.  
Thine as ever,

F. Asbury.

P.S. My respects to Mr. Bassett<sup>[63]</sup> if in the city.

*Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington,  
D.C.*

*It is clear here that the church is having disturbances. The Baltimore church difficulties are giving Asbury much concern. Mr. Hammett has divided the church in Charleston and set up his separate congregation.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*January 1, 1792<sup>[64]</sup>*

[*To Nelson Reed*]<sup>[65]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am seated here for a few days after a rapid march to this city. I think it my duty to write many letters. My soul can rejoice in God. I feel myself uncommonly moved to believe the Lord will give peace to his church, and great prosperity to his Zion this year. Such a sweet loving spirit runs through the conferences. Noticeable changes have taken place. I am grieved because the Lord is offended, that simple happy society in Baltimore, famed and respected for many years for hospitality, simplicity and union, should be distressed and disturbed with restless spirits. I think it is your indispensable duty to call a solemn meeting of the society the first opportunity and read that minutes pointing at those members



who shall rise up against the government of the church, that such persons being found guilty shall be expelled. You may plead my order and authority if you choose.

It was early sent to this town (if report can be credited) that some person has written, and for aught I know the very day or soon after that the minority had departed from us, and gave advice to Mr. Hammett<sup>[66]</sup> to come forth to meet these disaffected men. When I left Virginia they were all gone quietly to their stations but two, one of which some of the preachers and people were unwilling to receive, and viewed his resignation very providential.

I shall not say who has done this deed, and there are so many strange things told here. This I know, one of the most respectable members in the society, his name has been mentioned through mistake but I am not yet bereaved of my children in Baltimore. I think you will do well to consult one or two faithful friends on the contents of my letter.

Opposition to the laws, union, and government is treason against the Church: to defame the Conference. Brother Smith<sup>[67]</sup> hasted home; but one of the brethren had written up the state near an hundred miles to know what it was that was so dreadful at the General Conference. I hope you will give fair warning that you will put the law in force against such. The society in Baltimore is applauded through the states. I know them so well they would not keep a contentious person that would rejoice and publish abroad a division after it is made, much more *before*. I have had my mind much

impressed that it will give more knowledge, union, and circulation.

If the Redstone preachers, yours and Brother Bruce's above the Ridge, could meet at Oldtown<sup>[68]</sup> it would be far better. Then the Eastern and Western shore, the other part of Brother Bruce's<sup>[69]</sup> District, to meet in Baltimore the last week in October, making about 50 or 60 preachers. It will never do for preachers to rise up in a district and never move out of it for three or four years. If our brethren can hear this trouble they will have more of my company in the town, and district. If this letter should have good success write to me. I expect to be here again in the middle of February. I have my troubles, one horse is lame, my favorite riding horse. But Oh Jerusalem, my only cause of grief and joy. I pity your college<sup>[70]</sup> perplexity, but this I hope will be better, then you and some other will be able to purchase with cash and support better credit. I am as ever thine

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Freeborn Garrettson was one of the earliest and most dependable of Asbury's preachers. In 1784 he went as a missionary to Nova Scotia, being assigned there by the Christmas Conference. However, he stayed there only a short time, coming back to the United States in 1785 and being assigned to Shelburne. Asbury reports that all was well in Virginia; but before the end of the year O'Kelly led his schism*

*into the Republican Methodist Church, which was established in Surry County, Virginia.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*February 18, 1792*

[*To Freeborn Garrettson*]<sup>[71]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

After a cold and trying, tedious journey, we are safe in Charleston. It has been a consoling time to me. Oh, my soul thou hast trodden down strength! I feel heaven in my soul daily. Peace, sweet peace, reigns through the whole work. All is unity with our brethren in Virginia. We expect the General Conference will meet, provided Dr. Coke can attend, the first of November. I trust we shall know what Israel ought to do in all things of moment. I do not intend to hold conference in New York till after yours in Albany. The conference in New York will be the 27th of August. We have been favored with a revival in the western parts of North and South Carolina and Holston also. We must look for a general spread of religion.

You will do well to examine carefully into the state of religion in families, and the leaders, stewards and local preachers at quarterly meetings. Is thy own soul deeply baptized into God? We can be saved from the least and low remains of sin. Oh how many lose or leave their first love! How few can bear affluence and prosperity! Who would think a man should preach so acceptably and act so diabolically as some have? Let us watch and be sober. I hope to see thee as I pass New York to the eastward, then we can fix my flight through Connecticut as I shall be on horseback. I wish to

explore a way from Springfield among the Green Mountains to Albany. Thanks as ever

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Judging from this letter, William Glendinning applied to the General Conference for some kind of readmission to the ministry or for permission to carry on his "extraordinary mission." It is clear that the Conference still thought of him as mentally unbalanced.*

November, 1792

[To William Glendinning]<sup>[72]</sup>

Your letter to the General Conference was read and considered. You consider yourself as having an *extraordinary mission* and therefore do not choose to submit, as another preacher, to our government. It was concluded from the contents of your letter, that you did not desire to come under our direction any farther, than, 1st, For you to have sanction from us for your proceedings; and 2d, To be answerable to us for *your moral conduct*. After mature deliberation, it was concluded, 1st, That you cannot be considered as one of us, unless you come under the discipline of our Church; 2d, That you are not to expect the use of our houses for public worship; and 3d, That our preachers are not to make your appointments, nor countenance your proceedings, while you pursue your present plan.

Francis Asbury<sup>[73]</sup>  
Jesse Lee  
Benja. Barnes  
Ira Ellis  
Jesse Buxton  
Danl. Southall  
Josiah Askew  
Benja. Blanton  
Jn. West  
Thos. Anderson  
John Ellis

Pemberton Smith  
Nicholas Snethen  
Wm. Spencer  
Jas. Meacham  
John Baldwin  
Danl. Stringer  
Wm. Moss  
Ch. Mosing  
Jas. Rogers  
Jn. N. Jones

*W. Glendinning, The Life of William Glendinning,  
Preacher of the Gospel, 68-76*

*At the General Conference of 1792 Asbury refused to  
preside. Coke presided in his place. O'Kelly had split the  
church. The split really occurred over the powers of the  
episcopacy to which Asbury refers here. The appointment of  
the preachers was the point at issue. The General Conference  
sustained the position of Asbury. It was in 1792 that O'Kelly  
and his group left the church<sup>[74]</sup> and founded the Republican  
Methodist Church, later called the Christian Church.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Thursday, 8th November, 1792

[*To the General Conference*]<sup>[75]</sup>

My dear Brethren:

Let my absence give you no pain—Dr. Coke presides. I am happily excused from assisting to make laws by which myself am to be governed; I have only to obey and execute. I am happy in the consideration that I never stationed a preacher through enmity, or as a punishment. I have acted for the glory of God, the good of the people, and to promote the usefulness of the preachers. Are you sure, that, if you please yourselves, the people will be as fully satisfied? They often say, "Let us have such a preacher;" and sometimes, "we will not have such a preacher—we will sooner pay him to stay at home." Perhaps I must say, "his appeal forced him upon you." I am one, ye are many. I am as willing to serve you as ever. I want not to sit in any man's way. I scorn to solicit votes. I am a very trembling, poor creature to hear praise or dispraise. Speak your minds freely; but remember, you are only making laws for the present time. It may be that as in some other things, so in this, a future day may give you further light. I am yours, &c.

Francis Asbury

*Asbury's Journal, November 8, 1792*

*Of O'Kelly, Bishop Asbury writes to Morrell, after the adjournment of the General Conference. Asbury states the issues. The Council had preceded the General Conference. It was the advisory body to Asbury. O'Kelly had been a great*

*problem. He left the church and took the disaffected with him in 1792.*

*November [15], 1792*

*[To Thomas Morrell]<sup>[76]</sup>*

I believe now nothing short of being an episcopos was his<sup>[77]</sup> first aim. His second was to make the Council independent of the Bishop and General Conference, if they would canonize his writings. This could not be done. His next step was with the authority of a pope to forbid me, by letter, to go a step farther with the Council, after carrying it once around the continent and through the first Council, which ordered me to go round and know the minds of the brethren. His following step was to write against me to Mr. Wesley, who he knew was disaffected to me, because I did not merely force the American Conference to accede to Mr. Wesley's appointment of Brother Whatcoat, which I did submit to Dr. Coke only for peace with our old *father*.<sup>[78]</sup> How moved he then to make himself independent of me and the general connection, and dragged in the little Doctor, whom, a little before, he would have banished from the continent. Then he stipulated with me through the Doctor to let him stay in that station,<sup>[79]</sup> and consented to leave the decision to a General Conference, and when the decision went against him, went away.

*[Francis Asbury]*

*John J. Tigert, A Constitutional History of American  
Episcopal Methodism, 262*

A Letter of James O'Kelly  
to Jesse Nicholson

*There are two letters from James O'Kelly, one to Jesse Nicholson and the other to Colonel Williams, which are printed by Bennett in his Memorials of Methodism in Virginia. Both give a defense of O'Kelly's reasons for leaving the church.*

[December —, 1792]<sup>[80]</sup>

[To Jesse Nicholson]<sup>[81]</sup>

Dear Brother Nicholson, Local Preacher:

O, my brother! Alas! my brother. I beseech God to grant you a share in every blessing of the everlasting covenant. O, brother, the heart knows its own bitterness. I am too often giving way to the overflowings of a full heart. O, the heart-breaking thoughts!—the Methodist preachers who stood together like regular soldiers, are now afraid of each other, as you told me last evening you feared me. Fearful prelude to a universal decline, or a fearful separation! Find out the cause; search for the Achan. One there is in our camps; and if the lot justly falls on me, cast me away, and there will be a calm. But be sure, before God, to give me justice. I am not given to change. A Methodist I am, and how can I change. The elders to the North, not knowing what to accuse me of, make me their table laugh, still I am loth to go away.

What have I done? Overturned government? What? the Council—not Methodism. I only say no man among us ought to get into the Apostle's chair with the Keys, and stretch a



lordly power over the ministers and Kingdom of Christ. 'Tis a human invention, a quicksand; and when my grey hairs may be preserved under ground, I may be remembered. We ought to respect the body before any mere man. A consolidated government is always bad. We have published that we believe a General Conference to be injurious to the Church. District Conferences have lost their suffrages; men of wit will leave the travelling connection. Boys with their Keys, under the absolute sway of one who declares his authority and succession from the Apostles—these striplings must rule and govern Christ's Church, as master workmen; as though they could finish such a temple. People are to depend on their credibility. These things are so; I know what I say; I am able when called upon to answer it. I am a friend to Christ; to his Church, but not to prelatick government. If you will carefully read the Bishop's address to me and others of the preachers who oppose the late proceedings, there you will find the heresy reflections—and the very manner of the new constitution; but, unless you look over and over it, 'tis hard to understand. My dear brother, farewell; reject me, all of you, and let me feel the sneers, the frowns of strangers. My days are few among you; when the members reject me I drop my journeyings.

I am, &c.,

James O'Kelly

*W.W. Bennett*, Memorials of Methodism in Virginia,  
323-25

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Date is that of the *Journal*, January 12, 1790. James O'Kelly was presiding elder in Virginia. (*Journal*, 1852.)
- [2] O'Kelly had written Asbury, "Brother you know our infant state, grant us one year to consider the matters coming before us. Or if you refuse this, take away your negative—and if you refuse 'I shall as a duty I owe to the Church use mine influence,' etc." This is all of the letter quoted. Then O'Kelly is quoted as saying, "Francis received my letter by the hand of the messenger, but he utterly refused to comply with my request. He answered me after this manner, 'Thy letter greatly alarmed me. . . .'" (See above. Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 371.) The negative referred to here is the power Asbury attained in the Council to negate what was done by the Council.

There is reference to another letter to O'Kelly in Asbury's *Journal*, September 25, 1790. "To conciliate the minds of our brethren in the south district of Virginia, who are restless about the council, I wrote their leader a letter, informing him, 'that I would take my seat in council as another member'; and, in that point, at least, waive the claims of episcopacy, yea, I would lie down and be trodden upon, rather than knowingly injure one soul." O'Kelly was the presiding elder on the South District.

- [3] See appended excerpts from letters from Jarratt to the Rev. John Coleman. The following excerpts throw light on Jarratt's attitude toward Asbury and Coke.

*April 15, 1790*

(Excerpt 1)

Great strifes and contentions have pervaded the societies, about liberation. I know not how they will terminate. I don't concern about them. Father O'Kelly has lately published an essay on the subject. It is, no doubt, a well meant effort; but is a jumbled spot of work—though it may not be the less efficacious on that account. Perhaps you have seen the essay, as it was published in the north. His glosses on Scripture are very inaccurate: indeed he seems to have so little understanding of Scripture, that he darkens rather than illustrates those passages he has undertaken to explain. However, he is a good man, and valiant for what he judges to be the truth. . . .

You must have seen the Arminian Magazine, published by Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury. . . . I admire Mr. Wesley's original sermons, printed in that magazine. The diction, &c. shew a strength of genius not to be impaired by the wastes of time. They betray nothing of second childhood, except the larding them with so much Latinity, may appear to savour of it. I was pleased and edified by Mr. Asbury's Journal. I saw so much of what he seemed to be, when he used to visit me, that I found my affections towards him very strong. Dr. Coke's Journal is very far from being equal to his; nay I think his narrations, for the most part, very trifling and not worth reading. He does not discover the man of judgment at all, in that performance. I think it was very weak and imprudent in him, to give such extraordinary characters of, and bestow such high

encomiums upon some of the preachers and others, who are yet living, and who may be too much tickled and elated thereby—I don't suppose them to be out of the power of temptations of that sort. . . . Mr. Petegrew, who, next to myself, had befriended the Methodists more than any other clergyman in America, is compared to a little chicken, &c. &c. Are not such things too trifling for a D.D. or LL.D. or even for a B.A. If you have read this magazine, as I expect you have, you must have observed the gibbet he has made of my name: and I suppose he intended that it should be gibbeted in *secula seculorum*. But, you know me better, than to suppose any thing the little creature could say of me, could move me much. . . . For if there be not five falsities or misrepresentations, in the five lines, written, respecting me, in page 342, I am, as Falstaff says, a shotten herring. I will point them out to you, and I know you can believe me. After saying he met me at Roanoke [Chapel] he says, first, "That I went with him eight miles." I did not go one step with him. Second, "We talked largely about the minutes on slavery." The whole conversation, on that subject, would not have taken up three minutes time. Third, he says, "I would not be persuaded." I don't know that he used one word to persuade me. Fourth, The secret is, says he, that I have twenty-four slaves. God knows me better, and so do you. Fifth, He intimates that I mightily oppose their rules. Every one that knows me, knows this to be so far from the truth, that it was quite the reverse. When I parted from the doctor at that time, I did not mistrust I had offended him, and expected he would have called on me when he came near my house. Instead of this, he passed

by along the road over the bridge, without vouchsafing to call, and make this Journal upon it, page 392: "I passed by the house of Mr. Jarratt a violent assertor of the justice and propriety of Negro slavery." Did you ever discover me to be such a violent man, as to authorise any one to make violence a distinguishing characteristic of me? The truth is, the little man read the minutes to me, and asked my opinion of them. I told him I was no friend of slavery; but however I did not think the minutes proper, for two reasons. First, The disturbance it would make and the opposition it would meet with in the societies. Second, He ought not to make a disputable matter a positive term of communion. And as he was a stranger in the land, I told him the spirit, of Virginia would not brook force, and probably I gave him some advice on the matter which I suppose the bishop looked upon as an insult—but I did it in the integrity of my heart, without any suspicion it would offend the gentleman so highly. . . .

I am your sincere friend,

Devereux Jarratt

*August 31, 1790*

(Excerpt 2)

Dr. Coke's *Journal*, I hope to treat with becoming contempt. But should I light on him in a proper place I might try to convict him of sin, or else furnish him with matter for a new Journal. His little soul, I believe, was exasperated at me, for laughing at his episcopal credentials, which he vainly drew out upon me, with Mr.

Wesley's hand and seal annexed forsooth. The sight to me was truly farcical and ludicrous in the extreme—I could not forbear smiling—But my pleasantry, on viewing the parchment, was too serious a matter for the doctor; his pride could not brook it—and so he has shewn his spleen by holding me up in his journal. He intended it, no doubt, for a gibbet—and I expect he would have done as much hurt to my body as he intended to my reputation, could it have been done as easily; I mean by publishing Falsities. I freely forgive him, and I pray to God to forgive him, and cause him to know himself.

I remain, your Friend and Brother,

D. Jarratt

The Life of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt, 81-84

[4] The *Discipline* of 1791 had at this place "in the latter end of the year, 1766." (See *Discipline*, 1791, for other changes in reference to priorities. Also see *Discipline*, 1797.)

[5] *A Form of Discipline for the Ministers, Preachers and Members (Now Comprehending the Principles and Doctrines) of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Considered and Approved at a Conference Held at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland, On Monday the 27th of December, 1784: in which Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, Presided: Arranged under proper Heads, and Methodised in a more acceptable and easy manner. The sixth edition.* Philadelphia: printed by R. Aitken & Son, No. 22 Market Street, and sold by John Dickins, No. 43 Fourth Street, MDCCXC.

- [6] Where was Newton? Probably in what is now West Virginia. This letter is dated 1795 in some references. However, he was not in Virginia in July, 1795. (See *Journal*.) It may have been Newtown (now Stephens City, Virginia).
- [7] Strickland in *The Pioneer Bishop* says this was written to a Quaker in Delaware.
- [8] Founders of the Quakers or Friends.
- [9] No place, date, or signature.
- [10] The Virginia preachers met in conference in Mecklenburg, and O'Kelly proposed that they write an affectionate letter but send no delegate. The preachers were pleased by his suggestion. (See MacClenny, *The Life of Rev, James O'Kelly*, ch. vi, for a discussion of these facts.)
- [11] Pastor at Annapolis, Maryland.
- [12] Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.
- [13] Accomack County, Virginia.
- [14] Somerset County, Maryland.
- [15] Cokesbury College.
- [16] Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, III, 147.
- [17] Thomas Morrell was born in New York City, November 22, 1747. His mother was a member of Philip Embury's first class. They moved early to the present Elizabeth, New Jersey, where there were no Methodists, and joined the Presbyterian Church. At the outbreak of the Revolution, Morrell formed a company of volunteers, was made captain, then major, and later was severely wounded. He was taken to his father's house in Elizabeth Town by permission of George Washington. Later he became a

merchant with his father in Elizabeth Town. He retained the friendship of George Washington and conducted Asbury and Coke to see Washington May 29, 1789. He was converted in 1785 by John Hagerty, the Methodist, when Hagerty was preaching in Elizabeth Town. About three months later Morrell left the mercantile business and started preaching. Hagerty made appointments for him. On his third or fourth attempt to preach Morrell felt that he had failed as a preacher and decided he had not been called to preach. However, three people came to see him and told him they had been converted by his preaching. He started the church at Chatham.

Morrell entered the conference on trial in 1787 and was appointed to the Staten Island Circuit, which included Elizabeth Town. His ministerial labors mainly included New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, South Carolina. In spite of several severe illnesses he lived to be an old man. He kept a journal and wrote in his journal when he was ninety years old a summation of his life and gratitude to God. On August 9, 1839, he died rejoicing. His last words were "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me," and, "All is well." (See Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, III, 141-50.)

[18] To friends in England.

[19] Date not certain, place unknown.

[20] Bishop Coke sailed from England on October 16, 1790, to help Asbury with the conferences. Asbury intended the letter to greet him on his arrival in Charleston.



- [21] "If yet in time"—it would not have been if Coke had arrived on time.
- [22] The Allegheny Mountains.
- [23] Cokesbury College. Reference is to the English Methodist school, after which Cokesbury College was patterned.
- [24] Pastor at Alexandria, Virginia.
- [25] William Ward.
- [26] Reference is evidently to the hardships of the ministry and the Methodist system.
- [27] The small council which had been serving as the advisory body to Asbury was superceded by the General Conference.
- [28] Richard Whatcoat had been appointed by Wesley to stay on in America.
- [29] It should be remembered that Wesley remained in the Church of England.
- [30] In the meantime Coke and Asbury heard of Wesley's death. Coke left Asbury to depart for England. However, he missed his boat and did not see Bishop White. (P. 383.)
- [31] The Rev. Devereux Jarratt of Virginia.
- [32] Coke wrote to O'Kelly in 1791 after the February Charleston Conference, also after the Virginia Conference. Coke's letter to O'Kelly reads, "Methodism is gone. But remember when we meet together and overthrow the new institution (the council) as I believe we shall, if Mr. Asbury is not satisfied with the government as it stood before, we will contend for a Republican government. Give me thy hand—fear not; I am a friend to America." (M'Caine, *Letters*, 118.)

- [33] Coke preached a funeral sermon for John Wesley. He was preaching in Baltimore. He said, "The leaving of Mr. Wesley's name off the *Minutes* was an almost diabolical thing. No history furnished any parallel to it, that a body of Christian ministers should treat an aged and faithful minister, as Mr. Wesley undoubtedly was, with such disrespect." Farther on in the sermon he said, "Two of those actors in Mr. Wesley's expulsion are dead and damned, and the others, with their patron [Mr. Asbury we suppose], will go to hell except they repent." On May 4, 1791, Wilmington, Delaware, in a letter Coke wrote, "I doubt much whether the cruel usage he received in Baltimore in 1787, when he was excommunicated did not hasten his death. Indeed I little doubt it. For from the time he was informed of it, he began to hold down his head, and to think he had lived long enough." (M'Caine, *Letters*, 112.)
- [34] Coke did not stand by O'Kelly at the General Conference, and O'Kelly felt that he had been deceived in Coke.
- [35] Presiding elder on Baltimore District.
- [36] Several of the preachers are described in this letter.
- [37] Drinkhouse indicates that it was written between May and September.
- [38] It is not known to whom it was written. Drinkhouse says that it was from "a full two years file in the writer's possession." It would be interesting to know what became of this file. The letter refers to Coke.
- [39] A letter from Coke to Asbury is printed in Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform*, 413. (See also 398—414.) The letter speaks for itself, as follows:

ISLE OF JERSEY, ON THE COAST OF FRANCE  
*September 23, 1791*

Dear Friend:

I have written many letters to you, but have received none from you. I have written so much to you concerning the imprudence I was led into in preaching Mr. Wesley's funeral sermon, that I shall say no more at present on that head. I also dwelt on some other things which you might construe as unkindness to you. . . . Will you appoint a place for me to meet you in the month of November of next year? I mean, will you inform me what part of the continent you will be in at that time? Why don't you send me your minutes? Why don't you write me? . . . Come, let everything contrary to love and friendship die away and be no more forever. You must make allowance for me, considering the great influence Mr. Wesley had on my mind, and his great prejudice toward you. . . . I am determined to write to you every opportunity till I sail for America, let your neglect toward me be ever so great, or ever so much deserved by me. Adieu. Pray at least,  
For Your Truly Faithful Friend and affectionate brother,

Thomas Coke

*Edward J. Drinkhouse, History of Methodist Reform and  
Methodist Protestant Church, I, 413*

[40] Cokesbury College.

[41] Pastor, New York. He had established the new church. (See letter to Morrell, May 20, 1789.) The church was called Forsythe Street Church.

[42] Cases of books.

[43] Old John Street Church.

[44] Drawing loads.

[45] The exact date is not given. No place given, evidently September 21, 1791. (See *Journal*.)

[46] Letter to O'Kelly from Coke. (See footnote to letter of Coke to O'Kelly, May 4, 1791.)

[47] The letter is not signed. Probably there was more to the letter.

[48] No address on the letter, but it seems to be to Dr. Jacob Hall, president of Cokesbury College.

[49] This notice to William Glendinning seems to have been written from the Virginia Conference, which met at Lane's Chapel, Sussex County, Virginia, on Friday, December 23, 1791. The preachers listed here were in that conference. (See also letter of November —, 1792.) Some preachers did not sign.

[50] The *Minutes* show that William Glendinning was admitted to the ministry in 1776 and traveled until 1786, when his name is listed among those "who desist from traveling." He was on the Brunswick Circuit, Virginia, in 1785 and developed a mania of some type. In 1784 he had been appointed to Nova Scotia but refused to go. At that conference he was refused ordination because of "want of gifts." Asbury records in the *Journal*, Sunday, December 26, 1790, at Newcastle, Hanover County, Virginia: "William Glendinning spoke after me: I am clear he is not right in his head or heart, and am therefore resolved he shall speak no more at my appointments." The *Minutes* show that he secured a pension in 1790 of £8 6s. 10d. (Jacob S. Payton.)

- [51] Lane's Chapel, Sussex County, one of the first preaching places in Virginia. Early conferences were held there.
- [52] Edward Dromgoole was a local preacher on the Greensville Circuit, Virginia. He was a traveling preacher from 1774 to 1780 and from 1783 to 1786.
- [53] The early states had their own currency.
- [54] William Glendinning. One of the preachers who sided with O'Kelly but who desisted from the traveling ministry in 1786. (See *Minutes*, 1786, and letters December 23, 1791, and November —, 1792.)
- [55] Rev. Devereux Jarratt, the Episcopal clergyman of Virginia. After 1784 Jarratt felt aggrieved that Asbury had led the Methodists out of the Established Church.
- [56] British Methodists.
- [57] Thompson was unknown. The conference passed over Coke and others ordained by Wesley and elected Thompson. Probably this was their reaction to one-man rule.
- [58] Bishop Coke. Reference is evidently to Bishop White's letter. (See letter, April 24, 1791, and Summer, 1791.) Coke fraternized with Hammett at Charleston. In Petersburg they separated and did not stay together. In Baltimore, Coke saw Bishop White.
- [59] Asbury did not reach Charleston until February 11. (See *Journal*.) Either the date on the letter or the *Journal* is incorrect. Probably the letter date is correct, as it is so plainly written on the original.
- [60] The grocer and former traveling preacher.
- [61] Dickins was the first Book Agent.

- [62] Henry Willis, a preacher. At one time he traveled with Asbury.
- [63] Mr. Bassett of Delaware who became governor.
- [64] Though January 1 is the date of the letter, Asbury was in Norfolk, Virginia, at that time. He did not reach Charleston until February 11. The *Journal* may be incorrect. (See *Journal*.)
- [65] Presiding elder of Baltimore District.
- [66] See reference to Hammett in the *Journal* of February 11 and February 18, 1792. (See *Journal*.)
- [67] James Smith who was known as "Baltimore" Smith. He was a critic of Asbury and the episcopacy.
- [68] Maryland.
- [69] Philip Bruce was presiding elder of the district which included the northern counties of Virginia and the Frederick Circuit.
- [70] Cokesbury.
- [71] Freeborn Garrettson was presiding elder in northern New York in 1792. The districts are not named in the early *Minutes*. It was he who had gone out in 1784 at the direction of Asbury to call the preachers to the Christmas Conference.
- [72] See note to letter of December 23, 1791. William Glendinning published an autobiography, *The Life of William Glendinning*.
- [73] It is interesting to note that, though in the letter to Glendinning of December 23 James O'Kelly headed the list of preachers, he is omitted from this list. Asbury records at the conference, "Mr. O'Kelly, being disappointed in not getting over appeal from any station made by me,

withdrew from the connexion and went off." (See *Journal*, November 8, 1792.) Glendinning says in his comments following this letter that he had no intention of going off with any who were "breaking off" from Asbury. However, he joined the new movement according to MacClenny, *The Life of the Rev. James O'Kelly*, 128-29.

[74] See letter, November [15], 1792.

[75] See *Journal* for reference to the General Conference.

[76] Pastor at New York.

[77] James O'Kelly. For a discussion of the O'Kellyites' side of the controversy see MacClenny, *The Life of the Rev. James O'Kelly*. (See *Letters*, 419, n. 68.)

[78] Wesley in 1787 had attempted to have Whatcoat elected a superintendent, but the conference refused. In 1800 he was elected to the episcopacy.

[79] O'Kelly had been in the south district of Virginia for about ten years (see *Minutes*), and it was here that he got his new Republican Methodist Church going. He and his followers took over many churches in southern Virginia and North Carolina.

[80] There is no date or place to the letter, but it was written after the General Conference of 1792.

[81] Jesse Nicholson lived in Portsmouth, Virginia.

**FROM 1793 THROUGH 1796**

*June 22, 1793 - November 1, 1796*



## CHAPTER FIVE

### FROM 1793 THROUGH 1796

June 22, 1793 - November 1, 1796

*Daniel Fidler's parents lived in Maryland between Oldtown and Fort Littletown. Daniel was in Nova Scotia. Evidently Asbury was reminded to write to Daniel by his visit to Daniel's parents.*

OLD TOWN [OLDTOWN], MARYLAND

*June 22, 1793*<sup>[1]</sup>

[To Daniel Fidler]<sup>[2]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I called at your father's house, and spent a night there on my way from Old Town Conference. We hope the dear old people will make their way to glory. They will long greatly to see you after two years. You will return to the continent, or at least to the grand American Union, when your way is clear. We have a general growth and increase of souls. I hope that not less than three thousand will be made subjects of grace this year. A pretty general harmony reigns through the body as to traveling preachers. J. O'Kelly<sup>[3]</sup> is nearly left alone. His next move will be among the local line and the membership. Notwithstanding our trouble the work goes on westward, yet the savages are restless. I expect that in a very few years we shall be through New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont states, and so become near neighbors to Nova Scotia.

I fear I do not see as much simplicity in our young brethren now as in years past. The love of shining in dress and talents appears to be too prevalent. O my dear child, keep humble, watchful, simple, and walk with God, that you may live as well as preach the very spirit and practice of the Gospel. My heart is toward you in the love of Jesus. If I should see you again, O may you be full of grace and God! Thine as ever,

[Francis Asbury]

*W.P. Strickland, The Pioneer Bishop, 244-45*

*Here is evidence that Asbury was not infallible in his appointments. He wishes he had made some of them different. Also it shows his concern for the "Dutch"-speaking people. Several of his letters show his great concern for the people who spoke in languages other than English.*

WYOMING, NEW YORK

*July 3, 1793*

[*To Thomas Morrell*]<sup>[4]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

Every occurrence gives an opportunity of information. These frontier circuits here suffer the want of my presence to see the state of matters. . . . Will you, the next letter you have an occasion to write to John Dickins, direct said Dickins to desire Daniel Hitt, on the Pittsburgh circuit, to take the earliest opportunity to let Valentine Cook, upon the Clarksburg circuit, know to come and meet me at the Baltimore conference, Oct. 20, 1793. I have found a vast body of Dutch on the Northumberland circuit, and the said Cook

can preach in Dutch. Had I known it at conference I would have stationed him there. I believe there are several young men who will do as well on Clarksburg as he.

I am convinced I ought to station preachers all the year; and it appears not right to take all the preachers away. There are such disorders it gives a great opening to men, devils and sin. Our poor preachers keep Lent a great part of the year here. Our towns and cities, at least our conferences, ought not to let them starve for clothing. I have had a pretty long campaign in the backwoods ever since March. I judge it will be best for half the preachers from Albany, Massachusetts and [New] Jersey to attend at [New] York conference, that we may keep the work going on. I think we must absolutely never let the preachers wholly leave their circuits; this is what was never suffered in England for fear of havoc. It is pressing times in America.

Thine as ever,

F. Asbury

*Louis D. Palmer, Heroism and Romance, Early Methodism in Northeastern Pennsylvania, 100-101*

*Here is more evidence of Asbury's continuing concern for his parents' spiritual and physical welfare. As usual he is giving an account of the growth of the work. It is evident here that he has given up all idea of ever returning to England to live.*

NEW YORK, N. Y.  
*September 1, 1793*

[*To his Parents*]

My ever dear Parents:

I am pleased to hear by Mr. Suckley,<sup>[5]</sup> (who was at the house), of your welfare. I expect by this time brother Sause has supplied you with a small sum of money. I shall not forget to supply you in future. It is but once in the year I visit our cities and sea-ports. I am called in a very peculiar manner to help in the planting of the Gospel westward. O what have you to do now but to spend half your time in meditation and prayer; to make your last days by far your best. I know not how you feel. But, although I have not seen fifty years, I feel many infirmities, but Christ is all and in all. I am resolved to give myself wholly to God, through my short day. I trust not only thousands annually join us, but 3000 are converted to God every year. I wish you would desire Mr. Taylor, or someone, to write to me once in three or six months. Mrs. Smith's son was with me this morning. I shall try to put him forward to something, if in my power.

My love to all friends,

Francis Asbury

[*What follows is an addition to the preceding letter, on the same sheet.*]

I have the flower of my days in hearing of and speaking for God and Christ. It is now near thirty years I have been speaking. I cannot, as heretofore, preach fifteen or sixteen times in seven days. I thank God for the use of my eyes, and

ears, and tongue. I often pray for you. O that my parents may be saved from all sin before they die, that I may have the best assurance of your going to glory.

I think it would be best for you to sell any useless property you have, and live upon the proceeds. I shall never want or possess anything you have. I do most earnestly wish, if my mother should outlive my father, she would come to me, if able, and I am alive. I greatly rejoice that the seed of Methodism sown by me in Great Barr, groweth. I congratulate the society.

Two and twenty years have greatly defaced features and families out of my remembrance. It is no matter. We shall hereafter know better than we are now known. I trust you will cry to God for the souls around you, that awakenings and conversions to God may be frequent amongst you, and that believers may be sanctified. The Lord can work like himself. O for a constant, pure, heavenly flame! I trust and hope the Lord has converted two or three thousand souls in the United States the last year. We have about 300 zealous travelling preachers, and near 700 local. We have the range of fourteen or fifteen states like small kingdoms; indeed, some like large ones, the whole continent 1,400 miles from north to south and a thousand from east to west. I have not forgotten Old England, although I never wish to reside there. Yet, I could wish I could visit it for only 8 or 10 months.

I am your very dear,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*This is the only letter extant to William Watters. He was the first native American preacher and was one of Asbury's best men. He had located when he married. Asbury is trying to get Watters to go back into the traveling ministry.*

STAFFORD COURT HOUSE, VIRGINIA  
*October 29, 1793*

[*To William Watters*]<sup>[6]</sup>

My dear Brother:

I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you but must salute you upon paper. It appears to me some awful clouds hang over this once favoured continent. The inhabitants of Philadelphia were faithfully warned that God would punish them. If not with war, nor famine, yet he might [have] sent the pestilence. Oh! awful days when the people die by hundreds in a day!—Our book concern will be hurt by this calamity. Oh! if the Lord will spare the valuable life of John Dickins.<sup>[7]</sup>

The restless division spirit that prevails among our people and preachers below is a serious subject. I am now going<sup>[8]</sup> where you, Brother Garrettson and myself went 13 or 14 years ago.

I should be well pleased if your wife was in some town where she would be safe, and you could enter again, and die in the good cause. It would please me if you would superintend Lancaster, Stafford, and Fairfax<sup>[9]</sup> as a presiding elder, next year. I want some older heads in our ministry. The

Lord works westward and more northward, and eastward. We have great prospects about Boston, Connecticut and Rhode Island. I have been affected with a disease of the throat, and feel but through mercy able to keep along. It has followed me that the Lord will send a consumption upon this land. His hand is lifted up.

Various nations are in distress—we shall not be wholly unpunished. I think Christians should do more than at other times, and suffer greatly, and deny ourselves rigidly. My soul, I trust is more than ever given to God and his work. We have had a good conference, with about 50 preachers. We had to sit a whole week. God has given us a few thousands this year. Some sanctified souls in [New] Jersey. I shall be much obliged to you to supply as often as you can in Alexandria this year. I shall command a supply, but the young man is weak in body and not as strong as some in faith and love. If you would attend every Sabbath day, at least every other Sabbath. I am as ever thine in the bowels of our dear Lord.

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Jacob Hall was at Abingdon, Maryland, where Cokesbury College was. He was president. Asbury was traveling near Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia, and evidently thought of Cokesbury and was prompted to write this letter.*

PRINCE EDWARD, VIRGINIA  
*November 10, 1793*

[*To Dr. Jacob Hall*]

My very dear Friend and Brother:

I trust Cokesbury will yet live before the LORD. I am informed Hampden and Sydney College<sup>[10]</sup> hath but about 30 scholars, two teachers and no sources but what are gained by education. I shall be obliged to you to lead on Bless [?], Gibbs, and McClasky into learning and teaching. I see great prospects of schools. It is worth while to educate here, when a private priest can gain 8 pounds Virginia money per year for education, and the planters board at 12 pounds. I could employ the boys when we could have a steady serious local preacher to oversee the schools.

I shall be very willing to hear from you in March at Holston at the post-office in Abingdon, [Va.]. Altho' I should take it as a singular favour to hear from you at Charleston, [S.C.], in February. If you will do me the favor to write very freely on the plan of education and the number of scholars; and anything you judge for the good of the house. I wish Brother Everett<sup>[11]</sup> could purchase that house of onions<sup>[12]</sup> for a kitchen. I trust we shall pay our way quarterly and gain more employment. I am resolved to have peace in the family and whether they are men or boys, they must turn out if they disturb the family, preacher or teachers.

Where presiding order prevails, God dwells. I think great care should be taken to ground those boys (that shall come to teach) well in English Grammar, arithmatick and



mathematicks. Do tell me my dear friend if you think it will answer any valuable end for me to call in June. I could ride 40 or 50 miles out of my way to serve you. Write with the greatest freedom, and suggest anything you think would be for the advantage of the college.

I am with great respect,

Yours, F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Asbury had come to Virginia and was seeing some of the effects of the O'Kelly schism. The disaffection of the preachers reminds him of his other problems of keeping preachers. Many were marrying and leaving the work.*

NEAR PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA  
November 23, 1793<sup>[13]</sup>

[To Ezekiel Cooper]<sup>[14]</sup>

My very dearest dear Brother:

I am yet moving southward and heavenward. I have spent some comfortable hours in Maryland and old Virginia in some places where I have preached the Gospel more than twenty years ago. Glory to God these people and their children are growing up for glory. I fear the divine spirit will shew itself in a few months; with to your tents oh Israel! Report says that 700 members and 30 preachers will form.<sup>[15]</sup> But it may not be as formidable as we fear, and they boast. I am to be addressed with a petition to call a conference of ministers, and people, to redress their grievances. If they seem not heard they will withdraw from us.

I waited long to hear from my dear Brother Cooper but it was awful tidings. Married or single leaving the work, is my distress. The western country is much distressed and still I must go, if possible, to Kentucky. The church, and school<sup>[16]</sup> will suffer more with my absence than presence. The delicacy of the work in Massachusetts calls for great economy, and great nursing, the tender plant, the work is the Lord's, the wisdom, the power, the glory also. Oh, Christ is thine. We have had a great and general sickness. Saints and sinners humbled and dead. I wish exceedingly to hear from you. Send a letter to Brother Dickins<sup>[17]</sup> if it comes time enough; let it be sent to Holston by post or to Fort Pitt. I have afflictions<sup>[18]</sup> in my way, so have you, only let us give up ourselves wholly to God. I hope you will keep union with the people; and the preachers upon proper changes, that everything may go on well. Oh brother keep to the doctrines of the Gospel and press them home. I am as ever thine,

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Just when this letter was written cannot be ascertained from the Journal records. In August, 1793, and August, 1794, Asbury was in Connecticut. In 1794 he was sick in Maryland. Though he had an itinerary as planned here, he did not follow this plan exactly in 1793 or 1794; but he was in Hartford on Sunday, the 29th, 1794. It seems that the June 1 in the letter should be September 1. On June 1, 1794, Asbury was in Virginia at Harrisonburg. Many of the dates in the 1852 edition of the Journal are incorrect.*

CONNECTICUT  
— [1794]<sup>[19]</sup>

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[20]</sup>

Brother Roberts:

Will you be so kind as to write an answer to Daniel Burrows<sup>[21]</sup> a letter and let him know that something extraordinary hath befallen me, that I have been very unwell for some days, unfit for ministerial duty with a — cold and intermitting fever, that I have taken upon the low lands of Maryland. Tell him, the plan they have given out was one that Brother Whatcoat<sup>[22]</sup> took a copy of, and gave out by mistake, when [we] were only composing a plan. Tell him I have written on a complete plan which brings us to City [of] Hartford Sunday the twenty ninth, Monday 30 at — in Hebron. — Tuesday 31, Windham, at Thompson, Wednesday June 1-3, you will find the directions where to write in his letter.

Fr Asbury

P.S. As I shall not return through New York and probably the preachers will not all go, I must stay 4 or 5 days in order to know what and which is to be done. I am inclined get B—— to take charge of the Genesee District. F A

You are powerfully perplexed with your little local plagues but my work lies in 2000 oblong [miles] here and there and has almost every where, where we have preachers. Tell Burrows that Brother Whatcoat and myself shall probably be together, perhaps one of us will be able to preach.

*Drew University Library*

*This letter has neither date nor place. However, it was evidently written in 1794. In the letter of September 1, 1793, Asbury refers to Suckley's visit to his mother. He says in this letter that it was a year ago. Therefore the date of 1794. Asbury shows continuous love and concern for his parents' welfare.*

— [1794]

[*To his Parents*]

My very dear Father and Mother:

I have had some considerable pain of mind from two or three letters I have received from you, as also the information given by others, that the money was not paid. I have had certain information that Mr. —— received a sum last September, or thereabout. I last evening made an arrangement for a remittance to you, by my agent John Dickins, with Mr. Suckley, the young man that made you a visit last year. It will come by Mr. Holley, transmitted to Mr. James Foster, in Birmingham. This sum will come into your hands in the space of three or four months. There will be a great certainty of this cash coming into your hands.

My salary is fourteen pounds, ten shillings, sterling (\$64). I have sold my watch and library, and would sell my shirts before you should want. I have made a reserve for you. I spend very little on myself. My friends find me some clothing. I might have money, but the wicked world, and those<sup>[23]</sup> that leave our connection, strive to blacken my

character by saying I have the profits of books at my command, and profits from the College, and the schools established in many parts of America. These reports I am able to refute, and yet they say "he remits money to his parents every year." The contents of a small saddle-bag will do for me, and one coat in the year. Your son, Francis, is a man of honor and conscience. As my father and mother never disgraced me with an act of dishonesty, I hope to echo back the same sound of an honest, upright man.

I wish to despise flattery and injustice. I hope you will guard against fretfulness and discontent. I am well satisfied that the Lord saw fit you should be my parents, rather than the king and queen, or any of the great; also, as to when and where I drew my breath. I sometimes think you will outlive me. I have made my will, and left my all to you, and that's soon done. While I live and do well, I shall remember you every year; perhaps come to see you, if you live many years, and peace and harmony should take place between the continent and kingdom.

I rejoice that religion prospers once more in my native land. Above all, my dear father and mother, seek a deeper sense of God and religion, to be holy and ripe for glory. O that your last days may be your best! and that you may not only live long, but live and die well. Only be much in prayer, that your day of grace may never be past, while life and thought and being last, to all eternity. I am much obliged to those kind brethren that have written to me on your behalf. I beg you will take every opportunity of writing to me your true state of body

and mind! If I should be removed, I have left the charge with brother Whatcoat<sup>[24]</sup> to do for you in my place.

I am as ever, your dear son,

Francis Asbury

On envelope

To Joseph Asbury  
Hampstead Hall  
near Birmingham  
Staffordshire

*Drew University Library*

*John Kobler was one of Asbury's most dependable preachers, as this letter indicates. Asbury is giving directions for the Western Conference in case he could not be present.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

*January 22, 1794*

[*To John Kobler*]<sup>[25]</sup>

Dear Brother:

Notwithstanding I have enjoyed very little health since the first of August, having had inflammation, lameness, influenza, fever and colds, I have been struggling along to the present day. I have been frequently desired by the preachers and people to give up coming to the westward. I never consented until a few weeks past, believing myself unable and that it might probably endanger my life. But it appeared like an indication of Providence at that time unknown to me, that I should transact all my temporal concerns respecting Kentucky at the Conference in Petersburg. I was then in a

languid state not knowing what would befall me, and I have been much more so since.

I have herein enclosed a plan of the stations of the preachers which I should be glad should take place, but you must do as well as you can in cases of failure of contingences, and I desire you, if Brother McHenry<sup>[26]</sup> should not be present, you must take the Presidency of the Conference, and go through in regular order, taking their names, numbers, and election, if any of them should have the right of deacons election, which is two years probation.

I have desired Brother Poythress,<sup>[27]</sup> if possible to meet me at conference at Brother Mitchell's,<sup>[28]</sup> Bottetourt, May 26 to present me with the *Minutes* and information of the district, as I shall require and that we may give him such advice and direction as we judge necessary. I wish likewise to see you there for the same purpose as it may be needful for you to continue the oversight of the Holston District. If there should be any deacons, elect, they may take ordination there if you come. I shall likewise want the Minutes of your Conference. If our aged brother that went to Russell is not useful, and unacceptable to the people you must try what is the judgment of the Conference concerning him, if the majority is against him he must locate himself.

If I should be able to visit the western country next year you may consider the matter in your Conference and we can talk it over, should we meet at Bottetourt, whether it would not be best for the Cumberland, Kentucky and Holston

Districts to meet in the new territory about the first of May, the conferences in Baltimore, Petersburg and Charleston will be held late in the fall and early in the spring, so that I shall have no conference but yours to attend for several months and can make more time and *better weather*. I feel very unwilling to give up the western country altogether but whether I shall be able to come every year I doubt with me, but if we should meet we can fully talk these matters over. I conclude and am as ever thine in love,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*On March 22 Asbury records in the Journal his great concern for the brethren in the Western Conference. On March 23, Sunday, he says he has written several letters westward "to supply my lack of service."*

[WHITE] RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA  
[March 23,] 1794<sup>[29]</sup>

[To John Kobler]<sup>[30]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am sorry it is not for me to come westward. You will do the best you can for Holston. May the first, 1795, I must try the mountains again. If ordination is needful for any for deacons, they may meet me at Mitchell's<sup>[31]</sup> May 26, 1794, or you may meet me and let us take some counsel together and you will be able to give me some just account of the state of the Holston District. If the Lord is with you wonders will be wrought and you shall go on valiantly. I hope Brother



Lindsay<sup>[32]</sup> has grace, his gifts are small, his language is not much improved. He may do with a steady man, to direct him. The poverty of the church is exceeding great for preachers, yet not so great as the demands to different and distant parts. I have declined taking a person that is fit for the circuits with me, the call is so great.

If you are straitened for money, you must let me know. I think you had better meet me and tell me all you hear at Mitchell's. I am much better, but coming about 400 miles by riding it in 10 or 12 days, cold lodging and rains has given me rhumatick touches. I am now going where I have not been for years. I wait the providence of God in my moves. My dear Brother, press purity on thy own soul, on the souls of the preachers and the people there. That is the spot we feel our glory is departing. We must preach holiness plainly, pointedly, now to be obtained by grace through those, in great love as ever,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*As usual Asbury shows his great concern for the salvation of his parents. He also shows his concern for his old neighbors, as well as those around him, and the world.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
*September 22, 1794*

[*To his Parents*]

My very dear Father and Mother:

I am not unmindful of your present and eternal welfare. When I was in Philadelphia, in July, I remembered you; and I hope by this time you feel the effects of my filial duty. I desire I may hear from you all the particulars of your souls and bodies. I wish to know who among my poor old neighbors are converted to the Lord, and live religion. I suspect, were I to return, I should be a great stranger in the place where I was born. I am at present in a good state of health. Time has been when I have feared I should leave the world before my poor parents, and you would come to want. But God is all sufficient. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. O let me hear, if you go hence, that you die triumphant in the Lord, and go shouting to glory. We are not without the downpourings of the Spirit of God in a wonderful manner. But I want the continent, the world, to flame with the spiritual glory of God. O my father! O my mother! be much in prayer for meek, patient, loving, holy souls. O how awful to live almost one hundred years and not be fit for heaven and glory.

I am, as ever, your dear, faithful obedient son,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*There were two churches in Brooklyn. Asbury preached three times on the Lord's Day, at ten o'clock in the morning*

*and in the evening at the old church. In the afternoon he preached in the new church.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
*Lord's Day, September 28, 1794*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[33]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am now satisfied that you should take your stand here till further orders. It is my wish that you should keep a conference with the preachers in this city, stationed and supernumeraries. It is my desire that once in five or six weeks each one of you should spend a Sabbath in Brooklyn. Brother Phoebus<sup>[34]</sup> has heard my mind. I want quarterly meetings to be held at each of the three houses, first at one and then at another. Meet the first day, and the following day call the leaders and stewards in conference, close conference, about the work of God and their souls, the order and harmony of the societies and their temporal supplies. Have a love-feast for all of the societies. Let me hear from you, and you shall hear from me. I have been greatly employed preaching three times this day; am going off early tomorrow morning.

Thine in love,

Francis Asbury

P.S. I give it as my real opinion, that you should have no open love-feast. Attend to this. F. Asbury

*G.A. Phoebus, Beams of Light on Early Methodism, 190-91*

*The statement in reference to Jacob Hall, the president of Cokesbury College, was written in 1794. It was printed in an article entitled "Jacob Hall, Surgeon and Educator, 1747-1812." Hall resigned on October 17, 1794, after six years as president.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

*October 23, 1794*

*[To whom it may concern]*

This is to certify whom it may concern, that we the employers of Doctor Jacob Hall, late president of Cokesbury College, find no cause of complaint, either respecting his moral character as a Christian, his ability as a teacher, or his attentions to the students when present. And hereby declare our satisfaction for the services rendered to the College for six years past.

Signed in behalf of the Conference,

Francis Asbury

Attest. Nelson Reed  
Joshua Waller  
Lem'l Green  
Rich'd Whatcoat

Maryland Historical Magazine, VIII (*September, 1913*),  
217.

*Maryland Historical Society Library*

*The conference started in Charleston on January 1 and ran through January 7. Asbury as usual was not well. He was met in the city by bad news of the loss of three friends. In this*

*letter he discloses some of his ascetic views as to eating and drinking—views which were so characteristic of his life.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.

*January 2, 1795*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[35]</sup>

My dear Brother:

I am, by the good and always kind providence of God, brought safe to this city in peace, but a little unwell by hard traveling and changes. Serious things have taken place here. Brother Hughes is dead, Captain Darrall and William Adams drowned. We creep along, with an increase of hearers and members. Some wandering stars appear and shine a little in the new Trinity. We pay our debts, and go on fair and easy. I must say, every time I visit Charleston my feelings are better, and I hope there is some fruit of my toil.

I should be much obliged to you to favor me with your former kindness in letters, any thing that is of moment for me to know, especially from the eastward, that comes to your knowledge. Charleston, Holston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston or Hartford, are good points to meet me with letters.

I am in hopes that something valuable will take place in [New] York in the year 1795. Your attention ought to be paid to Discipline, and visiting from house to house, but not to eat and drink. I am pointedly against that. You have a house to eat in; you need not go to feast with the Church of God. We ought to visit as doctors, or as persons to plead the cause of

their souls; not as guests, to eat and drink, but as divines for souls. I am convinced it is and will be an evil.

We have had few city preachers but what have been spoiled for a poor man's preachers. That is a truth we can awfully substantiate. What persons and times are past and gone, let them go. I trust your soul is more engaged with God than ever, and you will send me good news of the spiritual affairs of the society; as to the temporal matters, Cokesbury<sup>[36]</sup> is out of blast, and let it go; we were great too soon. My ten years' dread is over; I shall leave the world and my charge shortly. Excuse my not writing a longer letter. I have many to write.

I am as ever,

F. Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*From Fish Dam Ford, North Carolina, Asbury is making his engagements with John Kobler of the Holston District. On April 26 he reached friend Nelson's in western North Carolina; and there he was met by William Burke, Francis Acuff, and Thomas Wilkerson. He does not indicate who is the brother from the east of Virginia. He evidently met the brother at Edward Mitchell's.*

FISH DAM FORD, N.C.<sup>[37]</sup>

*March 27, 1795*

[*To John Kobler*]<sup>[38]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I have an intention of being at friend Nelson's to hold a general meeting there Sabbath Day, April 26. I should be happy to be favoured with the company of the preachers and people that wish to see me. I shall be exceedingly straightened for strength, time and horse, to get to Baltimore by the first of June. I am to stop and communicate with our brother in east Virginia. I shall have to hasten to New Virginia, Rockingham<sup>[39]</sup> in the interests of the church and education.<sup>[40]</sup>

If it should turn out that any of the preachers should have a horse that they want to let me have, I want change and [?] the balance of 4 or 5 guineas, good size, young, 5 years old, well gated, and good life. I have not spent my time altogether in vain in Charleston, poor Joseph's brethren<sup>[41]</sup> are coming to Jesus. You will do your best to meet me, and hasten the conference. At least I should wish my horse to rest till I come up from Holston; after bringing me over the mountains. You will, I hope borrow a horse to carry me down to Conference if it be where it may be. I am under such great expectation of going to the northern boundary of the United States this summer, Provinces of Maine, Hampshire, and Vermont, as we are just entering these fields. I am now obliged to save myself all I can. Twenty-five years maketh a great difference, I cannot do as heretofore, and it seemeth my heart is bigger

than ever it was and the people and preachers I think require more than ever more than man. I am a poor weak man too.

Thine as ever,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*The conference had been meeting in Baltimore, and Asbury was writing from there. He is disturbed because his parents had not received the money he had sent to them. The cheap gossip about him had irritated him, and he answers the criticisms. Interestingly, he reports himself as enjoying great health.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
October 30, 1795

[To his Parents]

My very dear Parents:

I am pleased to hear from you, by Benjamin Rhodes, or any other person. I am sorry you had not received what I mentioned in my last. I wrote to you a few weeks back, from Philadelphia. I have delivered into the hands of my agent the supply for the present year. By a late letter I am informed it will soon be transmitted to you. Were it ten thousand per year, if I had it in my possession, you should be welcome, if you had need of it. No person could have been in more difficulty of circumstances than myself. It is wickedly reported of me that I collect money from the printing concern and college,<sup>[42]</sup> and send it home to my friends, in large sums. This is done by wicked men [whom] I have prevented from oppressing and



robbing the Church of God. To cover their own baseness [they] charge me; so that my good to you is evil spoken of.

I hope you use carefully what I dearly purchase by riding six or seven thousand miles a year, besides sitting in and conducting conferences of two hundred preachers, and the charge of many things for the cause of Christ. The coat and waistcoat I now have on I have worn thirteen months, and I would not carry a second shirt if I could do without it. But all these things are but trifles. If you are wholly given up to God, the Gospel is preached to my poor neighbours and their children, I shall rejoice. I have enjoyed great health, and have travelled extensively through twelve of the United States, now growing into little kingdoms. I had hopes of seeing you, but now they fail, unless you come to me. My one prevailing desire is that you may make sure work for heaven.

I am often thankful you have kept open house for the word and people of God, almost forty years. Go on, my dear parents. You hear so often from me that you will think you see me, and I am very near you. Never give your souls a moment's uneasiness about living. If I live and do well in temporals, you shall live also. Think not that any thing comes grudgingly from me. Could you eat wedges of gold, if I had them you should be welcome to them. I should be glad if you would take the time of my baptism from the church register, that I may know it perfectly. It will cost you but a shilling, unless that, as everything else, is doubled. Provisions are high with us; but workmen's wages are in proportion. Four shillings and sixpence a day labourer's wages in summer; and

in towns common labourers gain that always. I am as ever  
your most unworthy, yet most obedient,  
loving son,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Nelson Reed was the presiding elder over Cokesbury, and it seems here that he exercised some functions over the college even to the curriculum. Asbury discusses the Preachers' Fund.*

LANCASTER, VIRGINIA<sup>[43]</sup>  
November 13, 1795

[To Nelson Reed]<sup>[44]</sup>

My truly dear Brother:

I wish you to be particularly cautioned against corrupt Latin authors being taught in the College,<sup>[45]</sup> it is this that causeth such places, and filleth the minds of youth with infidelity, and lust. And it is strange the poets have not been purified or banished from the schools. After the Grammars, and Cordini,<sup>[46]</sup> they ought to read Eutropius,<sup>[47]</sup> Cornelius Nepos,<sup>[48]</sup> Selectae Profanis,<sup>[49]</sup> and the Latin Testament. The poets ought to be purged or burnt and not to be used in Christian schools. We might as well teach them Aristotle's Masterpiece. I am inclined to think Brother Dickins<sup>[50]</sup> could procure some pure elegant Latin authors fit to read. I have had some labour and consolation. Oh, that our preachers could but feel for the souls of the congregations of hundreds who wait for the message. When I think such a poor hobbling man as I

am should travail through 4 circuits before they come to the charge in Lancaster; and yet I stopped a week in Baltimore. I do not regret my visit to the Ridges, Georgetown, Alexandria, and Lancaster, where we have a very good ——.

To —— John Moss came —— I have thought powerfully about having trustees incorporated in Philadelphia for the Preachers' Fund, this would help me out of the care; satisfy the connection and be a means of commanding legacies. I wish Tommy Haskins<sup>[51]</sup> to make a bill to lay before the General Conference. I have a design should the fund ever be reduced or not reduced soon, below the appointed sum, that the sixty pounds might lie in your hands only giving an acknowledgment. I feel mightily eased of the burden. Mr. Fouks has payed John Potts<sup>[52]</sup> nine pounds Virginia [currency], he must breathe a while before he will pay the balance. He frowned at Dawson for keeping an order on a person in Georgetown till he supposed it was lost, yet and hoped the College debt was paid. If you truly acknowledge God the College can be made a paradise, a Bethel to your souls.

I am as ever thine

Francis Asbury

P.S. Dear Sister Reed will play the soft counter of love and tender feelings when you are a little rough. Read Blair on Gentleness.

*Drew University Library*

*Neither date nor place is given for this letter. Evidently Cokesbury College was still in existence as he does not refer to its burning, which happened in December, 1795. The letter was probably written in 1795. Coke was about this time frequently in Europe, as the letter suggests.*

——[1795]

[*To his Parents*]

My ever dear Parents:

It is with the greatest difficulty I can communicate to your wants, or even be informed of them. I have requested and will request Doctor Coke, as he is so frequently in England, to know and supply, or order a supply of all your wants. Every act of kindness done to you in England, I shall return to the Doctor when in America; and also repay what he requires. I am in great straits about advising you to come hither. It would be attended with great expense and danger; and should you suffer, by land or water, it would give me great pain. My hands are very full. I am here, and there, and every where, upon the continent. But I should fear nothing so much as your not being devoted to God, or so holy as you ought to be.

I frequently pray for you. I want to see you both in heaven; it is but a little, yea, a very little time, and we shall close our concerns here. If at any time you should be shortened, write to the Doctor, and he will supply you, and I will answer to him. If I were not about a great work, and under indispensable obligations to the preachers and people here, chiefly raised up under my ministry, you might hope to see me. I have reason to believe, and that firmly, that the hand of God has been

clearly seen in bringing me to, and continuing me in this land, from the first moment to the present. We have opened a house for learning. — So far I am concerned for the present and rising generation. I am in some measure, by a multiplicity of business, constrained to forget my own country, and my father's house.

I am as ever, your affectionate son,

F. Asbury

The Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review, *XIII*, 310

*This letter was written just after the burning of Cokesbury College. Thomas Haskins was a trustee of St. George's Church, Philadelphia. It is mainly a newsletter.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.

January 11, 1796

[*To Thomas Haskins*]

My own dear Son:

As Cokesbury. . . .<sup>[53]</sup> Attention will be turned toward the spiritual interests of our Society chiefly. This hath perhaps been one cause of its consumption. I wished and prayed if it was not for his glory it might be destroyed. It hath taken up my time, consumed my spirits and would eventually have rendered me useless if I had not given it up. As to the bill for the fund, it must be drawn according to the section in the form of Discipline on the subject. 3,000 pounds will be sufficient.

The subject of relief of the superannuated preachers and widows and orphans of preachers, as are this order<sup>[54]</sup> in the

minutes and recommended from year to year by the Bishop and Conference or President and Conference held in any part of the U.S. Oh, my dear Brother, how I pant for thy soul to be wholly alive to God and flowing with holy love. I hear of a stir of religion in [New] York, and we have had the city in motion here. God is with and hath perfectly recovered its love, one distracted with Solomon wronghear [gossip].<sup>[55]</sup> It is very low times here with the separate people.<sup>[56]</sup> Our Society is greatly augmented with the return of old and increase of new members.

Dr. Coke writes me he is now about to sail for Timboo in Africa with six companions. One of the kings hath invited him. I am in great hopes God will work upon our prosperous darker continent. I am solemnly happy in God, but I am pained to be cooped up here 2 months, but the winter campaigns are the cause of my pain. So I must submit. My love to . . . Norths and Bakers<sup>[57]</sup> and all that ask after me, thrice more than ever,

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*Prayer meetings were a great source of power in the early church. Asbury's letters reveal the place of importance they had in his mind. This is one of several letters in which he gives detailed instructions as to how they shall be conducted.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*January 30, 1796*

[*To John Hagerty*]<sup>[58]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I have felt an uncommon impression on my soul concerning the society in Baltimore, I am afraid they are sinking into formality. My wish is that prayer meetings should be established in every part of the town where they can be admitted two nights in the week, six or (7) on the same evenings. The women, also in equal number, might be for them. I would advise short sermons, and two or three join in prayer after, in the Church. I feel greatly impresst, I am sure the women could have a prayer meeting at Sarah Hagerty's room. And if any of the old line, are sick and cannot come out, "we will come to you," must be the answer.

I wish there be a move made in the leaders meeting, and let the matter be done systematically. Let a preacher, or person, go round and see who will admit meetings for prayer, mixed, with a few pointed words of exhortation. Let certain persons, one, two, or three, or more be appointed to lead these meetings, and keep order. I am absent, yea six hundred miles, from you, yet like Abel altho' dead by distance, I must speak to you, and to you the preachers and leaders, arise this work belongs to you. I believe God hath laid it on my heart, if you try it I shall find your souls alive when I come.

I wish my letters, in substance, may be read to the leaders meeting. Formerly, fool that I was, I used to be writing about temporal things. Oh! had I have spent as much thought and

care about the church as about that altar of bassok<sup>[59]</sup> which is burnt<sup>[60]</sup> down how happy I might have been. I am as ever thine.

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*A most interesting insight into Asbury's attitude toward the women is reflected in this letter. It was written with the intent of stirring up prayer meetings among the women. Asbury wrote to the wife of Thomas Haskins. Haskins was a grocer in Philadelphia, though he had been a preacher. Mrs. Dickins, wife of Book Agent John Dickins, and Mrs. Daniel Ruff were preachers' wives.*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*February 17, 1796*

[*To Mrs. Martha Haskins*]<sup>[61]</sup>

My very dear Sister:

My soul longeth for the prosperity of Zion. Oh that the sisters would establish prayer meetings once a week. Will you and sister Dickins<sup>[62]</sup> and those about the square? Oh if we had a spirit of wrestling prayer, we should see great, very great things. I have written to the brethren. Having a little time I remember the dear sisters. I trust they love God and me, and will listen to my advice. We have a woman's prayer meeting in this infant society.

Oh my sister you have a suffering, dying life but the grace of God is sufficient for you. Some bitters are good for the soul



as well as the body. I wish that those among you who are sick, let those that are healthy and more able come to the rooms of the weak. Oh, perfect love. I am resting, reading and writing. I think on the dear souls, my children, and think perhaps my God will bless some little instruction I may give their souls. I have thought you would take your flight soon. Oh may you soon be ripe for glory.

I can only preach publicly every Lord's day. My congregations, 1000 or 1200 souls. I am at times greatly led out for souls. *It is low times with the new sort of Methodists.* We have had several souls brought to God, and I am sure if there were half a dozen prayer meetings in Philadelphia, in private rooms, men and women [apart], we should have great times. Women are weak, but remember Eve, and Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Shebah's Queen, Elizabeth, Anna, Phebe and such like, bring the gifts to enrich the temple of God. Some of you may be powerfully quickened in perfection, love, and go in triumph to glory shortly.

I am with great respect thine. If my advice is taken, I shall find you all aflame for God when I may come in July. Sister Ruff<sup>[63]</sup> is gone. Oh my sister how shall I rejoice to hear it said, your old friend is gone but she was uncommonly happy before she died.

Thine in Jesus,

F. Asbury  
*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*John Kobler had been with Asbury as they had traveled together through the Holston District in Virginia. Now Asbury has traveled through West Virginia, then Virginia, and into Maryland to near Frederick Town, where this letter was written.*

NEAR FREDERICK TOWN, MARYLAND

*June 21, 1796*

[To John Kobler]<sup>[64]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I cannot fully express in words my obligations to and love for thee. Whilst I was busy at Rehoboth<sup>[65]</sup> Daniel Hitt<sup>[66]</sup> was waiting for me at the Little Levels to take me to the Clarksburg quarter meeting the very Saturday and Sabbath Day I was at McNeals. I engaged the awful march through Tygar's Valley after riding about 160 miles in about 42 or 45 hours taken from three days. When I came near Morgantown Shin grew weak and falling down cut his knee and made the blood fly as if he had been struck in a vein. I rode him no more till I came away from the district. I was honoured with half a dozen preachers being with me continually attending three quarter meetings and filling up each day of one week. I rode near 100 miles in the district<sup>[67]</sup> and near 300 to Baltimore, my upper appointments upon Potomack Branch were deranged. We had to work near 200 miles to Frederick Town, Maryland,<sup>[68]</sup> all but 10 miles last Saturday by 11 o'clock.

I have had a cold in my head that hath been very uncomfortable to my sensations. Redstone [Pa.] is amazingly

improved. Work on the Eastern shore [Maryland and Virginia] attended with a deep and lasting conviction of long continuance to what some former calls have been. Schools and families ought not to be neglected. I have thought it might be of consequence for the eldership to take every member of the families alone and they would not fail of making, by the blessing of God, impressions. I am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury

P.S. Brother Riggan's love to you. Farewell.

*Drew University Library*

*The parents of Asbury were continuously on his mind. He wished to provide for them and regularly looked after their wants. What with his travel, the great distance from England, and the lack of mail facilities, he had many difficulties in getting money to them.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*July 29, 1796*

[*To his Parents*]

My very dear and never to be forgotten Parents:

I came providentially to this city, and had hardly time to breathe, after reading several momentous letters, from various parts of our continent, when I was told Mr. Suckley<sup>[69]</sup> was going to England. I hope to embrace this opportunity of sending you what little I have saved since my last remembrance of you. I wrote you from Charleston. Perhaps I was constrained, from the high sense of filial duty I had, to

invite you here. I feared the nation [England] would be in blood. I now think you are much better where you are. And I sincerely wish I could come to you, but I see no way without sinning against God, and the Church. Since I wrote from Charleston, I have travelled nearly two thousand five hundred miles, through Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. Hard wear, and hard fare. But I am healthy and lean, gray-headed and dim-sighted. But I hope I enjoy as much of religion, or more than ever, preaching, living and feeling.

I wrote to Dr. Coke to let you have ten guineas, and I would repay him when he comes to the continent. I must watch every opportunity to send you small sums. As my life is an uncertainty, I have employed a person<sup>[70]</sup> to transcribe my journals for the press; either here, or in England. You know how long I served the church for nothing. I might if I would, have money; but I am set for the defense of the Gospel. When men will labour as hard for God, as for man, and take no more than poor men ought to have, God will own them. O my dear father and mother, be wholly for God! Make haste to get ready for glory! I have great cause to mourn over my dear America! The people are growing wealthy and wicked. It is not with our society as we could wish. I wish you to take some care to write to me as often as you can. I am not sure what I shall remit. Mr. Suckley is my very great and kind friend, and yours also. Whatever I send; he will faithfully apply it to your service. I am now returning from a journey of

about three thousand five hundred miles, since the beginning of November 1795, to this date. I now commend you to God.

As ever, your dear and only son,

Francis Asbury

P.S. I am now, in the heat of our season, going to New-England, which is Old England continued. I shall pass through New-Jersey, the state of New-York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts; performing perhaps, a tour of near one thousand five hundred miles, before I come back to Baltimore which is like my centre and home. It may be happy for me, let the climate be healthy or unhealthy, to soul or body, hard or easy: I soon change. You will excuse my manner of writing. I have been called off several times since I began this epistle.

F.A.

On envelope

Joseph Asbury  
at Hampstead  
near Birmingham  
Staffordshire

*Drew University Library*

*This letter is not dated, nor is the place from which it was written given. However, Asbury says he is beginning the fifty-first year of his life, hence 1796. It was written before October 20 as indicated and probably written in the summer. Since Asbury did not refer to the Cokesbury fire, the letter may have been written in 1795.*

[PHILADELPHIA, PA.]  
[August, 1796]

[To his Parents]

My own dear Father and Mother:

I have received several letters expressive of your paternal love and gratitude towards me. I have often revolved the serious thought of my return to you. To say nothing of the State of Europe, and Britain, or the society, with whom I claim, in England. I have frequently asked myself, Can you retire to a single circuit, and act as a lay preacher, and step down? This is not my difficulty, if I know my own heart. With humility and self-abasement I may say, one hundred thousand respectable citizens of the new world, and 300 travelling and 600 local brethren, would advise me not to go. I hope the voice of the people is the voice of God. At present we have more work, than faithful workmen. We have a state or two out of 17 states<sup>[71]</sup> and territories, that call for help, and we are not able to supply them and support it.

I am like Joseph, I want to have you near me. I am not ashamed of your *poverty*; and I hope after so many years professing religion, you will not be wanting in *piety*. I have considered you have that which is my joy and glory; that you have had open doors above 40 years for religious exercises, when no other would or even dared to do it. It is a serious subject whether you think it is your duty still to keep a place for preaching, or if upon your removal the Gospel will be taken from poor Barr!<sup>[72]</sup> Yet, when I think you have no child, nor friend that careth for you, the distress of the land, and high prices of provisions, I wish to see you, and have you near

me. 'Tis true, whilst I live you will live also; if I keep my place and piety.

I have passed the slippery paths of youth; and am now entering the 51st year of my life, I have very different views and feelings. I have had the burden of a school, hastily called a college,<sup>[73]</sup> by Dr. Coke. I gave that up into the hands of trustees made by law. I study daily, what I can do without. One horse, and that sometimes borrowed, one cloak, one great coat, one coat, one waistcoat, (the last coat and waistcoat I used about 14 months), 4 or 5 shirts, 4 or 5 books. I am in doubt that if I should be called away you will not be provided for so well as among those I have faithfully laboured for this 24 years. It is true, you are not immortal, anymore than myself, judging according to the nature of things you may go first, one or both of you. All these things I have weighed in my mind. I wish you to reconsider the matter, and ask much counsel of God, and your best and most impartial friends.

I have received information of thirty guineas put into the hands of Mr. Suckley, to remit to your service. I received a letter from Brother Rhodes on your behalf, for which I am much obliged to him. On the subject he wrote to me, let him know I avoid all worldly incumbrances. Our Book interest is in the hands of John Dickins, in Philadelphia. Brother Dickins<sup>[74]</sup> keepeth a stationers shop. Should he choose to receive his grammars in sheets, without the British constitution, he may safely send them. The Americans think their own constitutions the best. John Hagerty, in Baltimore, keepeth a stationery. He may trade with him also. Should the

grammars come over by our General Conference, the preachers may take some. I shall remember *you* by Dr. Coke. I wish my dear parents to consider the matter and send me another letter between this and the 20th of October. Whether I be present or absent, dead, or alive, I trust my friends in Baltimore will take care of you, by my help.

You have spent many pounds upon Christian people, I know from my childhood. Happy I was when this was done; and I hope it will come home to you in mercy. You must make it matter of much fasting, and prayer, before you attempt anything. You must not expect to see me above once in a year. I hope the accounts I have had of the piety of you both are not too large. May you ripen fast for glory. We have not any extraordinary displays of the power of God. America is the young child of God and providence, set upon the lap, dandled upon the knees, prest to the consolating breasts of mercies in ——. But we are not as thankful as we ought to be. The —— of the church I wish to make the cause of ——. I stand in such a situation, and relation for the state of the ministry and people. I may have a thousand letters of information in a year, while swiftly moving through the continent every year.

The time certainly is drawing near when universal peace shall bless the earth: when distracted Europe, superstitious Asia, blind Africa, and America shall more abundantly see the salvation of our God. Oh let us be much in prayer. For the health of my body and by the desire of my friends, I stop two months, in the soft climate of Charleston, South Carolina, the



winter months, to avoid the rains. It is supposed my complaints have been derived from changes of lodging, and weather. I must travel rapidly for 10 months. My kind love to Brother Rhodes. I remember well seeing him at Witney, and his giving his horses something when sick. I am as ever your unworthy but

loving son

F. Asbury

The envelope has  
Joseph Asbury  
Hampstead Hall  
near Birmingham  
Staffordshire

*Drew University Library*

*The British Conference met in London on July 25. In that conference a letter of greeting to the General Conference in America was prepared. This was to be taken over personally by Bishop Coke. He presented it to the General Conference; and this letter of November 1, 1796, is the answer sent back by the General Conference.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
*November 1, 1796*

To the General Conference of the people called Methodists in Great Britain,

Fathers and Brethren, dearly beloved in the Lord:

We feel ourselves highly gratified by your kind remembrance of us, and with great satisfaction embrace the present opportunity, by Dr. Coke,<sup>[75]</sup> of returning you our sincere thanks for your welcome address,<sup>[76]</sup> and of assuring you of our unfeigned esteem and affection for you. Though a vast ocean divides us, we are intimately one with you in spirit, and frequently with much delight remember you in our prayers. We doubt not but we are remembered in yours; and we entreat also, through you, the fervent petitions of your dear flocks to the throne of grace in our behalf.

With you, beloved brethren, we deeply lament the increase of infidelity in the world. But it is no more than we have reason to expect, from the sure word of prophecy. And we have full confidence that, through the exercise of one great prerogative of the Head of the Church, abundance of good will be brought out of this greatest of evils. The faithful will be made manifest; the reign of antichrist to be put down by the infidels, who are the fittest instruments for the work; and the church of God will eminently become the city set upon a hill, the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

There certainly is, as you observe, brethren, a liberal spirit gone forth into the Christian world, and bigotry and party-rage daily lose ground. But the carelessness, and the contempt of the sacred writings, which more and more prevail, are perhaps as dangerous to individuals as the former. May we be able to steer between the rocks on both sides, under the guidance of our heavenly Master!

We admire with you the method God is taking to beat down the pride of philosophy, even by choosing the foolish things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and this is agreeable to the method of God's proceedings in the purest times of Christianity. At the same time, the Lord has not left us without men who, when necessary, are able to contend against that vain philosophy with its own weapons of logical arguments, and with success; though we are sensible how far we are inferior to you, our elder brethren, in this respect.

We bless God, that both we and our people highly esteem all the branches of the Methodist discipline; nor can we possibly be too thankful to our adorable Lord, for that highly-honoured instrument of His grace, your and our late Father in the Gospel, the Rev. John Wesley. We do trust, brethren, we shall with you persevere to walk by the same rules, and mind the same things.

We candidly confess to you, that we were very fearful, when the Lord took that eminent man to his reward, that divisions would take place among you, from the delicate

circumstances in which you were placed. To *us* in general he was personally unknown, and acted only by his delegates. But *you* were honoured with his constant residence and useful labours. Among *you* he superintended for half a century, to the admiration, we had almost said, of the whole civilized world. But our God is infinitely kind to us all. He has preserved both you and us in a wonderful manner. We rejoice in *your* union; and can bless God that we were never more united than at present. A few indeed, who were as great enemies to the civil government under which they lived, as to our discipline, have left us; and we have now not a jarring string among us. God has abundantly owned our feeble labours, during this present Conference, to the people of Baltimore; and we trust it is an earnest of a glorious Gospel-harvest through this continent in the ensuing and future years. At present *you* have the largest sphere of action in respect to the number of souls; but we are humbly endeavouring to sow those seeds of grace, which may grow up and spread in this immense country, which in ages to come will probably be the habitation of hundreds of millions.

We trust we shall never forget your kind advice, but shall always remember that the Methodist Societies through the world are eminently called to be one body, and to be actuated by one spirit; and that we have but one faith, one Lord, and one baptism.

To you and our God we humbly recommend you, fathers and brethren. May His everlasting arms be ever beneath and around you; may His blessed Spirit overshadow you in all

your conferences, and in all your labours; and may that love which we mutually feel towards each other increase a hundred-fold, till we all meet in those realms of bliss where we shall see each other eye to eye, and, with the children God hath given us, live together in the complete union forever!

We subscribe ourselves, with great respect and esteem,  
Your affectionate and younger Brethren in the Gospel,  
The American General Conference

Signed, in behalf and by order of the Conference,

Thomas Coke,  
Francis Asbury

*"An Extract of the Minutes of Several Conversations held at  
Leeds, July 31, etc. 1797." (Minutes of conference.)*

*Transcribed with notes by Frank Baker*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Asbury had visited the Fidlers on June 21. (See *Journal*.)
- [2] Fidler was on the Arlington Circuit in Virginia in 1792.
- [3] O'Kelly had more success than this letter indicates. The Republican Methodists soon changed their name to the Christian Church, and many strong churches were developed in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina.
- [4] Pastor in New York.
- [5] George Suckley, Esq. (an early and steady friend of Asbury's) "yet living, and resident in this city." (Note from *The Methodist Magazine*, 1831, 303.) Suckley was a Methodist in England, where he saw and heard the Wesleys preach. He came to New York with Coke. He was a leading merchant in New York, where he held offices both civil and ecclesiastical. He married Miss Catherine Rutson of Rhinebeck. Suckley lived to serve God and the church until 1845. He was born in 1764 and died in his eighty-first year.
- [6] Local preacher in Fairfax County, Virginia. He had located after traveling for several years. (See *Journal* note on William Watters.)
- [7] John Dickins, Book Agent.
- [8] Asbury is evidently referring to the trip they took into Powhatan County in 1780 when the famous ordinances conference was held at Manakintown. (See *Journal* note on Manakintown.)
- [9] Counties in Virginia.

- [10] Hampden-Sydney, the Presbyterian college in Prince Edward County.
- [11] Joseph Everett was pastor at Cokesbury in 1794. (See *Minutes*.)
- [12] Not clear.
- [13] According to the *Journal*, Asbury was at J. Smith's.
- [14] Presiding elder at Boston.
- [15] Reference is to the O'Kelly Republican Methodist Church, which had begun in Surry County, Virginia, not far from Petersburg. Actually the O'Kellyites, as they were called, made an effort to return to the fold. They felt Asbury gave them no consideration. (See MacClenny, *The Life of Rev. James O'Kelly*, 110-12.)
- [16] Cokesbury College.
- [17] Book Agent in Philadelphia.
- [18] On several occasions Asbury said that his chief affliction was the difficulties caused by his preachers marrying. He said once that the devil and the women were getting his preachers. Following is a report of the marriage of the Rev. William Spencer:

"I have been exercised in my mind for several years about altering my condition in life but was unwilling to quit the traveling connection as long as I found myself able to travel and labour for God and souls. Being fully convinced that the life of a traveling preacher is the best life for holy and constant walking with God and for usefulness to mankind of any other life whatever. I first set out in the vineyard of the Lord with no other motive but to glorify God and to gain souls to my blessed Master, and I was anxious to be as extensively useful as possible feeling,

however, that I was greatly exhausted and entirely unable to go through the labours I had gone through, I began to think seriously and with prayer to God for his blessing and direction about seeking a companion that might be a helpmeet for me. I viewed marriage to be an important matter, indeed, and was truly sensible of the necessity of acting with prudence and caution in so weighty an affair. I accordingly laid the matter before God in constant fervent prayer and likewise counselled with a number of my most judicious, pious, and aged brethren. I shall never forget an expression of an aged pious minister while talking with him on this important subject. 'Depend upon it, my dear Brother (said he) a married life is the happiest or miserablest life upon earth: therefore you do well in laying your case before God, and in counselling with your friends, &c.'

"My continual prayer to God was, that if it was his will I should marry, to chuse one for me that he knew would be a blessing to me in time and Eternity: and I have no doubt but God heard and answered my prayers.

"We were married the first day of November, 1797, in Lunenburg County, Virginia. The name of my wife was Mary Newbill, daughter of Mr. Nathe. Newbill of said County. The ceremony was performed by that man of God (now in Heaven) the Reverend John Easter. We had a small company of serious friends and brethren present, and after we were married, Brother Easter preached an excellent sermon, in which he treated largely upon the duties of husbands and wives, and which, I think, will be



remembered by my wife and myself with profit till death parts us.

"I now took my leave of an itinerant life, in which I had spent between 8 and 9 years, and had the unspeakable happiness to see many souls brought home to God. [For years he taught after this in Charlotte, Cumberland, and other counties.]"

The Experience, &c., of the Reverend William Spencer,  
Vol. I. Property of Dr. Robert B. Pierce, Broadway  
Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana

[19] Date not given, probably July 26, 1794.

[20] George Roberts was presiding elder of the district in New England which included these places in 1793 and 1794. In 1795 he was presiding elder of the New York District. (See *Minutes*.)

[21] The *Minutes* do not list Burrows.

[22] Whatcoat was presiding elder in Delaware.

[23] The O'Kellyites.

[24] Richard Whatcoat, later bishop.

[25] Presiding elder of Holston District.

[26] Barnabas McHenry was presiding elder on the district in 1793 which included Bedford, Bottetourt, Greenbrier, and Cowpasture circuits. Name of district not given in *Minutes*.

[27] Francis Poythress was presiding elder on Cumberland District in 1793.

[28] Edward Mitchell's.

[29] Date, see *Journal*, March 23, 1794. The month is not on the letter.

[30] Presiding elder of Holston District.

- [31] Edward Mitchell's. Southwest Virginia, Bottetourt County.
- [32] John Lindsay was placed on the Holston charge as assistant to Francis Acuff. (See *Minutes*, 1794.) The preachers were listed as assistants.
- [33] Pastor in New York.
- [34] The appointments in 1794 for New York and Brooklyn read, E. Cooper, L. McCombs; supernumeraries, W. Phoebus, J. Brush, D. Kendall. (See *Minutes*, 1794.) J. Brush had been the presiding elder in 1793. Freeborn Garrettson was the presiding elder in 1794.
- [35] Pastor in New York.
- [36] Statement is not clear. The college burned in December, 1795.
- [37] See *Journal* for the place, March 27, 1795. On the letter, which was defaced, only "Ford" appears.
- [38] Presiding elder of the Holston District.
- [39] Now Harrisonburg, formerly Rocktown, also called Rockingham because it was the courthouse seat of Rockingham County.
- [40] Asbury had started a school at Harrisonburg. (See Cummings, *Early Schools of Methodism*, 426.)
- [41] The Negro brethren.
- [42] Cokesbury.
- [43] Asbury stayed at the Widow Woodland's. (See *Journal*.)
- [44] Presiding elder on the Baltimore District.
- [45] Cokesbury College, which was within Reed's district.
- [46] Reference seems to be to Cremutius Cordus, whose Roman history, rabidly republican in tone, was made a ground for a charge of treason in A.D. 25. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XIII, 751.)

- [47] Eutropius, fourth century A.D., Roman historian who wrote a complete compendium in ten books of Roman history.
- [48] Cornelius Nepos, first century B.C., Roman historian who wrote *Chronica*, epitome of universal history, letters to Cicero, and lives of Cato and Cicero.
- [49] Selections from profane works.
- [50] Book Agent.
- [51] Thomas Haskins, who had formerly been a preacher, then a trustee at St. George's Church, Philadelphia. He was a grocer.
- [52] One of the early preachers who served with devotion and distinction. Asbury stayed with him in Manchester (now part of Richmond) shortly before Asbury's death. Across the James River in Richmond, Asbury preached his last sermon. (W.W. Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, 611-12.)
- [53] The Cokesbury College fire occurred on December 7, 1795. The reference is clearly to that. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., January 5, 1796.) Note the following comment on Cokesbury College in an excerpt from a letter from Devereux Jarratt, of Virginia, to John Coleman, an Established Church preacher in Maryland, January 28, 1796.

"I have heard of the fall and destruction of Cokesbury; but as I am not a prophet, nor a prophet's son, I will not tell you what I said to the little doctor [Coke], when he first opened to me his design of building that great house. However, like Micaiah, I gave him no mighty encouragement—nor have matters there turned out much

better than I expected. When men, like those on Shinar's plain, have determined to build, that they might get themselves a name, the Lord has frequently blasted the design. However I was sorry when I heard of the catastrophe: I felt for Mr. Asbury—though I never expected any great things, or good purposes, would result from the erection of that vast pile. Indeed, I see not, how any considerate man could expect any great things from a seminary of learning, while under the supreme direction and control of tinkers and taylors, weavers, shoemakers and country mechanics of all kinds—or, in other words, of men illiterate and wholly unacquainted with colleges and their contents." (*The Life of Devereux Jarratt*, written by himself, 181. Also see letter of October 17, 1806, in which Asbury refers to Coleman's publication of Jarratt's life.) Jarratt died January 29, 1801; and on April 19, 1801, when Asbury was passing through Virginia, he preached Jarratt's funeral, paying tribute to his friend. (See *Journal* reference for this date.)

[54] It seems he means "are in this order."

[55] Reference to O'Kelly schism. Note Jarratt's comment on O'Kelly in the following excerpt from his letter to Coleman, March 3, 1794.

"Though I have not had a letter from you since my last—yet being favoured with an opportunity by the little man [Coke], I must write a few lines. With regard to religious affairs in general I refer you to him, who is both intelligent and communicative. I hope to have some respite from methodistical tongues for a while, as they seem to have work enough to do among themselves. O'Kelly does

great things in the devisive way and I dare say he will make Asbury's Mitre set very uneasy on his head, so as to give sensible pain to his heart, and it may be to such a degree, that he may sincerely wish Dr. Coke had never given him a Mitre at all. Indeed I never expected that Mitre would set easy for any considerable length of time, as it was but a cobbled piece of work at first—and Dr. Coke was the principal agent. The divisions and animosities now subsisting are greater, perhaps, than you can conceive, and yet all these may be but the beginnings of sorrow. In a word I have seen and heard so much of the party zeal, party interest and party spirit of the people called Methodists, and the nefarious methods made use of to put down one and set up another, that I really doubt whether there would be any propriety in giving them the epithet of a religious society. Not that I doubt but are numbers of good people among them. What the end of these things may be, I know not. The little man [Coke], will inform you of more than I can write." (*The Life of Devereux Jarratt*, written by himself, 78.)

[56] The Hammett faction, followers of William Hammett, who had separated in Charleston.

[57] Laymen at St. George's Church.

[58] Book stationer, Baltimore. He is listed in the *Minutes* of 1794 among the preachers who had located "through weakness of body or family concerns." Like many others, he probably had to support a family, which in those days meant location. (See Asbury's letter to his parents, August, 1796.) He was converted under John King about 1771. He

died in 1823 and was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Baltimore.

[59] Reference not clear.

[60] Cokesbury College burned in December, 1795. Asbury evidently felt that the building of the college was a mistake.

[61] Wife of Thomas Haskins. Letter addressed "near 4th Street, Philadelphia." She was Martha Potts before her marriage.

[62] Mrs. John Dickins.

[63] Mrs. Ruff, the wife of Daniel Ruff, the preacher, had died. He entered the traveling connection in 1774 and traveled until 1781, when he evidently "desisted from travelling" because of marriage.

[64] Presiding elder, Holston.

[65] The places referred to are all in the present West Virginia.

[66] Daniel Hitt was presiding elder of the Pittsburgh District, which included the Clarksburg, Ohio, Redstone, and Pittsburgh appointments. (See *Minutes*, 1796.)

[67] The reference is to Virginia, now West Virginia. He says he was accompanied by Daniel Hitt. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., June 1, 1796.) On June 22 he gives a summary of his travels for the period.

[68] Frederick Town was in the Baltimore District, where Joseph Everett was presiding elder. (See *Minutes*, 1796.)

[69] A lay friend of Asbury's at whose home in New York he stopped from time to time.

[70] It is not clear to whom he referred. He later asked Thomas Haskins to do this. (See letter, June 26, 1801.)

[71] Seventeen states in 1796.

[72] Great Barr, England.

[73] Cokesbury.

[74] John Dickins, the Book Agent.

[75] Bishop Coke.

[76] The British Methodist Conference met in London on Monday, July 25, 1796, and agreed that Coke should take over a letter of greeting from the conference to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Coke took it with him when he embarked at Gravesend August 6 on the "Friendship" for Baltimore.

To the General Conference of the People called Methodists in America.

Dearly beloved Brethren:

With real pleasure we embrace the present opportunity, by means of our highly-respected brother, the Rev. Dr. Coke, of greeting you in the name of our common Lord, and of convincing you that we still remember you in love, and have your peace and prosperity greatly at heart. . . . We consider you as a branch from the same root from which we sprung, and of which we can never think but with inexpressible gratitude.

You will rejoice to hear of our unanimity and increase. The more so, as on the death of our venerable father, Mr. Wesley, the contrary was feared by our friends, and wished for by our enemies. Glory be to God, we never were more united to each other; nor were our labours, in general, more owned by the Head of the Church.

We trust, dear brethren, that you will join us, in frequently calling to mind our original design, and "walk by the same

rule and mind the same thing; namely, to save our own souls and those who hear us."

We congratulate you on the honour which our blessed Lord has put upon you, in crowning your endeavours with such amazing success, and blessing you with the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty, for which we also have great cause to be thankful.

May we still remember that, whatever differences may mark other denominations, we are eminently one body, actuated by one Spirit, having one faith, one Lord, one baptism.

That the ever-blessed Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may preside in all your assemblies and continue to distinguish you by particular manifestations of His love, till we meet together in the peaceful mansions of unmixed and never-ending happiness, is the sincere and fervent prayer of,

Dearly beloved Brethren,

Your truly affectionate Brethren in Christ Jesus,

The English Conference

Signed by order and on behalf of the Conference,

Thomas Taylor, President  
Samuel Bradburn, Secretary

This seems to have been the first official address which passed between the Methodists of the two countries, apart from John Wesley's letter of September 10, 1784.

No mention is made in the address of the formal written engagement into which Coke had entered in order to assist



Asbury more fully in the oversight of the rapidly spreading societies.

"I offer myself to my American brethren, entirely to their service, all I am and have, with my talents and labours in every respect, without any mental reservation whatever, to labour among them, and to assist Bishop Asbury; not to station the preachers any time when he is present; but to exercise all the episcopal duties when I hold a Conference in his absence, and by his consent; and to visit the West Indies and France when there is an opening and when I can be spared.

Thomas Coke

Conference Room, Baltimore, October 27, 1796."

The news of this engagement, released by Coke at the Irish Conference, preceded him to the English Conference, causing grave disquiet. Whatever misgivings the English preachers had about Coke's supposed ambitions, they realized that he was too valuable a leader to be driven from them. They made somewhat belated atonement for past neglect—or rejection—by electing him president of the conference. They also pleaded with him on four separate occasions not to desert them for America. Coke was deeply moved but hardly knew what to do. He obviously acquiesced in the reply to the address from America, though for modesty's sake he did not add his presidential signature. This answer, "To Mr. Francis Asbury, and all the Conferences of the People called Methodists in America," spoke of the discord within British Methodism, leading to the formation of the Methodist New

Connexion, and pleaded that he might be released from his engagement to America:

"It is on this ground, that we must request the return of our friend and brother, the Rev. Dr. Coke. He has often been a peace-maker among us, and we have frequently experienced the salutary effects of his advice and exertions in behalf of this part of the Connexion. He has informed us of the engagements he has made to you. But you must spare him to us for a time, at least while these convulsions continue in our Societies; and the sooner you permit him to return, the greater will be the favour. In this, we address you as your elder brethren; and therefore, we had almost said, we will not be denied; and if, when our affairs are in a settled state, he must return to you, to devote the remainder of his days to the work of God upon your continent, he shall return with our blessing and thanks. And, at all events, he shall visit you, if God preserve his life, at your next General Conference."

The English Conference's address went on to proclaim the real unity in spirit of Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic, and stated that any of the American itinerant preachers coming to Great Britain with a recommendation from their annual conference would be freely accepted on transfer and be accorded the full status of their years of traveling. The address was "Signed in behalf, and by order of the British Conference in Leeds, August 10, 1797, SAMUEL BRADBURN, Secretary."

For Asbury's reply from the Virginia Conference see letter, November 29, 1797.

**BETWEEN THE GENERAL CONFERENCES  
OF 1796 AND 1800**

*November 11, 1796 - May 9, 1800*

CHAPTER SIX

**BETWEEN THE GENERAL CONFERENCES  
OF 1796 AND 1800**

November 11, 1796 - May 9, 1800

*The General Conference of 1796 had been held in Baltimore. Asbury had been entertained by the Reeds. Now he is writing back to them with an appended letter to the society. He was traveling through Virginia and had stopped at two taverns on the way. Bishop Coke was along, and they had rested with the Parrot family in Richmond. He wrote this letter at the Walthall's near Chesterfield Courthouse, just outside of Richmond, across the James River.*

CHESTERFIELD, VIRGINIA  
November 11, 1796

[To Nelson Reed]<sup>[1]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am under great obligations to you and my dear Sister Reed for every expression of love and service to make life comfortable, whilst under your roof. We have rode near 200 miles since we made our departure from Baltimore, two nights lodging in taverns,<sup>[2]</sup> well entertained for our money. I have travelled with a sore boil on my cheek. I have contemplated my case to look forward for 4 years to have to ride 6000 miles a year. I thought I would not suffer myself to pass another General Conference and be left so, yet here I am in the same circumstances as before. I am flattered but not

released. I shall be obliged, if you will read the following lines to the society in my name.

"Dearly Beloved in the Lord, the stationed and local ministry, leaders, and members of the Society in Baltimore.

"My being absent from or present with you cannot alter my affection for, care over, or love to you. I hope what I am about to write is from God, and for your good. The Sacramental and Love Feast Communion you hold together, in my humble opinion, is not sufficient. Your classical fellowship is very local. It is impressed upon my mind that the want of prayer bands is somewhat supplied in the men's and women's classes. I most devoutly wish and desire that if not once in a week yet once in two weeks the whole body of the society should meet alone, as the church of God to participate in each others joys, and sorrows, trials, consolations, cares, fears and decisions, hopes, wishes and feelings, that you may speak, and pray, and sing together. I humbly hope it will be rendered a special blessing. It will be needful to give tickets to all the society; who should be admitted at the side doors of the church or meeting house. The Lord is returned to his place, when he will visit us again we know not.

"Let us exhort one another, and use every means. I judge it will be highly necessary for the leading members to meet once in 2 weeks for the temporal interests, and once in 2 weeks for spiritual purposes, and the improvement of their own souls. What I have recommended is a part of old Methodism, as it is practiced at New York and was kept up by the societies in

London. It will be much for the advantage of the society to bring all the gifts into the storehouse that there may be meat in the Lord's house that if any good is communicated to any soul the whole may have the benefit."

I am as ever your faithful  
friend and brother,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*On November 17 Asbury was evidently at the house of Brother Barr in Greensville County, Virginia. Here the Virginia Conference had been in session. John Dickinson, a layman of Wilmington, Delaware, had been a benefactor of Cokesbury College. Of principal interest in this letter are the references to the Chartered Fund.*

GREENSVILLE COUNTY, VIRGINIA  
*November 17, 1796*

[*To John Dickinson*]<sup>[3]</sup>

Dear respected Sir:

After a diligent search for the writings respecting the ground which you were so very kind as to bestow upon our Connexion, they are not to be found. We must, therefore, cast ourselves upon your candour and goodness and entreat favour of you to renew the grant.

Our General Conference lately held in Baltimore agreed, from the hints given them by many of their principal friends to establish a fund for the support of our travelling preachers,

among the mountains and in the Western Territories, and to supply the wants of our superannuated preachers and the widows and orphans of preachers. We have appointed several of our most respectable friends in Philadelphia, trustees of this fund viz, Messrs. Jacob Baker,<sup>[4]</sup> Haskins, North,<sup>[5]</sup> etc. and prefer the State of Pennsylvania for the chartering of the fund. Several thousand dollars have been already subscribed and as the former deed which you were so kind as to execute is lost, we are persuaded, that there is no charity in our Connexion to which the land can be granted, so important or so secure as the above described. The principal of all the subscriptions, grants, legacies, etc. is never to be touched. The interest is to be at the disposal of our yearly conferences, under such regulations as shall be made from time to time, at the four years General Conference.

We therefore, Sir, do entreat the favour of you to execute another deed instead of that which is lost, and if you be pleased to convey the land to Jacob Baker, Thomas Haskins and Caleb North, merchants in Philadelphia, as mediate persons, they will secure it to the Chartered Fund, without giving you further trouble. But we shall write to them immediately that they may make themselves known to you, that everything may be settled according to your superior judgment. We give you a great deal of trouble in this business but we know you will pardon us.

We subscribe ourselves, with great respect, dear respected  
Sir,

Your much obliged and very humble servants,

Thomas Coke  
Francis Asbury

P.S. We send you this letter by our much respected brother, Jesse Lee, one of our Presiding Elders. Dr. Coke intended doing himself the honour of paying a visit to Mr. Dickinson<sup>[6]</sup> this winter, but letters lately received from England, prevent his enjoying that happiness. However, he intends to return to America in about a twelve month's time and shall be highly grateful if Providence then indulges him with this pleasure. His respects wait on Mr. Dickinson.

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*There are only a few of the Asbury letters that cannot be dated definitely upon internal evidence or otherwise. This is one that cannot. However, the name Thorne provides the cue. She was a noted woman class leader and was both a Pennsylvanian and a North Carolinian. She had also been familiar with Charleston, South Carolina, as she had been originally a convert of the Rev. Oliver Hart, a Baptist preacher, who led her to Christ in North Carolina. He later lived in Charleston, South Carolina. She lost her husband and later married Captain Parker, a sea captain, and moved to England.*



[NEWBERN, N.C.]<sup>[7]</sup>  
[December 17, 1796]

[To Mrs. Parker]<sup>[8]</sup>

My dear Sister:

It is possible that you have so far forgotten your own country and your Father's House. Long have I wished, oft have I sighed [?] (about sister Thorne but no account, so have you changed your name and former friends and country [where?]). Surely you sometimes think how often we have sat and talked together at your own house and the houses of others, about the precious things of God. In per conversation last evening, the Doctor<sup>[9]</sup> gave me the most perfect information of your state. Your friends have thought strange indeed you never wrote. I do most earnestly desire you will send me a letter every year as long as you and myself live. You know I have faithfully and frequently lent you my feeble hand in tenderness and love to pluck you out of the low dungeon when your soul has been covered with an awful gloom.

You are become a joyful mother of children. Oh, let not these dear little creatures draw your heart from God. Remember pious Watts "The fondness of a creature's love, how strong it strikes the sense" and so on. Oh my dear sister what poison lies rapt up in every sweet connection of life; once you thought so, but now you painfully feel it. I desire you would write me all your heart that when I know your case, though at this distance, I may give you some advice and — [?] my pastoral charge. The prospect of religion, the glory of Zion, and the increase of the sons and daughters, the

opening we have in your native soil, the building a church in Charleston and the joyning some thousands, in that state. Doctor Coke who is the missionary of the churches will inform you. I have been rather sharp in my present letter but unless you write me with great freedom and acknowledge your fault in neglecting me and your American friends may be I shall be more severe.

I shall be pleased to represent you to your old friends, as being as ever and more than ever given up to God. I charge you before God be much in prayer, spend when able not less than an hour in the morning and the same in the evening in solemn private meditation and prayer with God every day and step aside at noon to speak with God if you can. Seek perfect love, seek it now. Brother and Sister Baker<sup>[10]</sup> and Wilmer<sup>[11]</sup> yet alive. Sister Patterson went from home a few weeks past into the unseen world. There I expect to see you. It appears providence has given me your country and strangely united my heart to the country and people so it is with you in respect to my country. I am with affectionate regards as ever yours,

F. Asbury

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*This letter shows some of the pressure Asbury put on Coke to stay in America. Coke and Asbury were beloved friends. However, Asbury had given up everything to become an American, and Coke was definitely an Englishman. His first loyalties were to his native land. On the other hand, Asbury never offered to turn over the episcopal functions to Coke and*

*Coke felt it. Asbury records in the Journal on February 8, "Tomorrow my dear Coke sails for Europe."*

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*February 8, 1797*

[*To Bishop Coke*]

My very dear friend, Dr. Coke:

When I consider the solemn offer<sup>[12]</sup> you made of yourself to the General Conference, and their free and deliberate acceptance of you as their Episcopos, I must view you as most assuredly bound to this branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. You cannot, you dare not but consider yourself as a servant of the church, and a citizen of the continent of America. And although you may be called to Europe, to fulfil some prior engagements, and wind up your temporal affairs, nothing ought to prevent your hasty return to the continent, to live and die in America. I shall look upon you as violating your most solemn obligations, if you delay your return.

If you are a man of a large mind, you will give up a few islands for a vast continent, not less than 1400 miles in length, and 1000 miles in breadth. We have sixteen United States for ingress and regress, rising not like little settlements, but like large nations and kingdoms. I conclude, that I consider you are no longer a citizen of Wales or England, but of the United States of America. I am, with great respect,

Your ever dear brother,

Francis Asbury

P.S. I give you this to remind you, lest you should forget what you have done, and what the General Conference expects from you.

*Samuel Drew, The Pioneer Bishop, viii-ix*

*George Roberts was for years one of the most frequent correspondents of Asbury. Asbury was in Charleston as usual in the winter months. He was greatly disturbed and distressed by the death of a dear friend, Brother Wells. He had been working on the discipline, and this letter tells of that. He makes reference in this letter to the parting with Coke. In the Journal on February 10 he says, "This day Dr. Coke is waiting to sail for Ireland. Strangers to the delicacies of Christian friendship know little or nothing of the pain of parting." The date on the letter has been torn out; but as Asbury makes reference to Coke on February 10 and says he was writing on the next day, then February 11 is the date.*

[CHARLESTON], S.C.  
[February 11, 1797]

[To George Roberts]<sup>[13]</sup>

My very dear George:

I am now answering two letters to one received. Yesterday in the evening, our dear Coke embarked in a Scotch vessel for Ireland. When I left you and Baltimore, that evening, I rode in the night till 8 o'clock, in which I suffered. We came drifting and dusting along, sometimes three, then half a dozen, and a dozen in company. Our route was through Alexandria, Colchester, Dumfries, Fredericksburg, and Richmond and

Petersburg. I was pleased to find general harmony. When we read them the decrees of yearly conferences we had great peace.

It seems the temple of war on James<sup>[14]</sup> is shut up. I must needs take my course through Norfolk, Portsmouth, Newbern, Wilmington, Georgetown, and then to this seat. The excessive rides, and cold and night work were preparing me with cold upon cold, [as] we came 30, 40, and 50 miles per day. We had great peace in the Charleston Conference. News of revivals in both States, Georgia and this. I went out one morning early; as frequently at night. By the death of Brother Wells<sup>[15]</sup> I was called out. I felt a kind of dumb stretching ague. At last it set me fast. For 20 days I chiefly kept my room. I never went to bed but one day, when seized with a violent shaking fever and ague, that held me cold and hot for six or seven hours. I knew not if the ague should get into my old system now how it might be. But blessed be God for men and means. I am better. Dr. Coke supplied my lack of service. If it was needful for me to be sick, it could not have been a better time and place. [Some defaced.]

We have written what will make about 100 printed pages,<sup>[16]</sup> have bound our work with six or 700 printed scriptures. Our hearts, hands, heads, eyes, Bibles, and concordances have been employed. I hope the work will please, convince, and instruct. We are only sorry we did not ask the General Conference to give us leave to strike out the childish questions, and to lay the text as well as the notes properly together. I view the work of vast importance that

hath cost us such application and thought for months and years. Brother James O'Kelly answered a woman who asked the difference between me and him. He gave her the powerful return. "Suppose," said he, "I were to show you the Bible and a form of discipline made by the General Conference, would you not know the difference?" For this cause we have abounded in scripture, and when we consider the form is 70 pages, we have not been prolix in the notes. Every explanation must be more than the text. We have guarded against weak arguments, and improper scripture, and against anything harsh and reflecting on others. We have struck out many to us exceptional parts of the tracts. These we did not hold as sacred as the discipline which we did not alter a word. In this we have been peculiarly careful that our notes should not speak a different meaning from the text. I judge it of such consequence that I shall offer the reading not only before the Philadelphia Conference but before every yearly conference in the Union. We have read a part before the Charleston Conference that we had ready.

The Doctor's time was lengthened only to write the last lines leaving out the Tract on Baptism, and the Service, without ordination service, it will be about 300 pages. As to what you say on Discipline it is true as to the church of England or Episcopal Protestants. There are many objections. If they have the doctrine, they do not preach it at all. They are a settled, man made, worldly ministry under no discipline and always have been. 'Tis our traveling plan like the flying camp is the matter: if they do not take the fever and die up! The

Maryland —— suffered much but afterward they weathered the storm.

In about fifteen days I march for Cumberland and Kentucky, shall make a route of nearly 1,000 miles to Baltimore. There you may meet me with a letter the first of June. I am to take Relief,<sup>[17]</sup> stiff as he is, 10 years old, my skin and my clothing, and not 3 dollars in my purse. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof! Brother Nichols did not write. Unless in urgent business, I only act on the defensive, that is, answer the preachers when they write. I am pleased to hear that the house is about at the 2 mile stone; more so to hear that the Africans are about building one; help them all you can. The more houses the more people; and the more preaching, and the more converted.

I met with nothing which so gladdened my hearers in sickness as the seeing a letter from [Vanderlip to ——] giving an account of the work at the New Church. I suppose the whole society could meet every week, at the old church<sup>[18]</sup> once a fortnight, and the same at the new church.<sup>[19]</sup> I must believe this to have been the constant practice of the primitive church. I am perfectly satisfied with the part I took in the General Conference relative to the slaves. It is of great consequence to us to have proper access to the masters and slaves. I had a case, a family I visited more than a year ago, a tyrannical old Welshman. I saw there he was cruel, his people were wicked, and treated like dogs. "Well," say you, "I would not go near such a man's house." That would be just as the devil would have it. In one year I saw that man much

softened, his people admitted into the house of prayer, the whole plantation, 40 or 50 singing and praising God. What now can sweeten the bitter cup like religion? The slaves soon see the preachers are their friends, and soften their owners towards them. There are thousands here of slaves who if we could come out to them would embrace religion. It is of vast moment for us to send the news far and wide. It hath its influence.

James King will be on this station. You may write to him. Ann Willis<sup>[20]</sup> lives where her husband died, or you may direct a letter to Jonathan Jackson, presiding elder, and he will spread the news through the Carolinas and Georgia, be particular.

We have had hundreds brought in through Georgia and South Carolina, and some parts of North Carolina the last year. You can promise me as much as I can you the present. Where do you live? Remember I live *here* as you said to the *man*. How long do you keep in the work, the present moment we can promise. As to the Baltimore burning, after a little shock at first it seems no more to me than as much chaff. If the LORD loves these people he will keep them down. Burning is a lottery, and many make a benefit of the calamity which I suppose is one. I only wish to know who burnt Cokesbury, which I shall ever believe was done wickedly, and I am sure it will come out at the day of Judgment. I have



written—circumstantially, I am weak. I suppose you will let the brethren know what they wish to hear of me.

I am as ever thine

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*The New York Public Library has two originals of Asbury's letters. This is one of them. The other is addressed on the envelope to Major Van Cortlandt. They are in the Van Cortlandt collection, and some have taken them for letters written to the man who was lieutenant governor of New York State for eighteen years and called "Governor." Asbury paid tributes to him on several occasions. Lieutenant Governor Van Cortlandt resided in the old Manor House on the Croton in New York. He was very rich. He entertained distinguished guests, among them Washington, Lafayette, Franklin, and Whitefield. Whitefield preached there. The Methodist preachers stopped at his house. Pierre Van Cortlandt was the first lieutenant governor of New York. He was president of the convention that adopted the constitution of the state of New York. The "governor" became a Methodist and gave the land for a church and burying ground. He lived to be ninety-three years of age and died on May 1, 1814. Henry Boehm has given an extended account of Van Cortlandt in his Reminiscence. However, this letter was evidently written to Philip Van Cortlandt, the elder son of "Governor" Van Cortlandt.*

—[N.Y.]<sup>[21]</sup>  
August 29, 1797

[*To Philip Van Cortlandt*]<sup>[22]</sup>

My much respected friend:

I have a serious leisure to write to my friends, but mental and body powers are weak. I am greatly obliged to you for the remembrance of me and earnest wish to see me at your mansion.<sup>[23]</sup> It is upwards of twelve years since I began the wreck of my constitution, when I became more immediately the superintendent of our community in America. We have been assisted to spread our Gospel from friends, and sometimes through the Western United States, the Northwest Territory, Upper Canada and the other British Provinces. Altho we do not number yet, we may calculate upon one hundred thousand that stand in the above named states in friendship and are in some degree of fellowship with us and perhaps ten hundred thousand that are our regular hearers. Thus both the Lord wrought for and by us his ministers and people: if we may even dare to call ourselves so. Many of our preachers have suffered want, hunger labour, lodging, rocks, rivers, mountains, wilderness, preaching in the Southern States, night and day, the people forcing [them] to their lodgings. Whenever a preacher is in the settlement, the tribes of poor slaves coming in the night, that cannot come in the day, the unhealthy climates: many young men that have seldom wrought in hard labour and tenderly brought up where they have had servants to do the drudgery of the plantations, these have had little life except the clash of arms and [company] encampments; many of the hardships of the American war that you have known something of; their zeal

and indefatigable labors wrecking their slender systems. A rehearsal of the things to Dr. Joseph Ramsey in Charleston astonished him, and that for the poor pittance of \$64,<sup>[24]</sup> the half or one third, this made the doctor offer and continue to our ministers his medicine and service gratis.

Of myself I may speak as a fool, if my Journals can pass the press [and] will satisfy the candid within. I have been labouring or loitering within, I have been resting on beds of roses or suffering night and [day], I stand astonished at myself and the goodness of God that I have been kept alive and moving. During my ten months indisposition I have rode upon horseback above two thousand miles in the worst of weather and country south and west and yet after all I am an unprofitable servant. I have not done my duty.

My dear friend I feel a great tenderness for you and your whole family for your distinguished kindness to our people when they were few in member. You are blessed with a goodly mother<sup>[25]</sup> as I am also. You have a gracious sister<sup>[26]</sup> whose soul with mine longeth for the salvation of your soul and the soul of your brother. But how hardly shall they that not only have much of this world, but are in connection with the policy and interests of this world.<sup>[27]</sup> My dear friend you hear, you feel the gospel, do you pray and strive? Early guidance being called, and [you] are a child of a mother's prayers and tears. Jesus hath bled for you. From a child God hath been at work on your heart. Probably in war and trouble saved, and perhaps you promised God if He would spare you, you would seek Him. When the Methodists<sup>[28]</sup> came along at

the first you had perhaps awful and palpable conviction, you could not hide it. You cannot keep away from Methodist preaching, you would feel a great disappointment and from rest to come to hear, you cannot be happy in a worldly enjoyment, you love some of the ministry as your own soul, yea perhaps more than your own soul if yet you do not love God. I should be happy to see you and to see you love Jesus. I have been forbid reading, writing and such exercises. Elder Wells<sup>[29]</sup> that attends me writeth my letters in general, but I would trust none with this, but myself, if even I see you again may it be in Jesus, farewell,

Most affectionately yours

F. Asbury

P.S. Excuse me I am in the country and want paper. With great respect remember me to the family.

*New York Public Library*

*Jesse Lee was one of the founders of American Methodism, being the father of New England Methodism. The New England Conference had been set to be held in Wilbraham on September 19, 1797. Because of his illness Asbury could not go. Lee was appointed to preside over the conference. The letter is most interesting, especially in the light of the letter which Jesse Lee wrote to Asbury on April 10, 1815, and which is printed with these letters. Asbury evidently expected Lee to be elected to the episcopacy. The whole letter does not appear in either Jesse Lee's history or Tigert's constitutional*

*history. The paragraphs printed here are taken from both sources.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
September 12, 1797

[To Jesse Lee]<sup>[30]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am convinced that I ought not to attempt to come to the Conference at Wilbraham. Riding thirteen miles yesterday threw me into more fever than I have had for a week past. It will be with difficulty I shall get back. I have sent Brother Wells<sup>[31]</sup> who next to Jonathan<sup>[32]</sup> has seen much of my continual labour and afflictions for many days and miles. The burden lieth on thee; act with a wise and tender hand; specially on the stations. I hope it will force the connection [his poor health] to do something and turn their attention for one to assist or substitute me. I cannot express the distress I have had in all my afflictions for the state of the connection. We say the Lord will provide. True, but we must look out for men and means. The Lord could have provided without such a poor, worthless creature as I am crossing the Atlantic. You and every man that thinks properly, will find it will never do to divide the North from the South. Methodism is Union all over; Union in exchange of preachers; Union and exchange of sentiment; Union and exchange of interests; we must draw resources from center to circumference.

[There must have been at this time, growing out of the O'Kelly schism, some talk of dividing the Church on sectional lines. The bishop was, as indicated in the letter, in great

distress, both in mind and body. Again, in the same letter, he says to Mr. Lee:] Your brethren in Virginia wish you to come forth. I think the most general and impartial election may take place in the yearly Conferences; every one may vote, and in General Conference, perhaps, one-fifth or one-sixth part would be absent. I wish you to come, and keep as close to me and my direction as you can. I wish you to go, after the Conference soon to meet in New York, to Georgia, Holston, and Kentucky, and perhaps come to Baltimore in June, if the ordination<sup>[33]</sup> should take place, and so come on to the Eastern Conference.

Francis Asbury<sup>[34]</sup>

*Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodists, 481-82*

*Nothing is known of this letter except what is here. Evidently the young man was considering the ministry, and Asbury was following up some contact he had had with him.*

NEW JERSEY

*October 5, 1797*

[*To Daniel Smith*]<sup>[35]</sup>

My very dear Brother Smith:

After riding two days we are anchored in a storm at Father Hutchinson's. I feel like a man leaving the world and think every place is my last. I think of my dear brethren in New York. How long I have lived with, loved, served and cared for them. You, my dear friend, owe all that you have to the Methodists, and will freely give them your willing and consecrated services. You have understanding, utterance and

knowledge, to be very acceptable. We have three houses and four congregations. Life and zeal and close union with the stationed preachers will render you a useful and desirable preacher. I wish you to be so. I pray that you may be richly filled and moved by the Holy Ghost. I am your real, but plain and faithful friend.

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Asbury was very particular about the editing of the Discipline. He gave directions about the editing. Anything which affected the church as the discipline did would be subject to great criticism. This is only one page of a three-page letter preserved in Garrett Biblical Institute Library and discovered too late for this volume.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
*October 24, 1797*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[36]</sup>

As to the Notes on the Discipline, I wish them to be printed in January. By all means leave out the letters. Put the Deed at the end, and place the different branches of the Minutes of the last General Conference in the sections where they belong. And about Brother Dickins'<sup>[37]</sup> allowance, put it all to death; it is no article of faith nor discipline.

Do your best; take time; expect no thanks from men, but do all you can. Angels can do no more. I shall be very free in

giving my opinion on any subject the Committee shall think proper, throu' you, to consult me.

I write to you from Baltimore, October 24, 1797. Bear this in mind.

Francis Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*The uncertainty and slowness of the mail are shown in the fact that two letters, one for each year, have come into Asbury's hands. However, his letters frequently were held at a city some months for his arrival. Here he shows that he has made up his mind to remain in America until he shall go to glory.*

VIRGINIA<sup>[38]</sup>  
[November 20, 1797]<sup>[39]</sup>

[To his Parents]

My very dear, and never to be forgotten Father and Mother:

I have received your letters, written in 1795, and 1796, and must wish you to get some friend to write very circumstantially once a year. I have been laying by, in the hands of our general book-steward,<sup>[40]</sup> in Philadelphia, about twenty guineas. The distance, and the difficulties of remitting money, are great, at least in such small sums. I have now resolved that the only way will be for our general book-steward to send his orders to Mr. George Whitefield, in London. I have strong assurances of brethren, on both sides the water, that they will take care of you, if I were dead. But



all flesh is grass! It is with the greatest difficulty I can see you supplied while in life; and as much whisper and noise about it as though I had sent you thousands. How will it be when I am gone to rest! Next to leaving the church, I feel for you. We must learn, you and I, to trust God.

It gives me pleasure to think you have kept open house near forty years, and spent what you had to spare on the cause of God. I hope my dear neighbours, and the rising generations, will not forget to praise God, and remember the name of Asbury, that brought and supported the Gospel among them. If I were to leave America I should break my heart; and if I stay perhaps I shall break my constitution. But here I must die! May you find a safe passage from England, and I from America, to glory. I send a small present for each, [a chasm made here by the breaking of the seal]. I have settled with Doctor Coke for the ten pounds. If the Doctor should offer you money you may take it, I shall use every prudential means to pay him. I must now, as I have done this thirty and eight years, commend you to God, and remain your unworthy, yet grateful son,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*The Virginia Conference is answering the British Conference in reference to the request of the General Conference for the services of Bishop Coke. The address indicates that the matter is a General Conference decision. Asbury was coming more and more to feel that Bishop Coke*

*would be lost to America and that another bishop would be necessary.*

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE<sup>[41]</sup>

LANE'S CHAPEL<sup>[42]</sup>

*November 29, 1797*

The address of the Virginia Conference to the members of the British Conference,

Respected Fathers and Brethren:

As you, in your brotherly kindness, were pleased to address a letter to us, your brethren and friends in America, expressing your difficulties and desires concerning our beloved brother, Dr. Coke, that he might return to Europe to heal the breach which designing men have been making among you, or to prevent its threatened overflow, we would observe to you, that have but one grand responsive body, which is our General Conference, and it was in and to this body the Doctor entered his obligations to serve his brethren in America. No yearly conference, no official character, dare assume to answer for that grand federal body.

By the advice of the yearly conference now sitting in Virginia, and the respect I bear to you, I write to inform you that in our own persons and order we consent to his return, and partial continuance with you, and earnestly pray that you may have much peace, union, and happiness together. May you find that your divisions end in a greater union, order, and harmony of the body, so that the threatened cloud may blow

over, and your divisive party may be of as little consequence to you as ours is to us.

With respect to the Doctor's returning to us, I leave your enlarged understandings, and good sense to judge. You will see the number of souls upon our annual minutes, and as men of reading, you may judge over what a vast continent these societies are scattered. I refer you to a large letter I wrote our beloved brother Bradburn<sup>[43]</sup> on the subject.

By a probable guess, we have, perhaps, from 1,000 to 1,200 traveling and local preachers. Local preachers daily rising up and coming forward with proper recommendations from their respective societies, to receive ordination, besides the regulation and ordinations of the yearly conferences. From Charleston, South Carolina, where the conference was held, to the province of Maine, where another conference is to be held, there is a space of about 1,300 miles; and we have only one worn-out<sup>[44]</sup> Superintendent, who was this day advised by the yearly conference to desist from preaching till next spring, on account of his debilitated state of body. But the situation of our affairs requires that he should travel about 5,000 miles a year, through many parts unsettled, and other thinly peopled countries. I have now with me an assistant<sup>[45]</sup> who does everything for me he constitutionally can; but the ordaining and stationing the preachers can only be performed by myself in the Doctor's<sup>[46]</sup> absence.

We have to lament that our superintendency is so weak, and that it cannot constitutionally be strengthened till the

ensuing General Conference. How I have felt and must feel under such critical and important circumstances, I leave you to judge.

To write much on the subject would be imposing on my own weakness, and your good understanding. I speak as unto wise men, judge what I say.

Wishing you great peace and spiritual prosperity, I remain your brother, your friend, your servant for Christ's sake,

Francis Asbury

*Samuel Drew, The Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke, 285-86*

*There is some confusion as to the references in this letter. It looks as if John Kobler was still presiding elder on the Kentucky District. If the Minutes are correct, he was changed to the Cumberland Circuit in Tennessee at the Virginia Conference which met at Salem Church on April 9, 1798. Asbury indicates here that that Salem Conference had not yet been held as of May 6. In 1797 Jonathan Bird was presiding elder on the Holston District, made up of Green, Holston, Russell, and New River in Virginia.*

WIDOW SISSILS  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
May 6, 1798

[*To John Kobler*]

My very dear Brother:

Being so much in haste and so in a crowd<sup>[47]</sup> I could say but little and think less. I have judged it will be expedient for thee to attend the next Virginia Conference at Salem and to bring out three with thee. Take your choice in the matter of Gibson, Jonathan Bird, Jarratt or Nathaniel Munsay.<sup>[48]</sup> These may expect a change. Six or eight such conferences as from the territory<sup>[49]</sup> to Bottetourt, to be performed in one year will work down my strength, if not my courage. I think you want more of the wisdom of the serpent to find out the wisdom of the serpent that will work powerfully at times in both sexes and all orders of man. Suppression is a grace if not carried to excess. Dangers stand thick through all the ground to push us into spiritual death, and the grave of sin.

We have need to spend one third at least of our time in prayer, one third in labour, and one third in sleep. We ought not to be all that time on our knees. We should ride and sit and walk in the presence of God. I have rode so hard, fasted so much, slept so little, my nervous system is in a flutter and I am full of irritation and to crown all, Brother Ray<sup>[50]</sup> and Baldwin<sup>[51]</sup> have led us through the hills and it was nearly to being hot and dry for a mile. Now we breathe and then we go along, only let us go on in faith and in patience doing and suffering the whole will of God. Write by post to Philadelphia or Baltimore. I am as ever thine in a sweet Redeemer,

gratefully I acknowledge your love to me, when unknown by person and some well known.

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*The news of Joseph Asbury's death had come to his son, Francis, though not directly. He writes immediately to his mother and gives some advice. He cannot see that it would be best for her to come to America. He reviews his sicknesses over recent months. He received the confirmation of his father's death upon his arrival in New York on June 13.*

[PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA]

[June 3, 1798]<sup>[52]</sup>

[To his Mother]

My dear Mother:

From the information I have received, I may fear my venerable father is no more an inhabitant of this earth; you a widow, myself an orphan, with respect to a father. I cannot tell how to advise you in this important change. I dare not forbid your coming to this continent. At present, I have neither health, nor purse, nor inclination, nor confidence, to re-cross the seas. It was there my serious times began. Comparatively, I never knew charge or trouble till I became an inhabitant of the sea; and in the new world. You have washed the saints' feet this forty years; you have entertained strangers, brought up children, and have done some good works. It is a comfort to my soul when I reflect that you have kept the Gospel ministry in your house so many years, whilst,

with my small abilities, I have been doing a little to spread the Gospel through sixteen states, any one of them, except two, affording more space than England. I wish you to stay, to support the cause of Christ in your house, to the latest hour.

If my father is taken away, I advise you to take a pious prudent woman to live with you, for company, and consolation. If I should wear my coat, one of the kind, with other parts of apparel, fourteen or fifteen months, I will try to remit as heretofore. I have formed no other connection. This might give you some assurance that I am still your son. As to the reward for the troubles you have felt, what compensation could I give? It is pretty well known here that I was born poor, my calling and everything. We have had many who have risen up from Europe, and in this country, that could not have their gratification, and have cast at me what they could find. I thank my God, I have been able to live up, in some degree, to the dignity and duty of a Christian and a minister.

I am exceedingly pleased with the attention Mr. Philips has paid and will pay to you. You have had yourself respectable, and extensive in friends, who, although they cannot give to you, can comfort you. I have been, as you may have heard, afflicted by excessive labours of mind and body. I had to neglect writing, reading, and preaching, for a time. I only attempt to preach on Sabbath days. I have had many ounces of blood taken away. I had to stop and lie by in some precious families, where parents and children, in some measure, supplied your absence. I laid by in Virginia.<sup>[53]</sup> When you hear the name, you will love it unseen, and say, "That was where

my Frank was sick." I am much mended, and live wholly upon a vegetable diet.

I move in a little carriage,<sup>[54]</sup> being unable to ride upon horseback. My route ought to be three thousand miles a year. I should wish, if a few guineas would procure it, a perfect plain portrait of yourself. O my mother! let us be holy, and watch, and pray, that we may meet in heaven. You have professed religion fifty years, living, feeling religion; a mother you ought to be in Israel. Your numerous friends will hear, and listen, when you die, to know if your last days were peace and triumph! were you to see me, and the colour of my hair, nearly that of your own. But still God is with me. My soul exults in God.

As ever, your dear son,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*There is considerable evidence that Asbury was most sensitive to the criticism which came to his ears from time to time of his personal habits. Because he sold books and because he sent money to his parents as regularly as possible, rumors spread around that he had means. He frequently explains his manner of living and his poverty.*



[NEW YORK, N.Y.]<sup>[55]</sup>

[June 18, 1798]

[*To John Dickins*]<sup>[56]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

As life with me now is a greater uncertainty than heretofore, I am concerned to communicate these few lines to the public, not doubting but they will give information and satisfaction to the candid and conscientious. It may be thought by those who measure others by themselves, that I have gained much honor, ease, power, and interest in my station in the Church of God. Nay, I have lived upon the providence of God and the charity of a few friends.

My method for many years has been to keep an account of what has been given me without solicitation. I have also kept an account of what I have expended annually, charging the connection with my salary of sixty-four dollars per year and my travelling expenses, as another preacher. When I have wanted a horse or carriage my friends have provided for me. My friends of Maryland, Delaware, Philadelphia, Jersey, and New York have chiefly communicated this supply. As to Virginia or the Carolinas, (except in a few extraordinary cases), as also Georgia, and the western and eastern States, I have visited them, taking nothing unless in extreme want on my side, or in great benevolence of my friends on the other. As to the college,<sup>[57]</sup> it was all pain and no profit, but some expense and great labor. From the Preachers' Fund the conferences can witness for me I have taken nothing. Of the book interest you can witness I have received nothing. Of the Chartered Fund I am independent, and wish to keep so. Of

money brought to conference, or collected publicly at times, it has been appropriated with the nicest equality to the wants and deficiencies of the preachers, but not any to me.

You have settled my annual accounts and have the book charge. Brother Nelson Reed<sup>[58]</sup> will do me the justice I demand, he having had the settling of the college books and my accounts. Brothers T. Morrell<sup>[59]</sup> and Philip Bruce<sup>[60]</sup> have had a most intimate acquaintance with my temporal affairs, and the inspection of my yearly accounts; yet after all I must die, to prove, my last will and testament, that I have not made my gain by the Gospel of Christ. And should I die as poor as I have lived, it will be said by suspicious, ungenerous men that I have made appropriations in my lifetime. I shall call upon the conferences, John Dickins, Nelson Reed, and Thomas Morrell, as witnesses to the truth of what I have written, as a debt of duty and of love they owe me, who am their brother and companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

Francis Asbury  
*W.P. Strickland, The Pioneer Bishop, 195-97*

*It is not clear from this letter what was involved in the controversy at St. George's Church. To it evidently was related the division which resulted in the church and which is described in the appended note to this letter.*

NEW YORK STATE<sup>[61]</sup>  
September 27, 1798

To the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church  
in Philadelphia,

I am informed there is some ground of complaint made by Jacob Baker and James Doughty<sup>[62]</sup> related to a late purchase they have made in what they think the church Trustees or major part are indebted some pounds, in which they have been led to expend money. These are to require you forthwith if you judge it necessary to order an examination and arbitration of the matter, the Trustees<sup>[63]</sup> choosing one man of the Society and the above-mentioned persons to make a choice of another, these may choose a third. Observe how or by whom it is to be paid will be an after matter. You are now to inquire into the merits and justice of the matter and an opinion in writing must be given by the referees.

In so doing you must oblige your friend and brother,

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*The news of the death of John Dickins reached Asbury several days late while he was traveling in New Jersey. On October 9 he was in Baltimore, and Asbury Dickins was with him. He records in his Journal on that day, "I had John Dickins' son with me: we sketched out a few traits of his*

*father's life. For piety, probity, profitable preaching, holy living, Christian education of his children, secret, closet prayer, I doubt whether his superior is to be found either in Europe or America."*

GERMANTOWN, PA.

*October 4, 1798*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[64]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

What I have greatly feared for years hath now taken place. Dickins,<sup>[65]</sup> the generous, the just, the faithful, skillful Dickins, is dead! I have had but one day to deliberate; duty, necessity, calleth me to be precipitant. You will anticipate what I am going to write. It is to you, and you only, I can look at present, in the recess of the Philadelphia Conference, to assist Asbury Dickins in the conducting our work as heretofore. You will correct the press? You will superintend the state and entries of the various accounts, that the connection and the family suffer no material injury? The Magazine must be continued; five or ten thousand hymn-books will be wanting immediately, and sundry other books. Brother Lee<sup>[66]</sup> will, if he is furnished with proper papers, collect what money can be obtained southward. We have done what we could eastward.

My dear brother, I need say but little; you will now have it in your power to render the connection and family such extension service as your heart, I hope, desires. I can only appoint at present, that the cause and family may not suffer. What the Philadelphia Conference will do, is with them. I

hope to be at Isaac Hersay's upon Friday evening; at North East Maryland on Sabbath-day. My horse is worn down. My health is greatly repaired, but ah! what is life? We have had great prospects eastward. As soon as the city is accessible you will go in. We shall send the Minutes for the present year. My long-lost manuscript journal I left with Betsy Dickins;<sup>[67]</sup> I must read it over before anything can be done. I am afraid to have it sent but by a sure hand, by land. I feel resolved, if the Conference pleaseth, to publish my scraps of journals as my all to the connection, and answer to those that trouble me. In this sickly state of things I must make haste.

Some letters written by Mr. O'Kelly, are now in Philadelphia to Mr. Wesley and the Doctor. I want to confront that wonderful man. Brother Lee and some others, with myself, premeditate to attend the Republican Conference<sup>[68]</sup> to demand the author of the book entitled *Christicola*, and controvert the charges as false.

I am, as ever, thine,

Francis Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Cooper had been in charge of the Book Concern for about three months. It is clear here that Asbury had made to a great extent the rules for the handling of the books. Cooper was not finding it easy to carry on in John Dickins' place. In fact, it took a long time to settle up the business and close the Dickins' estate.*

[CHARLESTON, S.C.]<sup>[69]</sup>

January 8, 1799

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[70]</sup>

My very dear Friend:

I anticipated the difficulties that would come in your way of conducting the Book Concern. It was not in my power to stipulate with you for what time, you should have the management. We feel ourselves under doubts with respect to remitting money without special assurances of the application and proper security for our property. We cannot desire any person to do our work for nothing; yet we want it punctually done. Brother Haskins's<sup>[71]</sup> and Asbury Dickins's letters came while the Conference was sitting in this city. Conference voted, hit or miss, to carry on the work forthwith, and nominated several books to be printed immediately. Conference agreed that a committee should consider the contents of your letter, received this day. We feel our doubts concerning the printing of more books at present. We have some scruples upon our minds if it will be possible to carry on the work in Philadelphia in future. The collecting of money will be attended to by Brother Lee,<sup>[72]</sup> with the greatest activity and punctuality. If you stay in town, I wish you would see books sent to orders, that we may sell off with great speed. I judge it will not be improper for you, upon the side and safety of the connection, to keep a list of money paid to the executors, and how it is applied; and you may keep an account of all the books you send out, and receive the cash for them; and what you shall have for your service you must leave to the Conference.

How to talk at the distance of seven hundred miles is not easy. My infirmity, and the general abuse I have had from men that have risen up against us, and the great suspicions raised in the minds of some of the ministry still with us, maketh me very cautious in my movements.

If I should not write to Brother Haskins, you may show him this letter and welcome.

I am, with respect and heartfelt concern, thy brother in Jesus,

Francis Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Though James O'Kelly had broken off from the church in 1792, he was still a great irritation to Asbury. Here Asbury reveals that he had written three hundred pages of answers to O'Kelly. The O'Kellyite movement was growing in Virginia and North Carolina, and there are references to it in Ohio.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.  
*January 9, 1799*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[73]</sup>

My very dear Friend:

You see how large a letter I have written with my own hand upon a broken sheet of paper. When I began I had no thought of writing so long a letter. I have been employed in dictating near three hundred pages, in answer to Mr. O'Kelly's<sup>[74]</sup> spite and malice. Conference time we have had

but six boarders in our house, and frequently in my room, and great part of the Conference visiting. We have had great peace. I wish, if a vessel should offer, my letters in packet may be sent to me at Norfolk or Newbern. I shall be at the former in March. The work of God is under a pleasing growth in the South.

I am, with continued respect to thee,

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

A Letter of Mrs. Baker  
to Francis Asbury

*This letter from Mrs. Baker is one of the few letters extant from a woman to Asbury. She gives a report of people, telling of each by name. Knotty Pine Chapel was one of the earliest churches in North Carolina, and Asbury was frequently there.*

KNOTTY PINE CHAPEL, GATES COUNTY, N.C.  
*March 17, 1799*

[*To Francis Asbury*]

When you were with me last, you desired I would give you an account of the dear saints who are fallen asleep in Jesus, in this place. I will give you a list of their names, with a sketch of some of their characters.

Elizabeth Norfleet, one of the first that embraced religion after the gospel was preached here; she was one of the meekest women, a pattern of piety to the end of her days.



Ann Gipson, converted from the height of pride and vanity to a humble lover of God and man; full of good works.

Mary Hays, a dear simple, humble, tender, affectionate woman.

Moses Kittrell, a man of great stability; when living he kept up Joshua's resolution; his wife, children and servants bade fair for the kingdom of heaven, some are faithful yet, and some have turned out of the way.

Mary Parker, who had much forgiven, and loved much.

Mary Richardson, a good young woman.

Susannah Benton, an honest hearted Christian, I believe; she went through the water and fire of affliction unhurt! such she continued unto her end.

Mary Haslett, a faithful follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

Sophia Hunter, former wife of brother Isaac Hunter; a very pious precious woman.

Mary Tugwell, her life was upright, she married, and died soon after the birth and death of her first child, and was much afflicted five or six months, and though she was so weak she could not sit up, yet she would rise off her bed and praise God for the sweet manifestations she had of the love of Jesus.

Henry Smith, and his son Thomas Smith, who were said to be good men.

Milberry Billips, a tender-hearted, loving woman, her husband a gross backslider; he brought his family to poverty; she died a few days after her husband, of a broken heart, as was supposed. Oh, the few happy matches!

Mary Hays, she lived happy with her good old Methodist husband, and died in peace.

Rachel Lawrence, a harmless, inoffensive person, under great affliction a long time; very patient and much resigned to God.

Mary Parker, a former wife of brother Thomas Parker; she professed religion ten or twelve years.

Priscilla Graham, a dear, lovely, meek woman, she lived about fifteen months after she professed religion; her humble, pious walk, manifested to all that were acquainted with her, that she had been with Jesus; and when she was on her death bed, her dove-like innocence and lamb-like patience were admirable: she had an unshaken confidence in God. One asked how she was, she replied, "O yes, I must go to Jesus:" She then intreated her husband not to be excessive in grief, but to prove faithful a little time, and they should meet in heaven to praise king Jesus. She soon became delirious: she would often say, "I am ready," and whisper "Jesus," as long as

she could speak! One week after the birth of her first child, she fell asleep in the arms of her Saviour.

Mary Duke, she walked in honour to her profession for near fifteen years; in life she was blameless, in death triumphant and glorious.

Christopher Reddick, a man truly converted from the error of his ways, too manifestly to be denied by the worst of enemies; he never was ashamed to own his Lord, or to defend his cause; a peaceful man in his family, and useful to his neighbourhood; in his last hours he appeared to be in peace, and much resigned to God.

Hardy Brown, a bright and shining light; an Israelite in whom there was no guile; an example of true piety; he had but short notice of his death, suffocated with the quinsy in a few hours; he exhorted his wife and all about him, to serve God; and cheerfully, with a smile on his countenance, left this world of sorrow.

Mary Gregorie, a daughter of sister Glover's, thirteen years of age; she came to live with me in April and died in October following; seven or eight weeks before she died, she became very serious, and often was much pleased to talk with me about religion; she was powerfully converted on her death-bed, and the Lord opened her mouth to speak and sing his praise. She would beg the sinners to look at her and repent. I believe she had a vision of angels just before she died; she

lifted up her eyes and said, "O you pretty creatures!" and breathed her last in three minutes.

O, my dear brother, while I write and think of the dear saints in glory, how it fills my heart with joy! Oh, the time will shortly come, when these eyes shall weep no more; this heart, which is now the seat of sorrow, shall cease to flutter and beat, and not a wave of trouble roll across my peaceful breast! I hope the Lord will renew your health and strength, that you may live long to water his vineyard. Pray for me, that I may be more holy, and more heavenly minded. Give my love to brother Lee; Mr. Baker and the children join me in sincere love to you.

Your affectionate sister,

I. Baker  
[J.]<sup>[75]</sup>

*Letters to Bishop Asbury from various people, South Carolina Conference Historical Society, Wofford College*

*The Minutes show that Anthony Sale and James G. Martin were at Norfolk in 1798. They were evidently not the preachers who died there and to whom Asbury makes reference in this letter. In 1798 Alexander M'Caine was on the Washington Circuit in the South Conference. Evidently a large number of Irish people had settled in Norfolk.*

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA  
March 29, 1799

[*To Alexander M'Caine*]<sup>[76]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I had an impression, upon my knees, that you would be the most acceptable person to take a station in Norfolk, in Virginia, for the present year: when this is delivered by a person to take your place in Union. I hope you will haste, the King's business requireth haste, great haste, for King Jesus. My confidence in you as a man of piety, conscience and honor is hereby signified: I have been served so faithfully by your countrymen.<sup>[77]</sup> I am not afraid to trust those I have had proof of. To reconcile you, find you will not need to preach above 4 or 5 times in 7 days. 2ndly, your accommodations will be good. 3rdly, there is a small revival of religion and the fare of things is pleasing. 4thly, you will be able to keep out of the weather when it is changeable. 5thly, you can write to any part of the world,<sup>[78]</sup> or most parts of the continent and kingdom.

It may be said Norfolk is subject to the malignant (fever). I answer not to the regular inhabitants. It is true two preachers have died here, but they were invalids. Your countrymen came here to trade; you may come to preach. Mr. Claudi [?]<sup>[79]</sup> of Ireland hath engaged to preach, some say his subscription is 1,500 dollars, he is a new Irishman. Will you flee? I believe you are a man of a better mind than he, or to flee. I am not

infallible but I trust the whole with God: and you. Write me when you are upon the station.

The soul's real friend,

Francis Asbury

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*The Philadelphia Conference had been in session, and Asbury had evidently received some very unkind letters. He was quite despondent and his health was very poor. Ezekiel Cooper was evidently not eager to leave the pastorate to become the Book Agent. However, the Minutes show that he was appointed to that position.*

EAGLEWORKS, PA.

*June 10, 1799*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[80]</sup>

My dear Brother:

Your letter came to hand in the haste and distresses of conference, I confess I have not had such a shock since I received yours in Charleston. It is enough! My own children are risen up against me; one of the dearest friends I had in America; his<sup>[81]</sup> letters are like the piercing of a sword, to my breast and heart. In real tenderness to you, I have offended, fearing your strength would not be sufficient for the charge. I have suffered much of late in labour and loss of my health, horse; and perpetual crowds of brethren. My Christian doctors, say *rest, rest* or death, or great danger! I have resigned the pulpit, I am weaning the conferences, I am absent whole days at a time; I keep no minutes now, never preside,

seldom speak in conference, only when called upon in a special manner by the conference.

I am at present resolved to seek the Lord a whole year; to know his will, should my life be spared, I have no more to say about your removal. Keep your station; it may never be my duty; or in my power, to give you another. Feeling the great; the exceedingly great wane of preachers I wished to keep one, another year. George Roberts, he hath stayed an unwarrantable time in New York; he cannot be supported upon any station but Baltimore. It may be thought, I am a very changeable man. It is by necessity; of others who change I am one, ye are three hundred; watching, I can, and complaining of my conduct. I may shortly come to this, that I cannot serve the connection, without sacrificing, my health, my life, or my conscience. I am willing to break my heart with labour, but not with the continual reflections [?] of the supposed best and holiest men upon earth; I do not believe God has called them to use me so; I find it groweth daily. I think reason, and revelation will teach me, when men are so generally displeased with my services; to doubt whether I ought to serve them any longer, then I can resign with propriety.

I am yours

Francis Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*This letter is to Dr. Wilkins, who became a long-time friend of Asbury. In writing to Wilkins and to Ridgely, he refers to the appointment of George Roberts to Baltimore, Maryland.*

*Roberts had been in New York. He was one of the outstanding preachers. He studied medicine. Because of his family he retired in 1806 and practiced medicine in Philadelphia though he retained a local preacher's relationship.*

NEW YORK, N.Y.

*June 22, 1799*

[*To Wilkins<sup>[82]</sup> and Ridgely<sup>[83]</sup>*]

My much respected Brethren Wilkins and Ridgely:

As I have known you I address my letter to you. I have been greatly exposed to difficulties to find a preacher in Baltimore, and the Philadelphia Conference at last have found one, a man that will be profitable and pleasing to you. George Roberts being a married man, he will be more expensive than a single man, but his address will command a congregation, and draw support. I am, whether present or absent as ever in love to, and constant concern for your souls.

F. Asbury

*Drew University Library*

*Some of the difficulties of getting mail in the early days are shown here. His mother had written a letter each year. She has made up her mind not to come to America.*



STATE OF NEW YORK<sup>[84]</sup>

June 28, 1799

[*To his Mother*]

My very dear Mother:

I have received yours dated in the years 1798 and 1799, both in the same week. Letters coming to me are landed at one end of the continent, when I am at the other, and are sent after me; but before they arrive, I am gone. I am thankful to God that my dear father died in peace; and that my mother yet lives, to serve God, and his ministers and people. I gladly consent to your refusal to come to America. You might find yourself disappointed, as many have done, in coming to this continent. If my way were opened to return, my difficulties would be great, in crossing the seas at this time of general distress of nations, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear of those things which shall come upon the earth, when the nations are destroying each other by thousands in a day, if not an hour. I am satisfied in your living alone, if you have such kind and watchful neighbours. My love and kind respects to them, for their attention to you.

The coming of Christ is near, even at the door, when he will establish his kingdom. He is now sweeping the earth, to plant it with righteousness and true holiness. My eyes are weak enough, even with glasses. When I was a child, and would pry into the Bible by twinkling fire-light, you used to say, "Frank, you will spoil your eyes." At that time, I sought the historical letter. I knew not the hidden pure light and life.

It is my grief that I cannot preach as heretofore. I am greatly worn out at fifty-five; but it is in a good cause.

I am as ever, your dear son in the Gospel,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*At Liberty, Maryland, lived Daniel and Eli Dorsey, probably brothers. Asbury arrived at the home of Daniel in the evening of August 7 and spent the night there. The next day he visited Eli Dorsey and the grave of Sarah Dorsey, his former nurse. Evidently Morrell had been critical of some decision of Asbury's. Asbury is very despondent and indicates that he will "come down" at the General Conference.*

LIBERTY, MARYLAND  
August 9, 1799

[*To Thomas Morrell*]<sup>[85]</sup>

My much respected Brother:

I received your letter, and apology at Albany. As matters stand between myself and you they can be easily accommodated. I have only to say I am writing my resignation,<sup>[86]</sup> and apology to the General Conference for every part of my general conduct. I firmly believe I have delayed my resignation too long, it is time they were put upon ways, means, and persons for the better organization of so great a body of people. It is a doubt if my life will be spared till the General Conference; but if it is not, I shall give them my thoughts in writing that they may read them after my decease. You may believe me to be in earnest, it is not the

business of yesterday. I wish the preachers and people to take warning I am about to come down from a *joyless height* and stand upon the floor with my brethren. Several have read my resignation and in general approve the design.

I am with respect as ever thine,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Neither the date nor the place of this letter is given. There are peace and revival in America. Asbury had sent thirty guineas before to his widowed mother, and this seems to be another thirty guineas. His father died in 1798. The Methodist Magazine places the letter in order after the letter of June 28, 1799. It was probably written in 1799 or 1800.*

[About 1799]

[To his Mother]

My most dearly beloved Mother:

I am yet living, with a restoration of health, to continue to labour and travel, night and day. I am, of late, more than ever invigorated, with a revival of religion in various happy parts of our continental field. Whilst war and want prevail (in other places), we have peace and religion. I have not time to write at large. I hope to manifest my duty and care, by sending you thirty guineas. You will please to let me know if this supply

is sufficient. I am not in cash at present, but trust I shall be in a few weeks.

I remain as ever, your affectionate son,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*The conference was going on in Charleston, and Asbury was having trouble making an appointment to Charleston. He had decided to appoint George Dougharty. John Harper was the other pastor there. John Jenkin's decision seems to have been left to him. This is one of the few instances where the preachers seemed to have had any choice.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.  
*January 8, 1800*

[*To George Dougharty*]<sup>[87]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

The probability is that Brother Snethen<sup>[88]</sup> will take his departure from this city either to Savannah or the north about the time of my removal. It is imprest upon my mind that you are the only person of my choice to supply this critical but important station. These are to request you if life permits, to be in Charleston on February 7th as I must go hence the 10th. Brother Jenkin<sup>[89]</sup> I am told will upon no consideration take this station; to leave it vacant till after General Conference will be attended with great damage! I cannot neglect my dear Charleston. Oh! the sorrows, the distresses, I have felt for 15 years. I wish you not to think necessity has drawn me to choose you, know my brother, you stand high in my

estimation. I always wish a man to know the confidence I have in him, that he may come up to my highest expectations of him. Whilst I have been writing, John Harper<sup>[90]</sup> came in. He highly approves the appointment and that you must have the charge by all means. I have written a large letter, but when I see you I shall speak the whole.

I am with great love thine in Jesus

Francis Asbury  
*Duke University Library*

### A Letter from Mrs. Asbury to Francis Asbury

*Included here is a letter from Eliza Asbury, Francis' mother. It was written for her by Sam Barkley, the preacher at Barr. Asbury's father died in 1798, and she was living in Richard Longmore's home. As Asbury's letters frequently inquired about old friends, his mother is naturally giving him the news. She signs herself Eliza instead of Elizabeth.*

GREAT BARR, ENGLAND  
*April 29, 1800*

[*To Francis Asbury*]

My very dear Son:

May Israel's God (whose you are, and whom you love) bless you in your body, soul, and labours, Amen. Your welcome letter from Charles-Town, South Carolina, dated January 21st came duly to hand, and found me very poorly. My legs and feet swelled much, and I was very sick and faint: and I began to think my Heavenly Father was about to call me

home, and I bless His holy Name I was quite resigned to His blessed will to go, unless He saw that by staying a little longer, I could promote his glory. However through Mercy, I am now much better. I can wear my own shoes, and go about again, only the affliction has left me weaker than I was; but I trust that I shall get a little more strength.

I rejoice that the Lord has supported you as He has, these many years. It is not to be wondered at, that you find some infirmities after so much and so long-labour and fatigue. However, you are still in good hands, and the great head of the church will dispose of you to His glory. Should you see your native land before I am removed: you may well think, I should rejoice to embrace you. But this I leave with Him who cannot err. I sincerely thank you for your care toward me. What you sent for my support the last year, came duly to hand. Your Aunt Sarah Rogers has been dead some time. I am glad the good work is going on in that New World. You began to meet the people at Sutton in July 1764. You was born in August 1745. I am glad that Joseph Pirkins is doing well in temporals: may he be more in earnest for salvation.

Edward Jordan and his wife are well, and desire their most affectionate love to Mr. Henry Foxall and his wife (if alive). They are very glad to hear of his welfare of body and soul: and would esteem it a singular favor to receive a letter from him soon. His brother John is gone into Wales, and does exceeding well both in spirituals and temporals. He still continues to receive the preachers. His brother Benjamin (at the Wrenn's nest) has a concern for his soul and earnestly

wishes to get the preachers to his house. James Stokes is very poorly indeed. He has been for a year very low in his mind, and past business. His mother desires that his uncle will pray for him, and that he will not fail to write.

We have had some revival in Walsall: where our preachers meet with some kind friends. I live in Richard Longmore's house; and have lived there about 20 years. Elenor Rogers has been dead about a year: John is well, but not married again. Phebe Smith is alive and her husband; they are old people. Sarah Weston has been dead some years: and her husband also. We are going on pretty well at Barr: the congregations are pretty good. Sam Barkley, our preacher who writes this, desires his most affectionate love to you and Brother Whatcoat.

I remain in dear love, your ever affectionate mother,

Eliza Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*This is the special communication from the Baltimore General Conference of 1800 to the British Conference. It was a reply to the "Address of the British Conference" which Coke had brought to America in 1799. The American Address was forwarded to England, but the British Conference did not reply until 1803. The addresses throw light on the relationships of Bishop Coke to America and England.*

BALTIMORE, MD.  
May 9, 1800

The American Address to the Members of the British  
Conference

Very dear Brethren:

By Dr. Coke we have received your friendly and affectionate Address,<sup>[91]</sup> and cordially rejoice with you in the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom, through your instrumentality, in the accession of so many thousands of souls to the Society of Europe.

We have considered, with the greatest attention, the request<sup>[92]</sup> you have made for the Doctor's return to Europe; and after revolving the subject in our minds, and spending part of two days in debating thereon, we still feel an ardent desire for his continuance<sup>[93]</sup> in America, arising from the critical state of Bishop Asbury's health, the extension of our work, our affection for and approbation of the Doctor, and his probable usefulness, provided he continue with us. We wish to detain him, as we greatly need his services. But the statement you have laid before us in your Address, of the success of the West-India Mission under his superintendence, the arduous attempt to carry the Gospel among the native Irish, requiring his influence and support, and the earnest request you have added to this representation,—"believing it to be for the glory of God,"—have turned the scale at present in your favour. We have, therefore, in compliance with your request, *lent* the Doctor to you for a season, to return to us as



soon as he conveniently can; but, at farthest, by the meeting of our next General Conference.

It affords us great pleasure, to hear that the Divine Presence has been so eminently with you at the last Conference; and, of consequence, that it was conducted with tranquillity and peace. The Spirit of our Jesus is a Spirit of union, is a Spirit of love. Aided by the same grace, we are endeavouring to follow your pious example, in keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and entreat you, our elder and esteemed brethren, to accept our grateful thanks for the earnest request you have made to the God of love, that a large portion of the same Spirit may rest on us, which hath blessed you with peace and concord.

We have some great and glorious revivals in different parts of the United States; and a pleasing, growing prospect is before us. Our hearts are united to each other, to our brethren in Europe, and to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Wishing you peace and prosperity, an increase of number, and an increase of grace, we remain, with respect and esteem, with love and veneration, your Brethren in Christ Jesus.

Signed by, and in the behalf of, the General Conference of  
the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America,

Francis Asbury

Richard Whatcoat

*"Minutes of Several Conversations, Sixtieth Annual  
Conference, begun at Manchester, July 25, 1803."*

*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Pastor in Baltimore.
- [2] Todd's and Ellis' taverns between Fredericksburg and Richmond.
- [3] See letter of December 10, 1786.
- [4] Baker was a prominent Methodist layman of Philadelphia. He was a wholesale dry-goods merchant, and he and his wife joined St. George's Church in 1773. He was a member of the second board of trustees of the church. In 1801 he was one of those who went out to organize the Union Church. He was president of the Chartered Fund. He was converted under Joseph Pilmoor and died in 1820. (See *Pioneering in Penn's Woods*, Philadelphia Conference Tract Society, 184.) (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [5] North first appears in Methodist history as a resident of Chester County, Pennsylvania. He had a distinguished record in the Revolutionary War and was later given a responsible post in Philadelphia. He, with Thomas Haskins (then also a resident of Philadelphia), now a merchant, formerly a preacher, and others created the Chartered Fund. North's services to Methodism were considerable. (Jacob S. Payton.)
- [6] In the report of the Chartered Fund, July 1, 1823, there is a list of contributors. Among these is "John Dickinson, Esq., Delaware, a plantation, for which was received \$1460.62." This is the second largest amount contributed.
- [7] There is no date or place on this letter. It could have been written from Newbern, North Carolina, and in December,

1796. Coke was with Asbury. He would likely have been reminded of Mrs. Thorne there because she had lived there.

[8] Mrs. Mary Thorne, the first woman class leader in Philadelphia, was appointed by Joseph Pilmoor. She was born in Bristol, Pennsylvania; but her family, named Evans, soon moved to Newbern, North Carolina. She married a Mr. Thorne and became a member of the Baptist Church. Her husband died; and she went to her parents in Philadelphia, where she became a teacher. She came under the influence of Joseph Pilmoor's preaching and joined the Methodists. However, for some time she continued in fellowship with the Baptists. After a while, along with nine others she was expelled from the Baptist Church for fellowshiping with the Methodists. She was forsaken by her family. She became Mrs. Parker and moved to England in 1778. She was a loyal Methodist and was greatly appreciated by John Wesley. Her husband lost several ships, and they became quite poor. However, she retained her great faith. (See Atkinson, *The Beginnings of the Wesleyan Movement in America*, 208-21, and Lednum, *Rise of Methodism*, 42-44.)

[9] Bishop Coke.

[10] Jacob Baker. (See note to letter written November 17, 1776, to John Dickinson.)

[11] Lambert Wilmer and his wife were charter members of the first Methodist church in Philadelphia. He was an officer in the militia in the Revolution, and he and his wife became class leaders in St. George's Church. (See *Pioneering in Penn's Woods*, Philadelphia Conference Tract Society, 183.) (Jacob S. Payton.)

- [12] Coke pledged himself at the Baltimore General Conference, October 27, 1796. (See Coke's letter, p. 146, n. 76.) Coke was on the way to England now. He embarked on an American ship on February 6 and was to sail on February 10.
- [13] Pastor in New York City.
- [14] Reference evidently to O'Kelly schism. O'Kelly organized the Republican Methodist Church in Surry County, Virginia. This county borders on the James River.
- [15] See *Journal* for an account of Brother Wells.
- [16] The reference is to the *Discipline*. (See *Minutes*, January 19, 1797.)
- [17] His horse.
- [18] John Street Church.
- [19] Forsythe Street Church.
- [20] Widow of Henry Willis, the preacher.
- [21] The place is not given. Asbury was in New York State, where he had been ill.
- [22] Philip Van Cortlandt was the elder son of Pierre Van Cortlandt. He lived until 1831. He was in the Revolution and engaged in some of Washington's most hazardous enterprises. He had continuous contacts with the French forces. He became a brigadier general in 1783. He lived at the Manor House at Croton. (Arthur Bruce Moss.)
- [23] The mansion must have fallen to Philip as he was the elder of the two sons.
- [24] The preacher's salary.
- [25] Mrs. Van Cortlandt, wife of "Governor" Van Cortlandt, was Joanna Livingston, daughter of Gilbert Livingston. She was a deeply religious person like her husband.

Whitefield had preached from the portico of their house to a multitude of friends and tenants of the governor. She was a relative of Freeborn Garrettson's wife. Her husband gave the land for the church at Croton. (Arthur Bruce Moss.)

[26] Governor and Mrs. Van Cortlandt had two sons, Philip and Pierre, Jr., and three daughters, Catherine, later widow of Abram Van Wyck, who lived at Croton with her parents; Mrs. Cornelia Beekman, who lived at the Peekskill Van Cortlandt residence; and Mrs. Ann Van Rennsalear, who lived at Albany. The reference here is evidently to Catherine, who lived at Croton with her parents and Philip. (Arthur Bruce Moss.)

[27] Asbury evidently refers to salvation. He shows his deep interest in Philip's soul.

[28] Reference to Garrettson, Henry Boehm, and even perhaps to George Whitefield.

[29] Joshua Wells was one of three preachers appointed to New York, the others being George Roberts and William Beauchamp. (See *Minutes* of 1797.)

[30] Jesse Lee was appointed to travel with Francis Asbury after the conference. He was presiding elder in New England.

[31] Joshua Wells, pastor in New York.

[32] This was Jonathan Bird. (See *Journal*, May 1, 1797.) He was presiding elder on the Holston District, living in Virginia.

[33] To the episcopacy.

[34] Tigert and Lee have different copies of this letter. The two have been edited and put together.

[35] Evidently a young preacher.

- [36] Pastor in Wilmington, Delaware, and editor of the *Discipline*.
- [37] Book Agent.
- [38] Evidently Surry County. (See *Journal* for this date.)
- [39] The *Journal* says November 21.
- [40] John Dickins.
- [41] See letter, November 1, 1796, and note; also Asbury's *Journal*, 1852 ed., November 25-29, 1797.
- [42] Lane's in Sussex County. The conference met from November 25 to 29.
- [43] Secretary of the British Conference.
- [44] Francis Asbury.
- [45] William McKendree. (See *Journal*, November 15, 1797.)
- [46] Bishop Coke.
- [47] The conference had been in session at Salem Church in Mecklenburg County.
- [48] Not clear as to who Gibson, Jarratt, and Munsay are, probably local preachers who were supplies. Jonathan Bird became a well-known preacher.
- [49] Western Territory. The 1799 Conference was actually held at Jones Chapel.
- [50] John Ray was on the Tar River Circuit, North Carolina. Interestingly, there are two sets of appointments in the 1797 *Minutes* for this North Carolina district. In the second set Ray is on the Roanoke Circuit.
- [51] John Baldwin was Book Steward for the Virginia Conference.
- [52] No date or address on letter, but supplied from *Journal*. It is not clear whether June 2 or 3.

- [53] December, 1797, to May, 1798. (See *Journal* references for these dates.) Part of the time he was at Edward Dromgoole's.
- [54] One of many references to riding in vehicles which refutes statements that he rode only on horseback.
- [55] Place and date uncertain.
- [56] Book Agent.
- [57] Cokesbury College burned on December 7, 1795. (See *Journal*.)
- [58] Nelson Reed was on the Falls Point Circuit in the Baltimore District. (See *Minutes*, 1798.)
- [59] Thomas Morrell was one of those preachers on the Elizabeth Town, New Jersey, charge. (See *Minutes*, 1798.)
- [60] In 1798 Joseph Everett and Philip Bruce are listed as presiding elders on the same district in Northern Virginia. (See *Minutes*, 1798.)
- [61] According to the *Journal*, Asbury was at the Widow Sherwood's on September 27.
- [62] Baker and Doughty were trustees.
- [63] In 1801 occurred the first break in the unity of Philadelphia Methodism. Those early Methodist laymen were earnest, determined, strong-minded men. They must needs live up to the strict rules of the *Discipline* and to withstand the opposition, often quite vocal, of their interested neighbors. So the old records tell us certain decided differences arose in Old St. George's in the first year of the new century. Some say they originated in the board of trustees over repairing the church. There is an intimation that the trouble lay deeper than a question of repairs and really arose from the political excitement, for



this was the time of the bitter feud between the followers of Jefferson and those of John Adams. Boehm says, "Such was the excitement that it separated families and friends and members of the church. I was urged on every side to identify myself with one political party or the other" (p. 65). Even the presiding elder became involved. Asbury records: "Dec. 30, 1800, while in South Carolina I received a letter from the North [probably from Haskins]. I was presented with a petition from eighty male members of the Society in the City of Brotherly Love entreating me to do what I had no intention of doing; that was to remove Brother Joseph Everett, Presiding Elder from the City.

"Failing to obtain satisfaction from the Conference, over fifty of the most prominent members withdrew from Saint George's in June, 1801, and organized the Union Methodist Church, and rented part of the Whitefield Academy on Forth Street, then occupied by the University of Pennsylvania. Bishop Asbury and Richard Whatcoat were appointed by the Conference committee to unify the disunited church. This they accomplished in part through a remarkable broadside which they issued and the next year the Union Church was back again in the fold, but as an entirely separate Society, and so from disunion came union and enlarged work, for soon Union became as large and influential as the mother Church, as ever God maketh the wrath of man to praise him." (*Pioneering in Penn's Woods*, The Philadelphia Conference Tract Society, 70-71.)

[64] Ezekiel Cooper was appointed Book Agent. He was on the Wilmington and Newport charge.

[65] John Dickins, Book Agent, died September 27, 1798.

- [66] Jesse Lee was traveling with Asbury.
- [67] Mrs. John Dickins.
- [68] O'Kelly organized the Republican Methodist Church, later the Christian Church, finally uniting to form the Congregational Christian Church. He wrote *Christicola*.
- [69] The place from which the letter was written is supplied from the *Journal*.
- [70] Ezekiel Cooper was appointed Editor and General Book Steward in 1799. (See *Minutes*.)
- [71] Thomas Haskins, merchant, former preacher, and John Dickins' son, Asbury.
- [72] Jesse Lee was traveling with Asbury.
- [73] This letter was written on the same page as the letter of January 8, 1799.
- [74] James O'Kelly, who split the church. (See references in *Journal*, 1852 ed., July 1, 1798; July 19, 1798; September 4, 1799; also "A Letter of James O'Kelly," April — 1787, in *The Letters of Francis Asbury*.)
- [75] Probably should be *J*.
- [76] Sometimes spelled McKane—a pastor at Union. "To Alex McKain" is written on letter but not in Asbury's writing. (See letters to M'Caine, July 16, 1806; April 30, 1815; July 1, 1815.) M'Caine later left the church to help form the Methodist Protestant Church.
- [77] The Irish. Early Methodism was indebted to the Irish for much of its leadership.
- [78] This indicates how difficult the mail service was in those days.
- [79] Probably an Anglican preacher.

- [80] The Philadelphia Conference now in session confirmed Asbury's appointment of Cooper. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., June 10, 1799.)
- [81] Reference to Cooper.
- [82] Wilkins lived just outside Baltimore at Hookstown. His father was one of the first converts to Methodism in Annapolis. Wilkins married the daughter of Samuel Owings, a member of the first class organized in Baltimore. Wilkins was one of those who worked on Asbury's *Journal*. He was appointed a member of the five-man committee at the Baltimore Conference of 1817 to elect a compiler for a life of Asbury. (See Smith, *Recollections of an Old Itinerant*, 163-65, 267-68.)
- [83] Probably Captain Charles Ridgely, builder of Hampton Hall. His wife was a Methodist and a sister of Mrs. Harry Gough of Perry Hall. He gave Strawbridge a farm. (See *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*.)
- [84] Asbury was near Poughkeepsie. He was accompanied by Jesse Lee.
- [85] Pastor in Baltimore.
- [86] The *Journal* states on Monday, May 5, "It was still desired that I should continue in my station," and, "I was weary but sat very close in conference. My health is better than when we began." Richard Whatcoat was elected bishop.
- [87] He had been on the Oconee Circuit, Georgia. He was appointed pastor in Charleston.
- [88] Nicholas Snethen was pastor in Charleston.
- [89] John Jenkin was pastor on the Edisto Circuit. (See *Minutes*, 1800.)
- [90] John Harper was one of the pastors in Charleston.

[91] (See letter, November 1, 1796, and British Conference reply; also reply of Virginia Conference through Asbury, November 29, 1797, pending a General Conference.) Coke arrived in England in the summer of 1798, and he tested the idea he had that the Bishop of London might be persuaded to ordain some Methodist preachers to administer the sacraments to the Methodist societies. He failed.

On returning to America in 1799, Coke carried with him "The Address of the British Conference to the General Conference in America," a portion of which follows:

"As we are informed by Dr. Coke, that your General Conference is to be held on the 10th of next May, we embrace the present opportunity, while assembled in Conference, to express to you the unabated esteem and affection we bear towards you. . . .

"There is one particular, which we wish especially to lay before you. We are perfectly acquainted with the solemn engagements which Dr. Coke entered into with you, at your last General Conference. And yet we are satisfied that the work of God, and the good of the church, considered at large, call for his continuance in Europe. The West India Missions have flourished under his superintendence, beyond our most sanguine expectations. Above eleven thousand have been added to the church of God among the poor negroes, in that part of the world. But there is no person at present to fill his place, and raise the necessary supplies. We, indeed, help him in a degree; but are satisfied that the work of God in those islands would receive essential injury, on his secession from it. In Ireland,

also, his assistance is peculiarly wanted. Military law has been established in that kingdom: but, through the Doctor's influence with the Government, protections have been obtained for the preachers in every necessary case; and, by this means, the brethren in that kingdom have been enabled to proceed on the itinerant plan, no one making them afraid. A Mission, also of the most hazardous, but of a very important nature, has been established in that kingdom. God has been pleased to raise three zealous men who preach in the Irish language, who have been commissioned, by the Conference, to travel through the land, preaching the Gospel to the native Irish. But the attempt would have been highly imprudent, if the Doctor had not procured for them general protections from the Government, addressed to all the Civil and Military Officers in the kingdom: and we may add, that the raising of the supplies for this new work entirely depends upon the Doctor.

"These reasons, beloved brethren, we think, strongly call upon you not to insist, at present, on the Doctor's fulfilling his engagements. We have left it to his discretion, either to send or deliver this letter to you. But if he visit you at your General Conference, we earnestly desire his return, believing it will be for the glory of God. And, if at any future time we have cause to think that the scale is turned in your favour, we shall not object to his devoting the remnant of his life to the work of God among our American brethren.

"You will rejoice to hear that our Conference, which concludes with voting this Address, has, on the whole been

the best we ever had since the decease of our venerable Father in Christ, the Rev. John Wesley.

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

"Samuel Bradburn, President.

Manchester, August 12, 1799."

(For this conference Coke was the secretary, taking over during Bradburn's year of office as president. Hence the lack of a secretarial signature.) (Frank Baker.)

<sup>[92]</sup> Strangely, the American address was not considered until the conference of 1803, and a reply was drafted for the following General Conference—"The Address of the British Conference to the General Conference of the Methodists in America." The address asked once more that Coke, who was preparing to leave for America, should return after the conference, although the sentence was added: "We do most sensibly feel what you say concerning our dear friend and brother Mr. Asbury; and, for your sakes, we anxiously desire his preservation among you, which we pray you may long enjoy." The address was dated "Manchester, August 5, 1803" and signed by the president, Joseph Bradford. At this conference, as at the preceding two and the succeeding one, Thomas Coke was again secretary and therefore did not sign the address which concerned his own position so closely. (Frank Baker.)

<sup>[93]</sup> That neither Coke nor the English Conference really expected him to return to America before the General Conference of 1804 is shown by Coke's letter to James Moore, February 28, 1801. The same letter reveals his

obviously genuine desire to stay in America. After recounting some of his success in Ireland, he goes on:

"But I am yours. In America only I consider myself at home. I have been kept abroad for several years past by the will of God. However, I shall endeavour to wind everything round, so that, if the Lord will but suffer me, I may close my career among you. Hitherto I have been kept from residing among you by the will of Heaven. But I do assure you it would be my supreme earthly delight, if I know my own heart, to hide myself in your woods, and labour and dwell among you.

"I intend to set off for America, the Lord preserving my health in any tolerable degree, next August or September, two years. . . . I shall, God willing, make a point of finishing (that is, printing off) my Commentary on the Old Testament by next August two years. . . . I shall also have the Commentary on the New Testament. . . ready in *manuscript* for the press by that time; and if Divine Providence do not again shut up my way from finally residing among you, I shall print the Commentary on the New Testament in America." (*Christian Miscellany*, 1847, 217-18.) (Frank Baker.)

**FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF  
1800 THROUGH 1801**

*June 21, 1800 - December 31, 1801*



## CHAPTER SEVEN

# FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1800 THROUGH 1801

June 21, 1800 - December 31, 1801

*Jesse Lee was one of the great preachers of early Methodism. Born in Virginia, he moved in many sections of the church and for a while traveled with Asbury. He was the father of New England Methodism. Though there was a question here as to his appointment, the Minutes show he was assigned to New York.*

[NEW YORK]<sup>[1]</sup>

SATURDAY MORNING

June 21, [1800]

[To Jesse Lee]<sup>[2]</sup>

Dear Brother:

We wish to close the Minutes in [New] York, if we can. You must have some place therein: will the above do? [New] York will be a blank at present. If you choose to stay until you think it meet to go down south, you may; and more, you may make your own appointments south, and omit going eastward. Or go, if you choose, to the east; or, if you choose, you may come to Kentucky.

Francis Asbury

Richard Whatcoat

*J.B. Wakeley, Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early  
History of American Methodism, 522*

*John Page was the pastor on the Cumberland Circuit in Tennessee in 1799 Asbury did not get to the Holston Conference of 1800, and Page was moved. Asbury evidently thought it was a mistake and rectified it.*

[VAN PELT'S, TENN.][<sup>3</sup>]  
[September 26, 1800][<sup>4</sup>]

[To John Page]

My dear Page:

I have only time to write a few lines. \* \* \* Had I attended at the last Holston Conference, you should have returned immediately to Cumberland. I should have had the petition that was sent for your return. Had I known what had taken place, I would have dismissed you when I passed by you. I hope you will now hasten to that charge as soon as possible: the eternal God be your refuge and strength. To save time, I hope Brother Watson will take your place, and Brother Hunter, Brother Watson's. Green must be left. If I can send help from South Carolina,<sup>[5]</sup> I will. When you come to Cumberland, you will see if Brother Young or Grenade will be best spared to come to Green. We borrowed two jackets of yours, we will leave at Van Pelt's. I purpose riding half the year, upon horseback, upon the frontiers of the work. We shall always attend the Western Conferences, while able.

I am, with great affection, thine,

Francis Asbury

*Albert H. Redford, History of Methodism in Kentucky, I,  
140*

*Stith Mead was a Virginian who had been transferred to Georgia. He became one of Asbury's chief supporters. Here he is being assigned to the Georgia District.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
January 6, 1801

[To Stith Mead]<sup>[6]</sup>

My very dear Mead:

We have enjoyed great health consolation, peace, and union in the sitting of this conference. Three<sup>[7]</sup> have located, three are gone over into other conferences. We are weak handed. We have done the best we can, and all we can do for poor Georgia. You are appointed presiding elder in the Georgia District; John Garvin to Augusta, but you will spend all the time you can there. Brother Samuel Cowles will manage Oconee if you cannot reach that circuit. Washington, Richmond, and Burke,<sup>[8]</sup> you may visit by riding 60 miles or one hundred. At the quarter meeting you should be present if possible. I wish you late in the spring, or late in the fall to visit St. Mary's, and take Savannah in your way. The book business must be wholly under your direction, they may be sent to you to your order, to Brother Cooper,<sup>[9]</sup> to Charleston, or Savannah. The reply to Christicola<sup>[10]</sup> is in Charleston. If it should be in your power to make me any remittance for a horse and chaise I bought of him,<sup>[11]</sup> before next January you may do it to Brother Cooper, if not when I come. I am with great respect as ever thine

Francis Asbury

P.S. From all the districts we have good news from the presiding elders or others, good prospects, the northern frozen state began to melt and shout. [Amen.]<sup>[12]</sup>

My very dear Brother:<sup>[13]</sup>

My desire is that God may give you health, peace, long life and multitudes of spiritual children. Surely the Lord will comfort Zion, after we are tried we shall come forth as gold, meet for the Master's use. He that believeth shall not make haste. The Lord sitteth on the water floods.

Thine as ever,

R. Whatcoat  
*Drew University Library*

*The South Carolina Conference met in Camden, and Asbury records that he wrote many letters north on the seventh and eighth. Ezekiel Cooper was evidently chafing some under the criticism that came to the Book Agent, and Asbury was sympathizing with him.*

[CAMDEN, S.C.]<sup>[14]</sup>  
*January 7, 1801*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[15]</sup>

My dear Cooper:

Grace and peace be with thy spirit. I have meditated a letter to you for some months. We have had a gracious season in conference for five days. Brother Blanton<sup>[16]</sup> is located. Stith Mead, presiding elder, is to preside in the State of Georgia,

James Jenkin in South Carolina. Brother Blanton showed me an answer of \$1,000, by John Harper. William M'Kendree, you perhaps know by this, commands in the west. John Kobler<sup>[17]</sup> was appointed to the Richmond District, but I fear he has failed. I heard that P. Bruce was at his father's in North Carolina. I desired him, upon his return, to see if J. Kobler was upon his station; if not, to take it himself; if Brother Kobler was in place, I desired Brother Bruce to go to Norfolk. We will do what little we can to collect for you; but we might as well climb to the moon as attempt to get some of those debts.

I thank you for the advice given of the middle ground.<sup>[18]</sup> We have some time to consider upon it between this and the yearly conference, when it will probably be brought before the yearly conference; at least, we may suppose, the presiding elder and elder will implead each other at the Conference.

I had no doubt but you would feel like wishing to be out of the business of book-making; but, my dear, it is not so easily done. You will have many a shot. I say in all company, when I speak, that you are deeply concerned for the interest of the Connection, and go very near the wind [?] in all your movements for our good. You are easy of access, I have found; readily pacified by a word or a line; you are not a man of intrigue, but open, and therefore I love you. The very thought that I gave you a nomination to your appointment is enough; those that dislike me will disapprove of you. I advise you, as a friend, to retire into your own business as much as possible. I only wish that those who think hardly of you or me

could, if it were right, be punished with our places they so much envy; but many would. God forbid! and we also will oppose it.

I think our Scripture Catechism is one of the best in the world, but it could be mended by you, and laid before the next Conference in the amendment. I gave the outlines to John Dickins.<sup>[19]</sup> I think now if you propound in your own language questions such as these, What is the duty of parents? What is the duty of husbands, wives, children, ministers, rulers, subjects, masters, servants? What is the duty of Christians one to another? and so on, and answer them wholly in Scripture, it would, in my view, be most excellent. We could enforce catechising if we had a complete guide.

Thine,

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*This is the second letter to Stith Mead in two days and seems to be an afterthought in reference to the "married" preacher. In the letter of January 6 Asbury had referred to the appointment of Samuel Cowles to Oconee.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
*January 8, 1801*

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[20]</sup>

My dear Mead:

You will be surprised with your appointment to president elder<sup>[21]</sup> of Georgia.

Not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord. You have but one poor married preacher, he is afraid he will starve upon Oconee all the year; he may change with one of the young men in Washington in 6 months. You will I hope, the Georgians will, supply the preachers with quarterage. And it will be needful the stewards should send an account to conference of what each has received. They will have no claim from conference, if the circuits supply them.

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*This is the third letter to Stith Mead in January, 1801. It seems that some injustice had been done in appointing Stith Mead in 1800. Asbury apologizes. The letter emphasizes Asbury's desire for proper reports.*

RICHMOND COUNTY, N. CAROLINA  
*January 20, 1801*

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[22]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

Grace, mercy and peace attend thee now and ever. I thought it needful to write as others had observed the arrangements of thy name in the last minutes, I feared some bad use might be made of it; and that thy mind —. I acknowledge it was improper; but I was led into it by your writing of your necessity to go to Virginia; I thought if you were obliged there, if you found it needful to stay, and watch your business; I might give you a station there. At the General Conference I concluded I should know definitely and only

placed your name at Augusta that I might not forget you altogether; but I totally forgot to put your name right, which I hope you will pardon. I am watched with a jealous eye, and the smallest slip of the pen, tongue, or memory may be marked, magnified, and sent several hundred miles across the continent.

I have received great news from Vermont, of a work of God equal to that in Cumberland. Good appearances in Massachusetts, and in the State of [New] York, in Philadelphia and Baltimore, Maryland, Delaware, and some places in poor, rich, dry, barren, formal, Pennsylvania. In the Pitt Settlement; onward to Chanango, in the Northwest Territory, God hath given us hundreds in 1800, why not thousands in 1801, yea, why not a million if we had faith. "Lord increase our faith." I wish the most perfect union to subsist between the Episcopacy, and the presiding eldership, and at least a circumstantial account by letter, every half year; that they may be eyes, ears, and mouth, and pens, from the Episcopacy, to the preachers, and people; and the same from the preachers and people, to the Episcopacy, giving an account of the work, for the press if need be; as also to lay before the yearly conference the great things God is doing in our land, and then by the press, before the whole world. You will send me a letter to Philadelphia by the time of conference there, to Brother Cooper's.<sup>[23]</sup>

I am as ever, thine in Jesus,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*



*If Asbury had had his way, there would be a considerable history of early Methodism. Repeatedly he tried to get the presiding elders and preachers to provide the materials. He indicates here how little had been written and how serious he was about the history. As usual he gives some report of the work.*

PEE DEE, S.C.  
January 30, 1801

[To Daniel Hitt]<sup>[24]</sup>

Very dear Brother:

Grace and peace be multiplied to thee and the preachers and people of thy special and sacred charge. I esteem it spiritual impoliteness not to answer a letter from a Christian friend, and more so to a minister of Jesus, and still greater to one highly official as you are, considering the dutiful correspondence you have always honored me with. But of late years my debility was my apology. This is in part removed. Once in every year I wish to hear circumstantially from the president elders, that we may collect, as in a medium, the most pleasing and interesting things of the work of God, not only for the episcopacy, but the Conferences, and the press. I think we have paid but little attention to the work of God, or pure history of religion in America. Except my Journals and a few letters, and our Annual Minutes, what have we to show of the great things God hath done with us, for us, and by us, for thirty years? If the Magazine of necessity must fail, a very choice collection, or selection, of the most pure American papers will be introduced; and it would be well for those that have been of standing in the work to write the beginning of

their lives, and religion, and labors, and it will be more easily finished in the memoirs of their deaths. We have been graciously supported in our route through the Western States; and the revival of religion among the united Presbyterians and Methodists in Cumberland gave me most animated pleasure and felicity. In the South we have harmony, but not a great increase.

I hope but little murmuring will be heard of the administration. Some missed their choice, no doubt, in such a popular election [Bishop Whatcoat].<sup>[25]</sup> I hope we shall do as little harm as any men they could have chosen; and we will do all the good that is in our power. We wish to know no places or persons after the flesh. The cities will be no more to us than the country, only as Conferences call our attention. We intend to travel ten months of the year at least, and to ride about 6000 miles in the year. I am sorry that any men of respectability among us should join the men of the world, or the separating party, and reflect upon characters and countries. It is a pity any man should bear reflection because Divine Providence gave him birth and being in this or any other land; the fault was not his, if such it is, and was by no means in his power to prevent. It will only serve to show some men's hearts, that they have judged themselves worthy of an honor which a judicious Conference hath conferred upon another. I hope, however, none will be so ungenerous as to charge me with duplicity, and join the disaffected party when disappointed: this will only teach me what I have always believed, all flesh is frail and myself also. I have always taken a pleasure, as far as it was in my power, to bring

men of merit and standing forward, and have rejoiced to find citizens take the superintendency of the work in various parts,—I congratulate you, brother, upon the prospects of the West. Late letters announce great prospects of good in the North and East. Of Maryland, east and west, with Delaware, I have not heard: it is possible you have heard more than I have. If a president elder doth not write to me once in six months, I shall fear he is not in his duty, or in a good temper.

This is a day of good tidings. We cannot hold our peace: if we do, some displeasure may come upon us. When I have read the accounts of the work of God in Cumberland and Delaware, I have found it has given fresh springs to preachers and people, our own and others also. As Conference has willed a larger supply to the preachers, it would be well to make collections quarterly, and in every Sabbath congregation. In our South Carolina Conference we came short only about \$48, and this was expended nearly in expenses. You will present us to the preachers in much love. I have sold my carriage, and am on horseback; but Old Gray will never stand the whole continent. Perhaps you may find a young, strong, good-tempered, well-gaited, light trotting or pacing horse of moderate price. I might be able to purchase. I have sold my carriage to Stith Mead,<sup>[26]</sup> who is unable to ride upon horseback: for at least, I must wait for pay twelve months. As your letter found a post, for which I am much

gratified, I hope this will come to hand in answer. Thine as ever,

F. Asbury  
The Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church,  
South, XIV (1860), 624-25

*Asbury had been traveling down the eastern coast of the country. George Roberts, the pastor of Light Street Church in Baltimore, had sent him by letter some report of the work in Baltimore and Maryland, but not enough. Asbury was disturbed because he could not get reports of the work, and he says so.*

KINGSTON, S.C.  
February 4, 1801<sup>[27]</sup>

[To George Roberts]

My most dearly beloved Brother:

What so long expected came at last from you and Brother Morrell.<sup>[28]</sup> We came along west of Charleston and sent a messenger to bring our letters to Kingston 100 miles on this side Charleston. We mark the pillar and the flame of fire that are the Providence and work of God. Withall if we reach Baltimore, travel about 5000 this year; but we have formed a place for future operation of about 6000; and to know no city or town after the flesh, but a night and away, and to visit most if not every district in the Union once in a year. My health is restored. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[29]</sup> takes off much public duty that I cannot attend to, with my other load.

I have sold my carriage and Old Gray is as brisk as he can roll in flesh. We have seen unspeakable times in Cumberland among the Amish, Presbyterians and Methodists. I hope that 500 souls have been converted last year, the work bears all the features of what was seen in Maryland and Delaware and in Georgia. We have seen with our eyes; in South Carolina we have visited largely. We shall have a work in time. As to staying in Charleston I always paid to drink for the [whistle]. I used to go to the Warm Springs<sup>[30]</sup> every season but I had nearly taken the flux in April. I was generally sick in Charleston of late years, nothing but regular and constant riding will do our work. We are called by the slave holders and Kellyites<sup>[31]</sup> and by some that may have been disappointed Englishmen. We must rise by our attention to every part of our duty and all parts of our work and charge. South Carolina also to the [?]<sup>[32]</sup> — of religion in Virginia, some good appearances.

I am greatly disappointed that Wilson Lee hath not written me some account of the work in Maryland and Brother Morrell and you are brief on that subject. Brother Ware hath not written to me. Once in a year all the presiding elders ought to write to the Episcopacy, to collect into a focus the work of God, for the press, and I wish the preachers of [today] would write a brief of their conviction, conversion and call to preach and where they had laboured. I will select all the most spiritual parts of letters to print and to keep a history of what God is doing in the South. Of Philadelphia, I have heard largely, but it must rest till conference. I presume that elder, and elder, will implead each other at the Conference. I should

be exceedingly glad if Brother Morrell and you, would both attend, the yearly conference, it will only be the loss of one Sabbath.

It is a subject of serious consequence where the East Conference will be no fear in cities where we abound with friends. The preachers are slack in going to their circuits, you will take the hint! I am a solitary man, I am much elbowed and courted in cities. Our work requires great dedication and much solitude. You will make a lift of a collection for Conference, the interest of at least, six thousand dollars never yet paid into the fund, besides a yearly collection as in Philadelphia after all our financiering the Chartered Fund is the best if it would yield 1400 or 2000 dollars it would give great relief.<sup>[33]</sup>

Our work<sup>[34]</sup> opens in the Pittsburgh direction westward. I esteem it a degree of spiritual impoliteness not to answer a Christian letter, and a ministerial letter more so. Would the presiding elders write to me one letter only of the state of the work, I should rejoice and the city preachers also of the cities. We could give great personal information to the conference and individuals of the work of God. I have not heard of Mrs. Gough,<sup>[35]</sup> if she is recovered. You may meet me with a letter at Norfolk about the last of the month, we are now upon the seaside way to Wilmington, Newbern, Halifax, Norfolk, and Portsmouth. Then Richmond, Fredericksburg, Alexandria, and so on. I beseech you to counsel Lyell<sup>[36]</sup> you are near him.

I am as ever thine and to the members of the Church of God  
in Baltimore

I send Christian salutations.

Francis Asbury  
*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
(Lovely Lane Museum)

*Thomas Morrell had not been well. There was a question as to whether he could continue in the work. His father was an old man. Evidently Asbury had thought of placing him in New York where he would have been near his father in Elizabeth Town or in Jersey. Asbury shows his great sympathy for Morrell. The next year he was moved to New York. The remainder of the letter is taken up with news and concern for the connection.*

KINGSTON, S.C.  
February 6, 1801

[To Thomas Morrell]

My very dear and loved Brother:

Grace, mercy and peace be abundantly multiplied to thee now and ever. Your letter came late to hand, by our sending a messenger to Charleston, after conference. We happily received them at Kingston, on our way to Wilmington. What is done, cannot be done over again: we cannot tell what advice to give, or how we should act ourselves had we been in circumstances, like you and Brother Roberts. I have thought, I should advise the preachers at such seasons to go and see their parents. You will advise concerning your

continuance in the work. I am well persuaded that you ought to take a station in New York, once more, and when health and weather will permit, if it was every week, visit your father and spend as much time as you can, a day or two. I am clear with Mr. Wesley, the obligation of children to parents never closeth but with life; and that parents ought to demand and children give their parents services, and support, if they need it, that parents have a natural, and divine right over their children. You ought to cheer the setting hour of your father's life: hold and stay long. My dear mother is going swiftly, if not gone: after praying fifty five years for me. I have often thought very seriously of my leaving my mother as one of the most doubtful sacrifices I have made.

I am more peculiarly tender on this subject, when written to by my Brethren. We have held our conference in Camden, in great peace, as if Providence had over ruled our removal from that seat of ——<sup>[37]</sup> Indeed it is a doubt with me if one yearly conference ought to be held at all: or more than once in three years in any city or large town.

Take this hint. I wish to do nothing with duplicity though I am sometimes charged with it from my professedly best or real friends near the center. The preachers will soon return to their work they are going through and need not learn the habits of citizens, they should attend with the greatest strictness to our task. At conference there, preaching is no great object at conferences, the keeping thirty or 40 horses is no object in the country but it is a great matter in town, if the



country people must have the horses, they may as well have the man.

I have need of great solitude, of mind and to retire in a country house, to think and meditate with my partner, who is always to be consulted, as we are one. You know the state of families, you know what frequent calls we may have from business, the most momentous concern that ever filled the hands, the heads, the hearts, of man, for the peace, good order of the general works. I hope Brother Roberts and you will both attend the conference: we need the aid of wise and gracious and frank counsellors; let no trifling excuse be admitted.

I hope that the collection will be noble, not less than the interest of 8 or 10,000 Dollars, that should have been paid into the preachers fund. I am easy how they raise it upon honorable means. We shall want money, and the rise of salary will demand it.

The poor people of the south have paid about 48 dollars and we had to pay a moderate sum for board. The removal of Conference will save 4 or 500 dollars, at the rate they pay for house rent and board and the burden of small pox and other things will be removed.

If this money is not wanted in the Maryland Conference, our poor brethren upon the Lakes or away among the rocks of New England, will dispense with it. Several married preachers are returned to the connection in the south and the

north, many will and perhaps ought to marry and to continue in the work, and we shall receive married preachers and [some may] be carried from one Conference and hands, and be drawn out of book money in the hands of the preachers, thus we need not transmit cash but keep it where it is.

There is a most glorious work in Cumberland, in the Tennessee State, in the union of the Presbyterians and Methodists. In Vermont it is great also. In these southern states after we have been trod down like the mire of the streets, God will raise and lift us up, and make our enemies lick the dust of our feet, if we are faithful.

I cannot say if the address was not of God and it may or will have its influence, it only lanced the impostume [abscess] of deep rooted enmity, that has been swelling for years. Politicians are very apt to over do themselves, the history of all nations, and people will teach this in sacred and civil books. Will you be so ——<sup>[38]</sup> as to procure your two pamphlets [?] clean copies. I wish to have all of them bound in a book, to transmit to any that wish in my life or death, to know about that or those matters. I want justice at least from men, and especially from Christians.

You will favour me with a letter to Norfolk, the last of March. If the presiding elders, in the cities and towns and country would give me once a year circumstantial accounts of

the work. I would ———<sup>[39]</sup> annually of Methodism, like Prince's History for a select collection of original papers.  
thine as ever

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

[A note is appended which seems to be from Richard Whatcoat.]

*The most interesting part of this letter is that dealing with the preaching and quarterly conference appointments. The letter shows Asbury's method of getting around. As a rule his itinerary was set up before he got to the various churches and preaching places. He was driven to make the appointments, which had been arranged well in advance. What a schedule it was can be clearly seen. There was no time for emergencies and the many illnesses he suffered. His life is all the more remarkable when it is seen through his preaching appointments.*

PORTSMOUTH, VA.  
*March 26, 1801*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[40]</sup>

My very dear Roberts:

Grace and peace attend thee and thine now and ever. We have toiled along the sea coast, solitary sands, long leafed pines, creeks, rivers and swamps of South Carolina and North [Carolina] to Norfolk, between 600 and 700 miles and have nearly filled 4000 since our start at Baltimore. The want of

water, the changes of mush have affected me some, but oh the winter of religion, the spring of trade, staves and shingles, ship building, all afloat.

Oh now I am talking of temporals. John Hodges<sup>[41]</sup> an old Methodist near Portsmouth was spoken to by Brother Simpson, he was here to supply Adam Fonderdon with what card boards he will command and Hodges thinks he had better have them longer than a correct length, lest they shrink, crack or damage, and better cut plain than thin, on one side, but safe. If Fonderdon will order by letter directed to John Hodges near the Great Bridge, Norfolk, to the care of John Stratton.

[line defaced]

I must also desire that Brother Morrell and yourself make no manner of excuses from coming to the yearly conference at Pipe Creek; let your stall<sup>[42]</sup> feed flocks in Baltimore, have a church for their luxury; remember Nicholas Snethen, and George Roberts, and Thomas Morrell are our committee of compilation. I am determined to do as little of that as can be. I would submit to men of sense and candor; but when men put on such airs, as some do, whom I know have no more sense nor learning than myself I will not commit myself to such judges and such critics.

Our appointments<sup>[43]</sup> we wish made with great punctuality and notariety through Maryland in the west.

April 27 Federal City Where and what time is to be set

Tuesd. 28 Montgomery Court House 12 oc<sup>[44]</sup>

Wed. 29 Goshen Meeting House 12 oc

Thurs. 30 Pipe Creek

Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>

Saturd. 2nd

Sund. 3rd

Mond. 4th

Tuesd. 5th

Wed. 6th

} [Baltimore]  
Conference

Thursd. 7th Ryster 12 oc, Stone Chapel 5 oc

Frid. 8<sup>th</sup>

Sat. 9<sup>th</sup> } Baltimore City

Sund. 10<sup>th</sup> }

appointments to be made by your judgment for the bishop  
on Mon.

Monday 11 Perry Hall 12 oc

Tuesd. 12 Gunpowder at 12 oc Abingdon 5 oc

Wed. 13 Bush Chapel 12 oc Swan Neck 4 oc Thence then  
we [cross] the River, we shall send our appointments to  
the other shore, but lest they should fail, if you have an  
opportunity, they are as follows

North East 14, 12 oc

Frid. 15 Carnanual Bethel

Bohemia at 12 Mannor Chapel 4 oc

Satur. 16 Georgetown at Roads 12 oc

Sund. 17 Still Pond 12 oc

Chester at 3 oc

Mond. 18 Church Hill

Tuesd. 19 Centerville 12 oc

Wed. 20 Easton

Thurd. 21 Boling Rock 12 oc  
Frid. 22 Cambridge 12 oc  
Sat. 23 Fraser's 12 oc  
Sund. 24 Chop Tank 12 oc  
Mon. 25 Milford 12 oc  
Tuesd. 26 Brick Chapel 12 oc  
Wed. 27 Dover 12 oc  
Thurd. 28 Cross Roads 12 oc  
Friday 29 Dickinson 11 oc  
          Wilmington night  
Saturd. 30 Philadelphia

And so we go. You will send a correct copy to the shore if you can; as we wish to let them know when we are coming. Farewell my love to all. Thine,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Another set of preaching appointments shows the unusual stamina of Asbury in spite of a body that was frequently in great pain. His will power was extraordinary. The references to the publishing business are interesting.*

PORTSMOUTH, VA.  
*March 27, 1801*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[45]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

If we do for you, in return you will serve us. We wish to take the following, or a better plan, if it can be found, through [New] Jersey:

Monday, June 8, to leave Philadelphia and preach at Clonmell, three o'clock P.M.

Tuesday, June 9, to preach at Salem, two o'clock.

Wednesday, June 10, to preach at Bethel, two o'clock.

Thursday, June 11, to preach at New Mills, three o'clock.

Friday, June 12, to preach at Emley's, two o'clock; but I must be at Joseph Hutchinson's that night.

Saturday, June 13, to preach at Brunswick, twelve o'clock; Drake's, five o'clock.

Sunday, June 14, to preach at Elizabethtown all the Sabbath.

You will consult Brother Sharp,<sup>[46]</sup> and do the best you can. I am not able to say what places ought to be in the vacancies, but we must be at Joseph Hutchinson's and Brunswick, and Drake's and Elizabethtown, that we may come in time to the [New York] Conference.

We could not collect any money from Thomas Bowen.<sup>[47]</sup> According to his settlement with Jesse Lee,<sup>[48]</sup> he holds the Connection in debt to him. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[49]</sup> hath received but very little of your money as yet, but he has sent you one hundred and twenty dollars. Forty-nine you will be pleased to

pay Sister Dickins<sup>[50]</sup> from Henry Bradford, as a part of payment he hath obtained for land sold in North Carolina; the remnant you will enter to Brother Whatcoat's credit, as he expecteth to receive money of yours at the Virginia Conference.

100 dollars United States Bank, No. 129.

20 dollars Bank of New York, No. 334.

This small sum will be of use to you, but the money Brother Whatcoat will collect, of yours, will be of no use to him, only a burden.

I am, with respect, yours,

Francis Asbury

Portsmouth, March 27, 1801

\$100

20

120

49 to E. Dickins

71 to R. Whatcoat

I have enclosed the twenty dollar bill in a letter to T. Haskins.<sup>[51]</sup>

F. Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Asbury's foot infection caused him to be confined in Philadelphia for two months, thereby missing the New York Conference. The foot trouble as described in the Journal was*



*a sinew strain. He had the constant attention of Dr. Physick. The church in Philadelphia was undergoing severe divisions as the Journal and subsequent letters show, and the malcontents both in and out of Philadelphia were giving him great concern. The immediate malcontent reference is to the Philadelphia Conference.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

June 6, 1801

[To George Roberts]<sup>[52]</sup>

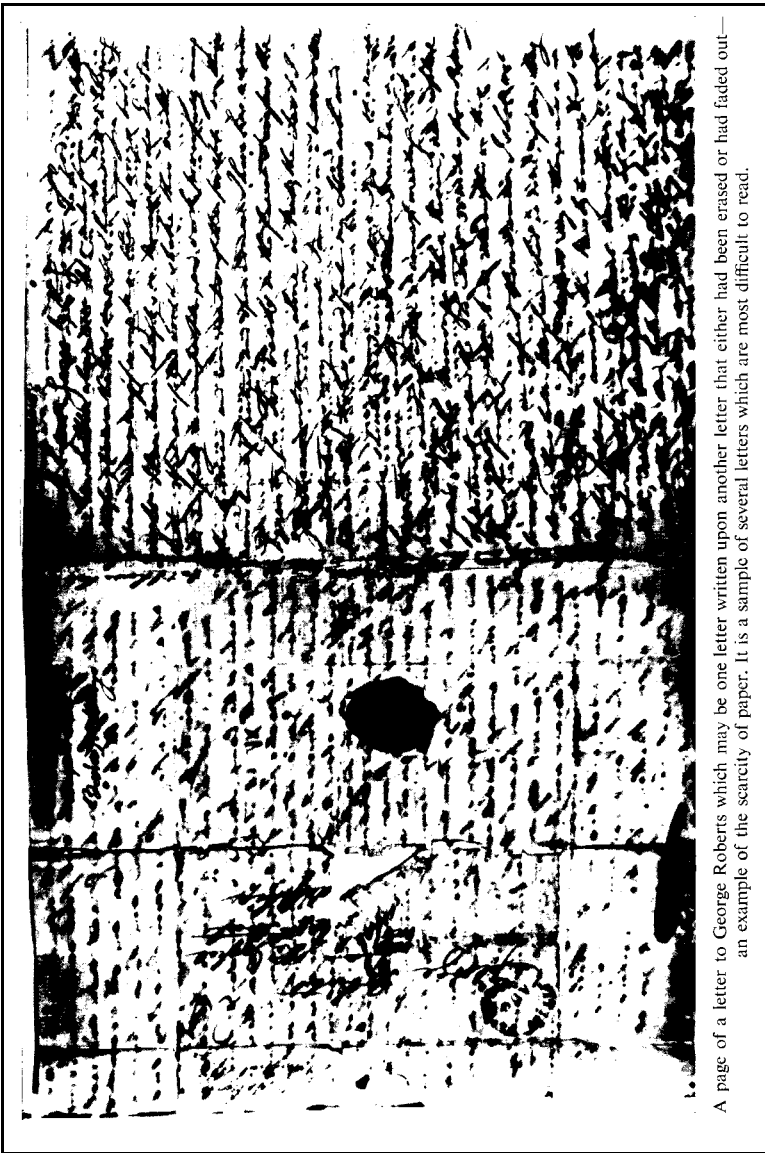
My very dear George:

I have been under an alarm with my foot, the Doctor<sup>[53]</sup> has pronounced a second and severe operation necessary; this morning he doubts, and hath applied a blister, to lay it open to see if any thing improper should remain under neath. The thoughts of not going to [New] York and the east sunk me down, and old Father<sup>[54]</sup> also, but the lame and blind will take the prey.<sup>[55]</sup> I am much afraid Brother Whatcoat will lose his sight in part or whole, he will ride and preach himself blind. We have had a great time in Conference. This day the Conference<sup>[56]</sup> closes with the petition of the malcontents. I highly disapprove of any thing coming before the Conference, it is a bad precedent; I plead not guilty. I had the leave of absence for operation upon my foot. I beg leave to suggest if I am to have a suit of clothes that they may be my own colour light blue,<sup>[57]</sup> the excessive heat of this country, and we being so exposed perpetually to the sun, it must be so for my health

and the important work to the east. I hope to be able to go. I  
am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury  
*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
*(Lovely Lane Museum)*





A page of a letter to George Roberts which may be one letter written upon another letter that either had been erased or had faded out—  
an example of the scarcity of paper. It is a sample of several letters which are most difficult to read.

*According to the letter of June 11, 1801, to Thomas Haskins, this address was sent to Haskins. Whatcoat and Asbury were appointed by the annual conference to write an address to the church. It may be that another letter was sent to Haskins along with this; but if so, it has not come to light. The succeeding letters to Thomas Haskins throw considerable light on this address. Whether the difficulty was largely between the stationed preachers and those who had been active in the ministry and were now attached to St. George's is not clear; but Asbury felt that the preachers, stationed, connectional, and local, could have solved the trouble. Ezekiel Cooper gives his side of the story in his Journal. He says it was a division between the rich and the poor, and he sided with the poor.*

*Samuel Coate was pastor for the one year, 1801. It seems that Ezekiel Cooper, the Book Agent, and Thomas Haskins, former traveling preacher and now grocer in Philadelphia, were at odds. Asbury says in the letter of July 10 that if union could take place between Brothers Swain, Coate, Haskins, Green, Cavender, and Cooper, "our trouble would soon be at an end."*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
*June 8, 1801*

To the Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in  
Philadelphia.<sup>[58]</sup>

BRETHREN, dearly beloved in the Lord, grace, mercy, and peace, be multiplied to you, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Annual Conference, which sat in this city during the last week, having had a view of the existing difficulties among you,<sup>[59]</sup> came to a solution—That as the Conference had never before been called upon in such a case or cases, and as their interference therein, might be setting a precedent, pregnant with evil consequences to the Church at large, therefore it should be recommended to you all, to resume the tone of harmony and love.

We were appointed by the Conference to address you upon this occasion—Therefore,

We address you by request of the Conference, and in the name and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles—"Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto

the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but Until seventy times seven.

"Therefore is the Kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

"But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into

prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormenters, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matthew xviii, 15-35.

"But if ye bite or devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Galatians v, 15, 22-26.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: But if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy: Who art thou that judgest another?" James iv, 11, 12.



"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden." Galatians vi, 1-5 vsr.

"Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile and hypocrisies, and as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Peter ii, 1, 2.

We lament that there has been a division of sentiment, either among preachers or members; But as all men do not see alike, in matters of church discipline, we beseech you brethren, not to suffer a difference in opinion or views, to alienate your affections from your brethren, the church, or the cause of God.

If you regard the authority or desire of the Conference, you are most earnestly entreated, on principles of love, to let every matter of dispute or complaint die and be buried. Moreover, if you wish to see or have the Conference among you in the future, you must add to your benevolent liberality<sup>[60]</sup> (for which we, in behalf of ourselves and the Conference, do thank you, collectively and individually, who have communicated to our wants) the more benevolent and soul-

cheering *feast of love* and *union* among yourselves: which we hope, in future, to find existing in the society.

Furthermore, if you calculate<sup>[61]</sup> on any great advantage or benefit, to yourselves or others, from a station of preachers in the city, you must live in the exercise of prayer, and peace. How can you expect your preachers to live and labour among you in the fire of contention, and always to be wading through the waters of strife?

We respect you, as one of the most ancient societies of our connection, in the United States, and most earnestly wish and pray, that your unity, faith, love, and brotherly kindness, might be spoken of throughout the world. We are greatly concerned and very solicitous, to have peace and unity re-established among you. The Conference consider each society as standing in its own accountability, as standeth every quarterly meeting conference, every yearly conference, and the general conference, according to the rules of discipline to govern them: and as the general conference has given no authority to the yearly conference to correct the real or supposed abuses of the quarterly meetings in the exercise of those duties referred to them by the discipline, and as they have heard the complaints against their own members, it is all they are authorised to do. The Conference have acted according to the best of their judgment, in thus recommending and entreating of you to unite in love and peace.

But if, after all we can say or do for you on this occasion, any of you<sup>[62]</sup> should so far yield to temptation, as to withdraw

from us, or leave the society, we hope to find you in the congregation. We are grieved at the idea of giving any of you up, or of losing you. We have done what we conceived to be for the best. If any of you leave us, we will follow you with our prayers, with our tears, our pity, and exhortations—we will follow you as the scattered sheep of our flock.

We advise, and enjoin it on all your present preachers and ministers,<sup>[63]</sup> carefully to avoid all pulpit reflections, and to visit generally from house to house, both rich and poor, and not to have the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons; and also, to use all healing and conciliatory methods, consistent with real piety and good discipline. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Philippians iv, 8, 9.

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." 2 Corinthians xiii, 11, 14.

Brethren, dearly beloved in the Lord,

We are, in the bonds of a peaceable gospel, yours  
affectionately,

Signed in behalf of the Committee,

Richard Whatcoat

Francis Asbury

*Taken from a photograph of a printed copy of the address  
in St. George's Church, Philadelphia*

*This and the following letters to Thomas Haskins throw light on the address to the trustees at St. George's Church and its contents. A summons had already gone to make a reply to the address. Asbury felt they were proceeding with haste. He pleads for patience and resignation.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*June 11, 1801*

[*To Thomas Haskins*]<sup>[64]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I shall take it as a distinguishing favor if you will send me the double letter<sup>[65]</sup> Brother Whatcoat and myself wrote in great confidence and conciliatory affection to you. You have heard of a summons of a reply to our Address.<sup>[66]</sup> I hope that more patience and resignation will prevail, and you will wait awhile, your haste will undo your cause as it hath done already. I know now from what quarter it first sprung that I had committed myself to an impeachment at the General Conference, by conveying official commands to the presiding elder by local preachers.<sup>[67]</sup> When I had more of the

difficulties of Philadelphia brought before me at Camden I concluded I would not write any at all upon the subject, matters had been carried with such an high hand, upon both sides, and Brother Whatcoat was absent from me at that time; and when he came he advised a joint letter; therefore if my letter is detained, and a second improper use made of it, it will make a breach between me and my old brethren, friends and children in Philadelphia that perhaps will not be healed.

Francis Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia.*

*Transcribed by Albert W. Cliffe*

*Thomas Haskins was for a long time the treasurer of St. George's Church, one of its trustees, and a former traveling preacher. He seems to have been closer to Asbury than any other member, and Asbury got him to do the work on his Journal. However, Haskins did not do it too well. (See Journal, April 5, 1802.) Asbury was doing everything possible to prevent a division of St. George's. Without doubt Haskins and Cooper were at odds.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.<sup>[68]</sup>

Friday, June 26, 1801

[To Thomas Haskins]<sup>[69]</sup>

My very dear Son:

If you can be so accommodating as to transcribe two volumes<sup>[70]</sup> of my journal by construction and correction upon your plan already begun, as soon as possible, I will promise

you \$100. If you will likewise copy and construct in the best manner you can some fragments of letters<sup>[71]</sup> I am selecting from a correspondence of near thirty years from a great variety of persons from different parts of the continent. You must be at liberty to have some parts you may judge uninteresting but these fragments of letters contain relations of revivals in most places in the union. I wish if you undertake this work it might be with all your might at least within the space of six or ten months.

I beg leave to suggest to you as there is, I understand a meeting<sup>[72]</sup> to be held at Col. North's this evening, if it would not be better to suspend all thoughts of withdrawing from the church, at least for six or twelve months, and all return to your stations and fellowship in the church. You will ask me how much nearer shall we be then and that I cannot answer. It may be no object with some of you by that time. You will ask me what further advice would you give and I answer your difficulty ought not to be with the conference or with me or the present stationed preachers or with the society in general. These you judge innocent as a body or with the official members except those that form the last quarter meeting. Then only will you leave these sheep that have not injured you. I hope you will not avail yourself of my advice to my injury but to your advantage.

Suppose you have a resolution entered into and a committee select a member of the agrieved body to be appointed to address all the members of that quarter meeting individually or collectively by word or letter; to give them the

fullest information they can of what was done and why things were so done at that quarter meeting; and never give over and address them, time after time, because it is a subject that so many feel themselves invested into such an amount of members that perhaps they will in the final issue of things, they will have the church, unless said select men can obtain such satisfaction as will calm the minds of the body of the dissatisfied members. Assume great tenderness and yet great plainness, move slow, make an address, copy it, send it to everyone. Let them answer you collectively or individually. Tell them they must not view it as a light matter but strive as they love your souls as the final due (worth) them.

There should not only be caution, how they take up and decide upon such a matter and most earnestly entreat their candid information upon the present matter and the select committee will report to the body. I wish it not to be made public that I have anything to do in the matter of advice. I confide in you and I know not that I could write to the body or any other person but yourself. You will easily, you will understand and systematize this plan in a few words.

You must consider whether you keep your places in the church and with which property you can demand that satisfaction, and how improper, if not impossible, it might be for you to obtain it if withdrawn. If you apply to the court, by all means stay in the county. You can know perfectly the members of that court or quarterly meeting and employ men to follow them with letter after letter in the greatest calmness and love by ample legation of the great breach it is like to

make if full information is not obtained. I have offered you a sum, I hope, to command for your transcript of the Journal and letters, I shall not depend upon the connection. We have already given a \$100 for the first copy<sup>[73]</sup> you now have. I shall be exceedingly gratified for you to proceed. It is not what it is worth but what I can spare.

Thine as ever,

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*A bad foot is still responsible for Asbury's staying in Philadelphia. He is writing to George Roberts in Baltimore and pouring out his soul on his personal and official problems. The division at St. George's Church is uppermost in his thinking. He indicates here that he regrets that he had attempted to do anything about it.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

July 1, 1801

[To George Roberts]<sup>[74]</sup>

My very dear Friend:

I have delayed writing not willing to trouble my dearest friends, to mourn, in hopeless, helpless grief for me. I have contemplated a return to Maryland, but it cannot be yet; indeed I have a second thought of going by stage to Boston. All things were conducted well and perhaps far better without than with me at [New] York. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[75]</sup> by the advice and help of the presiding elders and conference



(presided). All is well, a large and happy addition of preachers. Sylvester<sup>[76]</sup> is gone with Brother Whatcoat. This is well, perhaps he may continue with him and if I am able to move by the last of August I shall take Luke and go on to the westward and leave Brother Whatcoat to go down the old path<sup>[77]</sup> to Camden Conference. I know not a better man than Sylvester to attend the old bishop; ——, that —— writes he can see dimly with one eye. I do not speak with respect to want; but the old men, and women<sup>[78]</sup> quarrel with my dress and the heat of the weather calls for a change. I received no money here from conference, or trustees and I will not. The conference committee of finance in [New] York have sent me 18 dollars, I shall take 30 from Mr. Foxhall. If the Society in Baltimore choose they may repay him. As to my confinement I have a most affectionate skilful Doctor,<sup>[79]</sup> a large house, the use of three rooms by day and four if need be by night. I am a little like the old prophet. If I am weak it is a wonder if it is not at a widow's house.

In Charleston, Baltimore (old times) Philadelphia, state of New York perhaps about fifty have signed a declaration of withdrawing and seem in haste to be discharged from the society. These I call Puritans. What the preachers will do with them I know not, one elder is enough for bishop here. I fear we have had too many! My principal (trouble) was with those I have had difficulties<sup>[80]</sup> with on the other side the water, non-resident, non-president. I mean only to do my own business when President, and only when it is safe—give advice in what I cannot say is my business; only for general good. I only

regret that I had anything at all to do with the Philadelphia fire<sup>[81]</sup> and still I am here and cannot with safety get away.

The case of my foot is very stubborn, if past the worst, which we hope, it mends slowly. It was six months in preparing. I fear it will be two or three in curing. I hope the Philadelphia fever will not reach Baltimore. It is a sufficient curse here. I hope that the preachers and people will be done with it. With you, I believe it to be a Judicial stroke upon this society.

The universal gale of prosperity of the Connection is wonderful, for it is for our humiliation but a challenge. Philadelphia<sup>[82]</sup> for fifty years past, with all the cities in America, Europe or the world; for divisions among religious people so called. You will give me a line. Present Christian salutations individually and collectively in the pulpit if you please, to any and to all. You will judge of my case to sit from morning to evening in a disagreeable attitude in the heat of the weather and division in the middle of the city, while he is yet<sup>[83]</sup> speaking there cometh—

I am afflicted,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*This is another in the series of letters to Haskins. It reveals how bad the division was at St. George's. Asbury felt that the preachers were involved and that Haskins was himself a big*

*factor in bringing harmony. It is disappointing that there are not other letters extant to throw further light on what happened.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*July 10, 1801*

[*To Thomas Haskins*]<sup>[84]</sup>

Oh my much loved Son:

How long is this war to continue between the house of David and the house of Saul? Will it not be bitterness in the end? Now the anguish of my foot is removed and I am able to set it to the ground with a little more ease, I want to see what can be done for peace. Why cannot Brother Cooper<sup>[85]</sup> and you talk together, like Christians, men, and ministers, and men of sense, and citizens? Oh that we could have a little close conference between the stationed preachers and you that have been in travelling connection and see if we cannot understand each other.

There, if few of you were united you might by power of God shake the city. I am fully persuaded that it is to you, and of you our separate brethren hope, and boast. Would you return they would in time. I am almost confident, if there was union to take place and a close fellowship to take place between Brother Swain, Coate,<sup>[86]</sup> Haskins, Green, Cavender, and Cooper; our troubles would be soon at an end. Little did I ever think that one of my dear children would rise up against me. If I am bereaved of my children I am bereaved! till I am better persuaded I shall think from what I have heard, and seen, that it lies with Brother Cavender<sup>[87]</sup> and you, and oh my

dear, think of the consequences of misguiding souls; it [has] always been my fear and care, to do as little harm as possibly I could, knowing it is what little good I have ever done, or can do.

If you have not fellowship with individuals in the society, you will have some with the body. Your way is open to retreat with honor, now do it, lest the door should be shut. You owe it to the body of Methodists through the continent and may plead that you cannot leave them, nay I know not but you owe it to me! I hope to be at Ebenezer in the afternoon on Sabbath Day, there I hope to see you and others if you will not come to St. George's. This is but the beginning of a long talk up on paper, while I stay, which may be a week longer by necessity of my God.

Yours as ever

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*Since Asbury has been laid up for weeks with an infected foot, he has had time to think about his Journal and letters. He is not certain how best to proceed with the editing and transcription of the material. Haskins is working on them, but Asbury is wondering what kind of job it will be.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

July 11, 1801

[*To Thomas Haskins*]<sup>[88]</sup>

My very dear Son:

The probability is that I shall be in town another week to gain some strength, and part of a new foot; and as I am through the selection,<sup>[89]</sup> and file of letters; I have sent through the numbers of my journal back in haste; not expecting that I could attend an examination of them upon your first correction. I am now inclined upon second thought, more attentively to revise them upon your first going through them; and to judge more perfectly, which I shall choose, whether to have them transcribed as you have begun; or take them upon your first correction; or lay them by altogether; or let them be till some way may open, in my future life or after my death. I am at present under some doubt and difficulty what to do. By reading them carefully, I shall judge according to my imperfect judgment; whether I can submit them to the press in their present dress or not. Please to send the numbers by the Philadelphia (stage).

I am with great respect to you and yours,

Francis Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia.*

*Transcribed by Albert W. Cliffe*

A Letter of Thomas Haskins  
to Bishop Whatcoat

*Whatcoat also kept a journal Part of it has been published in W.W. Sweet's Religion on the American Frontier. Whatcoat's Journal had been in Thomas Haskins' hands. Haskins, the grocer and trustee of St. George's and former traveling preacher, was also working on Asbury's Journal. A comparison of Asbury's and Whatcoat's Journals shows that Asbury was much better equipped to write than Whatcoat and that Asbury had developed a great deal more literary skill and culture.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

July 11, 1801

[To Richard Whatcoat]<sup>[90]</sup>

Revd. and dear Father:

I this moment received your favor of this morning and in obedience to your wishes I send all your manuscript journals whichever came to my hands and I hope you will in due season decide on their publication and that they may appear to the eye under every advantage and become the medium of reproof, correction and instruction to future generations. You will please excuse my giving you a formal answer to yours of yesterday which has been duly received and maturely considered. I can and will hear almost everything you think proper to think of and tell me<sup>[91]</sup> and have judged it most expedient [?] to say nothing in answer, lest in saying what I might I should inflict a wound and give pain to one whom I love and revere equal to any man on earth. But if I am bereft

of my father,<sup>[92]</sup> I am bereft. Yet will I earnestly claim his prayers hoping that God may bless and continue us in Christ Jesus.

In haste, Your affectionate son and—

Thomas Haskins

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*According to the envelope this letter was directed to Ezekiel Cooper, superintendent of the press and books, Philadelphia. It is written from Perry Hall and tells of the conversion of Gough Hollady, a niece of Mrs. Gough. Asbury is also giving more information on the Journal. He refers to the strife at St. George's.*

PERRY HALL, MD.<sup>[93]</sup>

*Tuesday, [August] 4, 1801*

[To Ezekiel Cooper]

My very dear Brother:

I can inform you I came safe to Perry Hall, and had great cause to give glory to God. The African part of the family appear to be all upon the stretch for glory. An apparently thoughtless young lady, Gough Hollady, a niece to Mrs. Gough, found the Lord among the black people last night, and this morning leaped and shouted in the family pew at morning prayer. You cannot wish my Journals to be more perfect than I want them to be: in journalizing, we must have some little things, to carry on the thread. You will oblige me to send one of the second volume as soon as possible to Mr. Lukly, to

send to my dear mother to read at eighty-eight, or if at ninety. I have thought [suppose] if we should not have published the extract made by Mr. Wesley of David Brainard, that model of meekness, moderation, temptation and labor, and suffering self-denial. My love to all that inquire after me. I am thine as ever,

Francis Asbury

P.S. As your unworthy but sincere, not assuming to call myself your bishop, I hope you will as ministers maintain all possible union among yourselves and people. I hope the sword of contention will be sheathed to be drawn no more. Order and discipline, I trust, will be attended to. I humbly hope that a court called a quarter meeting, will not be established to govern the Society in its regular discipline, which ought to be attended to by the ruling elder of the station. I hope that quarter meetings and stationed preachers will all know and do their duty, as also Annual and General Conferences. I shall be thankful if you will send me some parchments for each order. If you have any thing special to do in your line, you will avail yourself of the services of our assistants, Hutchinson and Snethen, as we shall take different routes, to serve the continent, connection, and you.

You may send 400 copies of Minutes, two if not three, for each of the assistants to give and sell, as it is possible we may spread them as they have not been hitherto. If I am permitted to keep an assistant, I shall desire him to see the Minutes are properly prepared by him for you, that there may be less cause of complaint; but I know not that we are obliged



constitutionally to give the number in the station: but we cannot do it correctly, for we have sometimes our circuits mixed. You may send some of the Missionary Letters, if you please. I still think that it is high time we should attempt something of American papers<sup>[94]</sup> in the collection. I think we pay too great a compliment to European publications: if ours are not as elegant, they may be as interesting and as acceptable.

I am thine,

F. Asbury  
Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church,  
South, XIII (1859), 463

*After about two months of being laid up with his foot in Philadelphia, Asbury is on the road again. He has stopped at Perry Hall, the home of the Goughs, where he had been entertained; and he reports the conversion of Mrs. Gough Hollady to Roberts and McCombs.*

PERRY HALL, MD.<sup>[95]</sup>

[August 4, 1801]

[To Elders Roberts and McCombs]<sup>[96]</sup>

Dear Brethren:

Last evening I came. I have not made up my mind when I shall come to the city. I may hear from you by my kind friend Jonathan Tously. He hath been so to me, let me recommend him to your notice. God is in this family. When I think how the devil and men strove to drive us from the family and how many years the poor blacks seemed stupid and how they are

now. Last night Gough Hollady appeared serious. I spoke to her about her grandmother and mother and self in the black people's exercise. She found the Lord last night and this morning in the family pew jumped and shouted and reassured I felt as if I had little religion. I can use my foot but a perfect use I do yet expect. It is nothing at all but a fracture of one of the principal sinews of the foot that has been taken out, but then I shall get another complete. Poor Whatcoat<sup>[97]</sup> is almost blind. Let me hear how Brother Roberts is and full information by Jonathan.<sup>[98]</sup>

I am as ever yours,

Francis Asbury

P.S. The Doctor has written abundance of letters but I might as well send them printed. Some he hath written are dead or located. I have done what he would approve, directed them to those near at hand who may wish to see.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*As usual Asbury is suffering. This time it is the intermittent fever. Here he is writing about appointments.*

PERRY HALL, MD.

August 12, 1801

[To George Roberts]<sup>[99]</sup>

My greatly respected Brother:

If it is a pleasure to you to see and to answer my letters it ought to be reciprocal on my part. I have had something like

an intermitting<sup>[100]</sup> fever ever since I came to Perry Hall. It is with difficulty I can perform family duty when I have such pure air, good living and lodging. I think of afflicted thousands, I fear coming to the city till a change of weather. You say sore! I was by riding three days; I was sore for six! For this cause I want leather breeches, that will ly close to the skin, but they must have strings at the knees, if possible.

As to the case of brother M'Caine.<sup>[101]</sup> I shall invade the presiding elder's place,<sup>[102]</sup> that hath a special charge of the district in my absence, and preside. If I was to advise, it would be for brother Toy<sup>[103]</sup> to take the charge of the Point, for a few weeks, and he can attend to the building. He knows how things ought to be done. God has honored him, and the society in the city, I also. As to the case of brother M'Caine he had not; as I thought made up his own mind. I left him to his own providence, only I told him in substance to forebear working. If he chose to go to Charleston I should submit, but should fear he would not come back, or perhaps leave the work.

If Brother Toy would lend Brother M'Caine his horse, M'Caine, might ride into the forest, to any, or many, of the Friend's Houses, and to the good air and water, to Robert Carnan's<sup>[104]</sup> or up to Pipe Creek; or he might conduct me to N. Snethen.<sup>[105]</sup> I should hope that Brother Toy<sup>[106]</sup> would help matters along at the Point, perhaps better than any other man; if the Light Street preachers, could go sometimes to the Point. I am waiting for cooler weather, yet I hope at all events to be in Light Street congregation on Sabbath morning; but it

appears to me, I should be right down sick if I was in town now.

This family calls my attention a little at this time. I hope God is determined to bring back \* \* \* \* \*<sup>[107]</sup> to himself. Give thyself no trouble about any thought for me, but the buckskin to save skin, and I shall have to leave my velvet ones. Last night Mr. Gough's<sup>[108]</sup> famous saddle horse, 200 dollars price, laid and died by the long side of my supple joynted Jane, had she died, should she die, the half of my personal estate is gone, real [estate] I have none. If any letters send them. I am as ever thine,

F. Asbury

P.S. I cannot think I shall have any time to answer brother M'Caine as I have sent him to his own home on direction of his elder.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Coke was back in England, and Asbury and Whatcoat were carrying on in America. Asbury is giving Coke an account of the work.*

[STONE CHAPEL, MD.]  
[August 20, 1801]<sup>[109]</sup>

[*To Thomas Coke*]<sup>[110]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

To whom I wish grace, mercy, and peace. After a confinement of seven weeks in Philadelphia, and the eating out of a principal sinew in my foot by caustics, (it having been strained by excessive riding,) I am in my work again. I am now beating up to the westward to attend the yearly conference, for that department, in the east end of the State of Tennessee. By accounts from Cumberland [Tennessee], according to elder McKendree, the work goeth on among the Methodists and Presbyterians. At a meeting of the latter, about twenty souls professed to have received converting grace: at a meeting of the former, about forty found the Lord between Saturday and Monday; and there was no sign of the meeting ending, when the elder was obliged to come away. Few days pass but we have accounts from eight to twelve souls being brought to God at a meeting. Every circuit upon the Eastern and Western shores [Maryland] appears to have a revival. Since I wrote from Philadelphia, I have heard of a stir in [New] Jersey. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[111]</sup> is upon a thousand miles tour, in going to meet the [New] York and Massachusetts Conferences, and to come thro' the Lake, and Genesee country, round [New] York, Jersey, and Pennsylvania, I mean along the extremities of the country. In a little time I hope to meet him, and take the western journey, from Frederick-Town, in Maryland; thence to recross the Allegany to the south. I shall not have a probable opportunity of writing again till December, in Charleston.

Brother Whatcoat will perhaps go down the old path you have frequently gone with me, thro' old Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. We shall not be able to meet all the conferences, if we keep together, tho' our bones were brass and our flesh iron. The conferences are extended near one thousand three hundred miles along our world, besides the Western Conference, which will call our attention every year, from seven to eight or nine hundred miles from the coast. God is good to me, weak, lame, and feeble as I am. We have vast openings to the north-east; but as I have been kept back by my lameness, I have not informed myself of the particulars. Your circular letters<sup>[112]</sup> came late to hand: We have spread them abroad. I hope you enjoy perfect love; and fail not to urge it in every sermon and exhortation, and every prayer. If I were to judge myself worthy to write to the elder brethren in England, it would be, "Seek pure hearts; preach instantaneous salvation from all sin; let every prayer, every hymn and sermon be seasoned with this wholesome, holy doctrine."

Give my Christian salutations to every Methodist preacher in all the kingdoms, and all the people you please; I give you a full commission.

I am, as ever, thine,

Francis Asbury  
The Methodist Magazine, 1802, 217-18

*Though this letter has been placed by some as a letter to George Roberts, it is evidently a letter to Thomas Haskins.*

*The foregoing letters to Thomas Haskins deal with the Journal upon which he has been working for Asbury. Haskins and Cooper were in Philadelphia, where they could talk together.*

PIPE CREEK, MD.

August 22, 1801

[*To Thomas Haskins*]<sup>[113]</sup>

Very dear Brother:

Salvation attend thee and thine present, future and eternal. We came along with some pleasure and if not well; appointments or not we enjoyed the families and friends, and on the third day came to Pipe Creek. I was blest in seeing the Carnan's and some aged brethren and sisters. I have my drooping seasons, but still I must go till I can go no more. "Take no thought for tomorrow." I wish to be more attentive to my soul's voice. I am only partial to you because you appear to urge me to it by doing any thing and every thing you can with propriety for me. If I talk more, love more, write more, and pray more for you, you have compelled me. You will only say to brother Cooper<sup>[114]</sup> that you think I only "wish good pointing, and a few words to make it explicit."<sup>[115]</sup> But it is not the Journal of Ezekiel Cooper, or any other but Francis Asbury, and as such I wish it to appear.

I hope my brethren in turn will help in the work of God by prayer meeting and class meeting, and close discipline and market and field preaching. There you will meet the poor, the lame and blind and naked and if we do these things, let us then show ourselves unto the world.

I have my sinking, serious seasons and need your prayers and pity also, and when my spirits are very low my foot is very bad and I think will never be a perfect cure!

If Brother Whatcoat<sup>[116]</sup> should come down you can send by him any good news you can collect from any part of the connection. If I write to you it will be of good news. Brother McCombs<sup>[117]</sup> can recollect or Brother M'Caine<sup>[118]</sup> that copied a few lines for me, the good news from Cumberland. McKendree's<sup>[119]</sup> farewell meeting held from Saturday until Monday without any interruption, 40 souls converted and no prospect of the meeting breaking up when Brother McKendree came away. Oh what days of God's power are coming, indeed already come.

I am to thee and thine as ever

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Asbury is going on down the western route toward Kentucky and Tennessee. He is at Winchester, Virginia, and is probably thinking of passing Thornton Fleming's district to the right of his way. He is giving Fleming a report of the work as well as his own.*



WINCHESTER, VA.

August 31, 1801

[*To Thornton Fleming*]<sup>[120]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am pleased to hear the glad tidings of great joy, that the wilderness and solitary places are glad for them, (the people of God), and may the desert blossom as the rose. I have been foot-fast two months in Philadelphia; I am now crippling along to Nolichucky, or as far as I can go. We have pleasing hopes of a general revival, it speeds east and west, and about the centre. As many as eighty have joined at one meeting eastward. Dover and Milton had their Pentecost that continues to this day I hope. Near one hundred, it was thought, were wounded, cured, and crippled at the great Dover meeting on Whitsunday. O, my brother, preach fully upon holiness in every sermon, where there is but one believer. I feel, seriously, that such multitudes of young converts have been born since the gospel came to the continent; and so few old people are changed, and so few old believers are sanctified. We must urge them to go on to possess the land.

I am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury

*Courtesy of the Boston Public Library*

*Asbury Dickins, the son of John Dickins, first Book Agent, was the namesake of Asbury. He passed his early life in Philadelphia but later spent several years in Europe. In 1801 he was associated with Joseph Denny (Dennie) in founding the Portfolio at Philadelphia. He was clerk in the United*

*States Treasury Department from 1816 to 1833. In 1833 he became chief clerk of the State Department and served there until 1836. He became secretary of the United States Senate in 1836 and remained there until his death in 1861.*

BOTTETOURT, VA.<sup>[121]</sup>

*September 12, 1801*

[*To Asbury Dickins*]<sup>[122]</sup>

My very dear Son:

To whom I wish grace and peace now and ever. You will be pleased to hear of and from me. I am now about 400 miles in my way of travelling from the City.<sup>[123]</sup> I have enjoyed health to a good degree at my time of life, notwithstanding I have had to ride 25 miles in a day and lodge in a Publick house. My foot I trust will finally be a perfect cure, the scab is scaling. I have had my fears and my feelings for the citizens in all our cities, during the excessive heat. For my friends, and your family, I have so great a tenderness and care over.

If this should come safe to hand, will you be so kind as to write speedily to Camden.<sup>[124]</sup> I shall be in the south State by the middle of next month, and the letter may be brought to me by the presiding elder. I shall wish to know if you received my last from Baltimore with its contents. Please to remember me to Mr. Denny [or Dennie]. We have a most serious, and very dry season that hath and doth, prevail in the Southwest of Virginia.

Now my dear Son lest you should think me wanting on my duty; or that I have given you up, I must exhort you to seek

the God of your Father, Oh how you, would you, resent any reflection upon his character, but what is your living, a prayerless, forgetful life? Oh your dear Father, how true to his devotion, how Faithful to his God. The Lord Bless thee, Farewell, I am as ever,

Yours,

F. Asbury

*Property of Dr. Essel P. Thomas, Claymont, Delaware*

*Mrs. Elizabeth Dickins was one of the elect ladies of early American Methodism. Asbury referred to her many times. This letter accompanied a letter which Asbury wrote to Mrs. Dickins' son, Asbury, on the same day. On the opposite page of the original letter there are two other letters to Mrs. Dickins, one from Nicholas Snethen and the other from Philip Bruce. These preachers were Asbury's traveling companions.*

BOTTETOURT, VIRGINIA<sup>[125]</sup>

September 12, 1801

[To Mrs. John Dickins]<sup>[126]</sup>

My dear Sister:

I do not use lightness in my sayings and doings with any, and much less with you. I have joynd you at a Throne of Grace to pray for the salvation of the souls of your dear children, in the conversion of whom their, and your present and Eternal happiness is greatly concerned. Last Monday was a day to be remembered to my humbled soul. I hope always to recollect the first Monday in every month. You will never!

never! lose sight of salvation from all sin; ask it in every prayer, seek it in every means.

Oh my sister it is your priviledge now, by faith, tis this will sweeten every bitter cup, always holy, always happy, tis perfect Love. I am in a particular manner urged by the spirit to enforce it upon you; when shall I hear you witness this good confession? I hope in your next letter. I must be made perfect in suffering, this the Lord hath shown me. I am called to do and suffer more than any others in America. God hath done such great things for me. The work of God is running like fire in Kentucky. It is reported that near fifteen if not twenty thousand were present at one Sacramental occasion of the Presbyterians; and one thousand if not fifteen hundred fell and felt the power of grace. I remain your Friend as ever,

F. Asbury

FINCASTLE, VA.  
*Sept. 12, 1801*

[*Snethen's note to Mrs. Dickins*]

My dear Sister:<sup>[127]</sup>

I have the happiness of being able to pursue my favorite subject, the gospel of Christ with some degree of satisfaction, so much has my health improved since last June. The greatest inconvenience I have experienced from traveling is a small degree of sickness in the stomach at times, a complaint perhaps constitutional.

The new approach of the season of my affliction naturally excites my recollection of it and I trust I never recollect it without some grateful acknowledgments to the great preserver of life for so gracious a deliverance. Wonderful and adorable provider! How ought my soul to exult and rejoice in the God of my life.

I have been kindly disposed of since I parted with you. My appointment in Alexandria and Winchester<sup>[128]</sup> seems to have been the best I can conceive of, in the latter place especially it pleased God to give me favour in the sight of the whole town and I trust I endeavoured to use for their good to edification.

Please to receive my most grateful acknowledgments for your goodness and tender my lasting affection and respect to my most assiduous and kind friends who were my chief comforters, whose names you know. Grace and peace,

Nicholas Snethen<sup>[129]</sup>

*[Bruce's note to Mrs. Dickins]*

Esteemed Sister and Friend:

In company with Brother Asbury and Snethen, take the opportunity of adding a line or two to their Epistle—have not and hope never shall forget the many kindnesses that I have experienced while at your house. I hope the Lord still is your comfort and salvation. The distressing times<sup>[130]</sup> which the Society have experienced since I left your City has often pained my mind. I yet hope and pray that our gracious Saviour

will overrule for his glory and his faithful peoples good. I expect you have had and still have your trials, but cast your care on the Lord. He still careth for you. You have my best wishes for present and future happiness.

My love to Asbury, John and your amiable daughter, also to all my very dear Brethren. Yours in love,

Philip Bruce

*Property of Dr. Essel P. Thomas, Claymont, Delaware*

*The bishop is in worse shape than usual. He reports in detail the state of his health. In spite of his troubles he has reason to "boast a little."*

MAINE HOLSTON, TENNESSEE<sup>[131]</sup>

September 27, 1801

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[132]</sup>

My dearly beloved in the Lord:

May grace mercy and peace attend thee and the flock of Christ at Baltimore. To you I can boast a little, and I hope my boasting will be found a truth. I have now struggled along about 700 miles from the city of strife, unmeaningly or ironically called Philadelphia.<sup>[133]</sup> We have had heat, hunger and hard labour, and have generally had meetings three and 4 times a week, and excessive riding, over mountains, hills, ridges, rocks, vales, rivers, and creeks. I generally bear my testimony after Nicholas Snethen.<sup>[134]</sup> He is like David with his harp, when I am weary and dejected and wrapt in melancholy gloom, but the Spirit comes upon me and I bow

like old Sampson, but I fear few of the Philistines are slain. Yet three days and 35 miles and I hope to meet our Western Conference.

Now for some of my little sorrows. My bowels are ill disposed, my mare's back [is] swelled up; my foot is worse when I am low spirited, then I think I shall be lame for life. But the scab is scaled off and there is a little more strength in it, but there is some hard substance upon it, but I get along, my little fear is I am obliged to ride down the high mountains, because I cannot walk, and Jane<sup>[135]</sup> does not know how to crook her joints down these precipices; and sometimes I am so pained in the hip on the lame side in riding; then again all is well. But I shall be as impatient as a Christian ought to be, to hear of you and many families in the city, to know how you stood the heat and to hear of you it did not generate the fever among you. I count nothing of my labours or sufferings, but this country will populate swiftly. We cannot go into a house without hearing of six and nine children in general whose families are of standing and our brethren are among the oldest settlers. They are poor as they say, and can hold from one, to three, or five thousand acres of most valuable limestone land rich to the top of the mountains. A chief hope is my coming will help in the arrangement of preachers. *Snethen*<sup>[136]</sup> *and me fit to a pee.*

If you should have an opportunity you may send a line or two to Betsy Dickins<sup>[137]</sup> and let her know matters are well with me, and my foot, all things considered. You will present me to all, tho to plead I was not present concerning

appointments I take knowledge. Some know how matters are managed in the great Kingdom, about stationing the preachers. But as sure as our Episcopacy moves our preachers well, unless that awful society is devoted to destroy itself; more than one, that is Francis, think George by the Grace of God is the man. Do mind market<sup>[138]</sup> preaching as long as possible, yea if possible till the snow comes over city, years are desperate. God will save the tombs of Judah first.

I am as ever thine

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Many of the Asbury letters are in the nature of reports of the work. This is that kind of letter. It reports the work in the South to George Roberts. It reports not only on the Methodist work but also on the Presbyterian. One could wish that the reference to Asbury Dickins were clearer. He had evidently run afoul of the government in Washington because of his attacks on Thomas Jefferson. However, this attack on Jefferson does not seem sufficient for the severe language of Asbury.*

CAMDEN, S.C.

*December 30, 1801*

[To George Roberts]<sup>[139]</sup>

My respected Brother:

May great grace attend thee and those of the church of God in Baltimore. I have spent six weeks in the state of Georgia,



with great labour and consolation. On the sabbaths our congregations were so large I had to preach most of the days in the woods. I hail the return of peace to bless my native land and all the world. We have some pleasing revivals in the south, of which I shall have narrative letters. I hope you preach in the market house this temperate winter. Poor Thompson the strife is over. I had a strong intimation it would be a match between McE.<sup>[140]</sup> I think the choice is prudent. Oh Asbury Dickins!<sup>[141]</sup> I had dreadful fears of what would befall that young man! His dear Mother! Oh how awful I felt last night. I fear he had committed murder! I wish you had been explicit. Happy Father taken from the evils to come! Now had he been my real son, what a reproach he would have been to his father, but what I feel in mind! Oh that he should bear my worthless name. I hope my soul enjoys religion. I am assisted in preaching frequently, and faithfully. I judge Brother [Sylvester] Hutchinson will go to Kentucky to see his relations, it is not advisable he should travel through Virginia with Brother Whatcoat.<sup>[142]</sup> You may meet N. Snethen<sup>[143]</sup> and me with a letter the first of February at Washington in North Carolina, directed to the care of Mr. Potts,<sup>[144]</sup> merchant.

You must be very full of intelligence. I advise you to preach upon the travail of a soul, every sermon, preach very plain and pure, and God will own your work. The work of God is making its way in Carolina, North and South upon this side the mountains among the Presbyterians, union, union is the cry. Bishop Whatcoat and myself have formed a plan to part at New York, one to go east and the other west, to meet each of the conferences, and then meet at the South Carolina

Conference and so keep near together through the grand body of the conferences.

I have no doubt but if the Methodists hold out faithfully that they will work their way through these states southward and be joined by the Presbyterians. I have had such a letter fever I cannot be lengthy. Peace be with you all. Present my Christian salutations to all that you speak to, I am as ever,

Yours,

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*From this letter one can conclude that matters were much better at St. George's in Philadelphia. It is tantalizing not to have more of the facts as to what were the real points at issue and how they were divided. Phoebus in Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America speaks of a "serious and ugly dispute" which was in the church. Because of this the debt had not been paid. Asbury is congratulating the trustees on what had been done and urging them to build a parsonage. One group had left the church to form the Academy Church, and those who were left had extended themselves to retire the debt.*

[CAMDEN, S.C.]<sup>[145]</sup>

[December 31, 1801]

[To the Trustees, St. George's Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania]<sup>[146]</sup>

Respected Brethren:

I thank you for the attention you have manifested to me in your address, and account of payments. I rejoice exceedingly that we are just; may we also be generous, and do nothing through strife and vainglory. I hope your zeal and charity will provide a house for your preachers, and prevent a moth-eating rent. Let us pray much, and love the more; then we shall live holy and die happy. Farewell!

Since I began this letter Brother Whatcoat arrived with your letter, an apology for paper. Your pardon is granted. See, thou art made whole. It is generally granted our books are the best, intrinsically and extrinsically. Only let us keep them so.

Yours, for Christ's sake,

Francis Asbury

*G.A. Phoebus*, Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America, 276

*It is natural to find Asbury writing to Ezekiel Cooper about books and printing. Cooper was the Book Agent, and this was his work. The most interesting parts of this letter are the references to the Journal. It is clear that Asbury was not pleased with the work on it. Asbury begins by congratulating St. George's Church on the payment of the debt. Cooper had been active in paying the debt. Since the wealthy members*

*had left the church, it was a remarkable achievement, as Cooper pointed out in his Journal.*

CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA

*December 31, 1801*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[147]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I have received your letters, for which I thank you, and for other attentions. When we were told that the debt was paid [that is, due by the church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania]. I wondered by what mint or magic you had collected \$4,000 in four months; but when we had chapter and verse the wonder ceased. O zeal! zeal! what will it not do when made elastic by opposition! I hope the next thing will be to purchase, as perhaps you may at a low price, or build, a house for the preachers, after more than thirty years.

I find that the book market is good in the South, and the presiding elders and preachers are very diligent. I believe we need say but little. As to Bowen and Weeks,<sup>[148]</sup> I doubt if any settlement to purpose will ever be made. I do not wish to meddle much in the Book Concern; we have so many cooks, and some very unskillful. I pushed three books<sup>[149]</sup> into the press, and I shall expect reflections as long as they are in circulation, if I am in circulation. As a friend, I would advise you (as I am one that has eyes and ears every-where) to keep close to Fletcher's and Wesley's most excellent parts. As to my Journals, I feel my delicacies about having them printed at all in my lifetime; it may only put it into the power of my enemies to abuse me, as Mr. O'Kelly has so often done; while

at the same time my hands will be bound by inability or some local influences.

I am sorry to be a burden to my friends or the Connection. I do not wish to crowd myself or the Connection with more services than they call for. I was willing, at the request of some of my special friends, to submit an impression of the Journal to the press; 'tis true the General Conference approved it, and it was my wish it should go out in numbers; but it appeared to me that the general mind of the General Conference was that it should come out in a volume.

I have been taught to understand that a printer should point; and if he could not point he could not print. I do not choose to print any man's journal but my own. My language in preaching and writing is my own—good or bad. If you choose to send out the number, upon good paper, I shall submit; but I have been making up my mind closely to inspect, and strike out what, upon close thinking, I shall disapprove, and lay them by to be printed after my death, or to let them die with me. About twenty pages in four months' traveling will not be a great burden to the press. My first part was transcribed by one that did not understand my writing.<sup>[150]</sup>

As to the Hymn Book,<sup>[151]</sup> I can only say we have such a republic of critics and pointers, they will do as they please; but, I presume, if you had a thousand more to send into every district than you have sent, they would soon be sold; only let the work be done well, and there is no doubt of the sale of our

books. The Presbyterians and others will purchase our books.<sup>[152]</sup>

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] This was written at the New York Conference.
- [2] There is no designation, but letter was to Jesse Lee.
- [3] Benjamin Van Pelt was a local preacher who lived on Licking Creek in East Tennessee. The letter is not placed except for the reference in the letter to Van Pelt.
- [4] It has been suggested that the letter was written in 1799, but there is no evidence from the *Journal* that Asbury was at Van Pelt's in 1799. He was at Van Pelt's on September 26, 1800. Page is shown by the *Minutes* of 1799 and 1801 to be on Cumberland Circuit. In 1800 he was on the Holston Circuit with John Watson. (See *Minutes*.) Hunter and Watson fit into the appointments of 1800 and 1801.
- [5] Samuel Douthet and Ezekiel Burdine were transferred from Little Pee Dee and Anson Circuit, South Carolina, to Green. Benjamin Young was put on the Cumberland Circuit, Kentucky, with John Page. (See *Minutes*.)
- [6] Stith Mead was presiding elder on the Georgia District, succeeding Benjamin Blanton. In 1800 Mead was pastor with William Avant on the Burke and Augusta Circuit.
- [7] Blanton, Cole, and Evans. (See *Journal*.)
- [8] Appointments in Georgia.
- [9] Book Agent in Philadelphia.
- [10] Christicola was the pen name of James O'Kelly. In 1798 or 1799 O'Kelly published his *Apology*. In the *Apology* there is a letter called "Letter of Address to the Methodist Christians." He signs his name Christicola. In 1800 he published *Divine Oracles Consulted: Christicola*. (See *The*

*Life of Reverend James O'Kelly*, written by himself, 178, 208-12.)

[11] Ezekiel Cooper.

[12] Torn off.

[13] Frequently at the bottom or otherwise attached to an Asbury letter is a short note from Richard Whatcoat. This is a sample. As a rule the Whatcoat letters are more in the nature of blessings than added information.

[14] Place not on letter but supplied from *Journal*.

[15] Book Agent, Philadelphia.

[16] Benjamin Blanton was presiding elder on the Georgia District in 1800.

[17] The *Minutes* of 1801 show that John Kobler located in 1801. Jesse Lee was presiding elder on the Norfolk District and Philip Bruce on the Richmond District.

[18] Reference here is to the neutral position Cooper had said he had taken between the factions at St. George's Church. (See G.A. Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, 287.)

[19] John Dickins was former Book Agent, now deceased.

[20] Presiding elder of Georgia District.

[21] Frequently the term used is president elder instead of presiding elder.

[22] This letter is not addressed; however, Stith Mead was presiding elder on the Augusta District in 1801. He was a native of Lynchburg, Virginia. The reference is evidently to the fact that, though in 1799 Mead is shown in the *Minutes* to be pastor at Augusta, in 1800 the appointment reads Burke and Augusta, William Avant, Stith Mead.

[23] Book Agent.



- [24] Daniel Hitt was presiding elder on the Alexandria District of Virginia.
- [25] Elected bishop in 1800.
- [26] Presiding elder on the Georgia District.
- [27] Part of year defaced, but 1801 is correct.
- [28] Pastor in New York.
- [29] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [30] Bath Springs, now Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.
- [31] Followers of James O'Kelly.
- [32] A line seems to be defaced at bottom of page.
- [33] Several lines defaced.
- [34] His itinerary.
- [35] Mrs. Gough of Perry Hall, Maryland.
- [36] Thomas Lyell, who later went into the Episcopal ministry in New York.
- [37] Evidently reference to Charleston, where they were having difficulties.
- [38] Letter defaced.
- [39] Nearly a line defaced.
- [40] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [41] Hodges was an early name among the Methodists. The family first had a ferry, then a toll bridge.
- [42] Bookstall.
- [43] The list of appointments gives insight into Asbury's method of meeting the societies. He sent the appointments ahead, and the preachers and people knew when he would be in the communities.
- [44] O'clock.
- [45] Book Agent, Philadelphia.

- [46] Solomon Sharp, presiding elder on the New Jersey District.
- [47] Thomas Bowen had been a Book Steward. (See *Minutes*, 1795.)
- [48] Jesse Lee was presiding elder on the Norfolk District.
- [49] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [50] Widow of John Dickins, former Book Agent.
- [51] Grocer, Philadelphia.
- [52] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [53] See reference in *Journal*, June 6-July 31.
- [54] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [55] Perhaps a reference to Isaiah 33:23: "The lame take the prey."
- [56] The conference in Philadelphia was closing that day. In the *Journal*, Asbury refers to the possibility of a "formidable" division in the Philadelphia Conference which had just closed. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., June 7, 1801.) The appointive power of the bishop had been challenged repeatedly, and this was probably the issue.
- [57] In view of the fact that so many preachers through the years have worn black, it is interesting to see that Asbury's color was light blue.
- [58] Asbury's reference to the division in St. George's Church is found in the *Journal*, 1852 ed., Sabbath, August 27, 1801: "Some violent men have divided the body of Christ in the city of Philadelphia—let such answer for it in this and the world to come." (See G.A. Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, ch. xiv.)

- [59] There is no reference to this in the *Journal*. On July 31 it says, "Our Conference was a gracious one." (See letter with notes, September 27, 1798, to the board of trustees.)
- [60] In order to show their peeve, the brethren had not been too hospitable.
- [61] The brethren probably desired special privileges because of the size and age of the church.
- [62] The letter goes the second mile to say that the whole matter and each individual shall be dealt with in love.
- [63] An appeal to all preachers there stationed, local and connectional.
- [64] Thomas Haskins, grocer in Philadelphia, formerly a traveling preacher.
- [65] It is not clear whether the reference is to the address itself or another letter. Asbury thought Haskins was the key figure in getting the trouble settled.
- [66] The address of June 8, 1801.
- [67] Haskins was evidently a local preacher, and Asbury was laying himself open to the criticism of approaching the problem through a local preacher rather than a presiding elder or pastor.
- [68] There was no *Journal* record for this period as Asbury was laid up in Philadelphia with a bad foot. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., May 31, 1801.)
- [69] Grocer and local preacher.
- [70] On July 27 Asbury says that he was reading his papers for a second volume of his *Journal*. (See *Journal*.) This letter shows that he turned over to Haskins work that had already been done by another to whom he had paid a hundred dollars.

- [71] A set of these "Letters to Asbury" was published in 1805. There are only about a dozen of these that are dated before this letter. A copy of the printed letters is in the library of Wofford College, Spartanburg, South Carolina.
- [72] Asbury has a definite purpose in this letter. He must have had it delivered to Haskins by messenger as he is giving advice for the meeting to be held that night at Colonel North's. North was one of the trustees of the church.
- [73] Not known to whom he paid it. Work had already been done by Dickins and Cooper.
- [74] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore, Maryland.
- [75] Bishop Whatcoat substituted for Asbury at the New York Conference.
- [76] Sylvester Hutchinson, the preacher.
- [77] Down the east coast through Virginia, North and South Carolina.
- [78] He does not mention in the *Journal* the people who quarreled.
- [79] Doctor Physick. (See *Journal*, July 8, 1801.)
- [80] (See letter of 1816 to Joseph Benson.) Thomas Rankin was chief of them.
- [81] Divisions in the church. (See letters above to Thomas Haskins.)
- [82] Name means "city of brotherly love."
- [83] Conclusion not clear. The paragraph is hard to read.
- [84] See letters to Haskins, pp. 137, 210, 211.
- [85] Ezekiel Cooper was Book Agent. He indicated that he had sided against the Haskins faction.
- [86] Coate was pastor in 1801. Haskins and Cooper had been in the traveling connection. Lemuel Green and Charles

Cavender were two of the preachers in Philadelphia in 1799. Richard Swain had been across the river in New Jersey. (See G.A. Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, ch. xiv.)

[87] It is hard to tell whether the chief trouble was between Cooper and Haskins or Haskins and Cavender.

[88] Thomas Haskins, the grocer in Philadelphia. Asbury was much concerned about his *Journal*. Several persons had a part in editing it, John Dickins, Ezekiel Cooper, Thomas Haskins, another unnamed person to date, and others later. Asbury was disturbed, as indicated in several letters, that the *Journal* would not be correct.

[89] See notes, letter to Haskins, June 26, 1801.

[90] Asbury and Whatcoat had been traveling together. Asbury was suffering from a bad foot. It became so bad that he was unable to go on. No reference is made in the *Journal* to Whatcoat's leaving. However, reference is made to the New York Conference being held, and Whatcoat evidently went on to hold it.

[91] It seems that Whatcoat had attempted to plead with Haskins to settle the trouble in St. George's Church.

[92] Haskins refers to Bishop Whatcoat as father and signs himself son.

[93] The letter as published had only Tuesday 4, 1801. However, the *Journal* shows Perry Hall as the place and August as the month.

[94] Asbury is concerned because of a lack of recording of history. He has seen the value of American papers in the historical picture.

- [95] This letter was evidently written August 4, 1801. It has been referred to as of 1807. However, the *Journal* records the event in the life of Gough Hollady, daughter of the Goughs. (See *Journal*, August 3-15, 1801, and *Letters of Francis Asbury*, 218.)
- [96] Pastors in Baltimore.
- [97] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [98] Not clear who this is.
- [99] No address. Seems to be to George Roberts, pastor, Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [100] See *Journal*, August 3-15, 1801.
- [101] Alexander M'Caine was pastor at Fell's Point, Maryland.
- [102] Wilson Lee was presiding elder on the Baltimore District.
- [103] Joseph Toy was converted under Captain Webb. He became a local preacher and entered the traveling ministry in 1801. He superannuated in 1819 and died in 1826. (See *Minutes*, 1826.)
- [104] Robert Carnan, or Carman, lived near Stone Chapel. (See *Journal*, August 19, 1801.)
- [105] Nicholas Snethen.
- [106] See above, note 103.
- [107] Name crossed out.
- [108] See *Journal*, August 3, 1801.
- [109] A comparison with Francis Asbury's *Journal* makes it quite clear that this letter was written between August 19 and 28, 1801, and probably about the twentieth.
- [110] Coke returned from America after the election of Whatcoat as bishop in May, 1800, and was busy in England, Wales, and Ireland. He presided over the Irish conferences each July and served the English Conference

as secretary. He was preparing his *Commentary on the Holy Bible* for the press. (Frank Baker.)

[111] Bishop Whatcoat.

[112] Probably prospectuses seeking subscribers for Coke's *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. The first two of six volumes were published in 1801. On February 28, 1801, he wrote to the Rev. James Moore that one volume was published but he dare not risk sending 250 copies in case they were lost and 250 sets thus broken. He intended himself bringing over "next August or September, two years . . . a sufficient number of complete sets on the Old Testament, neatly bound." (Frank Baker.)

[113] Thomas Haskins, grocer of Philadelphia.

[114] Ezekiel Cooper, Book Agent.

[115] Several letters refer to the anxiety of Asbury to have his *Journal* correctly punctuated and corrected.

[116] Bishop Whatcoat.

[117] Pastor in Baltimore.

[118] Pastor at Fell's Point, Maryland.

[119] William McKendree, presiding elder on Kentucky District.

[120] Presiding elder of Ohio District, Thornton Fleming (1764-1846) first preached west of the mountains on the Randolph Circuit in 1792-93. He was assigned in the East until 1801 when he was returned by the appointment of Bishop Asbury to the district west of the mountains as presiding elder. He spent the remainder of his ministry in the western Pennsylvania region, except 1805, being the oldest charter member of the Pittsburgh Conference when the conference was organized in 1825. He had been

admitted on trial in 1787. He served as presiding elder from 1801 to 1805, with a second term from 1806 to 1810. He served a third term when two districts were organized in the region in 1819, serving as presiding elder of the Pittsburgh District from 1819 to 1823. After the formation of the new Pittsburgh Conference in 1825, he was again presiding elder of the Pittsburgh District from 1826 to 1828. Thus he served as a presiding elder for a total of fourteen years. He was, in fact, Asbury's chief lieutenant on the frontier in the region of western Pennsylvania. (W.G. Smeltzer.)

[121] According to the *Journal*, Asbury was at Fincastle in Bottetourt County.

[122] The envelope was addressed to Mr. Asbury Dickins, No. Second Street, opposite Christ's Church, Philadelphia. Dickins was born in North Carolina, July 29, 1780, and died in Washington, D.C., October 23, 1861. (See Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*.)

[123] Philadelphia.

[124] South Carolina.

[125] Asbury was at Fincastle, Bottetourt County. (See *Journal*, September 12, 1801.)

[126] Mrs. Elizabeth Dickins, widow of John Dickins, the first Book Agent. He died in 1798.

[127] A fold in the paper covers the top part of the photograph of the letter.

[128] See references to Snethen for this period in *Journal*.

[129] The people in Winchester requested that Asbury allow Snethen to stay there. However, Asbury said that Snethen had been appointed to travel with him.



- [130] The reference is to the split in St. George's Church.
- [131] Asbury was at Charles Baker's. (See *Journal*, September 26, 1801.)
- [132] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [133] City of brotherly love.
- [134] His traveling companion.
- [135] His horse.
- [136] Nicholas Snethen.
- [137] Widow of John Dickins.
- [138] Outdoors.
- [139] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [140] He did not finish the sentence. The reference is not clear.
- [141] Asbury Dickins was the son of John Dickins, first Book Agent. He was born in North Carolina, July 29, 1780, and died in Washington, D.C., October 23, 1861. He passed his early life in Philadelphia, moving there with his father. When John Dickins died, Asbury was only eighteen; but he took over the book business with his mother's help—Mrs. Elizabeth Dickins, who was a very capable woman. In 1801 Asbury Dickins became associated with the literary genius Joseph Dennie in founding the *Portfolio*, a literary magazine, in Philadelphia. "Young Dickins single entry into partisan politics concerned the election of 1800. To the question, 'Shall Thomas Jefferson be the chief magistrate of these states?' Dickins answered a resounding, 'God forbid!' His verbose arguments centered on the contention that Jefferson was not a Christian. This tract had unfortunate repercussions for Dickins in later years when it served as evidence he had become a Federalist." Dennie was a supporter of the Federalist party. Dennie and

Dickins had great success with the *Portfolio* from the very first. The *Portfolio* was "like the Tatler, Politics with Essays and disquisitions on topics scientific, moral, humorous and literary." However, Asbury Dickins was associated with it for only a year, when Elizabeth Dickins, Asbury's mother, took over his part. Dennie died in five years, and that ended the *Portfolio*. Asbury Dickins, soon after the *Portfolio* incident, went to Europe, where he married and spent several years and also got into debt. In 1816 he became first clerk in the United States Treasury Department. From 1833 to 1836 he was first clerk in the United States State Department, where he acted on several occasions as acting secretary of state. From 1836 to 1861 he was secretary of the United States Senate. He was recognized at his death for distinguished service to his country. (See Appleton's *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 141; Asbury Dickins, "A Career in Government Service," *North Carolina Historical Review*, July, 1947, 281, by Ruth Ketring Neuermberger; also *The National Intelligencer*, Washington, D.C., Thursday, October 24, 1861; *The National Republican*, Thursday, October 24, 1861.)

[142] Bishop Whatcoat.

[143] Nicholas Snethen was traveling with Asbury.

[144] Ralph Potts, born in England, referred to several times in *Journal* as a dear friend.

[145] The date and place are not given in the letter, but the context indicates that it follows other letters written in December, 1801.

- [146] It seems that the difficulties had been ironed out and that the trustees had apologized for some of the trouble they had given in 1801. (See note to letter to trustees of St. George's Church, September 27, 1798.)
- [147] Book Agent, Philadelphia. (See Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, ch. xiv, for the story.)
- [148] Salathiel Weeks, a native of Prince George County, Virginia, who died with consumption in 1800. (See *Minutes*.)
- [149] One wishes that he had named the books. Evidently one was the *Hymn Book*, to which he refers in this letter. Another was probably *The Causes and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*. (See letter to ministers and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1793; also *Letters of Francis Asbury*, 253, n. 75.)
- [150] Not clear to whom this refers.
- [151] Asbury's published *Hymn Book*, known as the Asbury supplement.
- [152] No closing on copy.

**FROM APRIL, 1802, TO THE GENERAL  
CONFERENCE OF 1804**

*April 21, 1802 - May, 23, 1804*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### FROM APRIL, 1802, TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804

April 21, 1802 - May 23, 1804

*Another letter to George Roberts is from the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Asbury gives a report of the work on the shore.*

ANNAMESSEX,<sup>[1]</sup> [MD.]

*April 21, 1802*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[2]</sup>

My very dear George:

I am often reflecting upon my folly, in my gay hours, half asleep and then awake. I told you I did not pity you when you were enslaving yourself for me, the conference, and the church, and your own family. I will not apologize but confess my fault and ask your pardon; it was an unguarded word. We have had very changeable weather and stretching work, but hitherto the Lord hath helped me, and my Brother Whatcoat.<sup>[3]</sup> We have good prospects in all the circuits, but Talbot, and Milford are all for ingathering.

We shall have a complete house in Chester Town, after piety and policy have had their perfect work. By act of assembly, the house is to be set upon the publick square, where the market house stood, where they were opposed by the great in some attempts to fix else where. It was like the Light Street mysterious providence in Cambridge, the objects

[objectors] have built a neat two story house with galleries, all round, when behold our most excellent church is but one story, and one front gallery. So much for a seige of twenty years in Salisbury after being defeated twice.<sup>[4]</sup> — In Snowhill [Md.] we have a house going up. I was told the Presbyterians offered to share with the Methodists if they would furnish the meeting house but our people would not. They were too big. I have found out the secret of the money paid in Philadelphia<sup>[5]</sup> by the Society. A good brother went into the county begging and then went to the society with, what will you give if we can clear out the whole, so the matter ended. I hope you will be at home by the time this comes to hand. I have done with this coat, you may do what you please with it. I have changed my mind about two coats. I intend to have a bath cloak of black or white, and have it short so as just to touch the pommel of the saddle and to cover my arms.

I wish you to be wholly for God, preach constantly upon the travail of souls, and perfect love, and practical godliness. It is thought by some old members our young converts are very light in experience, but they are on the way. God will deepen his ———<sup>[6]</sup> in souls. Christ's fan is in his hand. My love to all that ask after me. You see I am sleepy all on the wing. We have little rest, day or night. Oh for divine support. I must leave my old rags with you, give them house room. There are some little irregularities among the people but I think the best way to expel them is to treat them with neglect.

Oh my brother I hope you will by all means attend the market places. Oh for Christ's sake seek his lost sheep, the

outcast of men. You are strong in help, make the best of your time. If Nicholas<sup>[7]</sup> is not gone I wish him to bring the oldest number of my Journal, one that is the oldest date, from Mrs. Gough.<sup>[8]</sup> Mr. Bassett<sup>[9]</sup> wishes you to be at their meeting, it is a new thing in Israel. I hope the conference will be returned to Dover on Duck Creek and I will cover that meeting.

I am ever thine,

F. Asbury

P.S.

Calculation \_\_\_\_\_<sup>[10]</sup>

we came out and \_\_\_\_\_

not 3000 and \_\_\_\_\_

—miles from and to Philadelphia

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
*(Lovely Lane Museum)*

JOURNEYS OF

**Francis Ashbur**

INTO VIRGINIA AND WEST VIRGINIA

With Virginia Historical Society

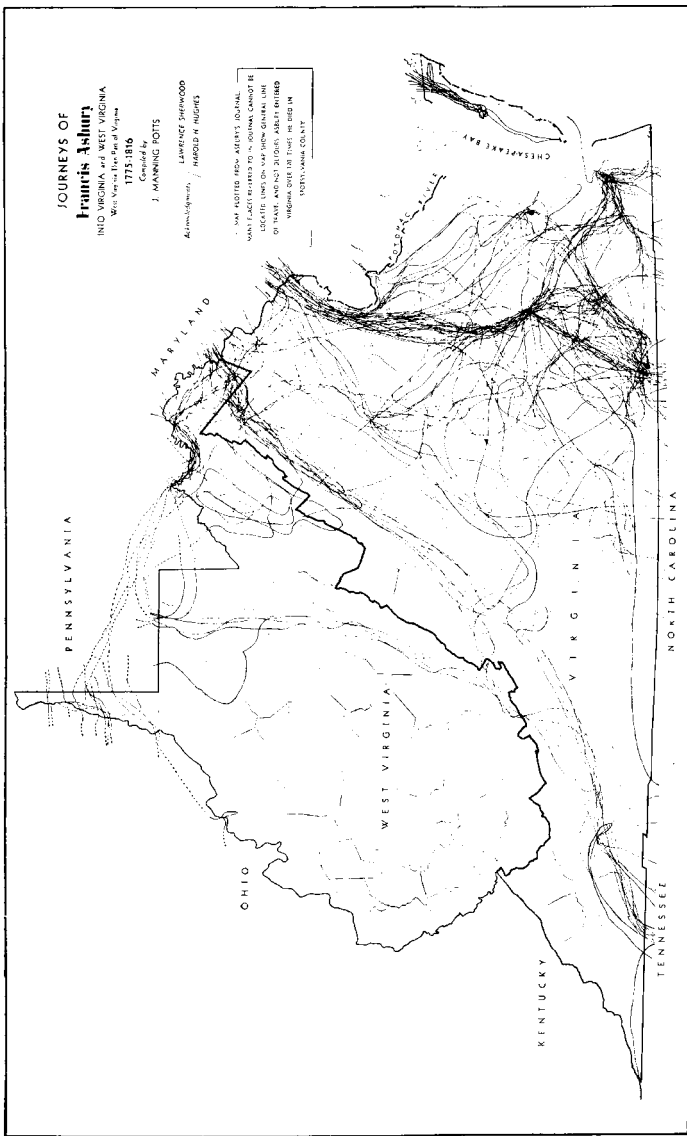
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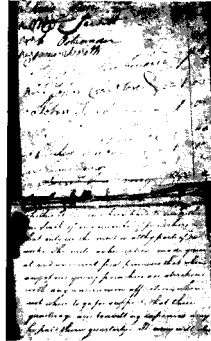
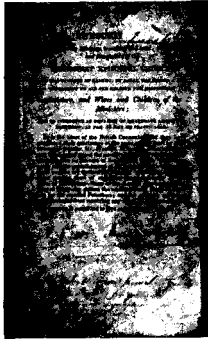
J. MANNING POTTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: LAWRENCE SHREVEWOOD  
AND GLENN H. HIGDON

\* MAY LOCATED NEW ASHBY'S JOURNAL.  
MAY LOCATED REVEREND TO IN JOURNAL CANNOT BE  
LOCATED (UNTIL ON MAY SHOW GENERAL LINE  
OF TRAIL, AND NOT 21 JOURNAL ASHBY'S JOURNAL  
VIRGINIA SIDE OF TRAIL, IN SIDE IN  
FOOTNOTED COUNTY







Pages from the "Subscrip"—the mite collection which Asbury had with him at the Arnold House, where he died.

Leave it to Mr. Preston's care to pay the Dollars  
to the only one left in debt for his  
day for receiving my house charge  
settled 2, 8, 2  
Wm. Russell  
Colonel Francis Preston

Said to be the only note in existence from the pen of Madam Elizabeth Russell, sister of Patrick Henry and widow of the Revolutionary hero General William Russell. She had formerly been the wife of General William Campbell, hero of Kings Mountain. After his death she married General Russell. Tradition in the family says that Mrs. Russell built an addition to her house with a room especially for Asbury, and this note was to Colonel Preston in reference to the payment. She also had a pulpit built for preaching. This letter was sent to her son-in-law, Colonel Francis Preston, at the salt-works. Mrs. Russell and the Prestons operated the salt-works. Salt from these works was used for troops in the Revolutionary and Civil wars. Original letter is property of Miss Nelly Preston, lineal descendant of Madam Russell, Seven Mile Ford, Virginia, and used by permission.

*Stith Mead had written to Asbury, evidently in reference to moving a preacher from the North to the South. Asbury indicates that the suggestion is impractical. He is reporting on the work; and he is urging the brethren, as usual, to report.*

NEW YORK, N.Y.

May 31, 1802

[To Stith Mead]<sup>[11]</sup>

My very dear Mead:

We have received your letters of [?]. We can only say there are some very strange men in the work, that are good and useful men, to be good men, and he is one. I think it is time now at least that every conference should find some of its members to fill any and every place in the union. To think of sending a man at such expense and distance is altogether out of the question, we have uncommon calls and uncommon supplies in the north. I expect we take and make about fifty married men, some with three, others with five and some with eight or ten children.

As to the work, it is glorious in Milford, [N.J.]. We have added 1600 in Talbot, 2000 in the Conferences of Baltimore and Philadelphia, about ten thousand souls have been added in eleven months in the two conferences. As to brother Milligan,<sup>[12]</sup> you can put him or any other preacher you have in Augusta. I have and shall supply the west from the Baltimore Conference with volunteers. Tomorrow our Conference will begin in [New] York. We hope for a shake in this seat of pride, policy, and outside piety.

I am now in doubt about going five hundred miles farther east to the Monmouth Conference.<sup>[13]</sup> This I can do, and reach Cumberland. I want the advice of Conference, and the consent of Nicholas<sup>[14]</sup> to take my place westward to fill my appointments.

We have great and gracious openings. I wish you to be very accurate in your accounts of the work of God and as concise, and yet let nothing of moment slip. [I] desire the preachers to furnish you with testimonies extraordinary of the work. These accounts read in the cities make the people feel amazingly. I suppose if I had sounded a trumpet before I read the accounts of the Presbyterians and Methodists, in Kentucky, Cumberland, North and South Carolina; which I read in our old church<sup>[15]</sup> yesterday I should have had thousands. We have taken a holding in Philadelphia last Conference. The Conference made an offer to them<sup>[16]</sup> of a preacher and they accepted one George Roberts, the old side John McClaskey. We hope that division will be held by a wonder, but it will cost the separates twenty thousand dollars to purchase and prepare a church in one of the best stands in the city, an old academy turned into an elegant church so they will have to pay for their folly or virtue. I am with great respect, thine,

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*George Roberts had been moved from Baltimore; and the appointments for 1802 show Philadelphia, Thomas McClaskey and George Roberts. The Journal indicates that*

*McClaskey and Roberts moved that the brethren who had bought the Academy in Philadelphia be offered a preacher. The conference agreed. It seems that Roberts was appointed to the new Academy Church. Asbury seems to be threatening to move Roberts to New York.*

NEW YORK, N. Y.

*June 3, 1802*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[17]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am of one mind. Who can turn me. I heard by the private owners that you were to be restricted to the Academy.<sup>[18]</sup> I utterly disapprove the motion. You must not only be free, but faithful, to preach at any time or place, for our other congregations. If the others can not cool off, we must submit to future awful consequences. What, you confined in your labours to 100 in society and 1000 in congregation when you may preach to 10,000 or more by going into other churches? If you come to [New] York, I shall, and I doubt not but the society will provide for and gladly receive you. It is almost reduced to a certainty that this conference will advise me to visit the Eastern Conference, and if they do, I shall submit. Nicholas,<sup>[19]</sup> will go upon my appointment, and it will keep me within call till August. I doubt if the station in [New] York will be completely filled till 3 months are past, at least till I return. We have formed a new district; and several matters are weighty with me. We have great harmony. Several married preachers that have local families want stations; that probably will have to wait, or stretch their loves. The northern

hive has swarmed. We have taken in about 21 or 22 but be assured we are at low water mark for religion in New York.

Upon my new plan of going east, I shall be in Philadelphia August the first day, and Sabbath. I have not much time to write ——. <sup>[20]</sup> If that implacable enmity does not subside, I shall only have to say, I doubt not only the religion but the honor of such men, and they will not commit themselves to me, to say no more, that their religion is much like Satan, it cannot be of God.

I am with respect as ever yours,

Francis Asbury

My dear Brother: <sup>[21]</sup>

Let not him that putteth on the Armour boast as him that putteth off. Think not that the policy of hell can be conquered at one stroke. The Dragon is for us and the old man dies hard. The Breath water will put out fire, and time will bring mighty things to pass. My prayers and heaven's blessing attend thee.

Richard Whatcoat

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Asbury is traveling through New England and writes again to George Roberts in Philadelphia, who is still having trouble with the new Academy Church. The letter is mainly concerned with the publication of the Journal and the letters which had come to him. The committee in Philadelphia seems to have had charge of the publication.*

BOSTON, MASS.<sup>[22]</sup>

*June 23, 1802*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[23]</sup>

My very dear Friend:

Grace and peace attend your spirit and the blessing of God be upon your labours. By this you will find that your letter had to follow me to Boston. I had hardly time to breathe after ending [?] upwards of thirty miles; before I had to read letters, and preach, in the finished house, to a very serious senseless people, I Peter iii, 15. I called at Prescott, they have finished their house. I called at New London, Brother Whatcoat preached, I scolded; the youngsters are wild and wicked. At General Lippet's<sup>[24]</sup> we had an unwieldy crowd, we had to ordain a Joshua Soule.<sup>[25]</sup> I am according to my motto faint yet pursuing. I am pleased to hear that you have taken a reef in the mainsail, I hope you will in time take another; these high toned brethren must come down.

I wish you to preach but twice in the Academy Church, upon Sabbath Days, that will be sufficient, then you can go to St. Georges, Ebenezer, or Bethel. I am greatly concerned that we should publish a narrative of the work of God in letters. I have selected some scraps of letters that have been lying by me for years, they are marked and filed; Sister Dickins<sup>[26]</sup> has them, and a book also. I wish the committee to devote an hour every day to make a choice collection for the press by the time I return. The manuscript I have, and what letters may come into my hands will be given up at my return. Brother Cooper<sup>[27]</sup> has spoken to me upon the subject but I wish great attention to be paid to the work; and that any thing trite, or

trifling should be struck out. I wish nothing but the wheat would be sent out in all our publications, and put upon a good letter, and very good paper.

You are at liberty to review my manuscript journals as a committee, and put in a word or two where the sense is not clear, and to strike out whole sentences, if you please. I am very sorry more care was not taken in Benjm. Abbott's<sup>[28]</sup> Journal. His reflections upon Brother Garrettson<sup>[29]</sup> and myself might as well been left out. We have no need to reflect upon or against another, the world, the apostate Methodist will do that. I hope you will visit and comfort Sister Dickins.<sup>[30]</sup> I judge she will have a heavy sea, my prayers attend thee. Give my Christian salutations to all you choose to represent me to. I am as ever yours

Fran. Asbury

P.S. I am sorry any disappointments should be made but we listened to our assistants, Brother Whatcoat's appointments are out through the Lake Country, and I shall come nearly upon the same route. My appointments are gone, only it will be a delay; except in Kentucky. The Chaplain is here and I think he had better stay between Boston and Providence at least for a year.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Asbury's mother's maiden name was Rogers. John Rogers is a cousin on his mother's side of the house. Mrs. Asbury has*

*died, and Asbury has received some news of her demise. He writes to John Rogers for more news of his home and the people there. As ever, he is concerned with the spiritual life of the person to whom he is writing.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*August 1, 1802*

[*To Mr. John Rogers*]<sup>[31]</sup>

My very dear Cousin:

I am exceedingly grateful to you that you have taken the trouble to write me a confirmation of my dear mother's removal to glory. I most sincerely wished to have heard of her exercises and views when near her journey's end. It was what I was daily looking for the time of life she was brought to. I hope her prospects were good for glory and that she is gone to her eternal rest. As to her property I never expected or desired a farthing, my only wish that it might be appropriate, as all we could spare for between forty and fifty years had been for the support of the gospel, at that dark place of my nativity. If they are unable as a society to support the cause I would contribute a small annual sum, so that the lamp might be kept burning in the Tabernacle.

I hope my dear cousin you will correspond once a year with me. Our continent from the north east to the south west is two thousand two hundred miles. My work is to visit seven conferences in one year, and to ride upward of four thousand miles. I am twice in the year, in the extremities, and twice in the center; and more accessible parts. As to the work of God, it is astonishing thousands out live six millions in the United



States, thousands are converted annually,<sup>[32]</sup> the work is spreading among both Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists, hundreds under operations of grace, at one meeting.

You will see by our annual minutes our increase: and the work is but beginning but we are amazingly scattered over the whole continent. Is she that was the Widow Griffin now living and in what circumstances? and in what station? be pleased to write me if she has religion. Is Mrs. Moorhead the person I knew to be once the wife of Mr. Moorhead? Oh, my dear cousin I fear you have gained the world and lost your religion. Oh, may our God have compassion upon you and heal your soul that you may live in Christ, in Jesus. I am afraid you live in a public way, you and your wife were frugal thrifty people, as you ought to lay aside, your business if you save wherewith to support you, and make the best of your last days. You must be temperate if you are nervous.

Who is that that wrote to me, under the name of John Rogers, that took my other likeness? I have no conception of any such person. He says he lived with a Reverend Hadden in Wednesbury and now lives in London. If you wish to write soon, direct to me in Light Street, Baltimore. I am so well known,<sup>[33]</sup> any letter in any publick town or city upon the continent; as we have societies in most of them, the letter will be sent immediately to our preachers that are upon the stations. I hope if you are able you will be very particular in writing of your soul, of your sisters, of your sons, and daughters. Present me to all known, and unknown friends, that ask after me.

I have no correspondent in England but Dr. Coke. I should wish to exchange a letter with you once in a year. We have peace, some liberty and some slavery. African slavery, in America, great plenty except Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. All men are free to hear and pay who they please, or have nothing like law mixt with our Gospel, all societies are equal and free, no usurpation over conscience or money. I am very rapid in my writing and riding.

I am dear cousin, your most affectionate friend and brother.

Francis Asbury

P.S. Please to accept one number of my second Journal and the Annual Minutes 1802.

*Drew University Library*

*Bishop Whatcoat is getting more and more blind. Asbury misses him and gives a report of the work. He has evidently had a question from Whatcoat as to whether he should come to Camden, South Carolina, for the conference. Asbury tells Whatcoat that he must make the decision.*

[PIPE CREEK, MD.]<sup>[34]</sup>

*August 10, 1802*

[*To Bishop Whatcoat*]<sup>[35]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I am resting a day, and now give you a few lines. My dear Mother died January the 6th. I had my difficulties in New York. I found the people in St. George's in a great flame with

Brother McClaskey for reprovng them publickly for some of their wild working in meetings. How far he was right in the taming and doing the work, I am not able to say. I opened Bethesda, that is the College Church, upon Exodus xx, 24 verse, last clause. In Baltimore they are but so and so to accommodate the police of the City, the[y] have resolved to conclude all meetings at half after nine. The fever is very serious in Philadelphia, by our last accounts the people were fleeing.

I have received a narrative of that great work in Elizabeth-Town. I have a letter narrative of the annual Meeting at Dover. Mr. Bassett<sup>[36]</sup> thinks hundreds were awakened, as Thomas Smith<sup>[37]</sup> found 100 before he had been round Dover Circuit. I have received a second letter from James Jenkin<sup>[38]</sup> of three general meetings, one at Waxaws another near Rutherford Court House, and a third at the Hanging Rock among our people, and asked with great displays of the power of God. *Mr. Jenkin writes* "Daniel Asbury<sup>[39]</sup> writes" they join fifty in going round the Yadkin Circuit and they think 1000 have been added in the Salisbury District since the Virginia Conference in March.

I must leave you to your own providence to come or not to Camden Conference. We shall all rejoice to see you, and you need not fear there will be enough to do, for you, and me and we ought in a particular manner to attend the Conference, and always to keep together upon the low lands, where the sea of troubles, always rolls upon me. I wish to have you, if you were blind, and could not preach at all, that we might only

consult each other in matters of such great moment. I have left you all the letters I have received from the Doctor.<sup>[40]</sup> When or where it will reach you, I know not, I am in health and peace of mind. I commend you to God and the word of his grace, as ever yours; and mine, to seek and find in all times of need.

I am your tried brother of Europe, and America,

Francis Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Again Asbury is writing to Bishop Richard Whatcoat. He is talking of visiting Whatcoat in South Carolina.*

SHEPHERDSTOWN, VA.<sup>[41]</sup>

*August 18, 1802*

[*To Bishop Whatcoat*]<sup>[42]</sup>

My very dear Soul:

Make haste that we may insure a meeting in glory. I find that your plans will put it entirely out of your power of coming to *Charleston*. I would have said the Camden Conference. I hope you will come strait and steady down to Dromgooles,<sup>[43]</sup> come by Alexandria, Dumfries, Fredericksburg, Richmond, and Petersburg. I have sent you the minutes inclosed. We grow upon the Western Shore,<sup>[44]</sup> some good times in Baltimore, circuit and city, great times in Calvert.<sup>[45]</sup> Brother Toy does well, and does wonders. Frederick, it is a growing season in some places. I have formed a plan to go to the North Western Territory next fall and you can stay in Maryland and go down the strait way to

Camden in the South. I pray for thee that thy strength may not fail.

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Many of Asbury's letters are in the nature of reports of the work. Except for letters there was no other source in those days for news. Here he is reporting on the camp meeting. He is also urging Thornton Fleming to report. He has much in his mind the "focus" which he later tried to get Alexander M'Caine to write. It was to be the history of early American Methodism. Unfortunately it was never written.*

JOHN MILLBURN'S, VIRGINIA  
*August 21, 1802*

[To Thornton Fleming]<sup>[46]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I have delayed writing because I expected to have seen you. Sometimes I feel myself in a great fit of writing to the preachers, as if it came by fancy or inspiration. The exceeding great harmony I have found in the Connexion eastward, added to this the supply of ministers, and the prospects are very great for the time. In [New] Jersey we have a powerful work, Maryland, east and west. The Delaware yearly meeting attended by 5, 6, or 7,000, for five days, and most of the nights, was marked with great honor and glory. I hope 4 or 500 souls were blest, either with awakening, converting, or sanctifying grace. I hope, my brother, you will keep a small journal at hand, and select at least one narrative of all the

extraordinary things of the great meetings, and of the number of souls professing awakening, justifying, sanctifying, or reclaiming grace. These things published as in "focus" from various parts, will amazingly move professors.<sup>[47]</sup> Oh, my brother, be wholly for God. I hope, if I live, to visit Redstone and Chillicothe on my way to the yearly conference in 1803 at Kentucky.

It is with pleasure we hear of a great revival of religion, from the extreme part of Kentucky to the center, to Cumberland, to North and South Carolina, and Georgia, you will see the souls God hath given us in fellowship by the Minutes. I hope for twenty thousand this coming year. You will do well to stir up the preachers and people to get as much money in readiness as they possibly can, where they do their work.

We must strive to be as independent as we can; let all the people bear their own burden. I have no doubt but our Baltimore Conference will be moved, and it ought to go round to the different districts that belong to the Conference.

You will excuse me, my writings are very desultory. I am hasting to the Cumberland Conference.<sup>[48]</sup> My Christian salutations attend all that ask after me.

I am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury  
The Pittsburgh Conference Journal, *February 8, 1834.*  
*Transcribed by W.G. Smeltzer*

*Roberts was in a ticklish situation with the Academy Church in Philadelphia. Asbury is conscious that he has not pleased either group. He refers to the Journals again. They had come off the press. He was not very well pleased. Thomas Haskins had edited them, and Cooper had had responsibility for the printing as the Book Agent. Asbury again makes suggestions as to making peace. In conclusion he discusses union with the Presbyterians.*

PHELP'S, NEAR WINCHESTER, VA.

August 23, 1802

[To George Roberts]<sup>[49]</sup>

My dear Brother:

May grace and peace attend you in your critical and dangerous station. I may well say of the dear Philadelphians, with Jeremiah, oh that I have in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring man that I might leave my people. My wish will shortly be obtained. Your conjectures about my conversation with Brother C.<sup>[50]</sup> is not well founded. I cannot recollect anything of the kind. As to my staying here or there, or yonder; if there is no conference held in the city, the other Bishops<sup>[51]</sup> will do better than I shall. Indeed both sides have so committed themselves, in my view, that I stand nearly on equal ground with both, and this judicious party on each side must know. It is this spirit of the times; it is the spirit of that city that both wrought through every religious society in the city. We have more real distress with those societies, than the whole connection.

If the church in St. George's would ruin me, the members of the other societies would have gone far, to do it, if I would have given them a preacher,<sup>[52]</sup> as a separate society, before the last vote of conference took place. I could make quotations of their words and letters. I believe both parties are mistaken, and see and judge, erroneously. I have thought that the people in Saint George's would perhaps commit themselves as the college society hath done; and perhaps may have to perform 12 months quarantines.

I cannot blame Brother Cooper<sup>[53]</sup> for my journals, first from my great affection to Thomas Haskins<sup>[54]</sup> and high opinion of his literary abilities. I wished him to read, correct and strike out what was improper. Secondly, I desired Brother Cooper to print it as it was, except some pointings. I had stricken out many things; and oh that I had stricken out many more but I left chasms and incoherences in the copy. If I had left him [Cooper] at liberty it would have been done better.

The talk about ruining me I have had liberally for a whole year, from the members of the college society, wonder not, but allow me to think they have you go on such hints. As to the smallness of the congregation; if they go to one house they cannot go to the other. That side of the question, told me the congregation had fallen off amazingly. As to Chandler, they have paid him off and if they have paid him more than his due, the conference may look to that, as he and every preacher must answer at the great day of the Conference: if they are impeachable bring the charges forward. I know but one way for peace. That is to appoint meeting after meeting of both the



warm men on both sides, and let them bleed one another freely; and answer face to face as to that I hear. I have two ears, one for each party, but if I could hear them make good their charges one against another, like men, and not to say Christian; I should hope for better times—backbiting and fighting in the dark. I despise report, say they, and we will report. You will see I am not in a high ease, for many you<sup>[55]</sup> will supply if's and I's and but's, or what else. I feel for our cities.

Yesterday I preached in the borough of Winchester in our house and also administered the Sacrament. The travelling<sup>[56]</sup> line were young and sick, the elder shift left me to serve alone. In the afternoon I went to the woods, and read some letters and preached and almost the whole city came out. I am feverish and feeble today and lame in the mouth. My jaws are not well. I have a horse and a mere bishop's levee<sup>[57]</sup> of the fraternity about me. Maryland grows, the work goes on in several counties. The Redstone District flourishes.

In Salisbury District<sup>[58]</sup> the supposition is one thousand added since the conference in April. God is eminently working in the Carolinas and the union groweth between the Methodists and the Presbyterians. Oh shame of men, deviled with —— demons, firm concord yield, and Methodists and Presbyterians unite whilst the Methodists in the city of brotherly love, —— [but] there is but little religion, in reunion. You will bear with me. I am weak, the weather is

hot, what I do is in haste but in love and pity. My prayer is that God may keep you body and soul.

Your brother as ever in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

A Letter of Jesse Lee  
to Francis Asbury

*Asbury had been asking for reports. Here is one from Jesse Lee, and it was evidently what Asbury wanted. The letter shows that they were having another revival in Virginia. Here Lee is reporting on some of the oldest Methodist churches in America. The first of these revivals was in 1775 and 1776 when George Shadford was on the Brunswick Circuit. This letter is referred to in Asbury's letter to Thornton Fleming of December 2, 1802.*

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA  
September 16, 1802

[To Francis Asbury]<sup>[59]</sup>

I received your letter from Philadelphia, and was made glad to hear of the great things that God was doing in the north. You can recollect with pleasure the glorious things that were wrought in this district in the year 1789, but the unhappy division<sup>[60]</sup> which took place soon after, chiefly by one man, to the injury of many precious souls, was one great hindrance to the work. But the Lord has given some late gracious

intimations of his presence amongst us once more, may we hope never more to leave us as a people. The work began on Whitsuntide, at a quarterly-meeting at Mabry's Chapel,<sup>[61]</sup> at which time and place about ten souls professed to be converted; and from thence it spread through many parts of the circuit; and I humbly hope from that time one hundred and fifty souls have been brought to God.

It will give you great consolation to hear that God has visited the families of the ancient Methodists, especially in the young and rising generation; among these are the Dromgooles, Wyches, Hobbses, and Pelhams. We had thirteen that professed converting grace at Merit's<sup>[62]</sup> Chapel, Brunswick Circuit. In Greenville Circuit there is a gracious work. It spread about Salem, from the last yearly Conference, and it came up from Brunswick Circuit. At Ira Ellis's Meeting-house, at the last quarterly-meeting, we had twelve converted, if no more; among these Edward Dromgoole's second son and daughter professed to be born again. In short, the Lord is bringing home abundance of the ancient Methodist children.

Sussex Circuit, that you recollect was favoured in the last revival, is visited in this; I understand that about one hundred have been converted in the space of six weeks. It began at Jones's Chapel, at our quarterly-meeting; sixteen souls professed to have found a change. You will recollect how it was at this chapel in the year 1787, and God is gracious still. In the settlement of Lloyd's Chapel numbers have been brought to Christ. There has been a great and gracious work

in the Amelia Circuit. Many souls have been converted in Mecklenburg Circuit. The work is considerably great in Bertie Circuit.<sup>[63]</sup> There is a small revival in Portsmouth Circuit. Camden Circuit has gained a little. I hear that John Chalmers, Sr., has been at Norfolk, and the flame is kindled, and many are converted. Remember me in all your prayers. I am, sir, yours in love,

Jesse Lee

*M.H. Moore*, *Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia, 126-28*

*Here is another letter to Thornton Fleming in which Asbury is giving reports and asking for reports. It seems that there had been no camp meetings in Fleming's territory. Asbury urges Fleming to start camp meetings. He is also sending a list of some preaching appointments in Fleming's district.*

BLACK RIVER, NEAR CAMDEN, S.C.

*December 2, 1802*

[*To Thornton Fleming*]<sup>[64]</sup>

My dear Brother:

May grace and peace attend you and yours. The God of all grace hath manifested Himself gloriously. In our Western Conference we have had in this year upwards of 3,000, and our Southern Conference will be but little short of that number, from the present appearances: and I calculate, if the Lord is with us and we are with Him, we shall have a general and yearly increase of 21,000 in the seven conferences.

The campmeetings are as extraordinary in North and South Carolina, and Georgia, as they have been in Cumberland and Kentucky; hundreds have fallen, and many have been soundly converted. It would not be the work of God if there were not some opposition; but it is not worth our notice to stand to parley with the enemies of the work. I have heard of two men that preached against the work, one in particular, that was suddenly called away by death. If a man should thus sin against God by opposing his work, who shall entreat for him? But some may do it ignorantly and in unbelief. Of these men I have written upon, one was in North Carolina, and the other in Georgia. I have the name and efficient testimony of one, the other I have not.

My brother, perhaps you would do well, when you can, to keep a register<sup>[65]</sup> of your quarterly meetings, as we do of our conferences; and that, especially, when your members are numerous and your business is critical, and not trust yourself to memory in the important matters of the Church of God. By this means you will put it greatly out of the power of deceitful and designing men to misrepresent your proceedings, by having it in your power to apply to your church records.

I wish you would also hold campmeetings; they have never been tried without success. To collect such a number of God's people together to pray, and the ministers to preach, and the longer they stay, generally, the better—this is field fighting, this is fishing with a large net.

I have formed a design of coming, next Fall, through your District. The Western Conference, next year, will be held in Kentucky, the first October.<sup>[66]</sup> My plan and purpose is to be at Bath<sup>[67]</sup> the second Sabbath in August, and to call a general meeting for three or four days to attack Satan's seat. Thence take my route up the Allegheny,<sup>[68]</sup> on to Redstone, and to the new state, and down the west side of the Ohio to Kentucky,<sup>[69]</sup> if you can mark the route, and give me a view of the plan at conference, we shall know more about it. I presume Brother Whatcoat will be with me, as I cannot consent to be absent from any conference without I am prevented by sickness. I think we had better travel together next year.

We have brought all the conferences as forward as we can in the year, in order to go and spend what time we can in the western country. And although I have had a powerful rheumatic shock, such as I never had in my life, and that by being exposed in the wilderness, I must try it again, and take my tent with me in future. I must have something to try me and keep me down, under such gales of prosperity of the church of God, that I may not be exalted above measure. I must have something to humble me and keep me in my place. I hope Sister Fleming is in a good state of health. The work is going on in Winchester.<sup>[70]</sup>

I had also to cut off 1,000 at this end of the continent, as I had laid on near 1,000 at the other end. Brother Snethen<sup>[71]</sup> supplied my appointments to Kentucky, and then went on my route to Georgia. I came upon a straight easy course to Camden, South Carolina, and have a few days upon hand to

write letters. Jesse Lee writes that they have a blessed work in the south district of Virginia, in Norfolk, Portsmouth, and most of the circuits, and on those where the work first appeared in '87, Sussex and Brunswick.<sup>[72]</sup> In Salisbury District near a thousand souls have been added. I am, as ever to you two, that are but one.

Affectionately, Farewell,

Francis Asbury

The Pittsburgh Conference Journal, *February 15, 1834.*

*Transcribed with notes by W.G. Smeltzer*

*After giving an account of his travels, Asbury discusses with Ezekiel Cooper questions relating to the book business. Cooper was handling these matters. Asbury is especially interested in his own books. It seems he had published three. He also gives the plan for his route north and makes comment in the postscript on the situation at St. George's Church.*

BLACK RIVER, 20 MILES  
FROM CAMDEN [S.C.]  
*December 23, 1802*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[73]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

May grace and peace be with you now and ever.

I opened your letter with expectations of general intelligence from the north, as I have been absent for near 4 months, but merchants must square their accounts. My indisposition and lameness prevent me from the continuance

of my route to Georgia and as I had laid on near 1000 miles at the East, I had to take off 400 at the south; by this means I received your letter a few days ago. I have not seen N. Snethen since I saw him on [New] York. He supplied my appointments to Kentucky but was lamed in his route, by the fall of his horse; he lay in Kentucky till after the Cumberland Conference; and then hearing that I was crippled he roused up, and crossed the Alps<sup>[74]</sup> and my path, and supplied the appointments in Georgia; and I came down the state of South Carolina, directly to Camden.

As to Bishop Whatcoat, I have not seen him since we parted in the district of Maine on the fourth of July, if you know where he is give my love to him. I have one thing to comfort me in all my toil and pain, and care, that is the revival of religion. Our Western Conference after twenty years labor is productive, we have added 3000 this year. The camp meetings in North and South Carolina and Georgia, have been equal if not superior to Cumberland, and Kentucky, and must supply an addition of hundreds and thousands to the Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptist Societies. I calculate if our God is with us, we shall make an addition in membership in the seven annual conferences annually, 21,000 and oh that they may be all Christians.

I should be accordingly sorry if you should think that any person suspected your honesty, integrity, or frugality, and industry. If any man envy our stations, or income, such do not consider our labor, or covet that. Indeed I have thought you have saved your wages in your work. It is my continual



testimony that you are too close to the interests of the Connection; and others think with me; that our books ought to be made of better paper and binding. It appears that the cry for my own books<sup>[75]</sup> is greater than ever, the Presbyterians would purchase and many others. I am of opinion that our books should be kept in the stores in small towns, and country stores, especially southward. I believe you might trust Isaac Smith with Hymn books.

I doubt not some will complain, that books not ours; and not so spiritual are printed, which they will call uncanonical and introduced whereas if our own special books, could be printed, others might then be advisable [?]. I have not perhaps heard the last of true Godliness; although no book is much more approved or profitable; you think often, as have need to do; of the moral "of not pleasing every body." I have not seen Dr. Coke's<sup>[76]</sup> letters, but I have heard of them.

You wish to know my route to the north. I have sent the plan to Brother Snethen,<sup>[77]</sup> as I had neither time nor ability to copy. I must write to you now, as I do it once a year; at and after the Camden Conference. I shall not have time. I have thought very seriously that as I cannot think of being absent at any of the conferences and considering Brother Whatcoat's age and his not being able, or both not been in the habit of holding conferences; for next year I think of our travelling together. I must abridge both my preaching and travelling too extensively, not withstanding Brother Snethen is so universally approved as a preacher among preachers, and people, it is a burden in part to me, and the Conferences to

support him out of our small allowances; and when anything is complained of as a grievance, I wish a relief. It is the spirit of the day, "save my money" in my route this year in attending the seven conferences. I have put the Connection to the expense of travel, and travelling expenses 131 dollars.

Be pleased to inform Brother Sharp<sup>[78]</sup> I received his letter, and that I am not able to say where his next appointment will be. It may be he may recross the Delaware, but we must move constitutionally from [New] Jersey, his term is out. I will give you what information I can from my head of my route. January 1803 the third Sabbath in Charleston, the fourth in Georgetown, the fifth in Fayetteville, February 1st Sabbath in Wilmington, the second in Newbern, the third in Washington, the fourth in Halifax. March the fourth, conference in Virginia. Bishop Whatcoat or myself at Norfolk, the second Sabbath of month, the third, Petersburg, the fourth, Fredericksburg, the fifth, Baltimore. As to my appointments through the Peninsula I cannot be correct but I will send them forward.

Everlasting love be with thee and yours,

F. Asbury

P.S. As to the state of the Trustees in Philadelphia I shall be happy to find they have done their worst at dividing and will now do their best.

N.B. If you could collect and have bound for me a complete Book of yearly minutes to the present year you would exceedingly oblige me but I doubt you have them now.

*The Rev. William O. Hackett, Georgetown, Delaware, owns original and supplied photostat*

*George Roberts was at this time possibly Asbury's closest friend and confidant among the pastors. The letter has been defaced in several places, and it is not possible to fill the blanks. Asbury's comments on baptism are very interesting.*

CAMDEN, S.C.

December 30 [?], 1802

[To George Roberts]<sup>[79]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

My indisposition hath prevented me on my route to Georgia, and brought me the 10th day over to Camden. I retired to a brotherly friend's house to write a few letters, and I shall forestall a letter to you, because in the time of conference, and immediately after, I shall be in haste. I have learned in affliction and the keenest pain to say the will of the Lord be done, and it is all right, for although I have laid on near one thousand miles east I was for going on to Georgia till the Lord stopped me. I have the only consolation, a minister of Christ can have, to see the prosperity of the work; and the confidence and love of the preachers and people, and not Methodists alone. Nothing else can be wanting, but more thousands in the nation.

We have added upwards of three thousand in the Western Conference this year; and we shall not fall much short in the South Conference. The campmeetings have been blessed in North and South Carolina, and Georgia. Hundreds have fallen and have felt the power of God. I wish most sincerely that we could have a campmeeting at Duck Creek<sup>[80]</sup> out in the plain south of the town, and let the people come with their tents, wagons, provisions and so on. Let them keep at it night and day, during the conference; that ought to sit in the meeting. Since I began — I have received 3 letters — M'Caine,<sup>[81]</sup> to — Thomas Lyell<sup>[82]</sup> and another — are well and — in Philadelphia, we have large accounts from Norfolk and Portsmouth — of a work begun by old Father Chalmers.<sup>[83]</sup> Jesse [Lee] wrote a few days ago good news of his district,<sup>[84]</sup> at large. I hope you are not offended, and therefore will not write.

Once a year I am willing to write a long letter to my brethren. My brethren in writing are not all like you, they do not write long letters of general intelligence. They must suppose that I wish to hear of every district, circuit and society where there is any revival, and anything extraordinary that has taken place.

I must believe there are some good and great men among the Presbyterian ministers, and a revival of religion and some fellowship and friendship subsists between us and these; yet there is a jealousy in us; but the walls of prejudice are falling. Many young people, and some elders come over to us, but as to John's<sup>[85]</sup> people; they are contrary to all people and they

sweep the young people into the water, that got converted at the great meeting, and our preachers in general, in exposed settlements, go on and preach baptism for baptism, and mode for mode, and the tide turns of sprinkling and pouring for dipping. In general I am persuaded we have not preached sufficiently on baptism and Christian perfection.

Your letter will come too late I fear for answer, however strife continues in St. Georges<sup>[86]</sup> but —— I hope both parties have —— has been long war between the —— shall the sword reach to the very —— terminate in the destruction of the house of Saul. Oh that they would strive to do their best as brethren.

Our preachers are in general health and union. I shall be thankful of your advice. It is a burden to me and the conference to keep my assistant, and although the people and preachers are charmed with Brother Snethen,<sup>[87]</sup> the case is so that I think Brother Whatcoat<sup>[88]</sup> and myself ought to travel together, for although he cannot do much in conference he is an excellent counsellor. It is so with me that I cannot content myself to be absent from one conference in the union; if I should be lame or die in the attempt. My way will be only to preach about three times a week and make no more such air balloon plans. Hard necessity unforeseen justifies my sending Brother Snethen, and the people were generally satisfied and my laming at Cumberland made it so he had to supply the whole western and southern route; only I came down this state. I have had one thought about our citizens in general. I wish they would lay aside the use of wine and strong drink in

general. God would suddenly and certainly work. I am determined not to go out of my way on that matter for five hundred presidents and all the bishops in the world. I am sincerely thine.

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Here Asbury is writing to Roberts about the Book Concern and its connection with the Chartered Fund. He is making it clear that the pension fund is the concern not simply of the Philadelphia Conference but of the whole church. He also delivers his soul on the matter of slavery.*

CAMDEN, S.C.

January 5, 1803

[To George Roberts]<sup>[89]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

We have this morning adjourned the Camden Conference after a close application of five days, in conference and congregations. We have had great peace, upwards of 3000 have been added in this as also in the Western Conference. I was exceedingly pleased that you enclosed the account of the [Chartered] fund. It came in time. We have had our talk about the Book Concern. Camden Conference, elected a committee to prepare a letter for you as a member of the Book Committee; and as a member of the Philadelphia Conference with whom the weighty matters of our stationery are intrusted. You will see the contents which I approve. I have in a

previous letter insinuated the same sentiments to him<sup>[90]</sup> and I thought it my duty to commend you to them as being upon the spot.

I took the liberty to tell how we proceeded in appointing a committee to examine the book stewards concern: and how you rose up in the conference and spoke and they said you were right in so doing and that the interest of one was the interest of all the conferences. This is the substance as to the Philadelphia affairs, so they are and so they will be. There is no doubt that M'Caine<sup>[91]</sup> will be at the Baltimore Conference. Be assured I shall not be sorry to see you there if you can make your way. I have thought that in the above ——<sup>[92]</sup> Book Committee and next conference in —— be better fixed. I wish the conferences see and vote by ballot. I have no desire even to nominate in any case. Let them choose by ballot whom they please.

My dear mother<sup>[93]</sup> was in such an advanced age that she gave her property into improper hands that what little there was will not profit me or the connection, which my mother and myself wished to give our all to the church. William Bruff is gone and I suppose the principal and interest of [600?] pounds is gone with him from me. I have brought a charge last year of 128 dollars against the Connection, salary and expense of which I was 12 dollars deficient. I made a demand upon the Camden conference for a seventh, 20 dollars. I have a letter or letters, in which it appears that after near 20 years exceeding great and precious promises we may depend upon

Dr. Coke.<sup>[94]</sup> I gave him to understand he must be all or none, at least he formed that idea.

Whenever the General Conference or the Bishop shall see fit to exonerate from stationing the ministry, then I can save myself. If they do not I must ease myself by going upon more straight lines, but it will be very difficult for me to divide the stationing with any man, but Brother Whatcoat.<sup>[95]</sup> Peoples, presiding elders, bishops may dictate but if they control they govern. As to any vindication pamphlets or subjects upon slavery; I have done with the parsimonious niggardly method of printing and selling these matters. If it was to do again; I would have Snethen's<sup>[96]</sup> answers to Mr. O'Kelly given away. I would pay the money out of my own pocket. The General Conference has made no law against giving away.

The South Conference have passed an order that Brother Snethen should collect "Othello upon slavery" or anything excellent, to print and give away, and they will have the work done in Baltimore. They think they will force conviction upon the people this way; as it is not meet to preach upon the subject. There are such heaps of slaves, always present and in the houses, there are always two or three in the houses. Brother Hagerty<sup>[97]</sup> will be employed and something will be done every year to oppose. I shall be pleased to hear from you at Washington in North Carolina, about the first week in February. Let me have general information of the state of the work. As I have wrote you a long letter you will excuse me



now as I have only one day to finish my correspondence. I am still the same, thy friend and brother

Francis Asbury  
*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
*(Lovely Lane Museum)*

A Letter of John J. Jacob  
to Asbury

*John J. Jacob lived near Romney, West Virginia, and is buried in the cemetery in Romney. He was a local preacher for years, but was ordained elder August 25, 1813, by Asbury. He freed his slaves soon after his conversion, and the manumission record is in the clerk's office in Romney. He was a devoted Christian. Jacob formerly lived at Old Town, Maryland.*

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, [VIRGINIA]<sup>[98]</sup>

*March 21, 1803*

[*To Francis Asbury*]<sup>[99]</sup>

On Saturday, December 19th, we had preaching at Old Town, but no move; but in the class, the Lord was powerfully and graciously present. Tuesday night, prayer meeting at Cresap's; we had life and power and some awakenings. Wednesday night at 'squire Martin's, four or five were converted, and many awakened. On Sunday, at 'squire Martin's, we had a great day. There was trembling and quaking among sinners on every side, and bursting praises from the Christians. On Tuesday night, we had meeting at

sister Breeze's, there was a goodly company, much weeping, some rejoicing—many awakened, and four or five professed faith. On Wednesday, prayer meeting at [J.] Cresap's. We had a gracious season on Thursday night, at Luther Martin's—a time of great awakening among sinners, and much rejoicing among Christians. On Friday we rested; but two or three got together at 'squire Martin's and one soul was set at liberty.

On Saturday, January the 1st, 1803, we had a meeting at Brother McLaughlin's a crowded house, and much of the sweet presence of Jesus; we continued the meeting at night, the flame rose higher and higher— about nine o'clock, I invited the weary and heavy laden to come home to the Redeemer and join the fold of Christ; they did not want much inviting, but came forward boldly to the number of twelve. They all came and kneeled at the table.

On Sunday, we had meeting at William Pool's: the new converts carried the flame with them. Perhaps it was the greatest day I ever saw, the Lord was of a truth in the midst, the solemn air that sat on all face the floods of tears and lamentations, the shouts of praise, and almost general spirit of prayer among all sorts of people, made this day a never to be forgotten. This day twenty-one new members were added to the church. The meeting, with small intermission, continued till past nine o'clock at night, when Brother Martin and myself, having no help, were obliged to send the people home, being quite exhausted.

From what has been said, you have had a view of the beginning of this glorious work, I shall now confine myself chiefly to those times when new members were added, as this will give you an idea of its progress. The Sunday night following, we had prayer meeting at 'squire Martin's; one converted, and nine added. The next night we had two converted. The Thursday week after, two were added: on Saturday one was converted in my own house, and many awakened. On Sunday, at McLaughlin's, the largest congregation by far that ever was seen here. Sinners trembled on every side. It was a day of remarkable power, and nine were added.

On Monday, January 31st, we had a love-feast. It is impossible to describe the inexpressible sweetness of that day. The young converts spoke to admiration; two or three were justified by faith this day. At night we had prayer meeting at T. Cresap's; and two were added.

Sunday, February 13th. Preached at McLaughlin's, and seven were added. Sunday 20th, meeting at Old Town, we had a gracious day, four were added. On Sunday 27th, at Pool's, we had a glorious day, nine were added here, and three at Old Town.

Thursday, March 3rd, in my own house; we had such a time in family worship, as I never saw before. The next Wednesday night, at the widow Breeze's, two were added. Saturday, we had meeting at McLaughlin's, in the day, and at S. Taylor's at night, five were added this day and night.

Thursday, March 17th, we had meeting at Brother Martin's, two were added.

Thus I have given you in a few words as possible a sketch of the beginning and progress of the most remarkably gracious work among us. It has not reached far as yet, but appears to be spreading.

Yours,

J. J. Jacob<sup>[100]</sup>

*Letters to Bishop Asbury from various people, South Carolina Conference, Historical Society, Wofford College*

*Charles Atmore was known to Asbury through Atmore's biographies of Methodist preachers. Asbury is giving Atmore a report of the work in America.*

WALTHAM, NEAR BOSTON, MASS.

*June 3, 1803*

[*To Charles Atmore*]<sup>[101]</sup>

My very dear Brother, not less so by being only known by name:

The present year is marked with great grace to the inhabitants of the United States. Great things have been done in the western states of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, by meetings held by encampments for several days and nights together. These meetings have obtained in Georgia, South and North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware. Some of these meetings have been held four, others six, and one nine days and nights, with small intermissions. One hundred and

seven have been added in a town in Virginia of about one hundred families, at a nine days meeting. The Presbyterians, over half the Continent, are stirred up, and are in church and congregational union with the Methodists. And they both feed their flocks together, like the ministers and people of God.

We are always pleased to hear from, and honour the members and ministers of the ancient Connection in Europe. We are one body. We have one Name, one Gospel, one Christ, one God, one Holy Spirit, one heaven. And as it comforteth us, (when we find some barren spots,) that there are so many fruitful hills of Zion, you will rejoice that God is with a branch of the Methodist connection in this country. I hope we shall continue to preach a *present* and *full* salvation, and fill up life to the best of purposes.

I am now in the 58th year of my age, frequently subject to an inflammatory rheumatism, and sometimes disabled for a season. Then I revive again, and limp along. I was born and brought up in a temperate climate with great indulgence, and lived in retirement till I was twenty-one years of age. Now my constitution is broken, thro' heats and colds, and I have grey hairs in abundance upon me. I have been thirty-seven years in the connection, and thirty-two in America. I hope to hold out a little longer, and then to meet my dear English brethren, preachers and people, in a better world.

"There all the ship's company meet  
Who sail'd with the Saviour beneath."<sup>[102]</sup>

I thought when I came to America, four years would be long enough for me to stay; but the children whom God had given us, asked, Will you leave us in our time of distress? and so here I am. Give me your prayers, and present Francis Asbury in love to all you please, as their and your friend and brother in Jesus.

Francis Asbury

The Methodist Magazine, 1804, 135. *Transcribed by Frank Baker*

*Stith Mead was very close to Asbury. Like other letters, this reports on the state of the church. Asbury indicates that Bishop Whatcoat is quite unwell. Asbury has had his inflammation and fevers. His comment on the Boston churches is most interesting.*

CAMBRIDGE, NEW YORK STATE

*June 27, 1803*

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[103]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I was pleased to receive a letter from you, of the good things of Georgia. I have visited North Carolina and Virginia as also Maryland, East and West Pennsylvania, [New] Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont. In these Eastern states there is a great talk about what is done south and west, but the awful state of the churches here resembles those seven [churches] Christ wrote to. We have some living preachers and people and some revivals but New England, is like the old; settled upon the

lees of the form of godliness, where there was once some power. I was in ill health when I passed Baltimore, and Philadelphia, more immediately: in visiting the Peninsula, and at the Philadelphia Conference but I have recovered in the eastern states, but we have such mountains to contend with in earth and people.

Brother Whatcoat<sup>[104]</sup> has had something serious in a discharge of blood at the urinary passage, that may either change his habits or his citizenship, from this to a better world. I believe we shall keep together this year if possible, we are now in haste for the new state<sup>[105]</sup> and Kentucky, going down the west of the Ohio. We wish to go down to the centre of South Carolina, to take a view of the work, to Charleston. I reviewed my plan, and think if life and limbs should serve we cannot be at Augusta till the first of December. I would not hazard any appointments for fear I should fail again and quite lose the confidence of the people, but if you should have appointments, we can fall in with you or perhaps attend some campmeetings or stop a while in Augusta, or if an opening, we may go to Savannah, as God in his providence may direct. It is so with me that if I go upon the low lands or expose myself I am subject to inflammation or intermitting fevers this was the case when I visited the east of Maryland last.

I hope and trust that if it was lawfull to set the Lord a time; that in seven years, the United States will flame with the glory of God. Well might a blessed God say, I would thou wast cold or hot. Oh this lukewarm work, and water, how disagreeable to God, and men. I could name but will not some are dead; I

hope not damned, I could name two congregations I was told, sold their ministers to congregations in Boston for 1000 dollars each. One of the congregations brought the money home and put to interest for 20 and 30 per cent, all is mixed up together and bought and sold. They have the impudence to make our people pay their priests, and force it from them. Nay, they have the assurance to tax one of our traveling preachers that, I hope they will put to jail, and I will help to support him there sooner than he shall pay their unjust demands. I am pleased to hear you are engaged to preach purity.

Kempis<sup>[106]</sup> says they that travel much are rarely sanctified. Oh my brother to converse with all sorts of spirits, tempers, all characters, all opinions, in all companies, we have boarded two days and bedded one night in taverns, all board, all tables, all families, such a life is ours. Two old men unknown padding along. Hail the South and West, they are cold or hot, a people I know I can trust by the mercies of my God, sweetening every toil, makes every region pleasing. If anything very special comes to light, send me if you can a line west by October to Kentucky Conference. I received the bill, by remittance, in full for the horse and chaise and have destroyed your note. Prayer meetings are good discipline, will help on the work of God. We have, if we have calculated aright added 18,000 in four conferences. I cheered myself and friends and consider that we should add 21,000 in the seven Conferences, but the wastage is so great and people die greatly, and remove into the new settlements. Perhaps 19,000 will be as much as we shall reach.



By letter from Dr. Coke, he will be at our General Conference to stay in America if nothing unexpected does not intervene. We have a considerable supply of preachers, but not more than we have work for, but many have families that we cannot support. The Philadelphia Conference were insolvent between \$2000 and \$3000. They have to cut off the supply for the children. The Boston Conference raised about \$82 for the married and \$42 for the single brethren.

I must conclude with my love to thyself and all you may please to present me to.

As ever yours,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*There is no heading to this letter other than "My dear Brother." It may have been George Roberts, and probably was, though there are some references to the Book Concern and the work of Ezekiel Cooper, the Book Agent. It is most informative as to Asbury's reference to the episcopacy. It is interesting to remember that these ideas concerning the bishops were never put into practice.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

July 19, 1803

[*To George Roberts ?*]

My dear Brother:<sup>[107]</sup>

I know in some measure what is right and what is wrong. Evils of such magnitude will not be cured in a day. You have a partial station,<sup>[108]</sup> you must, it is your duty to be partial to save the people you have charge of. I know the aggravating cases, but you have said they were such as would not justify division! Oh division! to divide the Body of Christ, you will not wonder at my want of confidence in the matter as well as the former. Lay no bet upon the General Conference, perhaps it would be better to leave the present preachers with them till peace is made. I am afraid the General Conference will have too much work laid up for them. I would wish them to have but very little, as for the Book Concern, I wish it was divided, one part in New York the other in Baltimore, with proper men to manage the work under the special notice of the conferences nominated. I think John Wilson<sup>[109]</sup> a very proper man. As a clerk he is masterly and a tolerable linguist.

I am happy to feel very willing the Conference should make or unmake me as they please, but as to presiding elders I am well assured that we send such boys that we need presiding elders to keep discipline, and are a most useful and respectable body of men. I am of an opinion that every yearly conference ought to have liberty to elect their own bishop, perhaps when they have one hundred members, and these bishops should be stationed for 6 years and visit the four or five districts regularly; that if there should be general bishops

to visit they ought to be chosen by the General Conference and if it was not myself, I would say the senior resident Bishop should always reside on the stations. I think that each conference could bring a bishop under the same discipline as they do the presiding elders. The seven conferences will soon be one hundred strong. When this is the case they will have a preacher in charge and nearly as much territory as I had at the first. I am very unwilling to be shouldered forward in the business.

I most sincerely wish the temporal and spiritual part of our discipline to be separated. I think if the General Conference is not connected it will be the greatest curse the Methodists ever had. It ought only to meet once in six years and none under six or eight years, to meet in it. As to complaints about the books, we had them heavily laid in, at the New York Conference. I fear we shall lose the admission of thousands of members this year. The General Conference ——<sup>[110]</sup> —— to kill the presiding eldership, others to make archbishops—Some to get a toleration for —— —— others to have our local preachers ordained over congregations to escape taxing. We have tax —— at Wilbraham and oh that they would take him to jail because he will not pay them ——.

[Francis Asbury]<sup>[111]</sup>  
*Drew University Library*

*This is one of the few letters extant in which Asbury deals with a particular preacher's case. Lyell had become a problem and became more so until he located.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

July 21, 1803

[*To Thomas Morrell*]<sup>[112]</sup>

My dear Brother:

Grace and mercy crown thee. Since I came to this city I received a letter from Brother Lyell<sup>[113]</sup> by order and wish of elder Pickering<sup>[114]</sup> to detain Brother Lyell longer in the Boston District, thinking it would be most for the Glory of God, for Brother Lyell to stay longer. I have but one only source of supply, to send Brother Michael Coate, that will be along as soon as possible. I wish you to write to Brother Lyell to Newport and let him know according to his and elder Pickering's wish, I excuse his coming this year to New York, and that he should continue under the direction of elder Pickering for the present year.

In haste and yet yours, most affectionately,

Francis Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Preceding letters have referred repeatedly to the division in the church in Philadelphia. It is clear that Ezekiel Cooper had been tied in with one of the factions. Asbury had been pointed with him in trying to heal the division. Now Asbury has come to the end of his patience; and following a vote of the conference, Asbury is asking him to move to Baltimore.*

SOUNDERSBURG, PA.

*July 24, 1803*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[115]</sup>

My dear Brother:

As the Executive of the Conference, and your friend, I think it my duty to tell you that I think it your duty, in obedience to the Conference, to move to Baltimore<sup>[116]</sup> about the first of October. You know there have been many changes among your brethren. I hope that you also will bear your part. It is my wish, if I cannot keep the people out of contention, to save the preachers. As to any reports that are false and groundless, you can easily combat them in Baltimore as well as in Philadelphia, by word or letter.

I think of any preacher that has been stationed in Philadelphia for six or seven years, I would conclude it was time for him to be removed if he was not local, and altogether out of my power. I wish every person that can be moved to be moved, and everything that can be done for peace and union to be done.

You are not ignorant that other preachers have been called suspended, and some removed at a word, to serve the wishes of some dissatisfied minds. You will take your turn with others, and as there was such unanimity in the vote of the Conference, it ought to have weight with you. As an individual your going or staying is nothing to me. I have no spleen against you. I only want peace in the societies, by any good means. I wonder why you should wish to stay where you

must have had great distress of mind, and I have thought it may be the cause of your ill health.

I am most sincerely, your friend,

F. Asbury

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*A shortened form of this letter was published in Briggs, Bishop Asbury: a Biographical Study. Coke was in England, and Asbury is giving him a yearly report of the work in America.*

NEAR LITTLE YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

*July 28, 1803*

[*To Thomas Coke*]<sup>[117]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

To whom I wish grace, mercy, and peace, in life and death. This will probably be the last letter I shall write you till the General Conference. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[118]</sup> and myself, since April, have had a tour of 1800 miles from Baltimore thro' Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, [New] Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Northamptonshire, and Vermont. I am now, after three days recess, setting out on a new route to the new state of Ohio, and to Kentucky. I purpose then to recross the Allegheny mountains to the south, that I may be at the Conference in Augusta, January 1, 1804. Our seven conferences are so appointed, and it will require between 4 and 5000 miles riding to attend them all; and the journies must be completed in less than ten months.

You will see by our returns that our number is increased above 17,000 this year; and, considering that many have died, and removed, we have certainly added above 20,000. As to the northern and eastern churches, I fear they are as lukewarm as any churches in the whole world, a few ministers and people, however, are roused from their lethargy: and our prospects become more pleasing daily in those parts. We have sent three choice young men as missionaries into Lower Canada.<sup>[119]</sup> In many parts of Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia, it seems as if there would never be a cessation of the work of God; but that we should spread and grow continually as in days past. In the heat and haste, I cannot write largely.

I am, with the same friendship as ever, your's,

Francis Asbury

P.S. Brother Whatcoat is under a serious affliction thro' the gravel. I shall leave him to rest in Maryland, till the General Conference. I go on, sick or well, lame or blind, sometimes not able to mount or remount, without help in my rheumatic complaints. But we must be at home every where, if it be under a tree, and prepared to meet death at any place with pleasure, thro' grace. I thought once, should I live to see preaching established in all the states, and one hundred in society in each of them, I should be satisfied. Now, I want millions where millions are. Farewell! farewell! My love to all you please to mention my name to in Great-Britain, by word or letter.<sup>[120]</sup>

The Methodist Magazine, 1803, 47

*At Pittsburgh, Asbury wrote two letters to George Roberts, one on August 18 and the other the next day, August 19. He is reporting upon his journey, his health, and the work. A notation on the envelope has "Pittsburgh, Aug. 1803." However, as this letter indicates, he was at the camp meeting, "30 miles from Pittsburgh."*

CAMPMEETING, PA.

*August 18, 1803*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[121]</sup>

My dearly beloved George:

By the grace of God I have now hobbled along near 410 miles from the city of strife, but in this wilderness I have only a lodging place as a way-fairing man that tarries but a night. I have been chiefly in Penn's woods, east and west. I feel as if God would shake this wealthy and sinfully secure people and work powerfully among the sections and remnants of the people in their narrow lives of parties and opinions.

I have had a serious dysentery for two weeks. In the first, I crossed the great mountains alone, in part, the last I rested, but was very unwell. I am now in better state (all is well). It was needful my stomach and bowels should be scoured before I go into the new state<sup>[122]</sup> where it is more sickly and the lands are low. I am now waiting upon a campmeeting that begins this day, near the Monongehela River, near a place of notoriety [?] called the Old Fort, 30 miles from Pittsburgh. It is the first of the kind attempted in this country, and we expect thousands. I shall not close this letter till I see what is done, if anything special, you shall hear.



Report says there was a mighty falling among the Presbyterians, but it is reported they are without conviction or conversion, some at least. They say the elders go among them and hold the candles but they will not or cannot say anything to the distressed. They want God to work alone. They want God to work without man or means except preaching and ordinance to see if his work is real. The people report they bark and snatch, and make strange noises. No wonder if they are left poor souls to themselves to contend with the devil and sin, and sinners. Mark, these are only reports. I think it is either judicially come upon these people or it is because they are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth for them and the people, that are stricken, educated in the doctrine that they can do nothing, they will not attempt to do anything. Here I will stop till I come to Pittsburgh if spared and receive thine and have something more to write.

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*The preceding letter to George Roberts was written before Asbury came to the camp meeting. Now he is reporting on the camp meeting. This letter was not finished on the nineteenth. He also reports for the twentieth and twenty-second. This letter and the preceding letter are written together as if one letter.*

PITTSBURGH, PA. [?]<sup>[123]</sup>  
*August 19, 1803*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[124]</sup>

This day I came to camp a very feeble man. The camp is upon a most agreeable mount under a noble lofty shade—2000 hearers at the sound of the trumpet came to the big stand to hear the little preacher Francis. Several have been stricken, 6 hopefully brought through, oh that there may be hundreds this night. General Fleming with many others will lodge in the camp. No Presbyterians have appeared of the ministerial lines as yet. I hope we shall have 2 if not 3000 tomorrow. I am very unwell. I mean to go and fire a gun each day and retreat. I wish that the city of Philadelphia had a 4 days seige of preaching day and night with a new preacher every other time, 2 sermons and exhortations in the morning and the same in the afternoon or night. And they keep at it till something would be done in the Academy and St. George's.

Oh what a foolish child of old age I am. Just as if the citizens would be such fools as the backwoods people. Be assured we had great order and great attention. Oh to see old men and old women dwelling in tents, their wagons and horses put away, not a trifler upon the ground this day, but many fainting and falling and crying for mercy. I will stop now, 20th of August. Sabbath Day 21 I preached at the camp, Isaiah lv, 6-7. Monday 22 I preached again, I Corinthians xv, 58. It was an open season. The exercise continued the greater part of the night, many powerfully stricken, we guessed at near one hundred, how many converted we know not. Several sermons and exhortations by night and day, about 15

travelling and local preachers and people from one to two thousand every day. Great order was observed. We had watchmen by day and night to guard the camp. A poor Roman brought whiskey to give away, but some of the guards seized his bottle.

Tuesday the provisions of many families failed and they had been 6 or 7 days from home. They struck their tents and moved their waggons, but as we were coming away many were coming and I desired Thornton Fleming<sup>[125]</sup> and James Quinn<sup>[126]</sup> to go and preach to the people. What the end will be I cannot say or when! Brother Renshaw was a strict observer and took notes. I will desire him to write to some of you some correct accounts. I am very weak with the heat and the state of body I am in, but I am greatly comforted to see the zeal of our brethren. I hope the preachers in the city live in great love. I cannot write you all but you are welcome to my letters in communion.

My love to all you please to present it to,

F. Asbury

P.S. I must ask your pardon for writing so bad but I have had so little rest and hardly a place or home for anything and my lameness and affliction presseth me down.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Asbury was traveling through Pennsylvania in August, 1803, going west. Bishop Whatcoat became sick and*

*"concluded he must stop, or go on with me and die by inches." Asbury needed another companion. He wrote the letter on August 26. (See Journal.) Henry Boehm joined Asbury and traveled with him, but it is not stated how long. Asbury arrived at Isaac Meek's in Ohio on Monday, September 12, and left on Tuesday. Evidently Daniel Hitt and his brother, Benjamin, met Asbury at Meek's a few days later. They had ridden 120 miles together after leaving Meek's by September 17.*

[PENTZ, NEAR YORK, PA.]<sup>[127]</sup>

[August 26, 1803]

[To Daniel Hitt]

My dear Child.<sup>[128]</sup>

I thought, by your not appearing sooner, that you were sick. I feel peculiar delicacy about your going at all. Your brother says you are much weakened and dejected: as such I fear to take you into the wilderness and to leave you there. You are now in a healthy country, and among your friends; and there I wish you to stay. If Benny<sup>[129]</sup> can come, if you can spare him, unless you wish him to stay and take care of you. I can employ John Cullison<sup>[130]</sup> to go to Hockhocking. I shall wait at Meek's<sup>[131]</sup> till Tuesday: I could till Thursday, but then the ride would be too dreadful. I have been pretty severely wrought in this District with labor and affliction. I am better, but I find it hard to spare myself. We have good prospects in this country. As to wine, barks, and Twilington,<sup>[132]</sup> I have them at your service. I have also most excellent laudanum; forty or fifty drops might break the ague. But I had one man to die in my company, and always feel afraid of forcing sick

men. Brother Whatcoat said he must leave me or die, and that by inches. Your brother will tell you my talking, as you have my writing. Thine as ever,

F. Asbury  
The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XIV  
(1860), 472

*This is only a fragment of the letter which Asbury wrote to Coke at this time. We are indebted to Drew for this much of it.*

CHARLESTOWN, S.C.  
November 23, 1803

[*To Thomas Coke*]<sup>[133]</sup>

. . . I was a little surprised at the reception of a letter dated Petersburg, only about fifteen days after one dated Dublin, July 4, 1803. You have hastened your escape from the storm and tempest of war and of water. O may you find a safe retreat, and a field of great usefulness upon our continent.

[Francis Asbury]

Drew adds: "This letter, which is dated Charleston, Nov. 23, 1803, and is addressed to Bishop Coke, Light-Street chapel, Baltimore, points out a track of nearly 5000 miles in length, which he was earnestly invited to pursue, in order that he might visit the seven annual Conferences on the continent prior to his return. This was a tour, which, according to Mr.

Asbury's letter, would take him about nine months to accomplish."

*Samuel Drew, The Life of the Rev. Thomas Coke, LL.D.,  
1817, 315*

*This note is a draft upon the treasurer of the Chartered Fund for one hundred dollars to be paid to Ezekiel Cooper. The money was to come from the funds deposited by the South Carolina Conference.*

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
*January 4, 1804*

[*To the Treasurer*]<sup>[134]</sup>

To the Treasurer of the Fund, chartered in its State of Pennsylvania for the support of its supernumerary and superannuated preachers, and its orders of Preachers, etc., & of its Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Pay on sight to the Revd. Ezekiel Cooper, Elder of its Methodist Church aforesaid one hundred dollars on account of its Annual Southern Conference of its said church sitting in Augusta aforesaid, this day and year above written.

Francis Asbury  
Thomas Coke  
*Drew University Library*

*As usual Asbury is in South Carolina in January. He has held the conference at Mr. Cantalou's house in Augusta, Georgia. He found Coke already in Augusta. Now he has come to Camden. He makes plans for Bishop Coke and also some observations. Uppermost in his mind are the problems of Philadelphia, the printing business, and the division of the churches.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
*January 11, 1804*

[*To George Roberts*]<sup>[135]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

Grace, mercy, love and peace, be with thee and thine now and [forever]. My life is growing shorter, so must my letters, you will accept one for two. I have been supported to travel upwards of 2000 miles since my departure from Philadelphia. God is good. I know I feel our prospects are great westward and southward. Our increase in the two conferences between 3 and 4000, exclusive of the wastages of such a body. By going immediately to Charleston, I missed your letter. My overseer<sup>[136]</sup> held me to it last month in the woods of Georgia. Open houses, frequent rains. My children love me to death, and would do it to death; if I would suffer it.

We have upwards of 30 in the West and about 40 in the South Conference, preachers, but we want many more. Bishop Coke was at Augusta, he is now in Charleston, he is going by advice to Boston, he will be in Philadelphia March 3. He will take his old lodging if convenient. From what I can judge the British Conference<sup>[137]</sup> will be half undone if he is

absent, they have and will have wave after wave. Therefore I hope the General Conference will permit the Doctor to go without any difficulties. I am deeply sensible that neither Dr. Coke nor any other person can render me any essential services in the Annual Conferences, more than the members of said conferences can do, unless they will take the whole work out of my hands.

We cannot attempt printing any original books in America unless the preachers choose to make little books and run the venture. Let us only get the form well formed and two reprinting offices established. One in Baltimore, on the authority of the Baltimore Conference and in New York the same, their limits of sale fixed, the appropriations of the profits settled. I would have a temporal economy and a spiritual pure form of doctrine and discipline fixed. We may send our papers to the Arminian Magazine. Only establish pure reprinting press. I wish the society would lift 40 or 50 dollars to the Doctor's travelling expenses. You and the Union Church are fixed. St. George's<sup>[138]</sup> have the man of their choice. I must appoint a man of my choice then you may live together until unity or death.

As to Francis and Philadelphia farewell. Farewell, so is my mind at present. What changes I know not may take place to change my mind. You say you love me. I believe you do, you will consider a short letter when I tell you I love you and you will not wish me to come into the fore of Brotherly strife. I have no more letters from C.C.[?]<sup>[139]</sup> He has my mind. I advise the Doctor to preach for both but to lodge at Jacob's<sup>[140]</sup>



if convenient as aforetime. Brother Shaffer and his trustees may work it as they please. If the Philadelphia Conference will suffer themselves to [be] imposed upon, they may. Farewell! My Christian salutations to all friends and especially Sister Roberts.

Fr. Asbury

P.S. You may write to me in Norfolk by March 22.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Thomas Sargent was pastor with George Roberts in Baltimore in 1804 and was reappointed there in 1805. In 1806 he was appointed to Alexandria, Virginia, in the Baltimore Conference. George Roberts was pastor at Light Street in 1804 and 1805. He located in 1806. Michael Coate was in New York in 1803 and 1804, and was moved to Philadelphia in 1805 and to Baltimore in 1807. Evidently Asbury had in mind moving Coate to Baltimore in 1804. However, Coate's marriage in that year prevented the move. Coate's brother Samuel had been pastor in Baltimore in 1802-3.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
January 14, 1804

[To Thomas Sargent]

My very dear Brother:

Grace and peace attend thy spirit, now and ever. While I was premeditating an answer to thy letter, according to thy

wishes; a second came from Elder Roberts, informing me that matters had not succeeded to thy wishes, and that you were about to return to your station. I had thought it might have been agreeable to Michael<sup>[141]</sup> to have returned.<sup>[142]</sup> I hope you will rub it out till Conference, and then a change may take place. I hope you will feel easy under your disappointment in your appointment; marriage<sup>[143]</sup> is an holy and honorable station, but critical and important; and better to be done but once in a man's life, for life, home, health is an object upon both sides. We must hope there is a providence in these things, and a man will be able to suit himself better or it may be better to continue, [single] in this all men must judge for themselves, that is, Christian men and ministers.

I rejoice exceedingly at the prospects of the work of God. Our Western Conference commands 1200 miles in length, and six hundred in width swiftly peopling<sup>[144]</sup> by one hundred thousand every month in a year besides that are born annually, healthy, fertile lands, and a renewal of religion. The Kentucky or Western Conference is the eye and centre of the West, at present we have upwards of 30 travelling preachers; in the South Conference about 40. We have great openings and I feel as if 1804 would be a year exceeding all we have yet known in America.

Men of little minds will be imitating bad examples, and the malignant fever of division may spread from great to little men, and from great to small places: we have great revivals of religion in our cities and towns but is in building churches, in

church divisions, in struggles for power to rule the ministry and form them to their own wishes, and parties and passions.

Oh Timothy keep that which is committed to thy charge, never be bought or sold or swayed from rectitude and rules of right. I am happy to hope the travelling ministry and Conference will keep clear of parties. We have great union in the body and we should pray for a healing, loving spirit. I have sent off your letter but your people were not in my way.

My love and Christian salutations to all you please. I am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury  
*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
*(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*The Journal records that Asbury came to Mr. Rembert's on Black River on Monday, the sixteenth of January. On Saturday, the twentieth, and Sunday, the twenty-first, he preached at Rembert's Chapel. A large part of the letter is taken up with a discussion of what to do about Bishop Coke.*

BLACK RIVER, S.C.  
January 21, 1804

[To Daniel Hitt]<sup>[145]</sup>

My dear Daniel:

By the Grace of God: God is good, is gracious to me. I passed with great ease the Alps of America: and had to drop down upon the headwaters of Seleuda; and made my way to

Charleston, and spent one week in our own house.<sup>[146]</sup> Here Mr. Brazer, only surviving minister of Mr. Hammett's<sup>[147]</sup> fraternity, has had conversation with me and Bishop Coke about giving up the whole concern to us. At present we preach in Georgetown and Charleston House, formerly called Mr. Hammett's. We have the only possession of Georgetown House.

From Charleston I made my way to Augusta. Overseer Mead<sup>[148]</sup> took care to keep me hard at it in Georgia in the penance houses in the course of last month. I have returned to answer my letters from the North; and then to proceed to Georgetown, Wilmington, Newbern, Washington, [N.C.], Tarborough, Norfolk, and on to the Virginia Conference. We have had some remarkable seasons of grace; rather, I may say, "they," our brethren, have, in Georgia, South and North Carolina, and old Virginia, as you have doubtless heard, from the latter. It is said one hundred souls were converted at a meeting in Brunswick,<sup>[149]</sup> exclusive of Negroes. Bishop Coke, after intending to the North, made a sudden tack, and came to meet me at the South Conference in Augusta. He is now in Charleston, and will set off, the last of this month, on a tour to Boston and the towns in the way, and return to the General Conference. It appears to me that he cannot well be spared from the Irish and English Connection, without irreparable damage; and I suppose he is better fitted for the whirl of public life than to be hidden in our woods. If I must bear the burden now laid upon me, I can call forth men of our own to help me, in or out of conference, men that know men and things by long experience.

Our printing work, as to new publications, will be checked; but if the preachers choose to risk their credit, and reputation, and interest, they may print small matters. I judge it will be best to give the special charge of printing to the Baltimore Conference, and the same to the New York Conference; and let these two Conferences give special direction to the agent what books to print annually, and allow a commission for the work.

I believe all the Doctor wants is to keep his name amongst us; and truly he has crossed the sea often enough to purchase this, and sent thousands to serve us. But I am in delicate circumstances to meddle any way. The British brethren may wish a bond of union, and they may object as much to keeping the Doctor's name in the Minute arrangement as we, while he is absent for half a year with us. In short, my enemies have charged me with rejecting Mr. Wesley, and all blame would revolve upon me if any thing in the Doctor's case was to take place; and yet, if I was to say much, I should be censured as one of the trinity of British Bishops.

If I was to advocate his liberty to be in England, it would be said I wanted to reign alone, and was jealous of a competitor, when every man of information must know that no man need be elated with the honor, if he does his part in the work of a Bishop in America. You will think of these things.—

As ever, thine,

F. Asbury

P.S. I should be glad of some brief, correct account of the work in America. I will send my Extracts of Letters<sup>[150]</sup> to be printed in the Arminian Magazine in Europe. The Baptists and Presbyterians publish plentifully. It will be best for us not to strive, nor cry, or cause our voices to be heard! our increase will be known, and our success will be seen enough to raise envy.

The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XV,  
(1861) 157, 158

*This is not a letter but is a page taken from the Journal. It is most interesting because Asbury gives what is equivalent to a defense of his "celibacy." It was written in Georgetown, South Carolina. He prefaces the statement by saying, "I have suffered in my flesh, and have had 'deep waters' of a temporal and spiritual nature to wade through." Though Asbury makes many statements about his preachers marrying, some of which may seem to be derogatory to women and the married state, he was not a woman hater. Witness how often he stayed at widows' homes and how frequent were his references to women, to their affairs, to the preachers' wives, to women's ministrations to him. He corresponded with many. Before he left England, he seems to have seriously considered marrying Nancy Brookes.*

## Asbury's Defense of His Celibacy

*January 27, 1804*

We reached Georgetown. I have suffered in my flesh, and have had "deep waters" of a temporal and spiritual nature to wade through.

If I should die in celibacy, which I think quite probable, I give the following reasons for what can scarcely be called my choice. I was called<sup>[151]</sup> in my fourteenth year; I began my public exercises<sup>[152]</sup> between sixteen and seventeen; at twenty-one I travelled<sup>[153]</sup>; at twenty-six I came to America<sup>[154]</sup>; thus far I had reasons enough for a single life. It had been my intention of returning to Europe at thirty years of age; but the war continued, and it was ten years before we had a settled, lasting peace; this was no time to marry or be given in marriage. At forty-nine I was ordained superintendent bishop<sup>[155]</sup> in America. Amongst the duties imposed upon me by my office was that of travelling extensively, and I could hardly expect to find a woman with grace enough to enable her to live but one week out of the fifty-two with her husband: besides, what right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her his wife, and by a voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage state, by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit long to be put asunder? it is neither just nor generous. I may add to this, that I had little money, and with this little administered to the necessities of a beloved mother<sup>[156]</sup> until I was fifty-seven; if I have done wrong, I hope God and the sex will forgive me:

it is my duty now to bestow the pittance I may have to spare upon the widows<sup>[157]</sup> and fatherless girls, and poor married men.<sup>[158]</sup>

*Asbury's Journal, January 27, 1804.*

*It seems as if Kendrick was restless in Charleston, and Asbury is urging him to settle down. In the letter Asbury tells about other appointments and men. He shows his concern for what he calls at the time his "beloved" Charleston. In the letter he shows his sensitiveness to the criticisms of his administration. He gives his reasons for appointing Nicholas Watters to Charleston with Kendrick rather than Isaac Cook.*

GEORGETOWN, S.C.

*January 29, 1804*

[*To Bennet Kendrick*]<sup>[159]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

Grace and peace be multiplied to thee from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As brother M'Caine<sup>[160]</sup> will fill up the after service of the day, I will sit down and talk with you upon paper. I am seriously sensible of the difficulties of your charge, and I should not wonder if you confer with flesh and blood, if you should wish to quit your station: but you will remember what God has done for you, and what He may do by you, if faithful: I had my reasons for not sending brother Cook,<sup>[161]</sup> and equal reasons for appointing brother Watters.<sup>[162]</sup> Our young men have fallen sacrifices to towns, brother Ormand lately.<sup>[163]</sup>



I feared brother Cook had not stability enough: not that alone, but he is very active in the country; he is stationed with a married preacher, that has halted the last year, and may fail this, and leave a growing circuit, (Oconee, Ga.,) for six weeks, chiefly with only one preacher. I aim to make present and future provision in the circuits for the year. Brother Watters is an aged man, a good preacher, and has travelled over a great part of the continent, and has preached above thirty years. I hope his life will be spared. I hope we shall have better security both for his soul and body than for any younger man. He failed in the circuit (Broad River, Ga.) by bad health last year; and will not be able to supply one this. Brother Daugharty<sup>[164]</sup> came from Conference with a murmur, and appears by Dr. Coke's letter, to continue so, you may let him see this letter and welcome.

Brother Daugharty wished brother Hill,<sup>[165]</sup> a young man of slender habits of body: that station might hazard his life or soul. He is now upon a very consequential station (Broad River, Ga.): both the preachers failed in supplies last year, not for want of piety, but health: perhaps he will have 4000 hearers. I cannot give them a preacher and take him away, as to McDean,<sup>[166]</sup> you have known his difficulties; added to this the highest expectation of the people is fixed upon him in Camden; and the circuit, as the colleagues with both these named men, are not so very promising in great acceptance. I cannot disappoint the people, and change the stations of the preachers upon such slight ground. We must be men and not children.

I had rather brother Daugharty had written many letters to me, than have influenced one that could not judge by reason of his want of information of men and things. I feel for Charleston! I do most earnestly entreat you if possibly you can to keep your station. I will look out. I know there ought to be three preachers, if you occupy three churches. If I find a man I can spare, and trust, I will send one between this and the General Conference. But what is it? We have about forty travelling preachers in the South Conference; and we want fifty, we have about forty in the Virginia Conference, and we want sixty, Georgetown wants one wholly, so does Camden, and you want three in Charleston; Columbia goeth without, but I hope brother Evans<sup>[167]</sup> will set out again. Poor Wilmington! I have sent a preacher there from the South Carolina Conference.

My dear soul, go on, God will reward you; give this year's labours, I am in peculiar circumstances. Two of the preachers have located, that I had hoped would have travelled. The preachers that travel appear to be too much afraid of employing married preachers, but it must, it will be done. Brother M'Caine leaked it out that you wanted three preachers, that I also know, but I cannot, I dare not take either of the preachers from their present stations.

The urgent letter I received from Dr. Coke has hurt my mind, that the friends should think I could pursue such a course toward the preachers, to make a breach in two districts and circuits to serve two hundred people in Charleston. The Georgians are very — —<sup>[168]</sup> you know, that adverse part that

say "Pope" and what not. To give the people a preacher and snatch him away. The presiding elders are afraid of moving a preacher, and yet urge me to turn them over like a ball among nine-pins. I do not station the preachers among the people as if they were school-boys, and the people our servants or slaves. I do not trifle with my office in that manner, this is not the way to magnify it, we must hold the confidence of the preachers and people very sacred.

Yours as ever,

F.A.

Southern Christian Advocate. *Transcribed by Albert D. Betts*

*For a second time within a month Asbury is writing to Kendrick. The division in Charleston is being healed, and Asbury considers Kendrick a most important figure in bringing peace. He compares the Charleston and Philadelphia divisions.*

NEWBERN, N.C.

*February 20, 1804*

[*To Bennet Kendrick*]<sup>[169]</sup>

My dearly beloved Brother,

May the good will of Him that dwelt with Moses in the bush, be with thee. I conclude matters are just as you have given me information. Before you will receive this, I hope brother Norman<sup>[170]</sup> will be with you before this will come to hand, then you will do the best you can. I advise you to be steady and uniform, and go on as you have begun, step by

step. You will have your difficulties on both sides the question; as to the Doctor<sup>[171]</sup> I thought the Bishop did not read him right; but your statement perfectly meets my view of things. I am pleased with our prospects in Georgetown, and Wilmington, in the latter they are pleased with brother Russell<sup>[172]</sup> and I trust and hope they will grow this year, in grace, and numbers; dear souls, they were praying most hours of the night, whenever I waked I heard cries going to God the Lord for mercy.

We have concluded that we must add twenty feet to the pulpit end of the house. I presume you will have the heaviest siege in Charleston this year you ever had in your life, but the grace of God is sufficient for you; it will be a great matter to heal a division,<sup>[173]</sup> that has been made for thirteen years: we cannot cure that division<sup>[174]</sup> in Philadelphia, that has been but of three years' standing, and they are all violent Methodists and fit to die almost with religion, but we have strange spirits in the world, and the Church and people appear sometimes bereaved of grace and reason also. You will find it best to preach pointedly on Christian tempers and duties, to add energy and fire to your administrations; above all, meet your colleagues, and spend a prayer and band<sup>[175]</sup> hour together every week, to keep love and union among yourselves, and the God of love and peace be with you all.

Write me at farthest to Baltimore in May, or even to Norfolk about the 1st of March if any thing critical should

turn up, or if Brother Norman should fail; that I may look out for help from some other quarter.

I am most affectionately thine,

F. Asbury

Southern Christian Advocate. *Transcribed by Albert D. Betts*

A Letter from Isaac Robbins  
to Daniel Hitt

FAUQUIER, VIRGINIA  
*March 1, 1804*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

Dear Brother:

Through the bountiful mercy of an indulgent God, I enjoy health and am satisfied it is my one desire to render it back to him again by attempting to answer in some degree the noble end for which I was created. I sometimes feel a fear, lest I should ever grieve his gracious, blessed, ever blessed spirit. I sincerely pray this fear may increase; that while I may be employing my hands to obtain a competency for my little family to live without distracting care, & to administer a little refreshment to a weary traveling pilgrim that may chance to turn in with me for a night. I may not forget from whom all blessings flow. I may not forget I have to die, and after that, stand before an impartial judge.

I had the satisfaction of meeting with Doctor Coke, Tuesday, 22 ultimo, & after hearing him preach in

Fredericksburg: he travels in the stage, has gone on to Boston, Lynn, & Marblehead (all within 20 miles of each other) and will return to be at General Conference. I had to go on before him Wednesday from Fredericksburg to Dumfries & prepare for his reception, give out an appointment by candle light. Brother Essex & myself rather suspect by his going thus on a visit before Conference, & by the answer he makes when any one asks him with respect to his future residing with us, that he contemplates on returning to England his answers are, "I am the servant of the General Conference for Jesus sake."

Perhaps it will be well for you to write Bro. Essex by post or some other immediate conveyance, as he is on an uncertainty about his Q. Meeting, he has forgotten the time. As I could not get any to fill my next Saturday & Sabbath appointment, I am debarred the pleasure which I anticipated of being at your Rector-Town Quarterly Meeting. May the presence & power of almighty God be with you all. I am sorry to say, except about Greenwich, we see no appearance (but very little) of a revival. My respects to your Brother & Sister.

Yours affectionately,

I. Robbins

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

*The letters written to Zachary Myles deal with British matters. Myles was an Englishman and continued his contacts with the home country, especially with his brother, William Myles, a British preacher.*

CHESTERTOWN, MD.

May 5, 1804

[*To Zachary Myles*]<sup>[176]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I accept with pleasure the book. As to anything I can do of a like nature I am not able to say. I have an imperfect account in a daily journal. Whether it will ever be published before or after my death I cannot say. There is a delicacy attends the business. I am at present and of late in the same line, only like a post boy, we have many critics, and bookmakers upon this continent. I have learned this never to perform works of supererogation for the Connection.

I am well pleased with what your brethren and Bro. Atmore<sup>[177]</sup> have done. Should any of the British Brethren write to me upon any given subject, they may expect I shall treat their letters with respect, but I may be in some distant parts of the continent. My riding a slim brute for 15,000 miles in three years will not admit me to carry only a few shirts, 2 books, the minutes, and my Journal, only a second pantaloon, so that 30 pound weight is heavy for me. I must stretch my blanket for a tent, and bed, upon the earth, if need be.

We have about 400 effective travelling preachers and about 2000 local. I am without a register of the names of each line. We have added at least 40,000 in 4 years in the membership through the 17 United States, and the Mississippi, and Northwest Territory, including the two Canadas. I am as well pleased, the old connexion<sup>[178]</sup> should publish our arithmetick records,<sup>[179]</sup> as that we should in America, we all have

knowledge and are increasing in book making, but perhaps we are more nice than wise, and hard to please. Will you send the British Arminian Magazine for 1803? Only wish to see if they have published any American newspapers. I ask only the loan, I suppose you know where I lodge? I am yours,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*It is evident that, though there is no date attached to the letter, it was written at the General Conference in Baltimore. Under date of May 7, 1804, Asbury refers in the Journal to this debate and the attack upon the ruling eldership. In spite of the fact that he says he did not take part in the conference debates, he is presenting his side to Ezekiel Cooper. He urges Cooper to argue the case. There was much discontent in this conference. There were 204 elders in the church, and only 111 were present. Before the end of the conference only 70 were present. In those days the discontents went home when they could not carry a point. It was the last conference when the three bishops were together. Coke was not there in 1808, and Whatcoat died after two years. Asbury made the comment to Daniel Hitt in the letter of August 22, 1804, "I think never did a General Conference sit longer with more ado, and do less, and perhaps the less the better."*



BALTIMORE, MD.  
[May —, 1804]<sup>[180]</sup>

[To Ezekiel Cooper]<sup>[181]</sup>

My Brother:

He that ruleth over man should be just. I am deeply sensible of the difficulties that will always attend my speaking or entering into the debates of either a general or yearly conference. If I have gained anything by serving you to my 33rd year of my age in America it is your confidence and affection. I wish some person will [see] when it comes to elders, (or one that has the charge of circuits, changing class leaders,) that the characters and standing of those men may be considered, as also the number that were put out of office in a certain *City*<sup>[182]</sup> and the men that were imprudently put in. Then let it be seen that all the men upon that floor are presiding elders,<sup>[183]</sup> as having charge of district, circuits, towns, or stations.

The elders of stations say that it is their right of office to rule, who is Lord over them? A few men a thousand miles distant from them may write to them. The presiding elders have given up their right of a station, or circuit, to be at the will of another. They hold their appointment 4 years or during pleasure, the pleasure of the Episcopacy, and great displeasure of the circuits' eldership, at least of some of them. I conclude then they have beaten these presiding elders, being Romans untried, and condemned. I hoped it was correction, but I am now afraid it was in some designed as destruction. These presiding elders have not asked this office, they have said we are not fit for the office in our own estimation; the Episcopacy

say fit, perfectly fit, who is fit, a sense of your own unfitness will make you diffident, humble, and diligent. The elders of stations, what I would call local presiding elders, in towns, cities, and circuits, do not stand at the will, or at the change of another as to office, go where they may. In short every deacon that has the charge, every elder, that has the charge of a station or circuit is a presiding elder in a sense, and there would be no help for the greatest abuses of power was it not for the presiding elders interposition and quartermeetings. I beg you would state the case of those ejected leaders. Many will know where you mean.

I am,

F. Asbury

P.S. I think of all the men in the connection, we ought to guard against these office right men, the local presiding elders for 3 or 4 years<sup>[184]</sup> in a town or city that can change or suspend leaders of 20 or 30 years standing, but let it be known for what fault. Are they erroneous or are they immoral? Then expel them. Henry Willis is called a local preacher by some but how many miles has he ridden in the year attending every other Sabbath at Frederick Town, 30 miles a day a man so afflicted as he is, mark that—

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*The General Conference of 1804 was presided over by the three bishops, Coke, Asbury, and Whatcoat. That point is important here, as the date and place, as well as the person to whom addressed, are not in the original. Reference is made*

*within the letter to "every one of the bishops," which naturally refers to more than two. At the General Conference of 1800 there were only two bishops until Whatcoat was elected. Before the conference of 1808 Whatcoat had died, and Coke was not present. Neither the conference of 1800 nor 1808 fits into the statements of this letter. Attacks were made in the conference on the episcopacy. Provision was made to elect a president of an annual conference "by ballot, without debate, from among the presiding elders." Provision was made for the trial of a bishop. A limitation was put on the bishops prohibiting a bishop from appointing a pastor to a charge for longer than two years. Bangs, Jesse Lee, Phoebus, Tees, and others discuss the Conference of 1804.*

[BALTIMORE, MARYLAND]<sup>[185]</sup>

[May —, 1804]

[To Ezekiel Cooper] (?)<sup>[186]</sup>

[Dear Brother]

The minute you have to consider tomorrow morning has neither sense nor meaning in it. You might turn it to criminate or clear every one of the bishops. If ours is a travelling episcopacy, how can we exercise it if we do not travel, and how can we commit ourselves? Without motion there is no transgression. If we travel at large where? Through England, Scotland and Ireland, or any or all Europe, or the world or through the United States or British Provinces? Oh, mend it or end it. The stationed preacher knows where he is to travel, the circuit preacher hath his circuit, the presiding elder hath his bounds. He ought to attend every quarterly meeting. Then give your bishops their work and all the men that are

ambitious for the honour, give them all the honour and all the labour and all the reproach. They must travel at large, to meet all the seven conferences in a conference year, if able, and if not able as many as they can. Let no excuse be admitted but lameness or blindness or a total incapacity to ride.

Now is your time, and see ye what the noble sons of America will do. Make what bishops you please but fix their bounds of labour as well as power. Let them never stop, but by a council of the ablest physicians that shall declare them unfit for duty. Never, never, never, admit a bishop before you have his work laid out. Let him, let his ministry, let his people know what he has to do. This is one way, this is the *only* way to secure yourselves as a Conference. Let them<sup>[187]</sup> sit mute, while you work out their lines and if your present bishops will continue to serve you upon such conditions, well; if not they may refuse. Let a man know what he has to do then he will know when he has done. If it is five hundred or five thousand miles to ride in a year he can then tell when he has done the work appointed him. I came from my knees to write. I will not sign my name.<sup>[188]</sup> You may take and make all the good out of this you can.

P.S. It shall not be estimated to have the appearance of a degradation if at the end of 4 years or any period of time a preacher is taken by the bishops out of the eldership of the Districts and put into the towns or circuit stations.

P.S. This done in some form will grace the appointments of the above nature that have and may hereafter take place and

that the preachers themselves in the first instance, and all their friends in the second that do not know the causes of such changes, may be assured it is not for any fault or is anything like a degradation.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*It was customary for the General Conference to address the British Conference. The addresses exchanged reports on the state of the church with felicitations each to the other. Here the chief question is where Coke should work.*

BALTIMORE, MD.

*May 23, 1804*

[*To the British Conference*]<sup>[189]</sup>

Very dear and much-respected Brethren:

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

blessed work of proclaiming the honour of our God, and of saving the precious souls of mankind.

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

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

The Lord has greatly prospered our labours in these United States. We have at present increased to considerably more

than one hundred thousand members; and the work still goes on in a great and glorious manner. Our brethren are much in the spirit of active perseverance in this blessed work; and, by the blessing of God, our hearts are cemented together in love, and are bound in the ties of harmony and unity.

With respect to our much-esteemed friend and beloved brother, Dr. Coke, he arrived among us last autumn, and was received by us with the sincerest sentiments of respect and affection. Since he came into these States, he has travelled about three thousand miles, visiting our principal societies, and preaching to crowded assemblies of our citizens. His time, we trust, has been profitably and acceptably spent among us, and we hope agreeably to himself. Your request for his return was taken into our most serious and solemn consideration; and, after a full and deliberate examination of the reasons which you assigned in favour of his return, we have concluded that there is a probability of his being more eminently useful at present in the way you point out, than for us to retain him; especially as our beloved Brother Asbury now enjoys better health than he did some years ago; and as we believe, with the assistance he can receive from our esteemed Brother Whatcoat, the work of superintending the Church and Societies can be accomplished in the absence of Dr. Coke. We therefore have consented to the Doctor's return to Europe, upon the express condition that he will return to us at any time, when three of our Annual Conferences shall call him; or, at farthest, that he shall return to our next General Conference.<sup>[190]</sup>

And now, dear brethren, we commend you to our common Lord, and to the word of His grace; hoping that you and we shall ever remain in the unity of the Spirit, and bonds of Christian and ministerial affection, until we meet together around the throne of God. Pray for us.

We are, very dear and much-respected Brethren, truly and sincerely yours, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

Francis Asbury

Richard Whatcoat

John Wilson, Secretary

*Nathan Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, II, 155-57*



## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Eastern Shore of Maryland.
- [2] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [3] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [4] Two lines torn off.
- [5] St. George's Church. (See letter, December 31, 1801, to Ezekiel Cooper.)
- [6] Letter defaced.
- [7] Nicholas Snethen, Methodist preacher.
- [8] Mrs. Gough of Perry Hall, Maryland.
- [9] Mr. Bassett of Delaware.
- [10] Letter defaced. P.S. not clear.
- [11] Presiding elder on the Georgia District, South Carolina Conference.
- [12] Thomas Milligan was on the Broad River Circuit in 1801 and in 1802.
- [13] See *Journal*, June 7, 1802.
- [14] Nicholas Snethen, preacher who traveled with Asbury.
- [15] John Street Church. (See *Journal*, June 1, 1802.)
- [16] The long-expected split in St. George's Church at Philadelphia had taken place. A new church had been formed in the Academy which became Union Church. George Roberts was appointed pastor. (See letter to Roberts, June 3, 1802.)
- [17] George Roberts, pastor in Philadelphia. He had been moved from Baltimore since the last letter.
- [18] The new church in Philadelphia, which was organized by those who split off from St. George's Church. It later

became Union Methodist Church. (G.A. Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, 276.)

- [19] Nicholas Snethen, his traveling companion.
- [20] Several words are marked out.
- [21] Here is a typical Richard Whatcoat note like those which are so often found at the end of Asbury's letters.
- [22] Asbury must have written this early in the morning before leaving for Lynn. (See *Journal*, June 22-23, 1802.)
- [23] Pastor, Philadelphia.
- [24] "General Lippett's" was at Cranston, Rhode Island. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., June 19, 1802.)
- [25] He became a bishop and author of the Constitution and Restrictive Rules.
- [26] John Dickins' widow.
- [27] Ezekiel Cooper, Book Agent.
- [28] A preacher who died in 1796. (See *Minutes*.) He was a very prominent itinerant preacher.
- [29] The preacher, Freeborn Garrettson.
- [30] Her son, Asbury, had been in some trouble. (See letter above, December 30, 1801.)
- [31] The envelope is addressed to Mr. John Rogers, 161 High Street, Walsall, Staffordshire.
- [32] Asbury seems to be saying that converted people outlived those who had not been converted. The population of the United States in 1802 was nearly six million (see census for 1800).
- [33] It is a most remarkable thing that Methodism had spread to this extent in America.
- [34] From Pipe Creek, Maryland. Name of creek supplied from *Journal* since the letter is effaced.

- [35] To Bishop Whatcoat though there is no address with the letter.
- [36] Richard Bassett, a prominent layman, became governor of Delaware.
- [37] Thomas Smith, pastor.
- [38] Report from South and North Carolina. Jenkins was presiding elder on the Camden District.
- [39] Daniel Asbury was on the Yadkin Charge on the Salisbury District.
- [40] Bishop Coke.
- [41] Now West Virginia.
- [42] Envelope has Bishop Whatcoat, Pittsburg, West Pennsylvania.
- [43] Edward Dromgoole on Brunswick Circuit, Virginia.
- [44] Western Shore of Maryland.
- [45] Joseph Toy was on the Calvert Circuit on the Baltimore District.
- [46] Presiding elder, Pittsburgh District. The first listing of the names of the districts in the *General Minutes* in 1801 calls the district in western Pennsylvania and western Virginia "Pittsburgh." Sometimes Asbury called it "Ohio." In 1804 the name of the district was changed to "Monongahela," which name was continued until the Pittsburgh Conference was formed in 1825. In 1800 circuits in Ohio began to be included in the district, and in 1804 an Ohio District was formed. When the Ohio Conference was formed in 1812, the appointments in western Pennsylvania and western Virginia continued in the Baltimore Conference until 1825. (W.G. Smeltzer.)
- [47] Professing Christians.

- [48] The Western Conference that year was held at Cumberland, Tennessee, on October 2, 1802.
- [49] Pastor, Philadelphia, in the new college church referred to by Asbury as the "Academy Church." (See letters to Roberts above, June 3 and June 23, 1802.)
- [50] Must be the Chandler referred to later in letter. He was the Rev. William P. Chandler, one of the Philadelphia preachers.
- [51] Coke and Whatcoat.
- [52] At the last conference the conference had voted to offer a preacher to the "Academy" congregation which had separated from St. George's. Roberts had been appointed.
- [53] Ezekiel Cooper, Book Agent.
- [54] Thomas Haskins, grocer in Philadelphia, trustee of St. George's, former traveling preacher.
- [55] The sentence is not clear.
- [56] Reference to preachers.
- [57] The small salary he received.
- [58] North Carolina.
- [59] This letter from Jesse Lee to Asbury tells of needs of growth in Virginia and North Carolina. Lee was presiding elder in Virginia on the Norfolk District.
- [60] Led by James O'Kelly.
- [61] Sometimes spelled Mabry's or Maybury's Chapel. It was on the Greensville Circuit. Joseph Moore and David M. Hume were the pastors. (See *Minutes*, 1802.)
- [62] Sometimes spelled Merritt.
- [63] Part of the Norfolk District was in North Carolina in Bertie and Camden counties.
- [64] Presiding elder, Pittsburgh District.

- [65] Asbury is again instructing Fleming to keep records and make reports. (See letter, August 21, 1802.)
- [66] The Western Conference referred to was held at Mount Gerizim, Kentucky, October 2, 1803. (Source—*The General Minutes*.)
- [67] This is now Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. Asbury stopped there whenever his journeys took him along the Potomac that he might avail himself of the curative properties of the mineral springs located at that place.
- [68] This refers to the Allegheny Mountains over which he needed to pass, not to the river of the same name in western Pennsylvania.
- [69] Asbury did make this trip in 1803. It was the first of his western journeys in which he passed through Ohio. He made this journey annually from 1803 to 1815 except in 1804 and 1806, coming from Baltimore or Philadelphia over the mountains, through the Pittsburgh region, and continuing on into Ohio.
- [70] There is an omission here in the letter as printed in the *Journal*. The editor explains as follows: "Here is a chasm of 12 lines in the letter owing to a part being torn off, and from the fragment left the sense could not be ascertained."
- [71] Nicholas Snethen, his traveling companion.
- [72] The first great revival in Brunswick was in 1775-76, the second in 1787.
- [73] The Book Agent, Philadelphia.
- [74] Allegheny Mountains.
- [75] His *Hymn Book* and *Heart and Church Divisions*. There was a third. He seems to refer to a book on Godliness in this letter.

- [76] Bishop Coke.
- [77] Nicholas Snethen, Asbury's traveling companion.
- [78] Solomon Sharp was presiding elder on the New Jersey District. Evidently his time was up.
- [79] Pastor of Light Street Church in Baltimore. The name was torn from the letter but it is clear the letter is to Roberts.
- [80] Maryland.
- [81] Alexander M'Caine, Methodist preacher.
- [82] Thomas Lyell, a Methodist preacher who became an Episcopal preacher.
- [83] Father Chalmers was one of the earliest Methodists.
- [84] Norfolk District.
- [85] John the Baptist.
- [86] St. George's Church, Philadelphia. (See letters to Thomas Haskins, 1801; also letter to Cooper, December 31, 1801, and letter to trustees, December 31, 1801.)
- [87] Nicholas Snethen was his traveling companion.
- [88] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [89] Pastor, Philadelphia.
- [90] Evidently Ezekiel Cooper, Book Agent.
- [91] Alexander M'Caine.
- [92] Letter defaced.
- [93] His mother, Elizabeth, or Eliza, had recently died in England.
- [94] Coke promised to come to America to stay.
- [95] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [96] Nicholas Snethen.
- [97] John Hagerty.
- [98] Now West Virginia.

[99] This is the kind of report Asbury was asking for so frequently. It was published in the only set of reports that were printed. Jacob's ordination certificate is in Duke University Library.

[100] When this letter was printed, it was signed I.I. Jacob. However, Jacob's name was John J. Jacob. Frequently in transcribing Asbury's letters, a J was mistaken for an I. (See *Journal* note, July 21, 1785.)

There are three records in the courthouse at Romney, West Virginia, of John J. Jacob's emancipation of his slaves. There are two for April 10, 1788, and one for May 15, 1789.

The first reads:

"Jno.J. Jacob  
to  
Sundry Slaves  
A Manumission  
Exam.

"To all to whom these Presents Shall come—Be it known that I, John Jeremiah Jacob of Hampshire County in the Common Wealth of Virginia taking into consideration the injustices of the oppressive practice of holding mankind endowed with Immortal Souls, Susceptible of the Grace of God and the gift of eternal Life in perpetual Bondage and being desirous to glorify God, in my conduct, by doing to others as I would have them do unto Me. And in order to bear a testimony thereof before God and all Mankind, Do by these presents declare that the

following Negroes Shall be liberated, emancipated, and forever Discharged from my Service, claim, or demand, or the Service, claim or demand of my heirs on the days to their names respectively annexed, to wit. . . ." (From deed books at Romney, West Virginia.)

He names the slaves and the dates when they shall be manumitted.

[101] Charles Atmore (1759-1826), converted under Joseph Pilmoor, sent out as a preacher by John Wesley in 1781. His *Methodist Memorial*, published in 1801, was the first collection of the biographies of Methodist preachers who had died during the eighteenth century. In 1811 he was president of the Conference. The *Methodist Memorial* noted a few who served overseas; but in 1802 Atmore published a separate *Appendix*, "containing a concise history of the Introduction of Methodism on the Continent of America, and short Memoirs of the Preachers who have departed this Life since that period." In his introduction Atmore says: "Of all the Preachers who had been sent over from Europe, Mr. Francis Asbury (to his honour be it recorded) *alone* resolved to continue in America, and determined not to desert his post nor forsake the flock in that 'day of trouble and rebuke.'" It seems most likely that Atmore came in touch with Asbury by means of his *Methodist Memorial* and its *Appendix*. (Frank Baker.)

[102] This is from one of Charles Wesley's best-known and best-loved *Funeral Hymns*. (Frank Baker.)

[103] Stith Mead was presiding elder on the Augusta District in Georgia.

[104] Bishop Whatcoat.



[105] Ohio.

[106] Thomas à Kempis, the great saint.

[107] This letter has no name to indicate to whom written.

[108] Asbury says in the *Journal* that he preached once at the Academy while he was in the city. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., Friday, July 22, 1803.)

[109] A preacher in New York. He became book editor after Ezekiel Cooper.

[110] Letter defaced.

[111] The letter is not signed.

[112] Pastor in New York.

[113] Thomas Lyell had been a very useful preacher. He was pastor in Richmond, Virginia, in 1799 when the new First Church building was erected. However, this is the beginning of the end of Lyell as a Methodist preacher. On May 11, 1804, Asbury records in the *Journal*, 1852 edition, that he received a letter from Lyell saying he wished to be located. Asbury says, "I am willing that he should belong to the church (Episcopal) people: I believe they have more need of him than the Methodists have. I answered Mr. Lyell by telling him that I would do what I could to procure him a location at the Boston Conference." Lyell became a preacher in the Episcopal Church.

[114] George Pickering, presiding elder on the New England District.

[115] Book Agent.

[116] In Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, 280-81, are listed Cooper's objections to going to Baltimore. There are nine of these. Interestingly, he did not go to Baltimore. One of the points he made was that the

General Conference had fixed the Book Concern in Philadelphia and that the Philadelphia Conference had no power to remove it. The General Conference of 1804 decided that the Book Concern should be located in New York. Ezekiel Cooper was re-elected as Book Agent, and John Wilson was elected Assistant Book Agent. Cooper was stationed 1805-6 in Brooklyn and in 1807-8 in New York. In 1809 he resumed his itinerant labors and was assigned to Delaware. Eight years later he located. He spent the next eight years in this relation on the supernumerary list in the Philadelphia Conference. During the latter part of his life he resided in Philadelphia. He died at eighty-four years of age in the sixty-second year of his ministry. (See Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, Vol. III.)

[117] Bishop Coke.

[118] Bishop Richard Whatcoat.

[119] Samuel Howe, Reuben Harris, and Luther Bishop. (See *Minutes*, 1802 and 1803.)

[120] Coke was about to depart for America.

[121] Pastor, Philadelphia.

[122] Ohio.

[123] Though this letter has Pittsburgh, it is evident that it was started at the campmeeting thirty miles from Pittsburgh. Evidently Asbury took it to Pittsburgh and mailed it there as it is postmarked "Pittsburg."

[124] Pastor, Philadelphia.

[125] Presiding elder, Pittsburgh District.

[126] Pastor, Redstone Circuit.

[127] Place and date supplied from internal evidence of letter and the *Journal*.

[128] Daniel Hitt, presiding elder on the Alexandria District.

[129] Benjamin Hitt, who with his brothers Daniel and Martin were preachers.

[130] Pastor at West Wheeling, Ohio.

[131] Isaac Meek lived just across the Ohio River in Ohio from Brook County, West Virginia.

[132] A medicine evidently.

[133] Hardly anything is known about Coke's last visit to America in the autumn of 1803. This extract, however, has been used by various of his biographers, occasionally with slight emendation and the rephrasing of Drew's hints about the remainder of the letter. Drew's extract and notes from the original must probably be regarded as our chief authority until the original turns up.

On this, his last, visit to America, Coke carried the address from the British Conference, dated August 5, 1803, asking for his return to England if possible, but adding, "for your sakes, we anxiously desire his preservation among you, which we pray you may long enjoy." (See letter of May 9, 1800.) In Coke's letter of January 6, 1806, however, he confesses to the American Methodists that on this occasion in 1803: "I had at the British Conference which was held just previous to my sailing, various severe struggles in my mind, whether I should take my solemn final farewell of my European Brethren or not. I did repeatedly give them strong reason to doubt whether they should ever see me again, & was faithful in repeating to them the solemn engagements I was under to you. But I

accepted of their address as an honest Man, though I greatly love & respect my European Brethren." Coke then records how, when he arrived at Petersburg, in Virginia, he had made up his mind to stay in America, intending first to visit the North, and to return in time for the General Conference. A vivid impression that he should go to meet Asbury at the Georgia Conference, however, caused him to set off for Georgia. He reached Augusta, Georgia, just before Asbury in late December. The cold-shouldering which he experienced at the conference convinced him that he "ought not to labour in America, unless the General Conference would consent to comply in some degree with its engagements." (See Duren, *Asbury*, 260-62. (Frank Baker.)

[134] There is no indication to whom it was written. It is not in Asbury's handwriting.

[135] Pastor in Philadelphia. He was moved to Baltimore in 1804. (See *Minutes*.) He had been serving the Academy Church.

[136] He called Stith Mead overseer. (See letter, January 21, 1804.)

[137] The British Conference insisted Coke be loaned to them.

[138] Joshua Wells was pastor at St. George's Church.

[139] Probably Cornelius Comegys, a layman who had been a trustee of the Chartered Fund along with Jacob Baker. (Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists*, 270.)

[140] Very probably Jacob Baker's.

[141] Probably Michael Coate, who was in New York.

[142] Reference to "returned" is not clear.

- [143] Reference is evidently to Michael Coate's marriage in 180 to Mrs. Mahetable Briggs, widow of John Briggs. (See *Minutes*, 1815.)
- [144] Asbury's method of figuring not clear.
- [145] Presiding elder on the Alexandria District (Virginia), Baltimore Conference.
- [146] The preachers' house built upon the pattern of Wesley's preachers' houses for single preachers.
- [147] Hammett had led a split in Charleston, the Primitive Methodist. Both the places referred to here had been Hammett churches. On January 28 and 29 Asbury preached in Georgetown House, which he called "Mr. Hammett's house, now fallen into our hands." Hammett was a British preacher who came to America in 1791.
- [148] Stith Mead, pastor at Augusta, Georgia.
- [149] Brunswick Circuit, Virginia.
- [150] It is not clear what Asbury meant by his "Extracts of Letters." However, there is probably an explanation of the fact that some letters published in the magazines are only excerpts.
- [151] Converted.
- [152] Preaching.
- [153] A traveling lay preacher, not ordained.
- [154] He arrived in America in 1771.
- [155] At the Christmas Conference in 1784.
- [156] Elizabeth Asbury.
- [157] The names of many may be found in the *Journal and Letters*.

- [158] The preachers were paid very little and were frequently in want when swamped by emergency expenses. Also they often failed to receive all their salaries.
- [159] No address, but evidently to Bennet Kendrick, pastor at Charleston, South Carolina. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [160] Alexander M'Caine, presiding elder of the Salisbury District in 1804.
- [161] Isaac Cook. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [162] Nicholas Watters. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [163] William Ormand, native of North Carolina, died in 1804. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [164] Daugharty, presiding elder of the Seleuda District, South Carolina. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [165] James Hill. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [166] Perhaps John M'Vean, a preacher on the Camden District. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [167] Llewellyn Evans was on the Edisto and Orangeburg Circuit in 1803. (See *Minutes*, 1803.)
- [168] Defaced.
- [169] This letter has no address. However, the facts indicate Bennet Kendrick. He was pastor in Charleston. Jeremiah Russell was appointed to Wilmington at the South Carolina Conference in January, 1804. (*Minutes*.) Coke was present at the conference. (See *Minutes*.) Norman evidently did not go to Charleston, and Nicholas Watters was placed there. (See former letter to Kendrick, January 29, 1804.)
- [170] Kendrick had asked for help.
- [171] Bishop Coke.
- [172] Jeremiah Russell.

[173] The Hammett division.

[174] Between St. George's and the Academy Church.

[175] The early Methodists had societies, classes, and bands. The band was the smallest unit within the class. (See editions of the *Discipline* from 1785 to 1844 for rules on the bands; see also Buckley, *History of Methodism*, I, 97-98.)

[176] A lay merchant friend in Baltimore, brother of William Myles, Methodist preacher in England who was author of the *Chronological History of the People called Methodist*. Zachary is sometimes called Zachariah.

[177] See letter to Atmore, June 3, 1803.

[178] Editor of *The Arminian Magazine*.

[179] Statistics.

[180] No date on original. However, Henry Willis was appointed to Fredericktown in 1803 and had been there a year. Asbury was beginning the thirty-third year of his ministry in America. (See *Minutes*, 1804.) The conference began on May 7 in Baltimore and lasted until May 23. (See *Journal*, May 7, 1804.)

[181] Book Agent of the church. The Book Concern was moved to New York by the conference of 1804.

[182] Reference seems to be to Philadelphia. Ezekiel Cooper was familiar with that split, since he was there.

[183] In this conference Thomas Lyell moved the abolition of the presiding elders. The motion was lost. See Drinkhouse for an account of the conference, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 498-501.

[184] This General Conference passed a restrictive rule which forbade the appointment of a preacher longer than two

years. This lasted for more than fifty years. Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 499.

[185] There is no date or place on this letter. It is clear, however, that it was written during the General Conference of 1804, which met in Baltimore from May 7 to May 23.

[186] It seems that this letter was written to Ezekiel Cooper. The preceding letter of May —, 1804, written to Cooper is much like this. Roberts' name put on the envelope by someone indicates that it was written to George Roberts. However, Roberts is not listed among the members of the conference in Bangs' *History of M.E. Church*, II, 151-52. Also at this time the relations between Roberts and Asbury were badly strained, as letters included in this volume show. Therefore Cooper seems to be the person to whom the letter was written.

[187] The bishops.

[188] The letter was unsigned.

[189] Answer to the address of the British Conference.

[190] This 1804 address was answered by the British Conference of 1807. "The Address from the British, to the Methodists' General Conference in America," signed by John Barber as president at Liverpool on August 11, 1807 (Coke was again secretary), again transmitted the quadrennial request: "What you have said concerning our present worthy Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Coke, is no matter of wonder to us, who have long known his value, the honour which our Lord has put upon him, and have enjoyed the fruit of his labour. By a vote of our Conference this day, he was requested to continue with us, in case his



engagements with you, which he has repeatedly stated to us, should admit of it." Coke did not return for the General Conference of 1808 and never saw America again. The address of the British Conference of 1807 did not mention his projected visit, nor did the American leaders endeavor to enforce the strict terms of his agreement with them. Though politely expressed, there is no real warmth in the letter; and Coke's reception at the Georgia Conference at the outset of his tour in 1803 had convinced him that he was really not wanted in America. (See the letter of November 23, 1803.) (Frank Baker.)

**FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804  
TO THE END OF 1806**

*May 31, 1804 - December 27, 1806*

## CHAPTER NINE

### **FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1804 TO THE END OF 1806**

May 31, 1804 - December 27, 1806

*George Roberts had been a problem to Asbury. For some reason Asbury thought Roberts had been thinking of becoming an Episcopal preacher in New York. In this letter Asbury feels that Roberts is not willing to go where he may be sent. However, Roberts did move to Baltimore in 1804. He stayed there until 1806 and then located to practice medicine and support his family in Philadelphia. He also became a local preacher and was loyal to the church. He had a record of devoted service.*

[SOUDERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA]

[May 31, 1804]<sup>[1]</sup>

[To George Roberts]

My dear Brother:

I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the Word. If you love me, now is the time to show it. I fear there is something at the bottom. What have you wanted? The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. How do you know but this is a judicial dispensation to beat off your hold from earth. You wrote me you were studying Physic. I felt! Your brethren have heard and felt, and have had their confidence perhaps shaken. What is hidden in our Connection? God will correct us by each other. If you leave

the work, if you dare, let God himself vindicate his own cause. How will your enemies colour away — and say you meant to settle in Philadelphia, locate, and attach yourself to those people.

If you do not consent to take Baltimore 3 or six months as your family will permit, I prophesy evil concerning you and your house and when I find men will not be persuaded, I give them up, and consent that they shall do as they will do. I had my fears about the Lectures.<sup>[2]</sup> I felt! In prudence I did not reply.

I am your aggrieved brother, father and friend,

F. Asbury

P.S. I have not time to write nor dry my letters.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Though George Roberts had been in an uncomfortable situation in Philadelphia due to the friction over the division of the churches, he evidently did not want to move. Very probably the extended entry of June 24 in the Journal is a reference to Roberts as well as to others. It is an interesting account of the reactions of preachers to their appointments.*

[June —, 1804]<sup>[3]</sup>

[To George Roberts]<sup>[4]</sup>

O my Brother:

I am sorry you should think I am under unfavorable impressions concerning you. But how many stock bricks must I take out of the wall before it is finished. How shall I cover my retreat in Brother Wells<sup>[5]</sup> appointment, he protested seriously against going to Philadelphia, you must get his consent to go to Philadelphia. I shall not appoint Brother Bunn,<sup>[6]</sup> this I can cope with. But so it is I am out at sea some leagues. I am lost upon the sea of changes like a cork upon the water. Oh, any port in a storm, it is like the sailor. I am yours still,

F. Ay.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*The envelope of this letter is addressed to "Major Van Cortlandt, Peeks Kill State of York." At another place on the envelope there is "Turkeyhoe [Tuckahoe], the Sherwood house in New York, June 20, 1804." It seems that the letter was written on that date. This letter was found among the Van Cortlandt collection in the New York Public Library. Was this "Governor" Van Cortlandt or his son to whom Asbury has written? He refers to visiting the "Governor" in 1799. This letter is the same general pattern as the letter of August 29, 1797, but is evidently to another person. Asbury is pleading with him to become a Christian. "Governor" Van Cortlandt was already a Christian; and Boehm, Tipple, and others say*

*he was a Methodist. This letter was evidently written to "Governor" Van Cortlandt's son, Pierre, Jr.*

*June 20, 1804 [?]<sup>[7]</sup>*

*[To Major Van Cortlandt]<sup>[8]</sup>*

Grace mercy and peace attend [you and] the family. I have heard [of the]<sup>[9]</sup> cloud that came over your sky when the sun of your temporal prosperity, shone with bright beams. I had hoped from my information that not a bone had been broken:<sup>[10]</sup> but since I came nearer it seems my information was not correct. I bless God your life was spared, if you go like Jacob halting, and praying all your days. Your call from necessity will be to more domestick life: may it be sanctified to your reconversion and saving conversion to God.

We are looking, we are longing for the salvation of God in the wealthy parts of our continent where the policy and prosperity of this would take up so great a place in the minds and pursuits of men. The God of Glory, far to the west hath caused the light of Zion to appear and arise and shine. I doubt not but thousands are annually converted to the Lord, and the poor, the slaves have the gospel preached to them.

My dear friend let me write from ——<sup>[11]</sup> love upon my part, danger —— —— I must urge the great concerns. —— —— I can do it in such a manner —— will know it: none will hear, but there is a witness to my fervent prayer for your spiritual and eternal interests. This is the way: I must repay the attention you have been pleased to repay to me.

I have had a year of labour of near 5000 miles and of attending seven conferences, besides the General Meeting rising in November, and very important in the organization. One hundred thousand, four hundred and seventy thousand souls, besides the many thousands that attend our ministry at seasons, [it] must be very great, with their connections and domesticks.

We live in a time of peace, and in general plenty, surely this is the time to gain religion, heaven and happiness. Oh ring [?] free and remember your convictions, your promises, your anguish, your fear, when in danger of death. Now say it to heart, he is a man of prayer and you will be a man of grace, a man of God. What will not the Lord do for you, what may he not do with you, if you neglect so great a salvation. ———<sup>[12]</sup> a good God may yet ——— ——— Simon's Calamity may ——— ——— ——— you, if you will forget your ——— ——— ——— in the prayers of a mother, a sister and wife,<sup>[13]</sup> a friend, the ministers of Jesus, the people of God: not only that your life might be spared but your soul:<sup>[14]</sup> this is the grand object, let this affliction say to you as the voice of God. I have cut you off from the world in some degree that you might seek my face. I recollect a son of praying parents by a gun lost the sight of both eyes, he did not return to the Lord but his dear [?] wife was taken away, then he sought the Lord, if I may so speak: to give himself. Great work to bring you home. Oh that at last you may cry out, Lord I see thou wilt have my head and Thou shalt have my heart, and my all, as my God and my all.

Please to present my Christian salutation to Sir<sup>[15]</sup> and Madam, and your Lady.

I am most sincerely, most affectionately yours,

F. Asbury  
*New York Public Library*

*Thomas Lyell, who is the subject of discussion in this letter, was pastor in Boston in 1802 and 1803. In 1803 Kibby was listed with Thomas Lyell at Boston. Lyell located in 1804 and later entered the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church. George Pickering was presiding elder of the Boston District. In 1804 Kibby is listed alone as the pastor in Boston.*

BUXTON, [N.H.]  
July 14, 1804

[To Epaphras Kibby]

My very dear Brother:

May grace and peace attend you now and ever. I wish to explain myself and intentions to you; I had no expectation nor desire that Brother Lyell should have returned to Boston last year; but he is a man of so much address that for many years hath obtained that indulgence from the episcopacy, and people, no other man hath had. I never was in the business of his coming to Boston fully; Brother Whatcoat began, and carried on the matter. I was surprised when Brother Lyell wrote me Brother Pickering thought he [Lyell] had better return to Boston. I doubted: and notwithstanding his age in the connection, (which I generally honor, by giving a charge



to such). Was it to do again, he should have had his name after yours. I believe he influenced *you* to write; to me he has a most insinuating address. I am sorry you were treated so improperly, at present we can do no better, as I think, than to station you a second year, in Boston.

May God help you to be faithful. God is with us we hope, 20 souls have been brought out already. I am in haste you will see, as I am always in haste.

My own love to the preachers,

F. Asbury

*New England Methodist Historical Society, Boston School  
of Theology*

*This letter has to do with Asbury's horse Jane. Asbury loved his horses. Jane and old Gray were among his favorites. He wrote most about Jane. In the letter to George Roberts on August 12, 1801, Asbury says, "Last night Mr. Gough's famous saddle horse, 200 dollars price, laid and died by the long side of my very supple joynted Jane, had she died, should she die, the half of my personal estate is gone, real estate I have none." Again in the letter of September 27, 1801, he says, "My mare's back is swelled up. . . I am obliged to ride down the high mountains, because I cannot walk, and Jane does not know how to crook her joints down these precipices." She must have been a low-country-reared horse. On July 26, 1802, near New York he records in his Journal, "I had to wait in a boat, tormented by heat and flies; still worse for my poor brute, who made an attempt to leap out*

*into the bay; had she been loose, and myself at a distance, poor Jane would probably have been overboard." Again he reports on Jane on June 2, 1804, "I reached Radnor. Here my little Jane was horned by a cow, and lamed: she is done perhaps forever for me; but it may be all for the best." In this letter he wishes he had her to take along.*

MANLEY'S, PENNSYLVANIA<sup>[16]</sup>

*August 10, 1804*

[*To Whom?*]<sup>[17]</sup>

My dear Brother:

May grace and peace (attend) you and the family. You will be pleased to deliver my mare Jane to Mr. Cooper. I have desired him to sell her at the price of fifty dollars. I am inclined to keep the mare I bought of Mr. Konagee.<sup>[18]</sup> You ought at least to have what is reasonable for the keep of her. This I have desired Mr. Cooper to settle with you. Had Jane been within my reach I might have taken her along, but I am just returned from a 1250 miles journey, to meet the [New] York and New England Conferences and I am now on a 900 or 1000 miles route to Kentucky Conference; therefore what is not ready, I must go without, I cannot settle my own little matters unless I am just at the moment. I am with Christian salutations to you and all friends.

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*Here is another letter to Zachary Myles. Again Asbury is concerned with British affairs. He is concerned with incorrect reports of his activities during the period of the Revolution when he was in Delaware and confined to that state.*

[PERRY HALL, MARYLAND]<sup>[19]</sup>

*August 16, 1804*

[*To Zachariah Myles*]<sup>[20]</sup>

My dear Brother:

May grace and peace attend thee and thine. I present you our minutes for the present year; as you are pleased to accommodate me with British papers. God has done great, very great things for us this year; we are able to extend our ministry to the very utmost bounds of the empire of the United States; and the Canadian provinces. 9000 net increase, besides the filling up all the deficiency of deaths, expulsions, removals, by emigrations from east to west. By our people going into remote, and solitary places, where the settlements are very small; we may upon a consideration, of the mortality of this year, I judge, have added not far if any short of 20,000.

At our New England Conference held far east in the District of Maine, we had near 50 souls professed converting grace and many quickened and awakened. We are boring forward. Camp meetings in the State of Jersey and New York to commence next month, we hope hundreds will be converted at quarter meetings and thousands this year.

I have observed an error in Mr. Atmore's<sup>[21]</sup> performance of my concealment in the State of Delaware, that was at Judge

White's, whose son is now Senator in Congress. It is a mistake. I had access to the house of Governors Rodney, and Bassett, and Dr. Magaws. I went where I thought fit in every part of the state, frequently lodged in the houses of very reputable people of the world and we had a great work. I think near 1800 were added in that state during my stay, about 20 months. I suppose Dr. Coke received some misinformation as he was hasty, notwithstanding I took no state oath first, or last, no man molested me.

I have taken the number of local preachers all but the Western Conference. I suppose this number and names will be about 2000 and 1000 exhorters. These will supply the travelling connection, not merely with boys but good and able experienced men. We have, you will see, near 400 travellers.<sup>[22]</sup> I have sent two copies, one for your brother<sup>[23]</sup> and another for yourself. I am late returned from a visit through Delaware, Pennsylvania, [New] Jersey, New York, and all the Eastern States; Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, the District of Maine, and Vermont. It has cost me the — of 1350 miles from and back to Baltimore. I am now faring for about 800 miles to the Conference in Kentucky, as you will see next October; at Mount Gerezim. Kentucky, which was a few years a dangerous frontier, is the centre of the western front of our empire where we behold a second part of the new world. I am affectionately yours as formerly,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Asbury, though passing near Daniel Hitt, had not seen him and therefore writes again. He is greatly concerned with camp meetings. He tells about them and instructs Hitt as to how to conduct one.*

SHEPHERD'S TOWN, VA.<sup>[24]</sup>

*August 22, 1804*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]<sup>[25]</sup>

My very dear Hitt:

May the God of glory attend thee in the grand cause of Christ and souls! My route through the Genesee turns out to be through [New] York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The New England Conference held in Buxton, district of Maine, four days and nights. We had between forty and fifty souls converted, a number awakened and quickened: it was great in the eastern blasted country. The preachers appeared greatly animated.

My Jane is wounded: I have changed my beast. I had to call for the Minutes, and had to wait for the revised form to be sent on by mail to Baltimore. I am greatly gladdened to hear that three camp-meetings are appointed: the first in the State of New York; the second in [New] Jersey, both in September; the third in Maryland, Pipe Creek, near the Chapel.<sup>[26]</sup> I am alone, I have taken the most social way. My journey since General Conference has been about 1350 miles. I have passed and repassed all the States north-east of Maryland. I have felt for the preachers in the east part of the work. I have told our preachers in Baltimore they ought to go out to the graveyard every Sabbath. O! alas for the towns and cities, they are very

dead. We must go upon extraordinary ways and means, and the Lord will work till thousands are brought to the Lord. I am so sleepy this heavy weather, and I am so weary withal, I cannot write sense. Do write to me, to Charleston, a narrative of the work in your district. Daylight is going; I must conclude. I think never did a General Conference<sup>[27]</sup> sit longer with more ado, and do less; and perhaps the less the better. I am, as ever, thine,

F. Asbury

P.S. I judge you will find it best to have two stands. If the work should break out at one, you can go to another. I wish you to be singularly careful of order: sixteen or twenty men as watchmen, to have their hours of watching. I would have them to bear long, white, peeled rods, that they may be known by all the camp, and be honored. Let them be the most respectable elders among the laity. Keep the preachers, travelling and local, listed; and call all upon duty. I believe, after we have established the credit of camp-meetings and animated the citizens, we must storm the devil's strongholds. I hope the people will be as independent as they can at the Conference in Winchester.

F.A.

The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XV  
(1861), 158, 159

*M'Caine refers to this letter by saying that it was one of the letters in his possession that had never seen the light. It is not clear to whom it was written. M'Caine used this letter to*

*argue against Methodist episcopacy, saying that it was as "anti-Christian" as the Church of England or the Church of Rome. It should be remembered that M'Caine was one of the men who were called Reformers and who started the Methodist Protestant Church. It is rather astonishing to read Asbury's opposition to collegiate qualifications for the ministry.*

[August 30, 1804]<sup>[28]</sup>

[To Alexander M'Caine]

The heat, my indisposition, and haste, make my writing worse than bad. I have no correspondent in England. I should be afraid of committing myself. In compliance with my character, I answer all letters. I cannot say but Dr. Coke may use policy to attach the British connexion to him. Some have thought he only wished to get off from his engagements to the Americans, and never would visit the continent again. But I should not wonder if he should be upon the continent in less than a year. And I know not how soon death may put me out of his way. Some are bold to say, I am the only person in his way. \* \* \* \* Perhaps the Doctor's letter transpiring may not be so displeasing. The British must know he pledged himself in a most solemn [manner]<sup>[29]</sup> to the Americans, this the Conferences remind him of, and tell him he has changed his ground. I have lately seen David Simpson's plea for religion. The greatest of all, it is England's warning. He proves that the Church of England is as anti-Christian as the Church of Rome. He has confirmed me in my opinion, and he says Reformation or Ruin.

I fear the Methodist connexion like ours will be more honorable than holy. Simpson,<sup>[30]</sup> like a true reformer, renounced all relation to the church of England, and not, like the great Watson, take 2000 pounds or 3000 pounds for his work. All establishments, all collegiate qualifications for the ministry, must be done away. God is as able to make prophets and apostles out of fishermen, ploughmen, or carpenters, and tentmakers as he ever was.

F. Asbury

*Alexander M'Caine*, Letters on the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1850, 152-53

*Asbury still had not seen Daniel Hitt, the presiding elder, though he was passing through his district. In those days of poor communication it was difficult to get in touch with a person. Asbury is reporting on what he has found. He is thinking of appointing Hitt to preside at the next conference (see letter, November 10, 1804).*

PHHELP'S, NEAR WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA

*November 7, 1804*

[To Daniel Hitt]<sup>[31]</sup>

My dear Daniel:

You will be surprised to hear of my passing this way. I have been sick upon Monongahela and Ohio about sixty days. I must needs preach at Union [Town]<sup>[32]</sup> and Jacob Murphy's,<sup>[33]</sup> ride twelve miles through the hot sun, and some rain. This brought on a chill and burning fever every day, with a most inveterate cough. I used emetics, two; the second



cleared me. I was bled four times, and blistered four. I was part of my time at Harvey Stevens's,<sup>[34]</sup> and two weeks at Beck's.<sup>[35]</sup> I had no intermission, but only a remission, for fifty days. I gave up my visit to the Eastern Conference. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[36]</sup> came up with me, and stayed till two days of my recovery. I came off as soon as the Indian summer came on. I came from Beck's (from Sabbath to Sabbath) to Cresap's.<sup>[37]</sup>

I am now on my way to Charleston. I must make the best of good weather. I have written to appoint a president. I believe it will come to that in time. I am in no doubt or fear but the connection will do as well or better without me as with me. The presiding elders have more local knowledge: they have more personal information of the preachers and circuits. I only go because it is my appointment from the Conference, and to cast in my mite; and I cannot be idle.

I am happy to find the work of God is reviving to the westward. I shall be pleased to have a narrative of the work in this district. God certainly has a controversy with this land: many that will not be mended will be ended, or mended and ended both. America is the infant of Divine Providence. He must begin to correct, he will correct us Himself: he will not let others do it. I make no doubt there is not a single spot but will feel in time (and turn) the rod of God. The sinners in the cities are not sinners above all the Galileans. I anticipated the

pleasure of seeing you; but time is short: I must improve every hour of fair weather and sun.

I am as ever, thine,

F. Asbury

The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XV  
(1861), 159

*As Asbury traveled to the south, he passed through the Alexandria District. On November 10 he records in the Journal that he wished to see Daniel Hitt. Since he did not see him, he writes this authorization for Hitt to preside over the Baltimore Conference on April 1, 1805. However, when the time came, Asbury opened the conference. (See Journal, April 1, 1805.)*

NEW TOWN, VIRGINIA  
November 10, 1804

[To Daniel Hitt]<sup>[38]</sup>

As I am going to the South, about 1400 miles passing and repassing, and hope to attend the South Carolina and Virginia Conferences, I feel my weakness, and calculate upon the probability of a failure in attending the Baltimore Conference to be held in Winchester, April 1st, 1805. These are to appoint you, according to the power delegated to me by the late General Conference. You must preside in the Conference as I have done, and do all things with a single eye to the glory of God. Admit, examine, elect, and station the preachers; and

God will be with and bless you. Given under my hand this 10th day of November, 1804.

Francis Asbury

P.S. *Mark well!* Should Bishop Whatcoat be present, his want of sight is such, he cannot preside, but he will be as counsellor, and may ordain.

F. Asbury

The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XV  
(1861), 159

*Little is known about this letter. The facts in it are the only clues. No reference has been found to it, nor does it appear to have been printed. A list of the books printed up to 1794 and shown in Phoebus, Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America, indicates that the letter was later than 1794, as none of the books mentioned here is listed there. The agents appointed in 1804 are shown to be Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson. A new edition of the Discipline was printed in 1804. The letter deals with the business of printing, and Asbury was criticizing the work.*

[Autumn, 1804]<sup>[39]</sup>

[To Ezekiel Cooper]<sup>[40]</sup>

We got your address and have drawn upon you for 150 dollars as our dividend of the profits coming from the Book Concern.

You will doubtless expect that we should address you as the agents to whom we have intrusted the management of our Book Concern and that we make such abbreviations and give you such directions as we think necessary.

Many [mistakes] were chargeable in your binders for misplacing the pages, have been discovered in the samples and the binding there is quite too slight.

The Life of Mrs. Hester Rogers,<sup>[41]</sup> we think it proofed too light on the paper and the bindings are indifferent, although the papers and bindings of the Life of the Revd. Mr. P. Dickinson<sup>[42]</sup> are better yet. We think it also a dear [?] book.

We wish you immediately to circulate an edition of the discipline, leaving out the different tracts, the Articles of Religion, ordination, etc., and to have it stitched in blue or some other colored paper.

We wish you also to print a volume of sermons written by Mr. Thos. Walsh.<sup>[43]</sup> Joseph Everett<sup>[44]</sup> can procure a copy.

In your abilities and integrity to promote the interests of our book [concern], we repose the utmost confidence and hope and believe you will do everything in your power to procure the best materials and to have the work executed in the most correct and elegant manner. At the same time we depend on you to collect all our money of the debt due to the institution as you possibly can. You will please accept of our

best wishes for your individual happiness in this and the world to come.

F.A.

Signed by order of the Conference W.P.C.<sup>[45]</sup>

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*Letters have come from Daniel Hitt which were replies to Asbury. Asbury is answering with further news of the work, north and south, as well as Kentucky. He sees many signs of revival.*

NEW BERNE, N.C.<sup>[46]</sup>

*January 26, 1805*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]<sup>[47]</sup>

My dear Daniel:

May the spirit of holy Daniel and a holy God fill thy soul. I received thy two letters at too late a period to be answered from Charleston. I found it proper to move as soon as Conference expired. God is good to me. I found, as I proceeded southward, my health increased. To my joy, I found brother Whatcoat had returned from the western states in good health, all things in good order, almost everything done my letter anticipated; but my letter not received till after the Conference; increase of eighteen preachers in the Kentucky Conference; two thousand members; South Conference, eleven preachers, few located; increase of members, fifteen hundred, notwithstanding the deaths and

great removals to the west, whose membership must be suspended for a time.

We had great love and union, but little money. I believe the Conference in the south was near one thousand dollars insolvent. Our married men sweep us off in the circuits, and share a great part of the bounty of two hundred and sixty dollars, Charter [Fund] and Book Concern. Yet such is the consequence of the work: we employ all we judge worthy. I calculate upon twenty thousand added to the societies, and twenty thousand dollars insolvency. We must not have gold and grace. God will give us souls for wages.

We overseers find this the very nick of time, in the winter season, to visit the seaports; these give us an opportunity of preaching to hundreds of the inhabitants of the sea. Our town stands are of great magnitude: by being present, I feel their importance, especially when we can get the Jews and Gentiles to work it right. I find it a matter of very great heartfelt concern to settle the frontiers of the sea, as well as the frontiers of the east, west, and north. We have the following towns which call for stationed preachers: Augusta, Columbia, Camden, Georgetown—yes, oh that I could command Savannah also! In the North [Carolina] State, Fayetteville, Raleigh, Wilmington, New Berne, Washington, Edenton, Poor Halifax, then Portsmouth,<sup>[48]</sup> Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond, and some others; for when we can come at a square of two miles, and two thousand souls, it is an object that we shall not perhaps find in a circuit; besides comers and

goers, as we generally say. We gain in this town, upon Trent,<sup>[49]</sup> a dark place.

A poor local preacher labored and preached till he was called home: now God has visited his children and neighbors; one hundred souls have been brought in. The work grows in Georgia and the Carolinas. I can see a surprising difference everywhere since the year 1785. Oh, what prospects open in 1805! I am lengthy; I am loving; you are liberal in writing to me. You have my letter that was lost by this time. I have a letter from Joshua Taylor<sup>[50]</sup> informing me of the success of our Conference in the Maine—of a camp meeting and several happy seasons in the Maine. Glory! I thank you for the printed account. I have a written one from Billy Thacher.<sup>[51]</sup>

The famous Abner Wood is turned Baptist from stem to stern. He was going on till they suspended him preaching Baptist-like upon the New London Circuit: now our Discipline is a human invention: Jocelin<sup>[52]</sup> is rebaptized. See our great Conference men. We must have some drawbacks.

They judged the campmeeting near Suffolk, Virginia, was the greatest ever known. Four hundred professed in four days. Baltimore and the Point look up. The fire of God is broken out in the city of Brotherly Love [Philadelphia]; near one hundred souls converted. God's thoughts are not as ours, nor his ways as our ways. I received a long letter from brother Willis.<sup>[53]</sup> I have only to add, he and myself have served the Church, the one above forty years, local and traveling, the

other between twenty and thirty. We must leave the government to younger men now.

You know my thoughts on the local eldership; they are yours. As to any valuable ends he contemplated, I can see none in his letter that might not be answered, as to their usefulness; but a judicious presiding elder might secure. The South Conference wrote a letter to the trustees of the Charter Fund, applauding gratitude for their attention. By brother Cooper<sup>[54]</sup> a letter is sent that they are well under way in [New] York, and much work on hand. At least I am happily disappointed, he is gone to [New] York to stay. I am always pleased to be disappointed for the best. B. Jones, Gibson, N. Watters, and W. Lee,<sup>[55]</sup> all, I have heard of the deaths. Now, brother, perfect love; live it, preach it. I have marked the kindling of a fire in the Latin and Greek Churches, so called, the French and Russians, the British at the bottom. I saw it some time, but it is likely to break out, it will probably involve the whole world. What can we say? Let us make haste to promote the work of God. It shall be well with the righteous. I am thine.

F. Asbury

*George G. Smith*, Life and Labors of Francis Asbury,  
226-28

*This is a follow-up of Asbury's letter of July 14, 1804, to Kibby. Kibby has had a year in Boston as pastor by himself. Thomas Lyell, who had been the senior pastor there, had*



*gone to the Episcopal Church. In 1805 Kibby was appointed pastor at Providence, R.I. Asbury is reporting on the work.*

PETERSBURG, [VIRGINIA]

*February 16, 1805*

[*To Epaphras Kibby*]

My dear Kibby:

May great grace and peace attend thee and thy charge. I was pleased to hear that matters were pleasing in Boston. Brother Atwood lodging in the same house put me in mind to write a line. God is good to me to thousands. I hope that there has been 500 extraordinary meetings where 12, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100, 200 or more precious souls have been invited, converted, or restored, and sanctified at a meeting. You have heard from the Maine, I have heard from thence and almost every part of the Continent, I calculate 1805 to be the greatest year that ever was known in America or the world; only let the preachers of a holy gospel, be holy, and Laborious.

We see the fruit of our labours where we have gone on meeting, 30 years and 20 years enlarging, and building new houses. The children we have, after we have lost our other, some by death, and division, and backsliding; say the places are too short for us, make room that there may be places for us to [come]. Oh glory, glory we have added for the present year 29 preachers for probation in the Two Conferences, West and South Conferences and about three thousand five hundred members of society.

I have travelled in 6 months and a half, exclusive (of Sabbaths, and some little stay at towns) three thousand, three hundred miles, those have been fall, and winter months, very severe weather. But God is good, do all you can—my dear soul, my dear son, for God, he will help you, my time is short you will judge; but *love constrains*. Present me to all the faithful and prospering Brethren. You can write to me to Baltimore in April and if later, to Philadelphia and York. Everlasting love be with thee.

I am as [ever yours],

F. Asbury

*New England Methodist Historical Society, Boston School  
of Theology*

*This is more of an introduction and recommendation of Ira Ellis than it is a letter. There is a long account of Ellis in the Journal. He is locating and intends to travel through the church. It is not clear as to what he was to do. He followed O'Kelly as presiding elder on the South District in Virginia and was there until 1805.*

BRUNSWICK COUNTY, VA.

*February 17, 1805*

To the Ministers, Members, and Friends of the Methodist  
Episcopal Church in the United States

With our Christian salutations we send, greetings. Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, through Jesus, our

Lord. We have thought it proper to recommend our beloved brother, Ira Ellis,<sup>[56]</sup> to your pulpits and attentions. One that has travelled fourteen years, extensively, faithfully, and acceptably, nine years he has laboured locally, preserving always a good ministerial and Christian Character; he hath filled the various stations among us, having exercised the offices of preacher, deacon, elder, and presiding elder. We give him the recommendation we think his standing and services have merited in our connexion; he is going upon business of consequence to himself; he may also be as attentive as circumstances will admit to the ministry of the word of God, at all times and places where he can have a congregation. Given under our hands this 22nd day of February, 1805.

Francis Asbury

Richard Whatcoat

*Asbury's Journal, 1852 ed., February 17, 1805*

*An invitation had been extended by the members and friends of Olive Branch Church for the next meeting of the Virginia Conference. After consideration Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat politely advise them that Norfolk has been chosen as the seat of the next conference.*

EDMUND TAYLOR'S, N.C. <sup>[57]</sup>

March 5, 1805

[*To Members of Olive Branch Chapel, Virginia.*]<sup>[58]</sup>

Very dear Brethren:

We feel ourselves under obligations to you together with our other brethren and friends at and in the neighbourhood of Olive Branch Chapel for your particular respect for and attention to (our) The Virginia Conference. We accordingly received your petition and therein found your most sincere request that this conference should be appointed to sit next at Olive Branch.

We thought it our duty and interest to pay attention thereto and we undoubtedly were more attentive when we heard of the divine approbation of God to it in owning and blessing the labours of and making the Word exhibited there, spirit and life, so that many souls will praise God in time and in eternity. Great joy indeed to us, to you and to all Zion's lovers. Therefore brethren if conference is so great a blessing as to cause remembrance in time and eternity we should remember others when it goeth well with us. Therefore as conference has never been in Norfolk, though they have repeatedly petitioned for it, we have favoured them with the next which will commence on Friday the fourteenth of February, 1806. Dear brethren we most earnestly request that you would join with us in prayer to the great head of the church that He may make it spirit and life to our Norfolk brethren and friends that hundreds and thousands of them may help us praise God in time and eternity——

We remain dear brethren, yours affectionate in the bonds of a pure gospel.

Francis Asbury

Alexander M'Caine Sec.

*This letter was the property of Lucy Gray Kendall (deceased), associate editor of The Upper Room, a descendant of Edward Dromgoole. It is now in the Southern Methodist University.*

*The following letter has its own introduction.*

EDMUND TAYLOR'S, N.C. <sup>[59]</sup>

*March 8, 1805*

An affectionate address from the Virginia Conference<sup>[60]</sup> of the Methodist Episcopal Church to all their official Brethren, local preachers, class leaders, and stewards, in their Quarterly Meeting Conferences in the Districts and Circuits of their charge.

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

Grace and peace attend you with our salutation to all saints. Possibly in your local situation you have not taken perfect knowledge of what God hath done for us a society, in the space of thirty-five years; we have not only planted, but have made a very gracious progress at the gospel in the seventeen United States, and in the Territorial Settlements, as also into the two Canadian Provinces, as may be seen by the Annual Minutes. What hath God wrought? We contemplate the happy

hundreds already gone to Glory; and more than one hundred thousand now in fellowship with us, and the children and servants of our Brethren must still greatly augment our charge, to Christianize and spiritualize all these, we might calculate upon half a million of souls that stand in this relation to us. Again when we consider all those who regularly attend our ministry, as our own members, we might calculate upon one million, probably one-sixth part of the inhabitants of these United States. Should we take the distance of land from St. Mary's in Georgia, to Passamaquoddy Bay<sup>[61]</sup> we might find it to be 16 or 1700 miles, and from the extremities of the Districts of Maine to the Natchez would be found upward of 2000 miles. What, but a travelling ministry, and a very rapid one too, could have spread themselves, over such a part of so great and yet unexplored Continent westward in so short a time, opening and settling from 3 to 6 hundred miles and verging to a thousand miles in the width thereof. We have upwards of 400 travelling, and 2,000 local preachers, with exhorters, the latter a source from whence we can draw supplies to replenish and strengthen our travelling connections. O Brethren, help us by all and every laudable means in your power, what should not men do and suffer for souls, after the example of Christ, and in obedience to his word, our Local Brethren can keep our congregation together, by preaching in the absence of the travelling line.

They can promote class-meetings, order and union among the Societies. They can see that none enter in among the Flock, to pervert or draw away disciples after them. Our Local

Brethren, highly esteem the travelling plan; some of them have spent their happiest and most useful days in the work; the Local Ministry, can help us greatly at Camp and Quarterly Meetings, they can promote prayer meetings, and when the work of God breaks out in a society can nurse the good cause. When the Travelling Ministry are obliged to go on to their daily appointments, they can be always ready, if disappointments are unavoidably made by the travelling Ministry, to fill their places. When modesty or self-diffidency prevails among the travelling ministry, to ask the people to contribute a mite, the Local Brethren can exhort and urge the Societies to liberality, to give for their support, that could have been full and free, and probably independent if they had been able to have tarried at home. But the word of God, was like a fire shut up in their bones; they were weary of forbearing and could not stay at home. Indeed it is not possible to calculate upon the good that has been done since the sitting of the General Conference in May, 1804, from what has fallen under the notice of this Conference. There has been perhaps 2 or 300 camp and extraordinary meetings, when souls have been convicted or converted from 10, to 15, 20, 30, 100, 200 and, in one extraordinary case 400. And who can conceive what may be done in twenty years to come. Oh! Brethren, was there ever such a time like this. Help, help by your prayers, preaching and purses. Many of our travelling Ministry are married men, and do not receive above \$82 per annum to support a wife and children; and whenever we have a surplus in our conferences, we do not Bank it or give it where there are no just claims, but send it on to the poorer conferences in the more extreme parts of the North and East.

To conclude, such fields are opening, so many preachers to preach, and so many people to pray, and such multitudes to be converted, what shall we see in twenty years to come, if the travelling and Local Preachers are united, preaching the same Doctrine, approving and enforcing the same Discipline, and shall seek by every lawful means, Ministerial and Christian union among themselves, and among all Christian Ministers and Societies. Thus living and walking as dear Children, what will not a good and gracious God do for us?

Francis Asbury

Signed in, and by order of Conference, 8th March, 1805.

*Drew University Library*

*It is interesting to note that though Asbury had appointed Daniel Hitt to preside over the Baltimore Conference in a letter of November 10, 1804, now that the time had come, Asbury was there. This letter has to do with some property Philip Sunderman had left to the church.*

WINCHESTER, VA.

*April 1, 1805*

[*To Thomas Morrell*]<sup>[62]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

Grace and peace attend thee. By a clause in Elder Ware's<sup>[63]</sup> letter; a Philip Sunderman,<sup>[64]</sup> hath left the Episcopacy of our church his executors, of his estate, to be applied in charity schools. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not it is sin." These are to desire you my old trusty friend, to apply to the Clerks office in Woodbury, for a copy of the will. What



we do is upon the wing of a minute, at that time, or place; or it may lay over for a year, or for time. If there is instruction how to apply that property, we will do the best we can, by the aid of seven councils, [that is] the seven conferences.

If this briefing can be acted upon, I shall require you, and another man of your choice to take from us the power of an attorney to act for us. Let this matter be in readiness by the 29th of May. Brother Whatcoat<sup>[65]</sup> shall if life and health permit see you with myself. I have no time for more information. It is now 6 o'clock, at 8 o'clock our important Baltimore Conference will be open. Mine and Brother Whatcoat's will and our love to you.

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Asbury shows some concern because he had not heard from Coke. It had been the custom of Asbury to send an annual letter to Coke when he was in England, reporting on the work; and Asbury refers to that here.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
*April 15, 1805*

[*To Thomas Coke*]<sup>[66]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

Grace, great grace let it rest upon thee. I have been wanting to hear from you, but there has no letter as yet appeared. The winds, the waves, the wars, or something hath prevented. I have sent you an annual epistle that will give you a general

view of four of the yearly conferences that have had their setting in great peace and good order. The menace of numbers so far, upwards of seven thousand, increase of preachers fifty, several returned to the work, that have been located.

It was thought I was going home last fall but I was returned again to serve and to suffer a little while.

I am as ever thine,

Francis Asbury  
*Emory University Library*

*There are several copies of this principal address extant. It was prepared for the South Carolina Conference. However, it seems to have been used as a basis for the addresses from the Virginia and Philadelphia conferences, probably others. Part of this address is the same as that to the Virginia Conference, March 8, 1805. However, there are differences.*

Address to Quarterly Conferences on Delaware District<sup>[67]</sup>

CHESTERTOWN, MD.

May 7, 1805

[*To the Onancock, Virginia, Quarterly Conference*]

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

Grace be unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied. It is scarcely possible for you, in your local situation, to have correct views of what our God hath done for us as a people in the space of thirty-five years. We think it a duty we owe to you to make the following statement. The Gospel, by our

ministry, has made a glorious progress through the seventeen United States, the territorial settlements, and Canadian provinces, as may be seen by our Annual Minutes. Should we compute the distance from St. Mary's in Georgia, to Montreal, in Canada, it would be found to be seventeen or eighteen hundred miles; and from the extremities of the district of Maine to the Natchez, two thousand miles.

What but a traveling ministry, and a very rapid one too, could so extensively propagate the Gospel in the midst of so much opposition. There are now more than one hundred thousand souls in fellowship with us, and perhaps six times that number who look up to us for ministerial services, and to hear the word of life, which you know by happy experience to be the power of God unto salvation, as well as many thousands of happy souls whom we doubt not have already gone to glory. We have upward of four hundred traveling preachers, besides about two thousand local preachers and exhorters, a source from whence we can draw supplies to strengthen and replenish our traveling connection.

We unanimously express our high regard for our local brethren, many of whom have long traveled, labored, and suffered with us in the vineyard of the Lord, and others who would have traveled but for secular affairs. Dear brethren, we acknowledge your great usefulness. You cheerfully labor with us when we are present, preserve the union of the societies, keep up the congregations and prayer meetings when we are absent, and your influence can and does do much in raising class collections for our support. Our apparent increase (in the

Philadelphia Conference) this year is small, owing in part to migrations to new settlements, and the uncommon sickness and mortality of last autumn. But when we bring into view the great wastage among twenty-eight thousand seven hundred and twelve, and the number necessary to repair that wastage, we shall see that the number received must have been very considerable to give us an addition of six hundred and twenty four.

Our finances for the present year are better than they were last, owing in part to the Albany district (where the deficiencies were usually great) being attached to the New York Conference, and yet many of the preachers were deficient more than twenty-three per cent., though they received nothing for their children. The circuits which have given liberally will please accept our thanks. We have received eight preachers upon trial, and discontinued—from their probation, and are exceedingly sorry to add that some of their cases were truly humiliating and distressing; nevertheless the Lord hath in great mercy blessed us with unusual moderation and peace, through the whole of our critical decisions.

Dear brethren, we have labored and suffered with you and for you, and are willing and determined so to do. We have confidence that you will endeavor to walk worthy of your vocation, and unite with us in all laudable endeavors to promote the Redeemer's kingdom. Let us in love continue to watch over and pray for each other, keeping the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace until we are come to the fullness

of the measure of the stature of Christ, that may finally rest with him forever.

F. Asbury

Signed in and by order  
of the Conference

William P. Chandler, Sect.<sup>[68]</sup>

*Quarterly Conference Minutes, Onancock Methodist  
Church, Virginia*

*The Philadelphia Annual Conference was in session at Chester Town, Maryland. There is no reference in the Journal to this item of business. The Chartered Fund was still in its infancy and was just being incorporated. Directions are given in the letter to the conference as to procedure.*

CHESTER TOWN, MARYLAND  
May 7, 1805

To the Conference of Methodist trustees now sitting in  
Philadelphia

We viewed your communications including a statement of the products of the Chartered Fund for this year and do gratefully acknowledge your fidelity in the superintendence of the interest of the institutions. You will honor our draft for 120 dollars.

We are sorry you have not been able to collect the debts due to the institution, particularly Mr. Henry Ennell's word

and the money arising from the sale of the plantation given to Mr. Dickinson and sold by your agent [?] to Mr. Rogers.

We are informed that the above moneys are now ready to be paid and that they would have been paid some time past but Mr. [Dickinson] and Mr. [Rogers]<sup>[69]</sup> did not know who to pay the money to. As you are the only guardian of the chartered fund you are hereby directed and requested to collect and bring into operation the above moneys as soon as possible.

We have carefully considered your memorial and particularly your advice to print the articles of *operation* [?] of the chartered fund with the minutes but think it would not be prudent to present them because it might give an advantage to those who seek an auction to misrepresent us. We have nevertheless advised the presiding elder to procure the acts of incorporation and to state and explain them to the people.

Please accept our best wishes for your prosperity and happiness and the happiness of your families.

We are dear brethren, Yours in love.

F.A.

Signed by order of the Conference  
W.P.C. (Chandler) Secy.

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*At this time Asbury was disturbed greatly because of the possibility of losing some of his preachers, notably George Roberts and Ralph Williston. All along some had been going to the Episcopal Church, such as Joseph Pilmoor, George Strebeck, Thomas Lyell, now Ralph Williston. This letter to Daniel Hitt and that of August 3 deal with the matter.*

NEW YORK, N.Y.

May 22, 1805

[To Daniel Hitt]<sup>[70]</sup>

My dear Brother:

With my usual salutation, grace and peace. Report says that two of our stationed preachers have been treating with a broken congregation, collected and then deserted by Mr. Strebeck,<sup>[71]</sup> first awakened, some by Methodists, then Germans, then Strebeckers, now Robertsonians<sup>[72]</sup> or Willistonians.<sup>[73]</sup>

It is said the latter hath written to them, and is expected on in a few days. Now for this man to send a vague letter to me at Conference to take a station, and because it was not his wish, to begin to treat in Baltimore with a messenger sent by the Strebeckers to get them a preacher! And who is it to be? Mr. Roberts or Mr. Williston. I am told the latter is expected in this city to see how it will work. Should he come, I hope that Brother George<sup>[74]</sup> and your self will supply his place immediately with Brother Jefferson,<sup>[75]</sup> and get some local brother to take the circuit; then let him find a place where he pleases. The secret of the matter was, our city preachers were invited to preach in that church, till they found they were

made of such stubborn stuff they could not be seduced by them.

Report says they are deeply in debt, and Mr. Strebeck has drawn off all he can to be High Episcopalians. I think that you ought to talk seriously with George Roberts, to know what he means to do; that if he is about to resign his office, another may be put in his place—Brother Bloodgood.<sup>[76]</sup> If any change should take place, let me know by letter, in New York, by the third week in July, that the Minutes may be properly printed, who have withdrawn themselves, or the changes in the stations. You may tell Brothers Roberts and Williston you are ready to fill their places whenever they choose to resign.

I have had but one day in the city. I am going out this morning. I have visited a glorious camp-meeting upon Long Island; it was a blessed time. Many souls were blessed. We are looking forward for the coming of Christ in the North. If any thing special turns up, write; and how your camp-meeting came out at the Springs.<sup>[77]</sup> I am sorry we should have ministerial juggling. Mr. Gough<sup>[78]</sup> hired some British soldiers to work for him in the time of the war, he sounded them, if they would like to stay in America; they said perhaps they might in some future period, but they must go home and discharge their duty to their king and country, and their answer was "Honor, sir; you know, honor!" I wish these holy ministers of Jesus Christ would cry out, "Honor, honor!" and honestly and faithfully tell the Conference, "We will serve you no longer." We do not, we have not, trifled with them: why should they treat us in such a manner? Henceforward we



have need to call upon the absentees to let the Conference know by letter, saying, "We mean to take a station this year; any one you can give us"; if not, "We mean to take such or such a station, or none at all."

Our Philadelphia Conference, by an appeal that called their attention a day, sat seven; and we ought to sit ten days, if we cannot do our business without. What, to hear with some certainty, two of our elders should begin a treaty with other people, as soon as the Conference is over, to leave their station! I confess my confidence is greatly gone. Finally, I wish not to precipitate matters; but would any man of the world employ a man and be satisfied, if he found that same man treating with another, and to leave his former employment? Brother George and you will be as one; take counsel; act with your usual moderation and prudence.

I am, with respect, yours,

F. Asbury

The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XV  
(1861), 313-14

A Letter of Thomas Coke  
to J. Walter Fountain

*Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke were devoted to each other, yet they did not see eye to eye. The temperaments of the two men are disclosed in some of their correspondence. Much speculation has been caused by their disagreements. The Coke correspondence is introduced here to clarify the*

*situation. Two letters are put together to introduce the matter. Several letters follow, and the correspondence needs to be considered as a whole. Coke had recently married, and in the spring of 1805 he wrote what had been called his "circular" letter to America. Many copies were sent out. It seems that every member of the New York Conference received it. This letter was sent to the Rev. J. Walter Fountain of the Baltimore Conference.*

*A second letter which Coke wrote on January 10, 1806, follows the circular letter. However, there were evidently intervening letters. The references in the letter to Alexander M'Caine are to other letters than the circular letter, though the circular letter seems to have begun the discussions.*

NEW CHAPEL, CITY ROAD  
LONDON, ENGLAND  
*June 1, 1805*

[*To Revd. J. Walter Fountain*]<sup>[79]</sup>

Very dear Brother:

Before you have received this letter, you will probably have heard of the alteration which has taken place in my state of life by marriage. I therefore feel it my duty to write to you in the fullest and most ingenuous manner, in respect of my relation to you, and the Methodist connexion in the United States of America.

About ten years ago, when it was the unanimous judgment of the General Conference, that the Episcopacy needed to be strengthened, I proposed to reside with you for life; in

consequence of which the most solemn engagements were entered into on both sides. The fulfilment of these engagements was delayed, with the consent of the Conference, by various circumstances then unforeseen; but I have never broken them in the smallest instance: and am now as willing to fulfil them as ever I was at any moment since I made them. My most beloved wife is also equally willing. She is indeed a twin soul to myself. Never, I think, was there a more perfect congeniality between two human beings, than between us.

But on the other hand, I should be the most ungrateful of husbands, if I trifled with her health, or feelings. It therefore does not appear at all probable that I shall make you another transitory visit. I cannot think of leaving my most dear wife for so long a time as a transitory visit would require; nor can I think of making her cross the Atlantic ocean twice for such a purpose. If we come to you at all, we come for life. But if we come for life, we come under the most express, permanent and unalterable conditions; except in the case of the death of Bishop Asbury, in which case I should consider it as my duty to sail for America, as soon as possible. But before I mention these conditions, I must make some observations respecting my venerable and highly esteemed friend Bishop Asbury.

As far as I know my own heart, I can most truly say, that I have not a wish in my soul to intrude in the least degree on the labours of Brother Asbury. As long as he can regularly visit the seven annual Conferences, you do not want me. But if he was so debilitated that he could not attend the seven

Conferences, I should be willing to come over to you for life, on the express condition that the seven Conferences should be divided betwixt us, three and four, and four and three, each of us changing our division annually; and that this plan at all events should continue permanent and unalterable during both our lives. I trust that our gracious Lord will continue so to strengthen Brother Asbury, that the necessity or expedience of this plan may not happen. But if it does, the annual Conferences, or the general Conference, must be consulted on the business, and I have no doubt but they will determine with the utmost sincerity, and irrevocable integrity. I promise also on my part to abide most sacredly by my engagements, and to be yours entirely for life, if you judge it expedient, on the conditions before mentioned. Nothing in that case shall detain me in Europe for a moment after I have settled my affairs, but such an illness on my wife's or my own part, as will absolutely incapacitate her or me from going on ship-board: for I can by no means leave her behind me.

But there is no present appearance that we shall be detained on the above account. My wife is one of the best of women: she breathes the genuine spirit of a Christian pilgrim, and would go with me anywhere, yea, through fire and water, in the will of God. My health has not been so good as it is at present, I think, ever since I first visited America or even then, praised be God. The constitution of my beloved wife is a very delicate one; but with great care and attention it is my opinion that it is likely to bear the fatigues of travelling for many, many years. She has been indeed brought up in a most tender and delicate manner, and therefore needs conveniences

through life, which others not brought up in the same tender way have no need of. But the Lord has blessed her, and me through her, with a sufficiency to supply both her and my wants, in every respect, without being burdensome to any society.

We were married on the 1st of last April, and in six weeks we travelled about 400 miles; and in a few days we are going on another tour of about 600, in which we shall cross the Irish Channel.

I must now observe that I do not intend, by any of the observations I have made, to derogate, in the smallest degree, from the worth and integrity of my old, venerable, and worthy friend, Bishop Whatcoat. I have, ever since I knew him, held him in very high esteem; but his age and infirmities render it impossible for him now to take even half the work entirely under his own care as a bishop. But I am truly thankful to find, by the accounts I have lately received from America, that he is able to meet Bishop Asbury at many of the Conferences.

There is no remarkable revival in the British or Irish circuits at present, but there has been a gradual increase in Britain. Our missions, both at home and abroad, prosper very much. I have sent to Brother Cooper and Brother Wilson a printed account of their prosperity, which I lately drew up. I bless God that the Committee which the Conference has granted me to aid me in the management of the finances of the missions, to answer letters, etc. etc. have shown such attention to the business, and have afforded me such aid, that

I am now assured that the missions may be carried on with spirit without me, notwithstanding the fears of my British brethren in conference concerning them.

Favour me with an answer to this letter, directed to me at the New Chapel, City-Road, London; and give me some account of the work of God in your district or circuit. Accounts of the great revival in America are exceedingly pleasing and profitable to our congregations in Great Britain and Ireland, and to the readers of our magazines. I wish you could see all my heart: if you did, you would find it as much as cordially attached to the American Methodists as ever it was in any part of my life.

I now leave the whole to the gracious disposal of our God; and recommend you, as I do daily, in humble and earnest prayer to his gracious protection. Remember me and my dear wife in your prayers; and believe me to be, what I most sincerely am,

Your very affectionate Brother  
and faithful Friend,

T. Coke

*The following letter to M'Caine, though out of place here, throws further light on the correspondence Coke had with the brethren in America.*

TRURO, CORNWALL, ENG.

January 10, 1806

[*To Alexander M'Caine*]<sup>[80]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I wrote to you by the last packet, a letter for the Baltimore annual conference, in conference assembled, in answer to their official letter sent to me by you. If you have not received it, I'll request the favor of you to write to brothers Cooper and Wilson for a copy of the letter; which copy they now have, lodged in their hands, lest any of my letters to the annual conferences should be lost. Be pleased to add the following paragraphs,<sup>[81]</sup> enclosed in crochets, to the letter I sent to you, if you have received it. The copy which is in the hands of brothers Cooper and Wilson, has those paragraphs in it. I was obliged to cut short the letter I wrote to you by the last packet, in order to save the post, and thereby the packet itself, otherwise the same paragraphs, or at least the same ideas, would have been inserted in that letter. I beg you will be so kind as to write to me immediately after the breaking up of the Baltimore conference, as I wish to know more of the sentiments of the Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York conferences on the subject in hand, before the next British conference begins to sit, or at least, before it breaks up, which I think may be accomplished. Please to give my love to the preachers, and all the friends in Baltimore, and pray for your sincerely affectionate and faithful friend,

T. Coke

*Alexander M'Caine, Letters, 154 Letter is the property of  
Jacob S. Payton, Falls Church, Virginia*

*Coke had written Asbury of his marriage. Asbury's comments here and in the Journal make most interesting reading. Mrs. Coke was a lovely Christian woman. Asbury shows concern for the publishing of important works.*

LYNN, MASS.

*July 15, 1805*

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[82]</sup>

My most dearly beloved Mead:

I am upon the wing, in the midst of the New England Conference where all is harmony and love. I haste to the Western Conference in a few days, the present Conference have voted Brother Crawford<sup>[83]</sup> an active acceptable young man to go with me. Bishop Whatcoat is gone on probably 600 miles ahead of me. We have had several campmeetings in this and the bounds of the New York Conference. Last Sabbath Day, we had 70 preachers and 3000 people in a grove and we had convictions and conversions, the people seem very much alarmed, steady habits appear to be shaken and shaking.

I have sent on the reply of Edwards<sup>[84]</sup> that if I was in your place I would print with a few alterations. Brother Cooper<sup>[85]</sup> was not at home. I cannot tell, if he has my sermon on the death of Mr. Jarratt,<sup>[86]</sup> but I hear Mr. D[romgoole] is about publishing the Life and Death of Jarratt. I shall be less anxious to send mine out. I have 4 preachers in my room in conversation. After sitting 7 hours in conference you will see the gaps of my letter.



I have received a letter from Brother Coke.<sup>[87]</sup> He is married to a Penelope, he says she is a Pilgrim. He says he shall come no more to America as a visitor but if at all, to stay if his work can be pointed out and all be made safe and easy before he comes, but with all he says he shall, if he comes be no burden to the Connection, so I conclude she is a lady of fortune. I told Brother Whatcoat at the General Conference 1800 the Doctor I thought would marry. I have told him since I expect to hear he was married; how could I divine all this.

I think some times that these campmeetings will bring on great opposition and I should not wonder if some of us should lose our lives, but I am sure they will storm still and shake the formality of religion out of the world. I feel awful but God is the Lord that hath showed us light. Write me fully to Camden by the last of October. I am most affectionately thine

Francis Asbury

P.S. You will be well pleased with Brother Sabin's<sup>[88]</sup> upon Discipline, I would advise you to reprint it with some local alterations. I have sent for that purpose that you make a good use of it. I think it excellent and well calculated for the meridian of Virginia as Vermont.

F. Asbury

P.S. Whether Mrs. Coke is old or young, a Methodist or Episcopalian we shall hear in due time. After being ——<sup>[89]</sup> with help for twenty years —— life alone, but I am not alone, I have 500 of my dear sons in the travelling and 2000 in the local line with a probable increase of near 720 every year.

Only pray for me and the 7 conferences. I am kept alive by mercy as healthy and active as I could expect.

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Though Ezekiel Cooper had been moved from Philadelphia, he was still Book Editor. Here Asbury is giving instructions for Cooper and Wilson in regard to publications. He is still disturbed because some brethren had gone out from among them.*

NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK  
*Friday, July 26, 1805*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[90]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

I have ridden rapidly two hundred and thirty miles in six days to redeem a day to write. I think that you might, with the assistance of Brother Wilson,<sup>[91]</sup> attend five conferences out of the seven every year. You could take Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Reasons for this, the critical state of the bills and banks; and that the preachers can be brought to a settlement better at conference than at any other time.

Brother Crawford<sup>[92]</sup> is appointed to ride with me. If he can render you any service at the Western or Southern Conferences you will give orders.

I should be exceedingly glad to see Mr. Wesley's Sermons published up to the ninth and last volume this year. Then I

should be pleased to see a complete set of his Journals published in America, and a set of his Appeals. It's time, after thirty-five years—it is time these were done.

I have had a thought of buying a light Jersey wagon, that I may go at the rate of the mail-stage, and visit all the towns and cities in the winter, and go to the westward in the fall; but the greatness of the expense is one difficulty, the badness of the roads another.

I give up Dr. Coke, according to his own letter, unless he should come for good. I have no unjustifiable partiality for men of any nation under heaven; I love all; they have nothing to gain or lose from me.

I have no more to do with the Book Concern than another preacher, nor so much as some of them. If I was to keep a little stage<sup>[93]</sup> the person in company, Brother Crawford, or some other, would carry a choice selection of the books of the connection.

When any one leaveth our connection he leaves the conference, not me; I would not have it thought I am any thing in the business. I am pleased to feel that we are not taught to look upon it as a calamity when any one leaves us, only we grieve they should lose their first love, and give the world cause to say the Methodist preachers may be bought with money as well as others. For my part, I am glad they are gone, and so the judicious part, preachers and people, will

say: let them go, and welcome. Had we not been shorn, we might have added near an hundred this year.

Perhaps it has been a trial to your mind that Conference made the additional provision for Brother Wilson.<sup>[94]</sup> They thought themselves justifiable; they did not think it right to require Brother Cooper to give up a part of his, yet they must know that to have a family in New York must make a difference. But then it is not known how soon you may have one.

Honor! Honor! Honorable men we are; but I conclude we have sunk in insolvency in the seven conferences, according to General Conference appropriation, about \$15,000, if not \$20,000; yet I never saw the Connection more united and cheerful, and determined to go on while liberty, equality, and order prevails; and the work of God goeth on with increasing rapidity in every conference, district, and circuit more or less.

I should be pleased with your company to Second River on Monday, at the new church near Newark. You can write me what you think the dividend will be; as the Western Conference and South [Conference], also, will go on for the next year, but will meet within this. You can write me, south, any commands you have for me as your organ, and the president of the conferences.

I am, as ever, thy friend,

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Thornton Fleming was a special friend and confidant of Asbury. It seems that Fleming was wanting to move, and Asbury is giving him advice.*

NEW YORK<sup>[95]</sup>

July 28, 1805

[*To Thornton Fleming*]<sup>[96]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

May grace and peace attend you. All stations, all places have their difficulties. If Brother Hitt<sup>[97]</sup> can relieve you, I am content; if Ridgway<sup>[98]</sup> is unfit to labor on a circuit, for want of health, he perhaps might replace you. We have glorious times in the north; it is growing. New England is catching fire; field meetings prevail in number and power. The New England Conference has carried the palm of victory. God was gloriously present; such a time was never known in or about Boston, or any part of New England. I believe hundreds felt the power of God at the Conference in Lynn. Oh, my brother, I have hard toiling, to ride through the burning sun, like the mail stage, 230 miles in six days, to redeem a day to write or preach.

I wish that when any of my brethren write to me, that they would give me all the information they can of the work of God, it cheers my soul, and I can also communicate it to thousands.

I am, as ever, thine in Jesus,  
Francis Asbury

P.S. I have but little time to read or write a letter. I do everything on the wing of time, minutes and moments fly with me. On reading your letter a second time, you express, if I understand it right, a desire to go west at the next Conference. You must think seriously, and pray God to give you light, if it is your duty to leave Annapolis sooner. I am not in haste to give changes. I should have many solicitations, if known, and all examples will be pleaded. I only say, I leave the matter with our beloved brother Daniel,<sup>[99]</sup> and yourself, and, above all, with the Lord.

F.A.

The Pittsburgh Conference Journal, *March 1, 1834*

*There is no date or place attached to this letter. It was written after the New England Conference of July, 1805, which was held in Lynn, Massachusetts. The Journal records that Asbury took a day to write letters at Manley's, near Philadelphia, on the third of August. It was evidently here that the letter was written.*

NEW YORK

*July 28, 1805*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]<sup>[100]</sup>

My dear Daniel:

May great grace attend thee. My letters were waiting in this city. I marked the contents, especially upon Redstone: it may be the case; but Stoneman<sup>[101]</sup> we all know has his crooks; Budd<sup>[102]</sup> has his peculiarities. I am going to see and hear for myself, if God permit. If you can relieve Brother Fleming,<sup>[103]</sup>

he may return; but there can be no change till Conference. We must take care how we step back; if we step wrong, sometimes we may step upon a log, or into a pit. I shall not (indeed the Minutes are in the press, and partially done) make any alterations. I am happy to find that we have great union in the New York and New England Conferences. Letters addressed from these Conferences to the West and succeeding Conferences announce the same.

In Lynn<sup>[104]</sup> God was glorious; the work of God was begun in the Society; several souls were in distress; the preaching-house crowded at five o'clock; preaching in the morning. Necessity and choice drove us to a grove near the meeting-house; two, if not three, thousand souls upon Sabbath day; many souls convicted, some converted, and an awful power. I suppose we had twenty sermons, near one hundred exhortations, and multitudes of prayers in six days. Satan was obliged to go to Boston to bring men to oppose the work. Lynn was thunderstruck; meetings held till midnight, as in Baltimore.

O Glory! Superstition falls in New England. I look for great persecution; all hell is in motion. I think some of us shall be martyrs yet, we make such conquests in every direction. Perhaps it is best to let alone G. Roberts,<sup>[105]</sup> but say to our Conferences, if they want to go, let them go: so says Francis! Let us have volunteers. I have a zealous, active young man to attend me, by consent of the New England Conference, (Joseph Crawford).<sup>[106]</sup> The Northern preachers appear to be greatly in the work; their poverty is great, but

they are not at all discouraged. Dearly beloved Ralph<sup>[107]</sup> is fixed in Strebeck's<sup>[108]</sup> remains.

I am happy to find one spirit animates the whole, for seventeen hundred miles: the same hymns, prayers, and language salute my ears and heart. This I say, we ought to be wise as serpents in the management of our meetings. I find testing and preaching ought to give way to exhortation. We had all preaching and very little exhortation at the New York Conference: in Lynn exhortation prevailed, and the work went on. We ought to communicate all we can, one to another. Brother Dougharty<sup>[109]</sup> writes they serve God all manner of ways, jerking, dancing, etc.; yet the work goes on. They say the fellowship revives among the Presbyterians in the Camden District. I shall be pleased to have a letter from you at Union Town.<sup>[110]</sup> Be sure to be full in a letter to me, if I live, at Camden, South Carolina Conference, and you shall hear (if I am able) from the West.

I am, as ever, thine,

F. Asbury

The Quarterly Review of the M.E. Church, South, XV  
(Nashville, 1861), 629-30

A letter of William P. Chandler  
to Francis Asbury

*For several years Asbury had been trying to get reports from the presiding elders. He repeatedly criticized them because they did not write. Here is a good report from*



*William P. Chandler. It is especially interesting because of its report on the camp meeting. It is said to be an extract.*

DELAWARE DISTRICT, DOVER

*August 5, 1805*

[*To Francis Asbury*]

Rev. and dear Sir:

As it is a part of my duty, to give you an account of the state of the district, in which I preside; I rejoice, that it is in my power to state particulars, which will, no doubt, afford you satisfaction.

When the appointments were made at the Conference,<sup>[111]</sup> in May last, I felt an inexpressible solicitude of heart, that our labours might be crowned with success the present year. The confidence and fellowship, that subsisted among the preachers, during our last sitting in Conference; (which confidence and fellowship have augmented among the preachers on this district, since that time;) gave birth to a hope, that we should have such times this year, as we had not known before.

Saturday, May 18, our quarterly-meeting began at Barratt's chapel, for Dover circuit. A considerable congregation was assembled. At eleven o'clock, brother J. Aikens<sup>[112]</sup> preached; and there was a general influence upon the people. After several exhortations, the meeting closed with evident marks of conviction upon the countenances of many. On Sunday morning, our Love-feast was accompanied with the presence and power of God. After the love-feast, seeing that our house,

(notwithstanding it is so large,) would not hold half the people; we made arrangements to keep the public meeting in the woods. Brother R. Lyon<sup>[113]</sup> preached a profitable sermon; several followed with exhortation; after which, I explained to the people the arrangement and order of our expected camp-meeting, to be held, July 25, &c. At the close of our meeting, we had a gracious shower of divine grace; the people were much affected.

Saturday, May 25, at Milford, brother C. Spry<sup>[114]</sup> began our meeting at eleven o'clock, and preached a useful sermon. Sunday 26, at our Love-feast, the power of God was very present; and the people spoke with life and animation. By request, brother Spry preached again today; and the people were refreshed and encouraged.

Saturday and Sunday, June 1 and 2, our meeting began in Lewes.<sup>[115]</sup> At this place I preached to the people three times. Many of our brethren thought this a good quarterly-meeting, and the best Love-feast they ever attended. There is a work of God in the circuit: a few souls have been turned to God since the Conference, and believers seem to be much alive.

From Lewes, I proceeded to Snow-Hill,<sup>[116]</sup> where the quarterly-meeting was held, for St. Martin's<sup>[117]</sup> circuit, the 8th and 9th of June. Here we were highly favoured indeed. Many were so filled with the love of God, that they could scarcely restrain themselves so far as to give their brethren an opportunity to tell what God had done for them. At the close of the public meeting, the power of God came upon the

people; so that from fifteen to twenty, at one time, were on their knees, crying for mercy. And the hearts of the people all thro' the house were made so tender, that a few words spoken to almost any of them, would cause the tears to flow profusely. Three or four of the mourners professed to find a sense of the pardon of their sins; and evident marks of deep conviction were visible in the countenances of the greater part of the congregation.

June 15 and 16, we held our quarterly-meeting for Accomack circuit. Brother J. Seward preached at eleven o'clock on Saturday; and we had a good time. After our meeting was closed, the preachers, by invitation, went to the house of Major J.S. Kerr, about five miles from Accomack court-house. His lady has been, for some time, a member of our Society. We had not been long there, before the conversation turned upon the subject of religion; and I cannot describe the satisfaction I felt when I found his mind prepared to receive the truth of the gospel. He resolved the next morning, to make a public confession of Jesus Christ, by going to the Lord's-table. This resolution he kept; and God our Saviour met us there in mercy and power.

At our Love-feast which followed, several persons professed to receive the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins. As the house was not sufficient to contain one half of the congregation, we were obliged to hold our meeting under the pines. There the mighty power of God came among the people. O the praying, weeping and trembling! Surely this meeting will not be forgotten. It is

probable that there never was a meeting in Accomack circuit, at which the people were so generally and so sensibly affected by the presence of the Lord. I think the greater part of the congregation might have been detained until sun-set.

On the 22d and 23d of June, the quarterly-meeting was held at Johnson's<sup>[118]</sup> meeting-house. We had a good time on Saturday, while brother Seward was preaching. Our Love-feast on Sunday morning was a refreshing season to many souls; and two in particular were able to say, before they left the house, that Jesus has power on earth to forgive sins. I have no doubt but numbers were deeply wounded with a sense of their misery; while others praised God for the things they had felt and seen.

Saturday and Sunday, June 29 and 30, our quarterly-meeting for Anne-messick circuit, was held at Salisbury.<sup>[119]</sup> At this place we had a blessed time. A few souls have been powerfully affected in this village within a few days; but I did not learn, that more than one or two got a sense of pardoning love at the quarterly-meeting.

There is a blessed work of God on this circuit. The preachers have taken into society many since Conference; a goodly number of whom are persons of much respectability.

July 6 and 7, a quarterly-meeting for Somerset-circuit, was held at Laurel.<sup>[120]</sup> We had an encouraging time from the beginning to the end of our meeting.

July 13 and 14, we held our quarterly-meeting for Dorchester<sup>[121]</sup> circuit, at Church-creek. Here there is a rapid work. The preachers are engaged in labour almost night and day. They have taken into society more than six hundred members since Conference; and the work is said to be increasing. O my God, ride on and people the earth with subjects of thy grace!

Caroline<sup>[122]</sup> quarterly-meeting was held at the new meeting-house, near Collins' Cross-Roads, July 20 and 21. Because of the numbers that were assembled, we kept our meeting under the trees; and the Lord was with us. In the evening two souls professed to find the Lord, in the pardon of their sins. We had a comfortable time, both in the Love-feast and at the public preaching on the Sabbath; but we were obliged to hold our meetings in the woods. There are proofs of a blessed revival of religion on this circuit. A number have been brought to God lately, and believers are much stirred up.

July 24, the day previous to the beginning of our campmeeting, I was with our brethren, on the camp-ground, making arrangements. Several preachers, with about fifty people, encamped upon the ground that night. We thought it prudent to keep a little guard stationed, for the security of the people and the camp; but we were not disturbed. Thursday, July 25, at sun-rise, the trumpets gave the signal for morning prayer; after which the people began to assemble from different quarters. At eight o'clock, the trumpets sounded the signal for public preaching: when the rules of the meeting were read.

Brother J. Lee<sup>[123]</sup> took the stand, and preached from Isaiah xxxiii, 13. Brother J. Chalmers exhorted after him. The work broke out, and went on until the trumpets blew for preaching at three o'clock; but every thing was as orderly thro' the camp as in a Court of Justice. At three o'clock, brother John Chalmers, from Baltimore, preached, and old brother Newcommer, a Dutchman, exhorted. It was good to be there. The congregation consisted at this time, of about 3000 souls. The work continued, and the people sung and prayed until the trumpets blew the signal for preaching at eight o'clock, when brother J. Totten<sup>[124]</sup> preached from the third chapter of Habakkuk, and second verse. The awful power of Jehovah was displayed among the people. There were at this time upon the ground 28 travelling preachers, 26 local preachers, 12 exhorters, and about 3000 people; 123 tents, waggons, &c. in which the people were to sleep.

Friday 26, it was supposed, upon calculation that upwards of forty persons were brought to God the last twenty-four hours. This morning at sun-rise there were 189 tents, covered waggons, and carts, that were en-camped on the ground; some of these tents contained 20 to 30 persons. The trumpets sounded the signal for public preaching at eight o'clock, and when the people were collected together, the number was judged to be about 5000 persons. Brother Thomas Ware<sup>[125]</sup> preached from 1 John iv, 5. Exhortations were given by brothers Bishop,<sup>[126]</sup> Totten, and Chalmers. At this period, people of all descriptions, from the grey-headed down to little children, were crying for mercy.

After the signal for three o'clock preaching was blown, brother J. Chalmers preached from John xiv, 12. The work of conviction increased considerably. At eight o'clock in the evening, brother James Aikens preached from Matthew xi, 28, 29; and the power that prevailed in the camp, bespoke its great Original.

There was no intermission in the cries of mourners, the singing of the joyful, the praying with the distressed, except in the time of public preaching; and the calculation was, that from 60 to 70 souls, were brought to experience the love of God in the last 24 hours.

Saturday 27, at sun-rise, the trumpet gave the signal for morning prayer. There were upon the ground 189 tents, covered carts, and waggons; 32 travelling preachers, 37 local preachers, 15 exhorters, and 24 leaders, with about 1,000 carriages, and from 7 to 8,000 people. When the trumpets gave the signal for public preaching at 8 o'clock, Brother J. Lee preached from John xvi, 20. Brother Sneath<sup>[127]</sup> exhorted. Many persons professed to experience an increase of grace last night and this morning.

At three o'clock, brother R. Lyon preached, and brother J. Chalmers exhorted. The work of God appeared to increase. At 8 o'clock in the evening brother W. Bishop<sup>[128]</sup> preached. At this time there was an awful power of God among the people; and many were in great distress of soul.

It was judged by some that in the course of the last 24 hours, from 150 to 200 persons, tasted that the Lord is

gracious. At twelve o'clock, brother J. Chalmers drew off a part of the congregation, (which at that time consisted of 9 or 10,000 people,) and preached to them a sermon against Deism. At three o'clock the signal was given. Brother E. Chambers<sup>[129]</sup> preached from 1 Pet. iv, 16. The provisions failing, and the people being at a distance from home, a number left the ground after preaching. At five o'clock the Sacrament was administered, and great grace followed.

At 8 o'clock, after the usual ceremony, brother Sneath preached from part of the 10th verse of the 25th of Matthew, and the work of conviction and conversion continued without intermission thro' the night.

Monday 29, after the usual signal, we had a moving time at morning prayer. At seven o'clock we prepared for our Christian parting. It was ushered in by two of the preachers walking around the camp, blowing the trumpets; after this, the preachers all assembled on the preaching stand, with the congregation before them. Brother J. Lee spoke a little upon the occasion. The preachers then fell upon each other's necks and wept. After which, we took leave of the people, expecting to see many of them no more, until we meet in our Father's house above. The place was truly a Bochim.<sup>[130]</sup> O my God, if such love can exist among mortals, what will be our joy if we meet around thy Throne.

I am, dear Sir, your obedient Son in the Gospel, &c.

William P. Chandler  
The Methodist Magazine, XXIX, 188



*Thomas Sargent was one of the pastors in Baltimore, and Asbury had had some news of Sargent's father. It seems that Asbury was prompted to write because of the news. He makes an extended report of the state of the church.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
December 28, 1805

[To Thomas Sargent]<sup>[131]</sup>

My dear Son:

May great Grace attend thee and thine. I heard of your father, and notwithstanding we travelled in the Ohio about 400 miles, we could see the dear old saint. I am told he is very zealous in religion. The magnitude of the Western Conference will call our attention, the oversight of 12 or 1500 miles and northwest, we cannot say what will be explored. 13,000 members, 5 travelling, 150 local preachers, half a million of hearers. We have sent out 7 missionaries, 5 to Mississippi, 1 to New Orleans, 1 to Illinois. We shall have to gather up possibly many thousand lost sheep of the house of America, besides the lost sheep of the house of Africa, and possibly the house of France, Spain, and Britain. We have 5 grand districts, Holston, Kentucky, Ohio, Cumberland, Mississippi. We have had very great harmony in our church whilst the new and old lights, Baptists and Presbyterians have [been] unhappy; and I fear heretical and schismatical jaws; and to crown all the Shaking Quakers are come to divide the spoil; and report affirms that two New Light Presbyterian Ministers

with their scattered flocks have joyned those wandering stars; Add to all this, Mr. — men bring up the rear.

I am happy to believe that the western world will afford a very great half of the new World. Many thousands emigrating from all parts of the East, to the West. We are resolved to begin and progress with other societies. I console myself with an increase of about 20,000 souls Joyned to the Church annually. Numbers are lost in the returns, and many by moving, and expulsion, and death. My returns since July from the presiding elders, and elders, have been partial, but I have a list before me of 2595 that have professed converting Grace. Every district of the 32 promises great success.

My dear Brother, I am thankful that you have made some exertions for preaching abroad. It shall not altogether be in vain. Oh let us preach and live; and live and preach. We have great hope of good at our conferences, in the seat of the [New] York Conference, it came afterward, in Lynn it came at the time. We have great confidence in love, want prayer, that the conferences have pledged to each other. We feel as if all the preachers and people upon the continent of the Methodist order are praying for us, when we are sitting, upon the charge of souls. Brother Roberts has suggested the African Church, as a proper seat for the Conference in Baltimore. I have thought the same. I have thought if in the long evenings, half a dozen brethren, that have a gift at congregational prayer were to spend half an hour in prayer every week night preaching, singing happily intermixed, a short Hymn, and then pray. Again if one or two should feel light, and like, to

drop a few words of exhortation, in any part of the house not two at a time. We have found that the greatest degree of good, and strict discipline, is consistent with; and highly conducive to a work of God.

My continual cry to the Presiding Elders is, order, order, good order. All things must be arranged temporally and spiritually like a well disciplined army. I calculate that the year 1806 will be one of the most awful years that was ever known in Europe or America for war and commotion, and I believe there will be thousands slain by the sword of desperate war. I trust thousands will be conquered by the sword of the Spirit in the new World. Present me to all you please Sister Sargent not forgotten.

I am yours

F. Asbury

P.S. Dear Father Otterbein, I have felt prior to information as if his time was short, one of the best men upon Earth.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

A Letter of Thomas Coke  
to the New York Conference

*Thomas Coke wrote several letters to the brethren in America. This letter followed the circular letter of June 1, 1805, in which he offered his services to America. Coke is*

*again presenting to the brethren his case for coming to America.*

*Without question Coke had a side to his case. Duren in his Francis Asbury has probably put the whole matter as well as anyone: "It is needless to say that Asbury's course cannot be defended on other than practical grounds. Bishop Coke was a bishop and equal in technical authority with Asbury. . . .He was on solid ground in the complaint which he registered against Asbury and the American Conference; as a bishop he did not receive the consideration to which he was entitled. But Asbury's course was determined here, as in everything else, by practical rather than ecclesiastical and technical considerations. Dr. Coke lacked adaptation for the American episcopacy, and Asbury had no intention of allowing a disturbing factor to impede the progress of the cause of Christ and the Methodist Church. He was out for an end which was not to be defeated by conventional consideration."<sup>[132]</sup>*

*Coke wrote another letter on January 6, 1807, which is almost like this, to the Philadelphia Conference. This is extant in the Philadelphia Historical Society at St. George's Church. He had also written a similar letter to the Baltimore Conference before writing to the Philadelphia Conference, but this letter has not come to light.*

FALMOUTH  
COUNTY OF CORNWALL,  
ENGLAND

*January 6, 1806*

My very dear Brethren:

I have received your official Letter, and sit down to vindicate myself, as I value your esteem very much. But it will be almost impossible for me to do so to your full satisfaction, unless you give me credit concerning my motives—concerning the movements of my heart, as far as I am acquainted with them, and the views and intentions of my mind.

I then in the first place, declare to you, that I have a strong and unfeigned love towards you all, and that the interests of the cause of God among us in the United States of America, cleave very closely to my heart, and are a subject of my daily prayers.

In the second place, I highly venerate Bishop Asbury, and consider him as a Second Father instrumentally of the work among us in the United States. (Excuse me for using the word us, for I still consider myself as one of you.) I must therefore beg (and I claim it from your candor) that nothing I shall say in my own defence, may be considered as in the least degree as disrespectful to him; as I consider him as acting according to the will of the General Conference in every thing which relates to me, as well as in all his Episcopal labors. I now proceed to my vindication.

About ten or eleven years ago, the General Conference voted that the Episcopacy needed to be strengthened. The debate was remarkably solemn and affecting; and I was moved by my ardent love of the work, to offer myself to you as a Coadjutor with Bishop Asbury, for the strengthening of the Episcopacy. Many were the prayers put up, and many and solemn were the reciprocal engagements entered into at that time.

Either that day or the next, Bishop Asbury proposed to me a plan of operations—I was to visit Albany, Vermont, and the whole of the New England States, as far as our work then extended in those parts, taking Philadelphia, New York, and, if I pleased, the Peninsula, in my way, and to meet Bishop Asbury in the Spring in some part of New England. I was astonished. I did not see in this plan anything which related in the least degree to my being a Coadjutor in the Episcopacy, or serving to strengthen it; though it was for that purpose, as the primary point, that it was thought eligible by the General Conference that I should reside for life in America. Bishop Asbury was to hold the three Southern Conferences entirely by himself; and I was to spend my whole time merely as a Preacher; and on a plan, upon which I should spend the chief part of my time in preaching to very few. The Northern States would be covered with snow. I should have Mountains of snow to ride over, only preach in general (a few Towns excepted) to the Family where I was, and a few of their neighbours. When Bishop Asbury retired, I fell on my face before God, and said, "O my God, what have I done?" Some of the Presiding Elders came to me afterwards to form my

Plan, and I was still more convinced, that, according to the whole plan, I was to be nothing but a mere Preacher. However, I was solemnly engaged; and though you had not yet in any degree complied with your part of the engagement, I was determined to move on, even in that small sphere of usefulness. But a short time before the General Conference broke up, came the Minutes of the British Conference, appointing me to preside in Ireland the ensuing year. This was done after I sailed for America. I had promised the Irish Conference, when I was at that Conference, that if I was so appointed, I would be with them, God willing. This point I laid immediately before the General Conference, and they unanimously judged that I ought to fulfill my engagement with the Irish Brethren. I then proposed to Bishop Asbury to accompany him to the three Southern Conferences, and to sail for Ireland from Charleston. We accordingly went together; but to my astonishment I was not consulted in the least degree imaginable concerning the station of a single Preacher. I did not expect or wish to be any thing more than a Chamber-Council, the ultimate decision in every thing still to remain with Bishop Asbury. In short, I neither said nor did any thing during the whole tour, which had any usefulness attending it, as far as I can judge, but preach.

When I went to Europe, I fulfilled my engagements in Ireland, and took a solemn leave of every Society in my tour, and of the Irish Preachers in their Conference. The British Conference being held in about a fortnight afterwards, I went to that Conference to take my final leave of the British Brethren. Four times they brought my case before them,

before they could prevail on me to take over an address from them for my return to Europe till the next General American Conference. But I informed them of the solemnity of my engagements in the fullest manner. I then returned to the States: but the length of the voyage, my capture by the French, &c. put it out of my power to visit more than two of the Conferences. Indeed, I visited but one—the Virginia Conference. Bishop Asbury and the Members of that Conference were unanimously of opinion, that I might return to Europe till the General Conference and that the General Conference, in the circumstances in which I was placed, would not disapprove of my conduct. Still to my astonishment I was not consulted in the least degree whatever concerning the station of a single Preacher, & had nothing I know of peculiarly useful to do, but to preach. But what astonished me, I think I may say, almost above expression, was the following mysterious circumstance—Bishop Asbury was at that time so weak in body, that he could not reach Charleston in time to attend the Southern Conference, & therefore did not go. I offered my service, as it would have been equally the same for me to have sailed from Charleston as from New York. But he refused me, & appointed Brother Jackson to station the Preachers, & Brother Jesse Lee to sit as Moderator in the Conference. I knew not how to account for this in any manner consistently with your most solemn engagements at the General Conference.

The next General Conference came. I confess to you, my dear respected Brethren, I was afraid, considering all the circumstances already mentioned, that if you kept me with



you, you would render me comparatively useless. I therefore previously accepted of the address of the British Conference concerning me, but was determined to submit to the vote of the General Conference. When I came, the General Conference after two days' consideration allowed me to return, principally on account of the Irish Mission. But I was surprised—I was astonished that you entered into no explanation concerning our reciprocal engagements: for during my whole stay at this time, I was not even consulted in the least degree on any thing belonging to the Episcopacy. I did indeed lay hands on a few who were ordained, & that was every thing.

When I last returned to America, I did expect from Bishop Asbury's letters, as well as from letters written by several of the Preachers, that you really had entered into my case, & did intend to employ me in some manner as a Bishop, so that I should have the opportunity of giving my judgment freely on all Episcopal matters. Under this impression I settled all my little affairs in England, & took with me nineteen chests, boxes, & trunks, containing all my papers, most important books, &c. (besides the copies of my Commentary which were packed in other cases) leaving only behind me that part of my Library which I should not immediately want, & which might be sent after me on my order; & also those copies of my Commentary which I was in hopes my British & Irish Brethren would sell for me. I had at the British Conference which was held just previous to my sailing, various severe struggles in my mind, whether I should take my solemn final farewell of my European Brethren or not. I did repeatedly give

them strong reason to doubt whether they should ever see me again, & was faithful in repeating to them the solemn engagements I was under to you. But I accepted of their address as far as it concerned me merely from the uncertainty which still remained, whether you intended to employ me in America in any other way in reality than as a mere Preacher: and on no other ground could I have accepted of the address as an honest Man, though I greatly love & respect my European Brethren. However, when I arrived at Petersburg in Virginia, I made up my mind to stay with you, & had formed a Plan of visiting the North, & returning time enough of course to be at the General Conference. But, when I was at Brother Ellis's near Richmond, a thought struck me with amazing power, "You should go to Georgia, to meet Bishop Asbury at the Georgia Conference." The impression made on my mind by this thought, completely robbed me of a night's rest. In two days I set off for Georgia. But how amazed I was to find, that every thing was in the same situation—that so far from my having any opportunity of strengthening the Episcopacy, according to your solemn engagements at the General Conference, when you accepted me as one of your Bishops, I was not to be consulted on the station of a single Preacher: nay, when I asked for a copy of the Stations of the Preachers at the close of the Georgia Conference, which was granted to every Travelling Preacher present, I was refused. I then saw the will of God concerning me—that I ought not to labour in America, unless the General Conference would consent to comply in some degree with its engagements. I did not want to station the Preachers as Bishop Asbury does. Nothing should be done to grieve that venerable Man: but I

approve of the stationing the Preachers by a Committee at each Annual Conference with the Bishops at the head of it. But every Bishop ought to have a right of giving his judgment on every point, or he is but the shadow of a Bishop.

When Bishop Asbury & I arrived at Columbia, I opened my whole mind to him. I laid before him my situation in Europe—that I had there the superintendency of all the Missions—of the Missionaries in Ireland, Wales, the West Indies, Novia Scotia & New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. I have a Committee to assist me in the management of those Missions, for which I bless God. Every year I preside at the Irish Conference, & the Preachers are stationed by myself and a Committee of nine who are the Representatives of the Districts; only the Plan is afterwards brought before the Conference for their approbation. In England, I am always either the Secretary or President of the meeting of Representatives of Districts, who station the Preachers, and my judgment has considerable regard paid to it; as also in the Conference, when the Plan is brought before them for their consideration: and in all these instances the Lord is pleased to render me useful. In Europe, I have incomparably more time for Literary matters than I could have in the United States. In respect to Preaching, I can preach in the year to three or four times the number of People I could preach to in the United States in the same time, from the compactness of the Circuits, and the crowded state of the Inhabitants. Now for me, I urged, to spend my life in America for nothing but *merely* to preach, would be to sacrifice so much of my usefulness, that it could not be agreeable to the will of God. Bishop Asbury

acknowledged the force of my arguments; & requested me to visit New England before the General Conference, which I accordingly did, though, I candidly confess, with much secret reluctance of mind; as I should lose the opportunity of seeing my Brethren at the Virginia and Alexandria Conferences, which, as I had come to the South, I sincerely desired to do; & should also be obliged to travel very much indeed in the Mail-Coaches with very disagreeable company in order to accomplish the Plan, & thereby preach much seldomer than otherwise I should have done: but I complied without making the least objection. Perhaps, dear respected Brethren, you will now ask me, "Why did you offer yourself to us?" I answer, "It was your unanimous vote at the General Conference, that the Episcopacy needed to be strengthened." I had been consecrated by our venerable Father in the Gospel, the late Mr. Wesley, a Bishop particularly for America. I had been the means of establishing your present form of Church-Government, which in a general view, (tho' it will admit of improvements,) I prefer to any other, I consider your union as of infinite importance to the continuation of the present revival. Your continent includes about a third part of the Land of the World. When fully cultivated & peopled, it will contain & support, perhaps, a thousand millions of Inhabitants, most of whom, I expect, will speak the English language. To preserve, therefore, your union that the work of God may progress with the progress of population, & at last leaven the whole Continent, lies very near my heart. I know that I am perfectly unworthy of the honour of *merely* preaching in all your Pulpits; but it is my duty to meet the calls of God, however unworthy I may be. If you consider my living &

labouring among you, will help to preserve this union, I shall think it the highest honour & happiness of my life so to do.

My precious Wife can travel under the Divine blessing five thousand miles a year, and I can travel ten thousand. But considering the circumstances before mentioned, it is my duty to have some explanation from you, before I come. I cannot come to you as a *mere* Preacher. As to my Circular Letter I recall it entirely, acknowledging that I laid down conditions which were not included in our reciprocal engagements. But I did not see things when I wrote it, as I do now. I hardly knew what to write, circumstanced as I was in respect to you: and you surely, my respected Brethren, must be conscious that an explanation of some kind is really necessary. Am I to come to you in any sense as a Bishop, & in what sense? I don't wish to act, if I come, but in perfect subordination to the General Conference, but yet still as a Bishop, & having a right to give my judgment in all Episcopal matters, unless I render myself unworthy of the Office. Do write to me, my dear Brethren, as soon as you have received this Letter. Send me Duplicates; one by the British Packet from New York, paying the postage to New York; otherwise it will not be sent off; and another by the first merchant ship; in which case, I believe I shall hear from you before the next British Conference sits, which I particularly desire to do. And now I leave this whole business in the hands of God & you. Pray for us. To God's most holy

keeping I commit you. May your blessed work flourish more & more; & your own hearts be ever full of Divine love.

I am, my very dear Friends, & Brethren,

Yours very affectionately & faithfully,

Thomas Coke

*Drew University Library*

*Though the heading of the letter is not given, it is quite clear that the addressee was Bennet Kendrick. The school and church at Wilmington are the subjects of discussion. An elegant church was built at Wilmington, which was referred to in Asbury's visit in 1805. As usual, the building of a church has its problems.*

WILMINGTON, N.C.

*January 16, 1806*

[*To Bennet Kendrick*]<sup>[133]</sup>

My very dear and faithful Son:

May the wisdom which is profitable to direct, and the power that is mighty to keep, be with you. I can only see the outside of things. As to the school it was not very pleasing to me to be put out of my house, so called, but it is said it is to keep away troublesome company; and employ a teacher, that he might not sink into mischievous melancholy. It is to be lamented that the country around is so unpromising, and the dwelling in danger, when the preacher is present or absent. God has kept us or we had been burnt up before this time. What I have told them to do, has been done in enlarging the house<sup>[134]</sup> and the galleries; the house ought to be weather-

boarded, on that old part, and the new part finished, and the outside painted. The black people like the whites grow worldly-minded.

I have thought that sister Beckards [or Richards] should have her board, and the house room gratis for her services. A preacher must not keep a horse; if he does this he ought to keep school or something to help the society. As to the property, I know but little about it, and I shall continue so until it is properly deeded, and entered on a book by lots. I have thought if we had not better stop leasing our lots, that we may not get crowded. I am by no means pleased with the dwelling house standing so near the church. If the house would not fall to pieces I would have it moved ten feet towards the kitchen, and ten or fifteen feet added, and two new chimneys, one to the house, and another to the lodging rooms, and fire places above. There ought to [be] something collected from the white people. The object of a Christian school for white children cannot be put upon the Africans, that are not permitted to raise any benefit from it at all. Again, I cannot shackle the appointments with this, that the preacher stationed here shall be schoolmaster.

I have had great groaning and altercation about Brother Myers<sup>[135]</sup> removal. If any thing might be done that a school might be kept under the superintendence of the preacher (but I might send a man unfitted for that,) a schoolhouse ought to be built if it was judged proper, but I cannot but tell every man among us, not to entangle himself with the affairs of this

world. You are wise and skillful and must judge of what is right.

It is not impossible as the Conference takes extraordinary visits in going a Christmasing that at some happy period it might come here, and be held once in four or five years in North Carolina. I wish that this year should conclude on improvement in Wilmington. I am looking to you that I have always found faithful. I guess your collection will be six hundred dollars this year. You will not spend above two hundred dollars in house keeping. The housekeeper may keep a girl, but not a woman with a child and husband. I hope that you will take the trouble to supply the house with what you will want, just what you choose, but do it yourself, and give the account to the stewards, and let them supply you with money. There is complaint from the old lady, that she is [two words lost] difficulty and the people, the blacks have themselves and their own work to do, you must read, and put in a word and guess at the rest. I have been very much afflicted by riding through the excessive cold. You can write to me in Baltimore by the month of July. We shall wish to know your spiritual and temporal state in Wilmington. I am confidently, yours in Jesus,

F. Asbury

The Southern Christian Advocate. *Transcribed by A.D.*

*Betts*

*Here Asbury is following the example of Wesley and giving suggestions for healing. Some of his concoctions were very*



*primitive, and of course useless so far as cancer is concerned. John Wesley had already written his book, Physic, which had gone into several editions.*

ISLE OF WIGHT [VA.]

February 22, 1806

[To Mrs. Mary Pilkinton]<sup>[136]</sup>

My very dear Sister:

May great grace rest upon you now and in the power of death. I feel for your soul and body. The latter must return to death, and dust, the former, to endless bliss. If you are not too far gone, one peck of red oak bark burnt to ashes, boiled to a very stiff substance, to make a plaster applied and reapplied till the roots of the cancer are eaten away. Then apply a soft healing salve of malorate or any healing salve. You will be well, by the blessing of God. Oh my sister faith and prayer, and perfect love, and then to glory. Your bishops, one is sixty, the other<sup>[137]</sup> is near 70, and we have seven conferences to visit, and the seventeen United States, and about 5000 miles to ride in nine months. I have many letters to write and my eyes fail but my faith is stronger than ever.

The glorious increase, Virginia Conference 2390, Western Conference 813, South Carolina 965, pray with your latest breath for Zion's glory. We hope there were near 100 souls converted in Norfolk and Portsmouth during the sitting of conference and we hope for another 100 before all the preachers leave the towns. Oh, glory Hallelujah, and a rich supply of preachers for every station and circuit. I am your dear brother that knoweth how to feel for, and pity the

afflicted and fatherless and widows, that are widows in deed Christians, in deed, thy maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name. May the everlasting arms surround you now and ever.

Your father, brother and friend,

Francis Asbury  
*Duke University Library*

*The notes prepared by Frank Baker make this letter one of the most interesting in the collection. The relations of Coke and Asbury have been the subject of much discussion and some controversy.*

NEW YORK, NEW YORK  
May 7, 1806

[*To Thomas Coke*]

My very dear Brother Coke:

Grace grace attend thee, and thine, and the ministers of Christ and people of God in every land. Having passed my three score years, I feel the happiness of seeing each other again, can we ever forget the days and nights we have sweetly spent together; spirits sweetly joined, and not a jar;<sup>[138]</sup> unless Diotrephe's<sup>[139]</sup> here, or there, formed for discord, whisper'd evilly. Ah my brother the deep rivers, creeks, swamps, and deserts we have travelled together, and glad to find a light to hear the voice of human, or domestick creature; the mountain rains, and chilling colds or burning heats, to say nothing of the perils of the deep. How oft you have stemmed the flood, the vast Atlantic with Columbian courage. Only be thou

faithfull unto death and Jesus will give thee the crown of life,  
*Life eternal Life!*

After riding chiefly upon horseback till the last summer, I have bought a very light stage waggon, by this mode I can visit the seven conferences with most of the cities and towns in the year. I have a young man<sup>[140]</sup> to drive, write, and preach, every night, when I preach in the day, unless when we are upon our flights, 40, 50, or more miles in the day. In 5 of the 7 conferences we have an increase of members 8273, preachers 58, but as judgment is begun at the house of God we mean to have no cyfers [zeros] in our connection; I do not calculate upon an increase of above 25 or 30 preachers.

As to the work of God it is greater than ever, and will be universal, it is growing general. In the 5 conferences past, we must calculate upon 500 subjects of restoring, converting, and sanctifying grace at the times of sitting: harmony, zeal, and order, animates the whole campmeetings.<sup>[141]</sup> Oh Glory, O Glorious! In Delaware the millennium is certainly begun. They can live without slavery, or liquid fire, the presiding elder has planned 100 nights and days to be in the woods. This work is now prevailing from Oconee, to Kennebeck River.<sup>[142]</sup> In my last route from Baltimore to Baltimore, 4000 miles in 8 months, I visited and revisited in part Delaware, Pennsylvania, Jersey, York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, indeed I did touch the State of Vermont.

You will not expect to hear from me but once in a year. I shall change my mode and go north west, and not return through the cities. I shall go like the scape goat into the wilderness, and rest from this tempest of trouble with the conferences; from June to September. If you wish to have any thing for your magazine from America, chaste and purified, I would advise you to print from our Annual Letter Book. I would advise you to commit the care of your books to Cooper and Wilson.<sup>[143]</sup> I go like the mail stage in all parts of the continent.

What God will do with the old I can not say but I think the new world will be converted by 1000 in a year. And yet I must say American sinners, are the greatest sinners upon earth, they sin against such mercy, blessings, and privileges. We are young in age; but old as a people, growing in pride and fulness of bread; but when I think, we hope, ours and others, form 5000 Gospel ministers, men, we hope, that feel the truth; and preach it, and when I hope for the prayers of many, ten thousands of people, I say surely God will work. I must not forget [to] inform you that the Western Conference has not been unmindful of the region beyond, far south west to Louisiana, and the Territories on the Mississippi. We have six missionaries that have gone six, eight, or nine hundred miles through the wilderness of savage tribes to the lost sheep of the house of America, the poor Christian savages. More of this you will see in our missionaries' own letters in the Annual Letter Book preparing for the press.

My dear friend you are a witness to my poverty for more than twenty years or I had done more for you, but I have attended you by night and day, have fitted your horse, held your bridle and stirrup, lent you [my] own horse, and with all the attention of a servant and often in a dark night called out, where is the Doctor, nor I alone, but all my brethren. You have never had more undissembled friendship shown to you than in America. I have a receipt from George Suckley<sup>[144]</sup> for 45 pounds thirteen and six pence sterling. This you will receive of Mr. Holley and pay to Mr. Rankin.<sup>[145]</sup> When I am able I will make up the one hundred sterling. As ever thine

F. Asbury

P.S. Since I began this letter I have received yours London, January 1, 1806. We have progressed in our campmeeting 4 days about 20 miles north east of New York. Oh what a time we have had, in uninterrupted work of God night and day. Never was an army in the time of war under greater discipline, men upon guard night and day, near 100 travelling, and local preachers; and possibly 3000 people; souls convicted, converted, sanctified night and day. Several praying societies at the tents; and, on the circle, should I guess I should say one if not 200 souls under operations of great preachers; my self, came and [gone?] thousand [year]; near two from Charleston; others from one hundred to fifty rich and poor many tents, markees, coaches, wagons, chairs. Monday the fourth day victory! victory declared upon our side, preaching at 10, 2 o'clock, 7, midnight, and cock crowing. Oh, the power of overwhelming power! upon the preachers, the members, the people of the world. We felt God

was so great in the praying exercises we could not call off the people to preaching, seeing that the preachers like the priest at the dedication could not stand before the Lord, weeping, weeping on all sides. You will excuse me when I tell you I have not slept an hour in bed.

You will find me with a letter . . . Oh my Brother it is matter of joy that so much of life is past with me, that I am not dead, nor damned, backslidden, as some have shamefully done. I have heard of but one preacher dead this year, Brother Iliff,<sup>[146]</sup> that died immediately after the sitting of the Philadelphia Conference last year. When I think I am in the sixty first year of my life, 44 of my publick labours, the 40th year of my slight travelling; and have been so much exposed to good and bad preachers, and people; I feel humbled for any imprudence; forgive me my friend, if I have ever grieved or offended you, for if I have, it was unwillingly. If I knew how to address Mrs. Coke<sup>[147]</sup> I would do it, but St. Paul has done it, and told us what the wife of a deacon, and bishop ought to be. I am to you both one of your best and faithful affectionate friends

F. Asbury

*Photostat at Methodist Mission House, London.*

*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

*This is the third letter to Epaphras Kibby which has come to light. He was a member of the New England Conference and in 1806 was pastor at New Bedford. It seems that Kibby*

*was to miss the annual conference, and Asbury is stressing the importance of the annual conference.*

WALTHAM, [MASS.]

*May 29, 1806*

[*To Epaphras Kibby*]

My dear Kibby:

May great grace attend thee as a Christian and minister of the Gospel. Brother Pickering has informed me you are in New Bedford and the prospects are pleasing. You are past the follies of youth; and are not to be taken with appearances, without fruit. You know the Methodist and Gospel Doctrine; and what is the Methodist and scripture discipline. You will walk closely with God, you will possess in your own soul, and preach to others, Gospel purity, Christian perfection.

In my own soul I have great consolations. I may boast a little to a confidant, 5000 miles in nine months, is my count. I have visited six of the 7 Conferences. God, the Lord was with us at all of them; but eminently Norfolk, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, we hope one hundred souls were blest, converted, reconverted, or sanctified at each seat of the three Conferences. At New York nothing special, but at the Campmeeting 22 miles north great! Great! operations.

The net increase this year in the six Conferences, 9990, besides deaths, removals, and expulsions. Query with me, if it is one-third of the fruit of our labours, when many are out of reach of society; others taken by other denominations. It seems you can not possibly attend Conference; you should

have written. We must try to compound with our up Land Brethren, to come down to the water once in two years; that we may have a full conference once in two years at least; it is not easy to tell the great use, and dignity, of our Annual Conference to tone, and retone the Connection; swiftly increasing annually by (the) thousand, to the extremities of the East, and West, North, and South above 2000 miles.

I am in the same affection and truly yours,

F. Asbury

*New England Methodist Historical Society, Boston School  
of Theology*

*Richard Whatcoat has died, and Thomas Coke's proposals to return to America under certain conditions have been turned down. There is now only one active bishop. Asbury realizes that something must be done to strengthen the episcopacy.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

July 15, 1806

[*To Bennet Kendrick*]<sup>[148]</sup>

My very dear Son:

Grace, mercy and peace attend thee. Zion travaileth, she bringeth forth children. This is the great year of God. I have gone like the mail-stage three thousand miles since I saw you. I have passed and repassed from hence through all the States, in brief, from Baltimore to the District of Maine, through New Hampshire, Vermont, and the State of [New] York, campmeetings, campmeetings. I have heard of eight or ten



north of [New] York. I attended three. Our Baltimore, Philadelphia and New England Conferences were blessed seasons.

On the Eastern shore of Delaware and Maryland it is reported, with all the certainty the case will admit, that about four thousand have been converted at the camp and quarterly meetings since the Philadelphia Conference in May, and one thousand sanctified. Peace and union in the conferences and city societies.

Dear Whatcoat,<sup>[149]</sup> after four years awful affliction, and three months martyrdom of pain, with the gravel and stone, died in meekness, patience and triumph, July 5th. Such a man I never knew in Europe or America. Who ever saw him laugh, or heard him speak an idle word; unspotted character for forty-seven or eight years.

Dr. Coke<sup>[150]</sup> has made proposals to serve the connection on a different ground, the conferences, all that have heard, have rejected the Doctor's letter, the answers are all reserved, and sent on, for every conference has written. Nothing is hidden.

Indeed, I did think very seriously about building White Chapel at the other end of the town, wholly for the whites. I felt for the awful fire, poor Wilmington! You are on the right track, go on, slow, safe, and sure.

I am just crossing the line for the Western Conference. Brother Crawford<sup>[151]</sup> is gone to his home circuit; never I think

will I take another man around the continent with me, unless he stands upon the same ground with myself. I will save my own and his feelings. I am alone in a sulky, and shall take help as it offers. Tell George<sup>[152]</sup> his letter came to George<sup>[153]</sup> of Boston. It was read in the Conference, I believe every man felt it. I wonder he has not written to some man of standing in every conference. I did not hear a single sentiment controverted. In writing to you I write to George,<sup>[154]</sup> to all. I am in haste in earnest.

Thine the same,

F. Asbury

P.S. Glorious increase of numbers of members—10,625. Increase of preachers 36—others like you swept the docket, no I will and I will not, shall, and I shall not. Judgment is begun at the house of God—one death<sup>[155]</sup>—two expelled.<sup>[156]</sup> Several, yea, all the conferences have furnished some choice and most excellent young men. Some dear good men are tremblingly alive for the Superintendency, they see it all but done—in the hands of a weak old man of sixty-one years of age. I feel something must be done speedily! Nothing but the expense of postage prevents me forwarding the minutes, they have been out a week.

Southern Christian Advocate. *Transcribed by Albert D. Betts*

*Alexander M'Caine was one of the three preachers assigned to Baltimore City in 1805. He was getting restless because he was unable to support his family. Jesse Lee in his*

*A Short History of the Methodists says that M'Caine retired in 1806 to support his family. However, in 1815 he reentered the traveling connection and continued until 1821, when he finally retired from the Methodist Episcopal Church ministry. He frequently traveled with Asbury. After Asbury's death he became one of the reformers and later one of the founders of the Methodist Protestant Church. He served as one of its leaders in South Carolina and Alabama, and served as secretary of the General Conference. He was one of a group of reformers who were expelled from the church for agitation. He died in 1856 in his ninetieth year.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

July 16, 1806

[*To Alexander M'Caine*]<sup>[157]</sup>

My dear Son:

If I loved thee less, I should not put myself to pain and scribbling. I love you, you know. I have always manifested it. Your honest bluntness I approve, &c.

As ever,

F. Asbury

*Alexander M'Caine, A Defence of the Truth, 15*

*Asbury wrote Coke shortly after the death of Whatcoat to tell him of it. He suggests that a service be conducted by Coke in England. Asbury gives his appreciation of Whatcoat. The remainder of the letter is largely taken up with an account of the work.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

*July 17, 1806*

[*To Thomas Coke*]<sup>[158]</sup>

My honoured Brother:

Grace, peace, power and prudence always attend you. Your letter of May 5th is before me. Our venerable Whatcoat<sup>[159]</sup> resteth from his labours. He left the world of sorrow July 5th at the house of the late Governor Bassett, Delaware, Dover. Oh why should I stain his inimitable character with recommendation. For near 50 years as a Christian, near 40 as a local and travelling preacher, 37 years he has been employed in the grand consequential station, upon the continent, cities, districts, and superintendency. Never was there a European character so pleasing to the Americans or more generally loved, and lamented. Whoever saw him laugh, or heard him speak an idle word. Deadness to the world! he died without money sufficient to pay his expenses, had he been charged.

While the present generation lives, Whatcoat will never be forgotten. For some years he has been awfully afflicted with the gravel, which terminated in the stone. He suffered martyrdom in pain night and day. He travelled near 3000 miles the last year of his life. As he lived, so he died a pattern of patience and victory. I think his funeral you ought to preach in Wednesburg, the society he long graced with his membership, may they never have a more unworthy member in America, a meaner superintendent or bishop.

I have lost a friend, a father, a brother! He was my first choice as a colleague to America. He had many traits in his character. I have not so fully seen in myself or any other man, so universally serious, an Israelite indeed, envy itself could not charge him with guile, in fine, and in fact. I think him to have been one of the very best characters in the British or American Connexion. Had he ceased to labour like other old men, he might have lived to 88, possibly he is passed 70. You express your pleasure he was able to attend so many or all the conferences; this may be done by riding 3000 miles, but Brother Whatcoat had visited the 35 districts as one charge; and every circuit 5000 miles in 10 months is what a superintendent ought to do.

From [New] York I took a hop to Portland, Dartmouth, Vermont, up the heights and rocks of White River, and down Onion River to Burlington, upon Lake Champlain, Ticonderoga and Crown Point, 1000 miles back to [New] York. Oh the glorious prospects in general, I suppose that north of New York there has been and will be 20 campmeetings. I came the first of May, 1806 to the end of the year. Eastern Shore excells all. We have good reason to believe that 4000 souls have been converted in the two districts, and 1000 souls. Dr. Chandler<sup>[160]</sup> writes 40 nights in the woods since Conference held in Philadelphia, April 4, 1806. Another Doctor says 110 nights more, to think of 150 nights in the woods at camp and Quarter meetings. Our people calculate largely of thousands that attend, some go from 10,000 to 15,000, they talk of a campmeeting to begin today near Dover, at Wheat they expect 20,000 souls. At a

campmeeting in Sussex, Delaware, late June, from the 12th to the 17th, 1165 converted toward the 4 thousand, I calculated upon, 606 sanctified, they do not include persons convicted, and restored. These things will stretch the credibility of your British Brethren. I need not write often in this marvellous manner, once a year will do. As to the increase of numbers you will see in the minutes. It is a great thing to be an Oxonian,<sup>[161]</sup> a man of honor, and learning. Perhaps if you go to untying the knot you will find [work]? If people throughout then vomit when they are heart sick, or brain sick I leave them to like it. I have no disputes with any; they may have them [to] their selves.<sup>[162]</sup> I am in great respect to you, and — Mamma,<sup>[163]</sup> Sister Coke with all the Brethren preachers and people in Europe. I can only help you with my prayers who am your friend and Brother in Jesus,

F. Asbury

P.S. I have deposited in the hands of George Stuckley<sup>[164]</sup> (my trusty well beloved Brother) near the sum of 50 pounds sterling to pass your hands to Mr. Rankin<sup>[165]</sup> on Mr. Williams<sup>[166]</sup> account. Should I live another year I hope to pay the whole next year but I am the same pecunious man I always was. I travel in a sulky alone, and had to borrow 105 dollars to pay for it. I may boast of my riding 5000 miles a year but I preach but little only on Sabbaths. I have neither time nor strength.

*Duke University Library*

*The subject of this letter is Christian perfection or sanctification. Asbury preached the doctrine and insisted that his preachers preach it. Henry Smith's Recollections are good word pictures of the early itinerant preachers.*

DR. WATTERS', MONTGOMERY, MD.<sup>[167]</sup>

*July 20, 1806*

[*To Henry Smith*]<sup>[168]</sup>

My very dear Smith:

May great grace attend you. I consent to what you say, in general. O, purity! O, Christian perfection! O, Sanctification! It is heaven below to feel all sin removed. Preach it, whether they will bear or forbear. Preach it. You have never experienced the realities of heaven or hell, but preach them. Some have professed it, [perfect love] but have fallen from it; others profess, but do not possess it. They trifle away life. They seldom use the gift God hath given them. I think we ought modestly to tell what we feel in the fullest. For two years past, amidst incredible toils, I have enjoyed almost inexpressible sensations. Our Pentecost is come, in some places, for sanctification.

I have good reason to believe that upon the Eastern Shore 4000 have been converted since the first of May last, and 1000 sanctified, besides souls convicted, and quickened, and restored: Oh glory, it will come across the Bay. I have reason to believe that at the Philadelphia Conference many of the preachers were powerfully blest in their own souls and covenanted to use ordinary and extraordinary means that have appeared in their being at least. Brother Chandler, 40 nights

and days in the woods at camp and quarterly meeting, and possibly will be 110 more before November. 10 campmeetings north of New York in about 2 months and more laid out now.

I think we congregate 2 millions in a year; and I hope for 100,000 souls convicted, converted, restored, or sanctified. The whole continent is awake. I am on a route of 3000 miles, from and to Baltimore. Such a work of God, I believe, was never known, for the number of people. The preachers will die in harvest field, as it lasts all the year. I believe Brother Whatcoat died a martyr for the work. Farewell in Jesus. I am still thine.

F. Asbury

P.S. I had to speak two hours to-day on the drought and was so worn out I had to write to forget myself.<sup>[169]</sup>

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Peter Cartwright was the best-known preacher of the West in the early days of American Methodism. He was born in Amherst County, Virginia, on the James River. His parents early moved to Kentucky. He was licensed to exhort in 1802 and formed the Livingston Circuit in 1803 at the age of nineteen. He did much to pioneer for the Methodist Church in Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. He was a striking figure, and not only took part in opening up the country but also took part in political life in Illinois. He was twice a member of the state legislature of the state of Illinois and ran*



*against Abraham Lincoln for Congress, but was defeated. He was a friend of Andrew Jackson and one of the founders of the Illinois State Historical Society. Cartwright was received on trial into the Western Conference in 1804 and was ordained deacon by Asbury in 1806.<sup>[170]</sup> He was ordained elder by Bishop McKendree in 1808. In that year Bishop Asbury appointed him a presiding elder. He preached for seventy years, retiring in 1875 at the age of eighty-five. He was a presiding elder for fifty-four years and a member of thirteen General Conferences.*

### The Ordination Certificate of Peter Cartwright

NOLlichuckie, TENNESSEE

*September 16, 1806*

Know all by these presents, That I, Francis Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, have this day set apart Peter Cartwright for the office of a Deacon in the said Methodist Episcopal Church; a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that work; and do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a proper person to administer the ordinances of baptism, marriage, and the burial of the dead, in the absence of an elder, and to feed the flock of Christ, so long as his spirit and practice are such as become the Gospel of Christ, and he continueth to hold fast the form of sound words, according to the established doctrine of the Gospel.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this sixteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and six.

Francis Asbury  
Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, 97

*Henry Smith was on the Baltimore Circuit. Asbury needed him in South Carolina and thought he was doing him a favor to ask him to come. However, Smith thought differently according to his entry in his Recollections. Joshua Wells went to Wilmington. Smith was changed to Fells Point Circuit in the Baltimore District.*

WAXSAWS, S.C.  
October 10, 1806

[To Henry Smith]

My dear Son:

Grace and peace attend thy spirit. I was musing in my mind yesterday, when feeling so troubled for the South Carolina Conference, with all that impartiality that becomes a general superintendent of seven annual conferences. It suddenly sprung up in my mind to write to Henry Smith to come with all haste to Charleston, if possible, by the first or middle of December. Immediately I write, and do not confer with flesh and blood. Our fields in this conference are white for harvest. The laborers are faint and few. Not that I would call preachers from other conferences, supposing the natives of that state were not competent, if we had them; or [willingly] invite men to come so far. Your rheumatick affliction may meet with a

cure in one year or nine months in Charleston. Preachers do not enter, nor continue in the work here, as in the middle conferences, to marry is to locate! The people are short lived, we must make haste to save them.

In Charleston we have one thousand members. They have souls. 3000 steady Sabbath hearers, that change, perhaps, to 15 or 20,000, in the whole year. I advise you to sell your horse, or lend him to a preacher, if you cannot sell. You will take the mail stage, and come in haste; (the King's business requireth haste). But, after all, if you feel any insurmountable difficulties in your way, or stubborn objections, I deal not in imperious commands. I must do the best I can with the strength we have. With the same post, a letter accompanies yours to Joshua Wells. If you can meet him in Baltimore, you can come together to Fayetteville.<sup>[171]</sup> Then he [Wells] will turn off to Wilmington.

As to the expenses of your passage, I shall desire the stewards to pay the whole. We have two meeting-houses, 60 by 40 feet each. We have a dwelling-house in the suburbs of the city. Two rooms, one above and one below, for each preacher, and anything that you will need; and as wicked a city as any in America. But Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. I have visited that place, and stayed for days and nights among boarders, as wicked as fiends. Now I have provided a house for my children. I cannot as long as I superintend, which may not be long, see any part of the work suffer, if there is help to be had. Your age, your steady mind, and your not being incumbered, at present, have moved me.

I have had an awful summer for heat and ill health; but a blessed conference. Good news from the Missionaries, added between 1300 or 1400 in the Western Conference, all union and love. Brother Watson<sup>[172]</sup> or some preacher will supply your place. You will write to me at Sparta, Hancock county, Georgia, if possible, before the conference rises, that I may know what to do with the stations, when I know whether you can come or not.<sup>[173]</sup> I have just escaped from the mountains; I have rode rapidly; and can hardly find a place to sit down without the bawling of children. Night comes on; and I close with saying, preach sanctification, directly and indirectly, in every discourse. My love to all the brethren. I am as ever, your father and friend,

F. Asbury

P.S. I shall only observe, that Baltimore Conference has about 18,000 members of society; South Carolina 12,000. I doubt if we shall be able to send out 40 travelling preachers from the south. Baltimore has about sixty, besides local men. We shall in the south meet in time, the brethren in the west, and take South America, and all the Floridas, French and Spanish, if the work goes on. Farewell.

F.A.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Thomas Haskins was a friend of long standing. From this letter it is evident that he had been appointed trustee of Dickins' estate and that he was charged with settling the Book*

*Concern business which had been in the hands of Dickins. It seems that a Mr. Amatt had first had responsibility but had died. This letter is printed in two sections in Francis H. Tees, The Beginnings of Methodism in England and in America.*

HANGING ROCK, S.C.  
20 MILES NORTHWEST OF CAMDEN  
*October 17, 1806*

[*To Thomas Haskins*]<sup>[174]</sup>

My dear Son:

Grace and peace from Him that was, and is, and is to come. Amen. John Dickins<sup>[175]</sup> knew his real friends, both to his temporal and spiritual interests. He wisely made choice of you at his death as his friend and a friend to the connection, you performed your trust. Happy it might have been, had all things continued in your management to the end; but of that no more, it is done.

The widow<sup>[176]</sup> writes me her friend Amatt is no more. May he rest in peace! I must request you if possible to take up the settlement of that broken estate; if you do not who will? I do not expect that the widow or her children will receive any more benefit; no they must seek support from other sources, as they have done for four years past. I wish only that the profits may go to the suffering creditors, only this I know that Mrs. Dickins will feel more ease of mind when she knows where she stands, although she has little or no hope of receiving any relief from that quarter, except it is mental. I hope you can begin where Mr. Amatt left it, as he had progressed.

For my part I have always been poor but now I am in debt. I gathered up the fragments of Williams<sup>[177]</sup> books and deposited the hundred pounds sterling, which is burnt up in Cokesbury and Mr. Rankin<sup>[178]</sup> made me executor, without my will. I told what I had done. He now demands the money and I must pay my Brother Rankin, or that part of my character will not come up to the other. I must pay 100 sterling out of my own pocket.

You see now how you and I have gained by the College, with my ten years toil and drudgery, and abuse, if any are made, we may expect the College will come up. Our dearly beloved Coleman<sup>[179]</sup> has published Jarratt's<sup>[180]</sup> Life in letters, with a kick at Cokesbury, (Shoemakers and Tailors) to set up a college.

I have this pleasure that we have the greatest possible harmony in the conferences. All the conferences are satisfied with your conduct, as trustees, your correctness and fidelity, and so they would [be] were you to publish as your fund expense, a few hundred copies of the charter, with a fervent begging letter, and you would have supplies from the living or the dead or both.

My dear Son I hope you are more than ever devoted to God in preaching; and living; time is short. I'm greatly amended in health, than when I wrote last. I have only to say I sit on a joyless height, a pinnacle of power, too high to sit secure and unenvied, too high to sit secure without divine aid. My bodily and mental powers fail, I have a charge too great for many

men with minds like mine. I hope not to jump down, fall down, or be thrown by haughty ambition, but I mean to step down as soon and safely and completely as I can; and not to stand alone, but break the fire by having more objects than one.

I am happy, the ship is so safe in harbor with an increase of 10,000 annually but how many more, if the dead, and removed and expelled were numbered. Understand me right I mean to live for life, but not alone, the executive is far too weak. 4 years my local labours were little inferior to many traveling preachers. In the year 66 I began my present line of labour, between 40 and 50 times I have [crossed] the Allegheny mountains, swamps, and rivers, of the south going and returning.

When a man is in his 62 year it is not safe to trust a great work in his trembling hands. A president of a state of the states ought to know when to retire for fear of damages, and if heaven would insure my life, bodily and mental powers, [I] would heartily advise my brethren to provide immediately for such a charge! and not to rest it with me, or any one man upon earth. Only to think, seven conferences, 500 traveling [preachers], possible two or three thousand local and official men, possible near ten millions in ——[?] or congregational charge, 100,000 in membership. Lord be merciful to me. Amen, pray for,

Your father,

Francis Asbury  
*Westminster Theological Seminary*

*Again Asbury is concerned over the camp meetings and is reporting them to Thornton Fleming. He is still sending around the news of the death of Whatcoat. It evidently took months to get news to the preachers. He reports especially on New York and the Western Conference.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.  
November 7, 1806

[*To Thornton Fleming*]<sup>[181]</sup>

My dear Son:

Great grace and peace be multiplied to thee and thine. The year 1806<sup>[182]</sup> has produced great changes in the natural and political world—but in America it is in the spiritual world! Stith Mead,<sup>[183]</sup> from the Richmond District, from March to August, 400 converted and a number sanctified. Shands<sup>[184]</sup> built houses or huts for camp meetings, and lived nearly 100 days and nights in the woods till November. Brother Chandler,<sup>[185]</sup> 150 days and nights in the woods, from May 3 to November, 1806. From May to August 29, converted 5368, sanctified, 2805, in the Delaware District. Somerset camp meeting, converted, 1165, sanctified, 606. Dover campmeeting, converted, 123; sanctified, 919.

Oh, my brother, when all our quarterly meetings become campmeetings,<sup>[186]</sup> and 1000 souls should be converted, our American millennium will begin. And when the people in our towns and country assemble by thousands, and are converted by hundreds, night after night, what times! Lord, increase our



faith. Nothing is too hard for him who made and redeemed a world.

I was gladdened in the Western Conference increase, 1400; increase of preachers, 12. Our missionaries healthy and successful in the new purchase,<sup>[187]</sup> When those new lands, discovered by Col. Lewis,<sup>[188]</sup> shall be peopled, we shall send out to the Pacific Ocean. The universal harmony of the connexion foretells a period at hand for the organization of the Superintendence, so as not to rest it with such weight upon shoulders burdened with the weight of threescore years, and deeply read in cares.

There is a blessed work breaking out in the city and State of New York, which, we hope, will not only spread through the Lake country, but for God and his cause. The time may come when I must try the Redstone<sup>[189]</sup> settlement once more. Our Western Conference is at Chillicothe, September 14, 1807. I hope, if there is anything special on the District, you will write a complete narrative of the work to put into my hands at Baltimore Conference, should we live.

Dear Father Whatcoat, after thirteen weeks illness,—gravel, stone, and dysentery combined—died, a martyr to pain, in all his patience and resignation to the will

of God. May we, like him, if we live long, live well, and die like him.

As ever thine,

Francis Asbury

The Pittsburgh Conference Journal, *March 8, 1834.*

*Transcribed by W.G. Smeltzer*

*Was this written to Alexander M'Caine or to someone else? M'Caine says it is another letter in his possession. It refers to the correspondence of Coke, especially his circular letter printed above.*

SPARTA, GEORGIA

*December 27, 1806*

[*To Alexander M'Caine*]<sup>[190]</sup>

I wonder exceedingly why the British connexion should be so agitated with Dr. Coke about his letter to us. They seem like bees, and all heads! But had the Dr. only written his letter<sup>[191]</sup> to me, I would have handed it to every conference at his desire. Yea if it had been an impeachment of my own person. \* \* \* \* \* I do not correspond with any as I do with you. Only look well to your soul; to be holy is to be happy. Farewell in the Lord. Amen.

F. Asbury

*Alexander M'Caine, Letters on the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 153*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] The date and place are not given; however, it seems clear that this letter was written at the Philadelphia Conference. It was evidently written before the letter of June, 1804.
- [2] Roberts took time for either study or lecturing.
- [3] This letter was dated only 1804, probably New York State.
- [4] In 1804 George Roberts was moved from Philadelphia to Baltimore. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [5] Joshua Wells was appointed to Philadelphia in George Roberts' place. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [6] Seely Bunn had been pastor of the Baltimore Circuit and was changed to Washington City and Georgetown. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [7] This date is on the envelope but may be incorrect.
- [8] Pierre Van Cortlandt, Jr., was born in 1762 and died in 1848. He entered the office of Alexander Hamilton. He served in the affairs of New York State but did not become as famous as his father and brother. In 1801 he married Catherine Clinton, daughter of George Clinton. He lived at Peekskill in the family home. He was an officer in the militia after the Revolution. (Arthur Bruce Moss.)
- [9] The end of the page is torn off.
- [10] There is no explanation of the accident.
- [11] The second page is torn off at the top.
- [12] The third page has the top torn off.
- [13] Mrs. Cornelia Beekman lived with her brother at Peekskill.
- [14] Pierre, Jr., became an Episcopalian and was a warden in the church at Peekskill for years. (Arthur Bruce Moss.)
- [15] The salutations are to his father, mother, and wife.

- [16] Manley's was in or near Philadelphia. (See *Journal*, August 10, 1804.)
- [17] There is no mention of the person with whom Jane was left. However, there is a name on the back of the letter which could be Radnor. Asbury refers to visiting a place, Radnor, at this time.
- [18] Evidently unknown.
- [19] Place not given. Probably Perry Hall, the Gough home. (See *Journal*, August 14-15, 1804.)
- [20] See note on Zachary Myles, letter May 5, 1804. Frequently called Zachariah.
- [21] Charles Atmore was author of Atmore's "Memorials." (See *Journal* and letter to Atmore, June 3, 1803.)
- [22] Traveling preachers.
- [23] William Myles.
- [24] Now West Virginia.
- [25] Daniel Hitt, presiding elder in the Alexandria District, Baltimore Conference. (See letter of January 21, 1804, to Hitt.)
- [26] Stone Chapel, the Strawbridge church. On August 5, 1804, Francis Asbury says in his *Journal*: "[New] York is the valley of dry bones. O Lord, I lament the deplorable state of religion in all our towns and cities."
- [27] See introduction to letter to Ezekiel Cooper, May —, 1804.
- [28] The date is not certain, but M'Caine puts it August 30, 1804, the day it was received and labeled. (See M'Caine, *Letters on the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 153.)

[29] The word "manner," it is presumed, was intended to have been written; but it is not in the original.

[30] "Asbury says David Simpson proves that the church of England is as anti-Christian as the church of Rome. And is not Methodist episcopacy as anti-Christian as either? Whatever arguments will prove the former will unquestionably establish the latter. Indeed, we think, all things considered, it is more anti-Christian, than either the church of England or the church of Rome—a point that shall be brought under review in the progress of these letters. 'Reform or Ruin' is the watchword for Methodists. Mr. Asbury gives a side blow at Dr. Coke and his 'collegiate qualifications,' and a tremendous thrust at these Methodist preachers who aspire after the honors of D.D. Away with such nonsense. Methodism was more prosperous before it was loaded with such excrescences than it has been since." (M'Caine, *Letters*, 153.)

[31] Daniel Hitt, presiding elder of the Alexandria District.

[32] Pennsylvania.

[33] Jacob Murphy's was near Union Town. There the Methodists had preaching in Murphy's barn.

[34] Stevens was upon the Monongahela. (See *Journal*, August 16, 1803.)

[35] John Beck's, near Ohio River in West Virginia. (See *Journal*, October 21, 1804.)

[36] Bishop Whatcoat.

[37] Joseph Cresap's. (See *Journal*, November 3, 1804.)

[38] Daniel Hitt, presiding elder of the Alexandria District, Baltimore Conference.

[39] There is no date attached. The agents Cooper and Wilson were appointed in 1804, and the Book Concern was set up in New York in the latter part of the year. (Phoebus, *Beams of Light on Early Methodism in America*, 282.)

[40] There is no person addressed on the letter, but it seems to be to Ezekiel Cooper. "The book business was carried on in Philadelphia under the management of Ezekiel Cooper until 1804, when it was moved by a vote of the General Conference to New York, where it was carried on under the control of the same gentleman, aided by Rev. John Wilson as assistant editor and general book steward.

"When the business was moved to New York, Mr. Cooper was allowed \$600 a year; and, although he was 'principal editor' and was receiving the above salary from the book room for his services, he took charge of the society in Brooklyn, Long Island, and insisted upon receiving from that society the disciplinary allowance of a travelling preacher. Such was the statement made to the writer by those who paid the money. Be it, however, as it may, his name stands on the *Minutes* of 1805 and 1806 as being stationed in Brooklyn. In 1808, Mr. Cooper's constitutional term of service expired, and the General Conference of that year, being so well pleased with the manner in which he managed the 'Concern,' voted him a bonus of \$1000, so said the reports of the day." (M'Caine, *Letters*, 11.)

[41] Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers was one of Wesley's women leaders, "one of the most saintly women of that first generation of Methodists." (Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century*, 496.)

- [42] The Rev. Mr. Peard Dickinson was an English Methodist preacher. He was Wesley's clerical helper and had been curate at Shoreham. There are several references in Wesley's *Journal* and *Letters* to him.
- [43] Thomas Walsh was a Methodist preacher. Asbury read the volume during his confinement in Delaware. (See *Journal*, July 17, 1779.) "Walsh became one of Wesley's most gifted and saintly preachers." (Wesley, *Letters*, III, 40.)
- [44] Joseph Everett was born in Maryland June 17, 1732. He was appointed to the Lancaster Circuit in Virginia in 1785. He was one of the preachers at the Christmas Conference of 1784. Everett is called the father of Methodism in the northern neck of Virginia. He had been brought up in an Anglican home but was converted from a life of vice during the New Light revival. Everett was awakened by Asbury and became an outstanding preacher. He was responsible for much of the growth of the church on the eastern shore of Maryland and Virginia, where he served as presiding elder. He served on several districts as presiding elder from 1796 to 1803.
- [45] William P. Chandler was secretary of the conference. The Philadelphia Conference had management of the Book Concern. A standing committee was appointed on it. After Dickins' death Ezekiel Cooper was chairman. Thomas Ware, John McClaskey, Christopher Spry, William McLenahan, Richard Swain, Solomon Sharp, and Charles Cavender were the other members.
- [46] Spelled Newbern now.
- [47] Daniel Hitt, presiding elder of the Alexandria District, Baltimore Conference. He was a Virginian who began to

travel in 1790. Hitt was one of Asbury's and McKendree's traveling companions and was for eight years the Book Agent in New York. He served as a presiding elder for eighteen years and remained unmarried. He died in Washington County, Maryland, in 1825. (See Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, IV, 79.)

[48] Virginia.

[49] Trent River.

[50] Pastor at Portland, Maine. (*Minutes*, 1805.)

[51] William Thacher, presiding elder in the New York District. (*Minutes*, 1805.)

[52] Augustus Jocelin or Jocelyn. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)

[53] Henry Willis, one of earliest preachers. He died in 1808.

[54] Ezekiel Cooper, pastor in New York. He had been Book Agent in Philadelphia. Asbury had to use pressure on him to move. (See letter above, May, 1804.) He continued to be Book Agent in New York. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)

[55] Benjamin Jones, a native of South Carolina; Josiah Gibson, a native of South Carolina; Nicholas Watters, a native of Maryland; and Wilson Lee, a native of Delaware. All died in 1805. (See *Minutes*, 1805, for memoirs.)

[56] See account of Ira Ellis in *Journal*, February 17, 1805.

[57] The Virginia Conference was in session then at Edmund Taylor's in Granville County, North Carolina. At that time this was part of the Virginia Conference.

[58] There were four preaching places near the present site of Olive Branch Church at Gasburg, Woolsey's Barn, Dromgoole's, Mason's, and the old Olive Branch. Olive Branch and Woolsey's were used at the same time. (See Early's *Journal*.) However, Woolsey's and the others



ceased to be preaching places; and Olive Branch, though it was moved, is said to be the descendant of the others.

[59] The Virginia Conference had been in session at Edmund Taylor's.

[60] This address was originally prepared for the South Carolina Conference, then altered for the Virginia Conference, later altered for other conferences. It is interesting to see the differences in the address as it went down to the local church. The South Carolina original has not come to light.

[61] An inlet of the Bay of Fundy.

[62] Pastor, Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in 1804. Moved in 1805.

[63] Thomas Ware, presiding elder on the Jersey District.

[64] Sunderman evidently lived at or near Woodbury, New Jersey.

[65] Bishop Whatcoat.

[66] Coke was in England.

[67] The original of this address was prepared for the South Carolina Conference and was then altered for other conferences. This evidently went to the Delaware District and to the charges from the Philadelphia Conference. A copy of it is still on the quarterly conference *Minutes* at Onancock, Virginia. (This copy was taken from the Onancock *Minutes*. The South Carolina original has not come to light.)

[68] Secretary of the Philadelphia Conference.

[69] The names are not repeated in the original.

[70] Daniel Hitt was presiding elder on the Baltimore District in Baltimore.

- [71] George Strebeck, who had left the church in 1793. He had first gone with the Lutherans to Pearl Street Church, New York. They built a larger church on Mott Street. This later became an Episcopal church. (See letter, July 28, 1805.)
- [72] Refers to the possible defection of George Roberts, pastor in Baltimore. Roberts located in 1806. However, he went into medicine and remained a faithful local preacher.
- [73] Ralph Williston went to the Episcopal Church. He is shown as withdrawn in 1806. He was pastor at Fredericktown, Maryland, in 1805.
- [74] The Rev. Enoch George, presiding elder of Alexandria District. Hitt was at the time presiding elder of the Baltimore District. They had exchanged districts. George later became a bishop.
- [75] Hamilton Jefferson was on the Frederick Circuit (Maryland), Alexandria District.
- [76] John Bloodgood, pastor of Baltimore Circuit.
- [77] Bath Springs, Berkeley County, West Virginia.
- [78] Henry Dorsey Gough, Asbury's old friend of Perry Hall, Maryland.
- [79] Pastor of Talbot Circuit, Chesapeake District, Philadelphia Conference. This letter was the circular letter referred to several times in the letter and sent to members of the New York Conference and others.
- [80] Not addressed, but evidently Coke sent the letter to M'Caine. M'Caine was secretary of the General Conference.
- [81] See M'Caine, *Letters*, pp. 154-55 for paragraphs.
- [82] Presiding elder, Richmond, Virginia, District.
- [83] Joseph Crawford.

- [84] Evidently Jonathan Edwards. Both Asbury and Wesley had been interested in his works. Wesley published one volume.
- [85] Ezekiel Cooper.
- [86] Devereux Jarratt, the Episcopal preacher of Virginia. William Glendinning published three volumes of Jarratt's sermons. A set is in the Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress. (See notes to letter of January 11, 1796.)
- [87] Upon the receipt of the letter from Coke, Asbury wrote in his *Journal*, "Marriage is honorable in all—but to me it is a ceremony awful as death. Well may it be so, when I calculate we have lost the travelling labours of two hundred of the best men in America, or the world, by marriage and consequent location." (See *Journal*, July 9, 1805.)
- [88] Elijah R. Sabin was a presiding elder in the New England Conference on the Vermont District. (See *Minutes*, 1805.)
- [89] Letter defaced.
- [90] Editor and general Book Steward. (See *Minutes*, 1804.) Also pastor in Brooklyn.
- [91] John Wilson, assistant editor and general Book Steward. (See *Minutes*, 1804.) Also pastor in New York.
- [92] Joseph Crawford.
- [93] Carriage.
- [94] John Wilson, Assistant Book Agent. The conference evidently thought Wilson needed additional income.
- [95] Asbury and Crawford, having passed through New Haven when there was yellow fever, were barred by proclamation from entering New York. Therefore they stopped at George Suckley's nearby. (See *Journal*, July 28, 1800.)

- [96] In 1805 Thornton Fleming had completed his first four-year term as presiding elder on the Monongahela District, and in the appointments had been sent East to ride the Annapolis Circuit. This letter is obviously in response to a letter from Fleming requesting a retransfer to the West at the next annual conference, and possibly before conference, if possible. In the appointments for 1806 we find Fleming beginning his second term as presiding elder of the Monongahela District. (See *Minutes*, 1805-6.)
- [97] In 1805 Daniel Hitt was presiding elder of the Baltimore District in which Annapolis Circuit was located.
- [98] William Ridg(a)way had been admitted on trial in the Baltimore Conference in 1805 and assigned as the third preacher on the Harford Circuit. This circuit was under Daniel Hitt in the Baltimore District. (See *Minutes*, 1805.) (Notes by W.G. Smeltzer.)
- [99] Daniel Hitt.
- [100] Presiding elder on the Baltimore District.
- [101] Jesse Stoneman was at Pittsburgh in 1805 as pastor.
- [102] Thomas Budd had been on the Redstone Circuit, Pittsburgh District, in 1803 and was changed to the Berkeley Circuit in 1804 and to Clarksburg Circuit in 1805.
- [103] Thornton Fleming was on the Monongahela (Pittsburgh) District in 1804. For some reason he had been absent. (See *Journal*, September 1, 1804.) At the conference of 1805 he was placed at Annapolis on the Baltimore District. (See letter to Thornton Fleming, July 28, 1805.)
- [104] Asbury was at Lynn for conference from July 12 to 16. (See *Journal*.)

- [105] George Roberts was pastor in Baltimore under Daniel Hitt. He located in 1806 but practiced medicine and served as a local preacher.
- [106] Presiding elder of the Vermont District in 1804. Appointed to travel with Asbury. (See *Minutes*, 1804.)
- [107] Ralph Williston. At Frederick-Town, Maryland, in 1805. He is noted in the *Minutes* as withdrawn in 1806. He had become the pastor of "Strebeck's" Mort Street Episcopal Church.
- [108] George Strebeck joined the New York Conference in 1792 and was appointed to New York. In 1793 he was at Long Island. His name dropped out after that. J.B. Wakeley, *Lost Chapters, Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism*, 386-87, tells how he first became a Lutheran preacher, pastor of a little church in Pearl Street. Later another church was built on Mort Street. This became Episcopal, and Williston was pastor here. Strebeck died in Charleston or Savannah.
- [109] Presiding elder on the Camden District, South Carolina Conference.
- [110] Pennsylvania.
- [111] Philadelphia Conference.
- [112] James Aikens, pastor on the Accomack (Virginia) Circuit.
- [113] Richard Lyon, pastor on the Dover (Delaware) Circuit.
- [114] Christopher Spry was presiding elder on that district from 1796-99. He located in 1804. (See *Minutes*.)
- [115] Evidently Lewestown, Delaware. (*Minutes*, 1805.)
- [116] Maryland.
- [117] Henry Boehm and James Ridgaway were on this circuit. (*Minutes*, 1805.)

- [118] On the Eastern Shore of Virginia, near Franktown. It is a flourishing church.
- [119] Maryland.
- [120] *Ibid.*
- [121] *Ibid.*
- [122] *Ibid.*
- [123] Jesse Lee.
- [124] Pastor on the Gloucester, New Jersey, Circuit.
- [125] Presiding elder on the Jersey District.
- [126] Pastor with Totten on the Gloucester Circuit.
- [127] Richard Sneath, pastor on the Cecil Circuit, Chesapeake District.
- [128] William Bishop was a junior preacher on the Gloucester Circuit in the Jersey District.
- [129] Ephraim Chambers was pastor on the Kent Circuit, Chesapeake District.
- [130] Means the weepers in Hebrew. (See Judges 2:1-5.)
- [131] Thomas Sargent was pastor with George Roberts at Light Street, Baltimore.
- [132] William Larkin Duren, *Francis Asbury* (The Macmillan Co.), 224-25. Used by permission.
- [133] Bennet Kendrick was pastor at Wilmington.
- [134] Asbury says, "We had about fifteen hundred hearers in our house of worship, sixty six by thirty three feet, galleried all around. I gave order for the completion of the tabernacle and dwelling house, according to the charge left me by William Meredith." (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., January 19, 1806.)

[135] Lewis Myers was removed from the Bladen appointment on the Camden District to Charleston. (See *Minutes*, 1805, 1806.)

[136] She lived near Brunswick Courthouse, Virginia.

[137] Whatcoat.

[138] The relations of Asbury and Coke have drawn much speculation. It was so in their own day. In spite of the inevitable variances of opinion between two such great leaders, there was undoubtedly a bond of warm affection between them. On January 6, 1806, Coke addressed a letter to the New York Conference vindicating himself from their suspicions of him, but reiterating his conviction that it would be wasted effort for him to come to America "as a *mere* preacher," but only if he could help them by exercising episcopal functions, as he had originally been asked to do. (See Duren's *Asbury*, 256-64.) In March the Baltimore Conference drafted a reply, which was to be presented to the other conferences. Asbury's *Journal* admits that it was written "in a manner that will not please him." The answers of the various conferences told Coke in effect, "You need not trouble to come back." In this personal letter Asbury tries to soften the blow with expressions of personal affection, even though he himself seems to have been at least partly in accord with the decisions not to ask Coke to honor his promise to settle in America for good. Bitter tongues had been wagging in England also, and Coke was the more anxious to advertise the fact of Asbury's friendship. On receiving this letter, therefore, he sent it on to Joseph Benson, who had been appointed Connexional Editor to the English Conference

in 1805, endorsed with a plea that he should insert this avowal of friendship in *The Methodist Magazine*:

To Mr. Benson

Very dear Friend,

I shall take it as a *peculiar* favour, if you will print every thing Mr. Asbury says in this letter concerning me, except what he observes about my commentary; as I wish that the Methodists in Europe may have a testimony, that Mr. Asbury & I did always labour together in love. *Do oblige me in this*. I intend to send you some more letters from Bristol in a very few days. My dear wife unites with me in love to you and Mrs. Benson, Miss Benson & all the family. I am, my dear Sir,

Your affectionate & faithful  
Friend

T. Coke.

Benson obliged *in part*. About half the letter, paraphrased as usual, was included in the November issue of the magazine. Of Asbury's professions of love, however, only the opening sentences and closing salutation are included. (Frank Baker.)

[139] Thomas Rankin. (See letter of August 15, 1788.)

[140] Joseph Crawford.

[141] Benson, in printing this letter in *The Methodist Magazine*, omits reference to camp meetings, making the letter read as if the revivals are simply at the conferences. The lengthy and emotional description of camp meetings in the second part of the letter is similarly omitted. The reason is not far



to seek. English Methodist leaders were afraid of the emotional excesses that might accompany such gatherings in England about which Lorenzo Dow had enthused in visiting the British Isles. The 1807 British Conference gave its official ruling on the matter thus: "It is our judgment, that, even supposing such meetings to be allowable in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief. And we disclaim all connexion with them." It was the breaking of this ban that brought about the formation of the largest cleavage in British Methodism by the formation of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. (Frank Baker.)

[142] Georgia to Maine.

[143] Ezekiel Cooper and John Wilson, Book Agents.

[144] George Suckley was a New York merchant of forty who had apparently come over to the United States with Coke, having received his first "class ticket" from John Wesley himself. (See J.B. Wakeley's, *Lost Chapters Recovered from the Early History of American Methodism*, 562-63.)

[145] Thomas Rankin.

[146] Benjamin Iliff, native of Buck County, Pennsylvania. (See *Minutes*, 1806.)

[147] On April 1, 1805, Coke had married Penelope Goulding Smith, the only surviving child of "an eminent Attorney" of Bradford-on-Avon. She also was included in Coke's offer of himself without reserve to America. Although fifteen years younger than Coke, she died before him, greatly lamented. (Frank Baker.)

[148] Unaddressed, but evidently to Bennet Kendrick, the pastor at Wilmington. George Dougharty was the presiding elder on the Camden District, South Carolina.

[149] Bishop Whatcoat died in Dover, Delaware, July 5. He was interred under the altar of Wesley Dover Church. (See *Journal*, July 8, 1806.) The following is taken from the memoir printed in the *Minutes*, 1807, 388: "March 30, 1807, at the place of his tomb, Wesley Chapel in Dover; Bishop Asbury made some funeral observations upon the death of Richard Whatcoat, his faithful colleague, from II Timothy iii, 10. 'But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long suffering, charity, patience.' That he had known Richard Whatcoat, from his own age of 14 to 62 years, most intimately, and had tried him most accurately, in the soundness of his faith, in the doctrine of universal depravity, and the complete and general atonement. The insufficiency of either moral or ceremonial righteousness for justification, in opposition to faith alone in the merit and righteousness of Christ.—The doctrine of regeneration and sanctification; his holy manner of life, in duty, at all times, in all places, and before all people, as a Christian, and as a Minister; his long suffering, a man of great affliction of body and mind; having been exercised with severe diseases and great labours; but this did not abate his charity, his love of God and man, in all its effects, tempers, words and actions; bearing with resignation and patience great temptations, bodily labours and inexpressible pain. In life and death, placid and calm; as he lived so he died. Richard Whatcoat was born 1736, in Quinton, Gloucestershire, Old England,

became a hearer of the Methodists at 21 years of age. Converted, September 3, 1758. Sanctified, March 28, 1761. Began to travel in 1769. Came to America, 1784. Elected Superintendent in May, 1800. Died at Dover in Delaware, July 5, 1806."

[150] See letter and notes, May 7, 1806.

[151] Joseph Crawford. Asbury says on Thursday, July 3, "Joseph Crawford came over the ferry with me, when about to part, he turned away his face and wept. Ah I am not made for such scenes, I felt exquisite pain." (See *Journal*.) Crawford was appointed to New Rochelle, New York.

[152] George Daugharty.

[153] George Pickering, presiding elder, Boston District.

[154] George Daugharty.

[155] Benjamin Iliff.

[156] *Minutes* show only Sylvester Foster.

[157] M'Caine was known for his "bluntness." He was a great apologist for the reformers. M'Caine located in 1806, as did George Roberts. Their names are shown under those located in the Baltimore Conference. (See Colhouer, *Sketches of the Founders of the Methodist Protestant Church*, for M'Caine's sketch, 90-119. See letters March 29, 1799; April 30, 1815; July 1, 1815; also preface to M'Caine's *Letters*.)

[158] This letter was addressed to Coke at the Methodist Chapel, Truro, England.

[159] Bishop Whatcoat. (See note to letter, July 15, 1806.)

[160] William P. Chandler was presiding elder of the Delaware District. (See his report, August 5, 1805.)

[161] Oxford University.

[162] This was crossed out.

[163] Asbury's mother died in 1802. This is someone else.

[164] Asbury's lay friend in New York.

[165] Thomas Rankin, who had formerly been in America.

[166] Robert Williams, who had handled books and whose accounts Asbury had been settling for some years. Williams is called the "Father of Methodism in Virginia." Rankin and Asbury were Williams' executors.

[167] See reference, *Journal*, 1852 ed., July 19, 1806.

[168] Though the letter is directed to the Rev. H. Smith, this was Henry Smith who was pastor on the Baltimore Circuit. It was he who wrote the *Recollections and Reflections of an Old Itinerant*.

[169] On the envelope are some figures showing members justified and sanctified. It is not clear whether these are in Asbury's handwriting.

[170] Peter Cartwright (1785-1872). In Cartwright's *Autobiography* he says that the correct date was September 16, 1806, though the *Minutes* stated 1807. Cartwright had come five hundred miles to conference from Zanesville, Ohio, where all the salary he had collected for the year was forty dollars. At this conference he was assigned to the Marietta Circuit in Ohio.

[171] North Carolina.

[172] John Watson was one of the preachers on the Frederick Circuit, Alexandria District.

[173] Following the letter, H. Smith writes in *Recollections and Reflections of an Old Itinerant*, 217: "Brother Wells was more righteous than I; for he obeyed the call like an

obedient son in the gospel, but I was disobedient. . . .  
"Smith was later censured before the conference. "In substance, the bishop said, he did not wish what he said to have a bearing upon me as an individual; but wished it to be distinctly understood that the preachers must be prompt and obedient, or the world could not be filled up."  
(Lawrence Sherwood.)

[174] Haskins was a grocer in Philadelphia and an official of St. George's Church. He took the place of John Dickins. Ezekiel Cooper was soon appointed Book Agent.

[175] John Dickins, the first Book Agent.

[176] Mrs. John Dickins.

[177] Robert Williams, who died near Portsmouth, Virginia, called the first Methodist preacher in Virginia. He located when he married. He had handled Wesley's books until he was stopped by order of the conference. The conference took over his business.

[178] Thomas Rankin and Asbury were the executors.

[179] The Rev. John Coleman to whom Jarratt wrote his letters. (See note to letter, January 11, 1796.)

[180] Devereux Jarratt, the minister of the Established Church who befriended the Methodist preachers in Virginia. The Coleman letters were published in 1806 in *The Life of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt*, written by himself. (Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress.)

[181] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District. (See other letter to Fleming, July 28, 1805.)

[182] The Methodist gain in 1806 was 10,625 (9 per cent.). (*Minutes*.)

[183] Presiding elder, Richmond District, Virginia.

- [184] It seems that the reference is to W. Shands on the Bedford Circuit of Stith Mead's Richmond District.
- [185] Chandler was presiding elder on the Delaware District.
- [186] This is a reference to the rapidly growing Methodist practice in the first decade of the nineteenth century of making the summer quarterly meetings of the circuits camp meetings, at which great spiritual victories were won. This shows that Asbury urged this procedure upon the presiding elders. (W.G. Smeltzer.)
- [187] This refers to the Methodist invasion of the Louisiana Purchase. Asbury sent E.W. Bowman into Louisiana in 1805. (Matthew Simpson, *Cyclopedia of Methodism*, 547.) (W.G. Smeltzer.)
- [188] Refers to the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific. It shows Asbury's far-ranging vision of fields for evangelistic conquest. (See notes on Meriweather Lewis, September 7, 1803, in the *Journal*.)
- [189] Asbury had omitted his western trip of 1806. That year he had made an extensive tour in New England. In order to reach the seat of the Western Conference, held at Ebenezer, Nolichucky, Tennessee, in the Holston country on September 15, 1806, he omitted his annual swing through western Pennsylvania and Ohio, and reached the seat of the conference by going up the Shenandoah Valley. (*Journal*, August 6-September 15, 1806. *Minutes*, 1806.) (W.G. Smeltzer.)
- [190] The letter as quoted by M'Caine has no address; however, it was evidently to M'Caine. (See *Journal*.) He had been secretary of the General Conference.

[191] The circular letter written to the New York Conference shortly after Coke's marriage. Coke proposed to become a resident in America, on the condition that the continent should be divided into two parts, one under him and the other under Asbury. The proposition was presented to the Annual Conference. An answer was sent to him congratulating him on his marriage but declining to accept his proposal. The proposition was to be referred to the General Conference. (See Bangs, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, II, 179.) Coke wrote at least two letters in January, 1806, which are included here. (See circular letter, June 1, 1805.)

**FROM 1807 TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE  
OF 1808**

*February 2, 1807 - May 27, 1808*



## CHAPTER TEN

# FROM 1807 TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1808

February 2, 1807 - May 27, 1808

A Letter of Bishop Coke  
to the American Brethren

*Coke again offers himself to the American connection. He is most anxious to travel in America. He indicates again that his wife will be able to travel, too. He hopes to receive a speedy reply. However, the brethren did not urge his coming. On January 6, 1807, Coke had written a letter to the Baltimore Conference which was much the same as his letter to the New York Conference of January 6, 1806.*

TAUNTON, SOMERSETSHIRE  
February 2, 1807

My dear brother:<sup>[1]</sup>

Sometime ago I sent you a long letter, addressed to the Baltimore<sup>[2]</sup> Annual Conference, and after that a short letter which I wished to have added to the former letter. But I request you to add the following to the first letter, instead of adding the second letter to it.

Perhaps, dear respected brethren, you will now ask, "Why did you offer yourself to us?" I answer, It was your unanimous vote at the General Conference, that the episcopacy wanted to

be strengthened. I had been consecrated by our venerable Father in the Gospel, the late Mr. Wesley, a bishop particularly for America. I had been the means of establishing your present form of Church government, which in a general view, (though it may admit of improvements) I prefer to any other. I consider your union of infinite importance to the continuation of the present revival. Your continent makes about a third part<sup>[3]</sup> of the land of the world. When fully cultivated and peopled, it will contain and support, perhaps, a thousand millions of inhabitants, most of whom, I expect, will speak the English language. To preserve, therefore, your union, that the work of God may progress with the progression of the population, and at last leaven the whole continent, lies exceedingly near my heart.

I know that I am perfectly unworthy of the honor of merely preaching in all your pulpits; but it is my duty to meet the calls of God, however unworthy I may be. If you consider my living and laboring among you, will help to preserve this union, I shall think it the highest honor and happiness of my life so to do. My precious wife can travel, under the Divine blessing, 5000 miles a year, and I can travel 10,000. But considering the circumstances before mentioned it is my duty to have some explanation from you. I cannot come to you as a mere preacher. As to my Circular letter, I recall it entirely, acknowledging that I laid down conditions which were not included in our solemn reciprocal engagements. But I did not see things when I wrote it, as I do now. I hardly knew what to write, circumstanced as I was in respect to you. And you surely, my respected brethren, must be conscious that an

explanation of some kind is really necessary. Am I to come to you in any sense as a bishop, and in what sense? I don't want to act, if I come, but in perfect subordination to the General Conference, but yet still as a Bishop, and having a right to give my judgment in all Episcopal matters, unless I render myself unworthy of the office.

Do write to me as soon as you have considered this letter. Send me duplicates; one by the British packet from New York, paying the postage to New York, otherwise it will not be sent off; and another by the first merchant ship. In this case, I believe, I shall hear from you before the next British Conference sits, which I particularly desire to do. And now I leave this whole business in the hands of my God and you. Pray for us. To God's most holy keeping I commit you. May your blessed work flourish more and more; and your own hearts be ever full of Divine love.

I am, my dear friends and brethren, yours very affectionately and faithfully,

Thomas Coke

*Alexander M'Caine*, Letters on the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 155-56

*Edward Dromgoole was an old friend of Asbury. His home in Virginia was Asbury's stopping place. For a time he was a traveling preacher, but located and became a local preacher. Asbury foresees some of the problems of a delegated General Conference. He is concerned greatly for a strong general*

*superintendency. He reports on what was done at the Virginia Conference which met at Newbern, North Carolina.*

PINNERS, N.C. [NEAR MURFREESBORO]

*February 11, 1807*

[*To Edward Dromgoole*]<sup>[4]</sup>

My very dear Friend:

Great grace attend thee and thine. I greatly desired to see thee, but duty calls me to Norfolk. I must travel like the mail stage, 5000 miles in 10 months, or less. The conference is appointed in Lynchburg next year. It is judged we must sit in a town. Glorious tidings, 1000 added in the Western [conference] the same as in the Southern, and 3000 in old Virginia, added nineteen preachers. Brother Chandler<sup>[5]</sup> reports, at campmeeting alone, in Delaware District 7 months, 7000 converted; and half the number sanctified. Brother Mead<sup>[6]</sup> about 2000, Chandler had 150 days and nights, in the woods, Brother Mead 90. Our wicked towns and cities are greatly visited.

Campmeetings prevail generally. I have heard of Simeon and Levi. Brother Bruce<sup>[7]</sup> is a Virginian, and Carolinian, your presiding elder. Before we left Newbern between 60 and 70 had joined society. I trust that it will be found that near one hundred were convicted, or converted at Conference; it was a great season. It was a time of love, and union among the preachers, our conferences in general are as the anti-chamber of heaven. An attempt was made under the patronage of the New York Conference — when the Superintendency, the four eastern conferences concurred almost in unanimity, but

it was carried [?] out with great odium in Virginia. I refer you to Philip Bruce, but it was all Simeon and Levi, O'Kelly<sup>[8]</sup> over again. I have done what I thought, but if I am called away ere long, and all the conferences become separate and independent, I am clear. From the present fare of things in the year 1808 we shall minute 600 travelling preachers, 300 will be elders and claim a seat in General Conference, 150 will be within 200 miles of the place of sitting, the other 150 at the distance of 400 and others 800, to come 1200 and 1600 miles to General Conference. We may hope for only a partial<sup>[9]</sup> promiscuous aristocratical spiritual body under no tie by constitution, or any check from the superintendency, doctrine, discipline, or order may go, but God will preserve. I had wished to retreat from the weight of the work, but when or by what means. I am like you, and all heads of families, the most to do in the last of life. From 16 to 62 years of my life I have been doing for others and my own soul. I do not wish to leave this connection as unorganized as Mr. Wesley from lamented necessity left the British, when we are in a free country; and may form as we think best. However I am a servant, and a martyr, if need be to the cause of God. He has blest me and by his grace I will not draw back, but think of all the ponderous load, but oh the prayers of God's people.

One thing is and will be secured. We are missionaries, while I move others will, the same ——<sup>[10]</sup> myself, —— shall have every order of —— life of the cause. I shall be pleased if you would write to me. I enclose a ten dollar bill for Father McKendree,<sup>[11]</sup> sent by dear Billy.<sup>[12]</sup> I suppose it is good, but you will keep the number. I took it from the South

Conference. Billy was well and doing well, he sees as do others with me.

I believe all the presiding elders in this and other conferences, see and feel the need of a strong united superintendency, not very large but from as a threefold Lord. I am greatly happy in God and supported far beyond my own and the expectation of others. I have this to say, I never sought myself. My intention never was impure. My eye was always single, and that by the prayers of the people. God has given me support. I doubt there is such a man as Simeon<sup>[13]</sup> (I put the eldest first) in the whole connection and yet I believe he does not believe me to be what his conduct sometimes signifies to me and others. Do write me at any time, or any town, or city, I go through I shall honor your letters as I do in general [?] that write to me. I am not immortal, glory to God everlasting.

Love attend thee, as ever thine,

F. Asbury

P.S. We had 67 ministers. Six are gone to the South Conference, we are full in an enlargement with a number of young men, but we may expect departures from the work, it is surprising that notwithstanding we had but one married preacher, we were insolvent, near 1,000 dollars, either the Virginians cannot beg or the people are covetous or the preachers are laying up money and the people are withheld.

P.S. I refer you to Mr. Wesley's notes and calculations on Revelations 17 chapter, and see where you can find the beast

that was to rise and reign from 1834 to 1836, if he is not risen now, if so his reign will be short.

*Edward Dromgoole Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library*

*The proposition of a delegated General Conference was being voted on by the conferences looking toward the General Conference of 1808. Because of Jesse Lee's opposition the Virginia Conference had voted not to endorse it. Here Asbury is reporting on the Baltimore Conference.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

March 9, 1807

[To Daniel Asbury]<sup>[14]</sup>

My dear Daniel:

God be merciful to thee and bless thee and thine. Doubtless you have heard, or will hear, that the motion of a delegated General Conference, as it came from the [New] York, was not permitted as a subject of conversation in the Virginia Conference.<sup>[15]</sup> We have had great peace, and great increase in both conferences, upwards of 3000 in each conference, 18 preachers added. The principle was tried in Baltimore, 51 for, only eleven against, a delegated General Conference, to be planned at the next. And may I hope that the four yearly conferences will come forward in their delegated capacity and contend that the Superintendents shall be chosen by seven delegates from each of the seven conferences and by no means leave the matter to Philadelphia, Virginia and Baltimore.

I am now bound, about 3000 miles by the last of July. The Baltimore Conference have agreed to lend me Daniel Hitt to travel with me to the Western Conference and pay him also but I doubt if it would be proper to take him all round. Write me to Baltimore, it will be handed to Little York [Pennsylvania]. I do not intend to be so partial as to visit any one place twice in a year unless I am compelled to go through like my Lord to Samaria. Short and sure thine,

F. Asbury

P.S. Only think 101 upon the list for the Baltimore Conference, 1807.<sup>[16]</sup>

*South Carolina Conference Historical Society, Wofford College Library. Transcribed by Albert D. Betts*

*This letter from the Philadelphia Conference, signed for the conference by Asbury, is an answer to a memorial which was sent to the conference by Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. It is not clear what the "strife" referred to was over, but it is clear that the members of Bethel were declaring their allegiance and loyalty to the Methodist Church. The message expresses the confidence of the Philadelphia Conference in the African brethren. The memorial is printed here as a note.*

*On June 11, 1799, Asbury ordained Richard Allen a deacon, the first Negro to receive ordination from the Methodist Episcopal Church. David Payne, "a man of color," was ordained deacon by the Virginia Conference in 1824. In*



*1793 Richard Allen erected in Philadelphia a meetinghouse called the Bethel Society. On June 29, 1794, Asbury says, "I preached at the new African Church. Our colored brethren all to be governed by the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists." Only Negroes were to be admitted to membership. In time the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania declared the Bethel Society independent. The date is not clear. The African Methodist Episcopal Church was not organized until 1816.*

PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
April 9, 1807

*[To the Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church]*

Your memorial<sup>[17]</sup> of the 8th instant was laid before the Philadelphia Conference and provided the supplement to your act of Incorporation which you allude to, be not contrary to the allowed usages, customs, and privileges of the Methodist Episcopal Church according to the established principles and government of the said church, admitted of in case of incorporation among our white brethren for the protection and security of their rights and privileges, the Conference accepts your memorial and entertains a confidence that our African brethren will evince their unshaken stability and firmness as Methodists according to our Discipline from time to time.

And we cordially wish you prosperity, unity, holiness and happiness.

Signed in behalf of the Philadelphia Conference

Francis Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

*The following short letter looks as if it may have been handed to a presiding elder in the conference or during the cabinet sessions.*

[PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA]

[April —, 1807]<sup>[18]</sup>

[To whom?]

My Brother:<sup>[19]</sup>

Unless something very great indeed [happens], I am fixed to retain Thomas<sup>[20]</sup> in the Baltimore Conference. I also think Brother Sharp will be continued in Philadelphia. They made choice of him themselves. If you and brother Sharp could think of a man, a second, I would think also.

F. Ay.

Monday Noon

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*A second letter to Daniel Asbury within a few months deals with the memorial to come before the General Conference. Francis Asbury is for a delegated conference. The old*

*O'Kellyite schism has been under discussion. Asbury defends himself, as usual, against charges of dictatorship.*

LITTLE YORK, PA.

July 30, 1807

[To Daniel Asbury]<sup>[21]</sup>

My dear Daniel and Namesake:

Great grace, great grace support thee in thy Christian, and ministerial character. Oh what prudence is needful these days, and faith and prayer. If you knew the man<sup>[22]</sup> as well as I knew him you would not expect anything better. To sell his land, collect his brother's debts, and sell his books, and rail against ye administration by word and letter and election was his important work to the South.

I suppose the General Conference will be presented with the *Memorial*<sup>[23]</sup> of New York, New England, and I hope the Western, and Southern Conference; in favor of equal representation. *Treason* or not then see what his majesty<sup>[24]</sup> will say to that. All the northern Conferences prosper, camp meetings prevail. I have heard of hundreds converted this year but I expect greater things in the latter than the beginning. The spirit of persecution is waked up, whipping, fining, rioting; possibly imprisonments, and death, if we will not give up campmeetings but rather let us die.

In the northern conferences we have sent out missionaries, to vex Satan, carnal priest, and people; these men are to go any where, and every where thousands will hear the Gospel more than our regular circuit order will supply. I have had an

awful siege this year 3 or 4000 miles already, rains, snows, dreadful roads. A snow May 7 Vermont. I am now stopt to get Jane<sup>[25]</sup> rested; to write letters, then Allegheny mountains. In Chillicothe Sept. 14, possibly Kentucky, Cumberland and out to the southwest of Georgia, second week of November to spend 3 weeks there, 3 in South Carolina, then Charleston. 103 preachers added this year, 1400 members increase.

One thing I have greatly desired; a well bred general continental Superintendency. Another thing I have greatly desired, that there should be 450 preachers in connection at the next General Conference, every one should have a vote for the superintendency. That those that have no vote nor seat in General Conference, should choose their men in the Annual Conferences, to choose for them in the General Conference. I care not how many go to Conference. My weight was fixed on the election of General Conference. When Mr. O'Kelly was prest with this he felt its weight, and falsely—and most solemnly denied; what could have been proved by many. And altho all that elected me are now gone, yet the annual conferences receiving me. Every congregation that has notice of your appointments must try coming to hear you, make their election of you for their preacher at that time and place.

You cannot conceive what God has done for America! Compared with the British Connection, Methodism began in England 1730, numbers now 150,974, the traveling ministry, Kingdoms, Islands, Missions, 576. In the Kingdoms 900 square miles thirty one or two million of souls. Methodism began in America 1771, in the country numbers now 144,590,

traveling preachers in the States and Canada, 536, America 2500 square miles length, from two to three and five million of souls only scattered abroad. In England men of great learning, advantage of books, in America unlearned poor men, woods boys. And we shall see greater times an hundred fold with persecution. Stand to the lance, death or victory *and victory is death Glory, Glory, Glory.*

Fare thee well thy name sake

F. Ay.

*South Carolina Conference Historical Society, Wofford  
College Library.*

*Transcribed by A.D. Betts*

*It seems that the camp meetings were arousing opposition in many quarters. Mead had trouble in Virginia. Asbury is reporting on his travels. Attached to this letter is another letter, which is to Mrs. Tabb of Gloucester, Virginia. Mead knew her, and he was to copy the letter and send it on.*

LITTLE YORK, PA.

July 30, 1807

[To Stith Mead]<sup>[26]</sup>

My dear Mead:

May the good will of him that dwelt with Moses in the bush (Emblem of the Church and Charge) be with thee. According to this time it shall be said of our Jacob, and Israel, in America; what hath God wrought. A carnal world, a fleshly ministry, and people, rise up against us. A spirit of persecution is waked up over the whole continent. All earth

and hell is roused against field meetings,<sup>[27]</sup> but we will endure fines, imprisonment, and death sooner than we will give them up. We have 25.00 dollars to pay, on the Eastern shore of Virginia, no law, or justice for Methodists.

Since the Virginia Conference I have ridden above 3000 miles. We have great peace in all our conferences, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, great and good prospects. New England great increase of preachers, and openings. Generally increase this year, preachers 103, 32 located, increase of members 1420. By making a comparison between the British and American Connection, Methodism began in Britain 1730. In the British Empire of Kingdoms, and Islands, above 30 million of souls to operate amongst; the minutes of last year, number of members in Britain 150,974, the number of Methodists in the States and Canada 144,590. The British Kingdoms 900 square miles of operation. The American state above 22,000 square miles. They have had only from two to three, and three to five million to operate among. Methodism began in America 1763<sup>[28]</sup> and 1770 but chiefly; as very little was done till the latter end of the year '71 except a small beginning in [New] York and Philadelphia.

Number of preachers in the British 576, American 536. We have made a happy improvement in the three Conferences, Philadelphia, [New] York, New England. We have sent out eleven missionaries, for the exterior, and interior, any place, and every place, unsupplied by the circuits, streets, lanes, shades, market houses. In Pennsylvania chiefly the Germans

are the object. We conclude many thousands will hear our Gospel by these men that will not in our circuits.

Pray for these heralds of grace. Do all you can by fair means to keep order in your meetings in the woods but we will not give up this ground, Satan will rage. I think it will be proper for you to take a station like what you say, and settle your temporal matters that you be free. I cannot tell how to answer and direct a letter to Mrs. Tabb<sup>[29]</sup> you will copy it and give it to her and any thing you please from yours.

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Mrs. Tabb was one of several women of means who became Methodists in the beginning, such as Mrs. Gough of Perry Hall, Maryland, and Madam Russell, sister of Patrick Henry, who was married twice, first to General William Campbell and then to General William Russell, heroes of the battle of King's Mountain. The Tabbs lived on one of the old Virginia estates. Asbury is writing her about her religious experience.*

LITTLE YORK, PA.  
*July 30, 1807*

[*To Mrs. Mary Tabb*]<sup>[30]</sup>

My dear Sister:

Are you heaven born, and heaven bound? Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and Jesus our Lord. My female correspondents are few except a few of

the preachers' wives that write me with their husbands in the same letter. I have once in a while to address a letter to a poor widow in distress, and once in awhile to her sister, formed of the same clay, redeemed by the same blood, a daughter of the same God; but the lady sister that holds her servants, rides in her coach, possesses her thousands. You have your cares, and fears, and prayers about those around, and nearly connected to you, by conjugal and filial tender ties; if not now, the time may come, you shall know it is not in vain now, if not in time, yet in heaven, you will know it. Only look well to your own ways.

Your table may be spread sumptuously every day, but you need not fare. Mr. Wesley observed that it was brought against the rich man as a charge, and adds that no man can be [saved] and fare richly every day. You can be clear of the great transgression. You have not family prayer, and religious exercises as you wish, yet you can retire often, and pray always. You cannot hear as many sermons, but you read Mr. Wesley's [book] at any time and other good books. You cannot give and do good, as you wish, but your *heart* is given up to God, in love and charity.

God has been gracious to me when traveling preaching and going upon my hands, knees and crutches with a regular fit of the rheumatism, inflammation in my feet, passing the Lakes<sup>[31]</sup> in great pain, patience, and power. Now I am making my way west, and by south to Charleston, possibly another 3000. I cannot say how far I may go west. The continent is waked



with the power of God, and persecution follows, the more the world hates us, God will love us.

I am yours in Jesus, a brother, a servant, a friend,

F. Asbury

P.S. There's been some [inflammation] in my feet for six weeks but am now able to walk without crutch or staff.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Jacob Gruber is the recipient of this letter. It is another link in the chain showing Asbury's deep interest in the German people. Asbury gives an account of the work and again compares the statistics of American Methodism with those of the British church. Daniel Hitt was Asbury's traveling companion.*

LITTLE YORK, PENNSYLVANIA

July 31, 1807

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[32]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

May you wrestle like Jacob, and prevail like Israel, Oh may the arms of your hands be made strong, by the mighty God of Jacob. I am here by grace, a most awful and joyful year; travels, and weather. I had to try the lakes, hands, knees, crutches. I have been lame for 6 weeks. I am learning to walk again. We have done a new, and blessed thing in the Philadelphia, New York, and New England Conferences, in sending out nine missionaries; and two from Gennessee, John

Richards,<sup>[33]</sup> and George McCrackin,<sup>[34]</sup> to Lower Canada. These men will go everywhere, in all vacancies. Thousands will hear our Gospel that would not by the circuit supplies.

The poor Germans, also Dear Henry,<sup>[35]</sup> feels faith. He is about to print our disciplines in Dutch. I hope you will redeem what time you can for the Germans in your charge. In your appointment that was in sight, you keep it in constant view; they are children of the same Father bought with the same blood of Christ. Oh could you with Paul wish if it was lawful to die like Jesus for your brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. I feared Brother Ward<sup>[36]</sup> would have his known, and unknown difficulties; help him all you can. Be very soft, but very firm in discipline, persuade him.

I see a spirit of persecution rising all over the Continent! Among carnal priest and people, we shall have fines, stripes, imprisonment, to drive Israel from the tents of Moab. I cannot say but some of us, may be called to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus. Let us not start nor fear to die.

No ministry upon earth are under such obligations to God and duty, as we are. Never was such a work carried on by such hands. I have compared the work in Britain, and America. See the disproportion Methodism began in England, 1730, numbers 150974, number of preachers, 576—Methodism began in the country part of America, 1771, [now] numbers 144590, preachers 536. Britain had not more than 900 square miles, America 2500, with the Canadas and New purchase. Britain 38 million of souls in the kingdom and

Islands. America from two to three million, or five. Britain, books, men of great learning: we know men of learning; [American] boys born in the woods, Oh how many in Glory already. Campmeetings, preach all over the Continent, hundreds converted, but there will be greater in the fall. 1402 added this year and was it not for the mortality and perpetual moving to new countries we might have 20,000.

Possibly we may make 2 or 3000 miles to Charleston, where you can write me again. There is always a little storm about General Conference. Some want to localize the Connection, but find themselves disappointed and fly like Lyell and Williston,<sup>[37]</sup> or locate like others, that cannot always be indulged. Some fright themselves to death as if the Heavens were to fall, and the earth to be moved out of its place and terrify themselves to death, with their own fears. Some think they must go to General Conference, or we shall import Rome,<sup>[38]</sup> and Constantinople,<sup>[39]</sup> they know not what, they sit awhile, and then beg and pray to go home, they find there is nobody, no blood to be shed or honors to be made. Pray much, he that ruleth with diligence. Farewell in Jesus,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

A Letter of Coke  
to the General Conference of 1808

*Coke addressed the General Conference of 1808. He was for the first time to be absent from the General Conference. The conference of 1804 had agreed to his return to Europe to reside there until the General Conference of 1808 or until he should be called sooner by three annual conferences. In his circular letter he had proposed that he take up his permanent residence in America. This had been sent to the New York Conference. Nothing had been done about it. Thus he wrote this letter.*

CITY OF DURHAM, (ENGLAND,)

November 16, 1807

To the General American Conference

Very dear and greatly respected Brethren:

My absence from your solemn meeting calls for a minute explanation of my motives for absence, and my future views. I did not expect, during my different short visits to your connection, to have any thing to do in the management of your work, except the honor of presiding at your General Conference, and preaching in your pulpits. I never returned to England without your leave, from the time I offered myself to be wholly yours: and whatever my own private judgment might have been, I should, in every instance, have considered your vote as the voice of God, if you had, on the whole, judged it best to have refused that leave. The last time I

visited you, I came over without any expectation of returning. I settled my little affairs in this country, and brought over with me every thing I had, except those parts of my library which I should not soon want, but which I left in such a manner that on the shortest notice they might be sent over to me, and also such copies of my commentary as I wished that my European brethren would be so kind as to sell for me. I did not take a decisive farewell of my brethren in Europe, as I was not sure whether you would, in your circumstances, as they respected Bishop Asbury, receive me as an efficient superintendent or bishop among you in any degree or manner: for this reason only I consented to carry over to you an address which contained a clause in it requesting my return to Europe. I should otherwise have strongly objected to the clause: however, I repeatedly gave very strong intimations, both to the British and Irish conferences, of the improbability of my return. I write not the above as if I did not highly prize my situation in the European connection. As general superintendent of their missions at home and abroad, as president of the Irish part of the connection, as having all their pulpits in the United Kingdom open to me when and as often as I please, and in many other respects possessing influence for great usefulness, I feel myself under unspeakable obligations to my European brethren. But I have made the above observations to convince you, that I held and kept my obligations and engagements to you, to strengthen your episcopacy whenever you pleased, most sacred. It is true, I wrote to you a circular letter, which, I now acknowledge, was out of order; and therefore I beg pardon for writing it: but I did not intend to be irregular. I hardly knew what to write in

order to bring matters to an explanation. For I was assured that you yourselves, after due explanation, would not wish to draw me out of a very extensive and successful sphere of usefulness, merely to preach; and, instead of strengthening the episcopacy, have less to do in the management of the work than the preacher who superintends the smallest circuit in America.

And now, you will ask, "What are we to expect from you." I will answer with the most perfect candor. If it be your judgment and vote that my residence with you will probably assist to preserve your union; and you agree that I shall have a full right to give my judgment in every thing, in the general and annual conferences, on the making of laws, the stationing of the preachers, sending out missionaries, and every thing else, which, as a bishop or superintendent, belongs to my office, I will, on receiving your answer, settle our affairs with the utmost expedition, and come over to you for life. You may observe, I do not desire any decisive power. I want no new condition. I only want to be perfectly ascertained, that if I reside with you, I shall be authorized by you to fulfil my office in the way above mentioned; without which our reciprocal engagements would be a perfect nullity, and I should be entirely the same among you, except in the article of preaching. By this proposal I break no engagement: I want nothing but a full explanation, and a part of that liberty which I have in the European connection. In Europe, I give my judgment in the two conferences, and in the representative meetings for preparing the stations of preachers for the conference, as far as I judge it my duty, on every point, and

have also a vote when we do vote on any subject. In missionary matters I am here allowed a negative and my committee a negative; this last I do not desire in America; but I desire the power of doing extensive good. If this cannot at present be granted by the authority of the General Conference, you may insert me in your minutes as formerly; or you may first insert the resident bishop or bishops, and add a N.B., Dr. Coke (or Bishop Coke, as you please) resides in Europe, till he be called to the States by the General Conference, or by the annual conferences; or if this be not agreeable, you must expel me, (for dropping me out of your public minutes will be to all intents and purposes an expulsion,) and leave what I have done for your connection to God alone: and though you forget me, God will not forget me.

I do assure you, very dear and respected brethren, that I love and esteem you highly, and am, with most unfeigned sincerity, your affectionate and faithful servant,

T. Coke

P.S. My precious wife desires that she may not be considered in the least degree in this business. She is no hindrance to me in any thing, but a blessing in all things. We are always, as it were, traveling, and I annually visit and preach at more places than I did for many years before my marriage.

*Nathan Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church,  
II, 197-99*

*The letter to Stith Mead of July 30 indicated that Mead might have to give up the presiding eldership. Evidently he has done this. Joseph Pinnell was on the Amherst Charge in 1807. In 1808 he was made presiding elder of the Richmond District in Mead's place, and Mead was pastor in Richmond.*

SPARTA, GA.

*November 18, 1807*

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[40]</sup>

My dear Mead:

May great grace attend you in your great trials and chances. I think it in duty and safety to inform you I have written an appointment to Brother Pinnell to oversight the district in your absence till conference. The greatness of the charge, the difficulties<sup>[41]</sup> that have arisen, your probable absence for 4 months, the genuine youth of all the preachers upon the stations, the age of the members of the quarter meetings, and the want of some man to stand in the gap, these things considered, you will at once approve my conduct in this matter. None but a father can judge a father's heart, so it is with a superintendent. Had you known when you wrote last of what might have taken place, it would have given it in our power to have fixt the matter before you came away, in a better manner. The charge of souls is great, we must know no man after the flesh, in such cases. I am your great afflicted, brother, but most disinterested friend, in Jesus,

F. Asbury

*Drew University Library*



*The concern here is with the proposals for the superintendency. Asbury is traveling the connection alone. Bishop Whatcoat is dead, and the General Conference of 1808 is soon to be held. Some were in favor of limiting bishops to an annual conference. Asbury was opposed to this. He was in favor of a general over-all superintendency.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
December 10, 1807

[To Nelson Reed]<sup>[42]</sup>

My very dear Nelson:

Great grace attend thee, and make thy last, the best of life. The sincerity of thy friendship, the soundness of thy principles in every part of Methodism, no one need doubt. If I write any thing in this letter in answer to a special part of thine it will be only to controvert the principle of some men sinking down; but not thine. As far as my observation has been in riding 4000 miles from Baltimore, the present year, by information, by official letters, I hope every, or at least most or all the districts have had a few happy hundreds converted; in a few districts, a few happy thousands. And we have as many campmeetings now as we had quarter meetings 20 years ago. Never failing blessings follow these meetings. Traveling and local ministers, sinners and saints, are blest, and dreadful apostates have died [?].

Harmony and order runs through our conferences. This has been a great year of labours and affliction to me. Surely I was directed of God, to ask of, and the Baltimore Conference to send, the present aid.<sup>[43]</sup> He has had to do but every thing

almost for me. That his burden might not be insupportable, I have taken the saddle and sold my carriage. My former affliction you were a witness to in part; my latter affliction has been such I have been sick 4 weeks, have preached tho unable 4 times. I have had my former affliction, an inflammation in the breast that I thought would not only affect my voice, but vitals.

I am not at liberty to say what I will do, 6 conferences, to meet this winter, in 4 months. Oh what a toil! But I sincerely think I shall never be an *arch superintendent* much less an *arch Bishop*. Rather like great George Washington, let me peaceably retire and lay my commission at the feet of the General Conference, and after the rapid race from 16 to 63, be supernumerary, superannuated or located.

I have had very little upon paper; (more from you than any one) about the Superintendency, those that have talked with, think as I think, as follows, that there should be one, two or three of the most confidential men of the American connection, elected by the General Conference, to locate these men annually to the seven conferences and that they should do their best to attend every conference, and all that are or shall be in the union, every year; and visit the seventeen states and ten (territories) as oft as possible, and have their eyes and ears in every part of the Connection. This is the true Wesleyan Superintendence, this is the essence of the General Assistency, this was formed in the constitution of 1784 and has been in operation ever since.

It is not to be wondered at in the church as well as the state we should have men that would destroy the best constitutions in church and state. A Bishop, oh that it had never been named.<sup>[44]</sup> I was elected and ordained a superintendent as my parchment will show. One superintendent for each annual conference, his majesty might make Baltimore, Philadelphia, [New] York, or Boston, the Grand Metropolitan Church. What could one of these do for us, no not half as much as four presiding elders in the field, or cabinet counsel.

I never never will act under such a Roman, an English or Moravian Episcopacy. How it is to be tried, whether this hideous form shall take place or the pure apostolical form, a constitutional superintendency, to stand on equal ground, I am willing to embrace. My feet fail to take my crutches, yea as long as I have an ear to hear and eye to see, and to handle. But that this will want nothing to make it a beast but legal power. Excuse my letter I am very weak, my love to sister Reed and all friends from thine,

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

A Letter of Daniel Hitt  
to Nelson Reed

*This letter from Daniel Hitt to Nelson Reed is included because of its unusual interest. Hitt was arguing the superintendency, and it is interesting to read his argument. Since he had been traveling with Asbury, he was in a position*

*to see the operation of it personally. He is an able exponent of Asbury's view.*

CAMDEN, S.C.  
[December 10, 1807]<sup>[45]</sup>

[To Nelson Reed]<sup>[46]</sup>

My dear Brother:

Yesterday evening we came to this place and had the pleasure of receiving your friendly letter, with many others from that part. I was glad to hear that you received mine from Cincinnati. Mr. Asbury gave me the reading of yours, which for some time past he has been partly obliged to do, for in some instances, I have had to answer some of his letters.

While in Georgia, Mr. Asbury was greatly afflicted, so that we could not make our intended route through that state, and we are now behind our appointments, judge, by information received, the prospect in the bounds of the South Conference is quite pleasing, and we calculate on several candidates for the travelling ministry, as well as a considerable increase in membership: and it probably would have been much greater if the influenza had been less prevalent & fatal in the south.

There were two parts of your letter that drew my attention, & somewhat created my astonishment; the first was that of 7 Bishops & the second was Jno. Wilson,<sup>[47]</sup> supposed to be on an electioneering journey to the South. When you say "the Preachers to the North," I must suppose you mean those North of Maryland, for to my recollection, I know none, who were in favor of 7 Bishops, & them to be located to the seven

Annual Conferences; neither do I think such a measure would have any tendency to perpetuate the Union of the general body: and we must be united, if we stand and prosper!

In my opinion nothing can keep the body united; but a well regulated, and energetic general superintendency. What was the Wesleyan in Europe, what was the American before, & since the organization of the Church in 1784, but a high toned general superintendency? Have the European Methodists prospered more since, than before Mr. Wesley? What Church, in any modern century, has prospered in number, & genuine piety, equal to the Methodist Episcopal Church? If we have been thus prosperous & successful, why should we depart from the present economy & regulations, to gratify the capricious humour of some dissatisfied individuals? Mark! I fix these observations on no individual, but attach it to the principle, to show that the principle itself is corrupt.

Secondly; as to Jno. Wilson, coming to the South on an electioneering expedition, either ecclesiastical or political, I believe no such thing. You may tell Brother Neal I had the reading of his letter & will attend to its contents as far as I can. My best respects to Sister Reed, Brother Hagerty, Brother & Sister Burnieston. Adieu.

Yours in the Lord,

D. Hitt

P.S. From the personal interview I had with Jno. Wilson when in Boston & from information since I am of the opinion that his health & settlement of his business as book steward were

the sole motives that brought him to the South; however, it is possible that he may have had other motives.

D.H.

*Drew University Library*

*Again Asbury is writing to a key man who would probably be in the General Conference. He is much concerned over the idea of the general superintendency which he had tried to establish. Again he brings in comparisons with British membership.*

REMBERT HALL, S.C.<sup>[48]</sup>

*December 14, 1807*

[*To Elijah Hedding*]<sup>[49]</sup>

My very dear Sir:

Great grace attend thee. I received thy letter at a time I was seriously afflicted with an inflammation in my breast; for near six weeks, I was not well able to read, write or preach. How shall I regain my health I am not able to say: if I meet six Conferences in 4 months, and ride on horseback 2000 miles, by the 6th of May. Let my good God be my guide, I shall do it lame, sick, or in health: as I have ridden 4000 since the last, or latter end of March.

I rejoice to hear you are not cast down in your important station but have help, hope, and success. You have felt the weight of a circuit, a district! Now what eyes are upon thee, what need have you to see, to be, to do in every part like your Lord, the eyes of all wait on you. Harmony, order, prosperity

are the inscriptions of the seal of your presiding eldership! You will see and feel more than ever the propriety of a General Superintendency, like a trinity in unity, coequal; rapidly moving to every conference in the Union, and every capital of the seventeen United States, yea all the continent if possible and practicable.

Now is the time, see if the Americans that have served the connection twenty or thirty years are not worthy the election of their brethren, to take the charge, and shoulder the important task. The men that feel and see as they ought, say no partial superintendency over an Annual Conference! No arch superintendency of one over the whole! No abolition of the general apostolical Wesleyan superintendency! No abolition of what was practiced by the General Assistants till the year 1784, and ever since, in well qualified order, say the men of minds ministers will walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing — —.<sup>[50]</sup> Words to the wise will be sufficient. Mark well.

I have either seen, or heard, directly, or indirectly, from most of the 35 districts, but some great official letters, are not come to hand. But from what I have collected, campmeetings are as common now, as quarter meetings were 20 years back, in many districts, happy hundreds have been converted; in others happy thousands! Glory! Glory! Glory! Reputable report says, in the east of Maryland, last August, campmeeting 10 days, 2500 or 3000 converted. Oh my brother doubt not, the good news you bring, will come to be general, and not only general but universal, only look over the

State of [New] York; see what was the state of things there 10 years back, and what it is now? Before you close the year, you will have better news, if I live you can meet me with a letter at any of the cities, by the order of conference.

Now I must commend you to God and the word of his grace, as a Christian, and minister. Oh Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust. I only shall add that Methodism in Europe has been in operation about 77 years among 30 million of people; taking the three kingdoms and Islands, a people close together. In America, 37. We are come up within about 6000 members, 40 ministers. God is the first cause of good, he hath blest the itinerancy, campmeeting, presiding eldership and general superintendency! And ever since it has fallen in the Father<sup>[51]</sup> of the connection in Europe, I fear the work has declined in about 4 million, to operate among near 3000 miles in length, one thousand breadth. In Europe, only 1000 we double the number with the British every year. Possibly we shall minute 600 traveling preachers next year.

Say son, can any man doubt it is time to regulate the General Conference or we may not only have in time 600 but on 1000 brethren at once in conference. I will venture to guess, that the interior conferences, Virginia, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, will seat 100 members in the next General Conference, and if the four exterior conferences, will seat 28 which is far more than ever they have done (except New York), the Western Conference had predetermined before, and elected in Conference, 7 of the best men they had, leaving



it for those that pleased to go, possibly the South may do the same.

Most heartily thine,

Fr. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

A Letter of Bishop Coke to the  
General American Conference

*The correspondence between Bishop Coke and Bishop White had come to light, and Coke felt that he had to clear himself with the General Conference. He therefore wrote the following letter. However, only a part of the original letter was printed in Moore's Pioneers of Methodism.*

NEAR LEEDS [YORKSHIRE]

January 29, 1808

To the General American Conference

My very dear Brethren:

. . . I find that a letter which I wrote to Bishop White in 1791 has been animadverted upon, though, if I mistake not, the letter itself has not yet been published.

There are very few of you who can possibly recollect any thing of what I am next going to add. Many of you were then only little children. We had at that time no regular General

Conferences. One only had been held in the year 1784. I had, indeed, with great labor and fatigue, a few months before I wrote this letter to Bishop White, prevailed on James O'Kelly, and the thirty-six traveling preachers who had withdrawn with him from all connection with Bishop Asbury, to submit to the decision of a General Conference. This Conference was to be held in about a year and a half after my departure from the States. And at this Conference—held, I think, the latter end of 1792—I proposed and obtained that great blessing to the American Connection—a permanency for General Conferences, which were to be held at stated times. Previously to the holding of this Conference (except the general one held in 1784), there were only small district meetings, excepting the council which was held at Cokesbury College, either in 1791 or 1792. Except the union which most justly subsisted between Bishop Asbury on the one hand, and the preachers and people on the other, the Society, as such, taken as an aggregate, was almost like a rope of sand. I longed to see matters on a footing likely to be permanent. Bishop Asbury did the same; and it was that view of things, I doubt not, which led Bishop Asbury, the year before, to call, and to endeavor to establish, a regular council, who were to meet him annually at Cokesbury. In this point I differed in sentiment from my venerable brother. But I saw the danger of our situation, though I well knew that God was sufficient for all things. I did verily believe then that under God the Connection would be more likely to be saved from convulsions by a union with the old Episcopal Church than any other way—not by a dereliction of ordination, sacraments, and the Methodist discipline, but by a junction on proper

terms. Bishop White, in two interviews I had with him in Philadelphia, gave me reason to believe that this junction might be accomplished with ease. Dr. Magaw was perfectly sure of it. Indeed (if Mr. Ogden, of New Jersey, did not mistake in the information he gave me), a canon passed the House of Bishops of the old Episcopal Church in favor. Bishop Madison, according to the same information, took the canon to the lower house, "but it was there thrown out," said Mr. Ogden—to whom I explained the whole business—"because they did not understand the full meaning of it." Mr. Ogden added that he spoke against it because he did not understand it; but that it would have met with his warm support had he understood the full intention of it.

I had provided in the fullest manner, in my indispensably necessary conditions, for the security, and I may say for the independence, of our discipline and places of worship. But I thought (perhaps erroneously, and *I believe so now*) that our field of action would have been exceedingly enlarged by that junction, and that myriads would have attended our ministry in consequence of it who were at that time prejudiced against us. All these things unitedly considered led me to write the letter, and meet Bishop White and Dr. Magaw in Philadelphia.

But it may be asked why did I not consult Bishop Asbury before I took these steps. I answer, It was impossible. I was at and near Philadelphia, and he was somewhere in the South. We had finished our district meetings, and he was to be in the State of Maryland about the time of my sailing for England.

I wanted that every thing should be prepared against my return—God willing—in about a year and a half, for further consideration; that Bishop White, etc., should have time to consult their convention, and that I might also lay the matter before Bishop Asbury, and correspond with him on the subject, and after that, if proper, bring the business before the General Conference, which was to be held in order to take into consideration James O'Kelly's division. Before I sailed for England, I met Bishop Asbury, at New Castle, in the State of Delaware (from which place I went on board), and laid the matter before him, who, with that caution which peculiarly characterized him, gave me no decisive opinion on the subject.

The next objection (and I think the only important one remaining) is the following: "If you did not think that the episcopal ordination of Mr. Asbury was valid, why did you ordain him? Was there not duplicity in this business?" I answer:

"1. I never, since I could reason on those things, considered the doctrine of the *uninterrupted apostolic succession of bishops* as at all valid or true.

"2. I am of our late venerable father Mr. Wesley's opinion—that the order of bishops and presbyters is one and the same.

"3. I believe that the episcopal form of Church-government is the best in the world, when the episcopal power is under due regulations and responsibility.

"4. I believe that it is well to follow the example of the primitive Church as exemplified in the word of God, by setting apart persons for great ministerial purposes by the imposition of hands, but especially those who are appointed for offices of the first rank in the Church."

From all I have advanced you may easily perceive, my dear brethren, that I do not consider the imposition of hands, on the one hand, as essentially necessary for any office in the Church; nor do I, on the other hand, think that the repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, when important circumstances require it, is at all improper.

If it be granted that my plan of union with the old Episcopal Church was desirable (*which now, I think, was not so, though I most sincerely believed it to be so at that time*), then, if the plan could not have been accomplished without a repetition of the imposition of hands for the same office, I did believe, and do now believe, and have no doubt, that the repetition of the imposition of hands would have been perfectly justifiable for the enlargement of the field of action, etc., and would not, by any means, have invalidated the former consecration or imposition of hands. Therefore, I have no doubt but my consecration of Bishop Asbury was perfectly valid, and would have been so even if he had been reconsecrated. I never did apply to the general convention, or

any other convention, for reconsecration. I never intended that either Bishop Asbury or myself should give up our episcopal office, if the junction were to take place; but I should have had no scruple then, nor should I now *if the junction were desirable*, to have submitted to, or to submit to, a reimposition of hands in order to accomplish a great object; but I do say again, I do *not* now believe such a junction desirable.

And now I conclude with assuring you that I greatly love and esteem you; that it is my delight to pray for your prosperity; and that I am your very affectionate brother and faithful friend,

T. Coke

*M.H. Moore, Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia, 161-64*

*It seems that Asbury was in some slight difficulty, as between Ezekiel Cooper, the Book Agent, and John Wilson, the Assistant. Evidently Cooper had sent some word about Asbury's writing to Wilson and not to him. Asbury is consoling Cooper. The General Conference elections are uppermost in his mind.*

GEORGETOWN, MARYLAND<sup>[52]</sup>

*March 6, 1808*

[*To Ezekiel Cooper*]<sup>[53]</sup>

My very dear Brother:

May great grace attend you. I will not plead age, my haste, my sight, long journies, my conference duties, my letters of special duty, for not writing to you. I had nothing special to communicate when I wrote to John Wilson,<sup>[54]</sup> it was for my account. I thought John would tell you anything that passed amongst us. We have had great peace and some increase of ministers and members, in all the conferences. In the west they had predetermined to elect seven men for General Conference, it is done. I doubt if there will be 40 members from all the 4 distant conferences, whether Philadelphia and Baltimore will send 80, 40, or 20 members, from each.

I hope all will be well, and doubtless Brother Coke will hold his relation to this connection as it hath been from the beginning. If you see Brother Totten,<sup>[55]</sup> but he is moving down, I have not heard from him. I feel as if this would be the greatest year that hath ever been known in Europe, or America for the power of God, come what will in the outward state. If I did not write from Waterford, I might plead my crutches. I have not had any letter from Brother Cooper, unless outside work. Indeed I expected to have seen Brother Cooper at Georgetown, but you may be well employed with the books, and Bible. Oh, Brother, perfect love, be wholly for God, for souls, and glory. May the good will of him that dwelt

with Moses in the bush be with thee. I am your father,  
brother, friend, and servant in Jesus,

F. Asbury

P.S. I cannot lock myself up a moment in a room as Mr. Wesley would. We are republicans here. If I sit down three or 4 will come in talking around. It shows their love but it proves my difficulties in preventing my speaking. My absent brethren I have only to let you know that all the brethren appear to wish some more equal representation.<sup>[56]</sup> I know not but the Baltimore Conference will fix upon a liberal elect number of the best members they have. I find it is the wish of many of the members.

F. Ay.

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*Coke is in England, and Asbury is bringing him up to date.  
Here Asbury's comments are prompted by Coke's marriage.*

NEW YORK, N.Y.<sup>[57]</sup>

*March 30, 1808*

[*To Thomas Coke*]<sup>[58]</sup>

My dear Coke:

Great grace, great peace, great usefulness attend you and your dear wife! God is gloriously visiting our continent, very generally but not universally. We have had, in the course of last year, more than common sickness, and mortality. The multitudes of our people are removing from the ancient, to the new and extreme parts of our country. Our prospects are



great. We visit almost every part within, and over the lines of the United States. We have, after your example, sent out missionaries into the interior and exterior of Pennsylvania, New York, and Jersey. We have gained three new circuits, and 100 members with the enlargement of an ancient circuit. In our towns and cities the work revives greatly.

You need not wonder that I am remiss in writing, since I have to ride on horseback 5000 miles in eight months, and to meet seven conferences, that comprehend near 600 preachers. Often I am at the other end of the continent when your letters land at this.

Oh my brother, I hope you are plain and pointed upon justification, and the witness of the Spirit, and on sanctification. I mark with pleasure the resolution of our elder brethren, concerning the pure, primitive doctrines of the Gospel and Methodism. It is not possible for us or you to calculate the good the Lord doth by us, in those that live and those that die daily in the Lord, and multitudes that never come into close fellowship with us; but will be found in the day of eternity.

My dear friend, I have received your many loving letters, and feel my obligations to you. If I write you one circumstantial letter in a year, well: my eyes, my time, my powers fail. Think how many hours I must be on horseback, when I only ride 3, or, at most, 4 miles in an hour. In many places we have only solitary woods for retirement. In towns and cities I always stay in my lodgings, viz. a day in

Baltimore, or Philadelphia, or New-York, unless in time of conference. I visit only the houses of God, and my friends that are sick. I do not go from house to house to talk, and eat, and drink.

I have one good thing to tell you, that amid all our peace, liberty, and plenty, our travelling connexion is kept poor. We have almost 600 preachers on the minutes and our funds and collections yield us possibly 6 or 7000 dollars a year. We have never attempted to raise any thing but the quarterage, 80 dollars, you know, to single, and the same for married preachers, and the same for their wives. Nevertheless, every conference in the Union is insolvent. Last year our New-England Conference was deficient 3000 dollars. We have to thrust out several of our preachers into the extremities, and some preachers and their wives have to draw, almost their whole salary from the conferences. Last year we had to send six missionaries 900 miles, through the help of a voluntary collection from the Western Conference. We gave only ten dollars to each of the missionaries, who had 5 or 600 miles to travel through the Indian Country. My dividend is 25 dollars from each of the seven conferences, to meet my quarterage and all my expenses. So that, amidst all our prosperity, we are poor.

I hope I shall be pardoned by all good men, and women, and by my Lord; that I have not followed rather, Peter than Paul.<sup>[59]</sup>

What I fail in this line, I make up in preaching, and Christian counsel, to that part of the Redeemer's family. I was told that a worthy sister desired her lord to lengthen his letters to me: she might have done, as some of the preachers' wives have done, filled the other side herself. Everlasting love embrace you! My dear Brother Coke, the past is gone with me, the present and future are in sight. We must mind little what men speak of us. Men will break out upon me, by word and deed, and oftentimes I never know it, and if I do I pass it by pleasantly; we must go through evil and good report. God knoweth the purity of our intentions.

I am, Yours,

Francis Asbury

The Arminian Magazine, XXXI, 573-74.

*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

*This is only a postscript to a letter, the main part of which M'Caine does not quote. Asbury refers to the misunderstandings between the brethren over Coke. At this time he seems particularly careful not to create discord with the British connection. Asbury had evidently received Coke's letter explaining his famous letter to Bishop White. The White letter is quoted by Paine.*

[NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT]

April 24, 1808

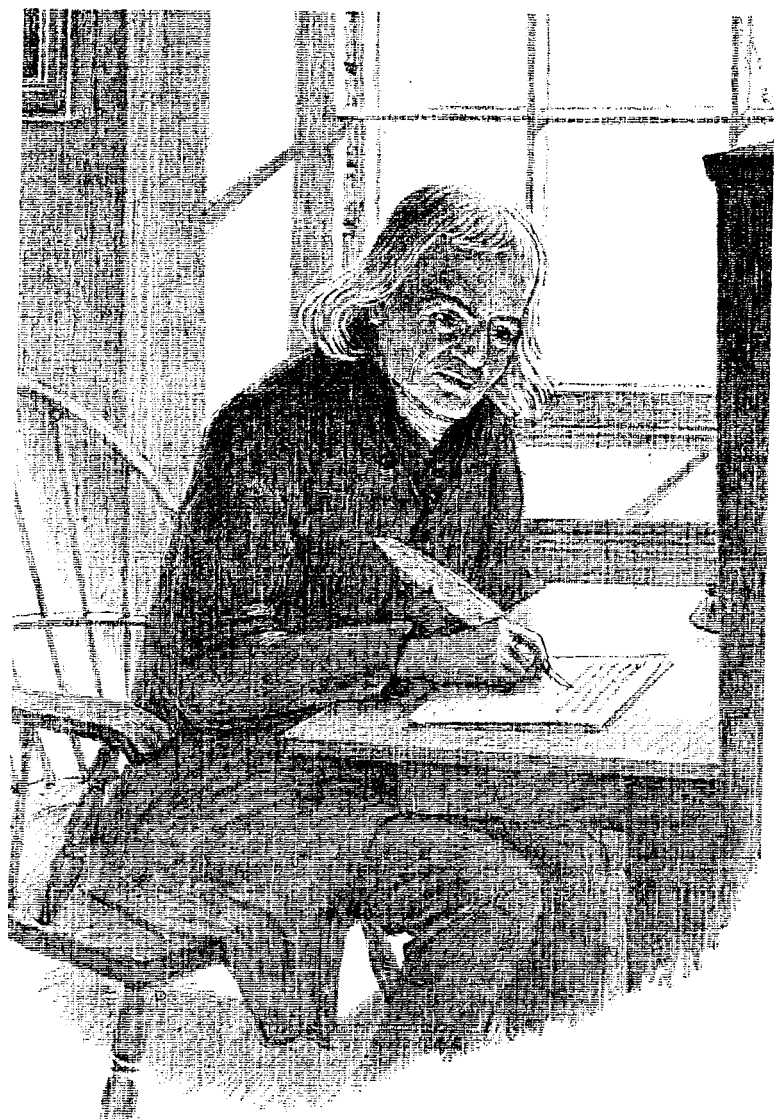
[To Alexander M'Caine]<sup>[60]</sup>

I have been grieved in former times with some little misunderstandings between the American connexion; I now

wish to guard against anything that might make discord between us and the British connexion through Dr. Coke.<sup>[61]</sup> We should all be pious, prudent and pure and entertain high and honorable thoughts of each other. \* \* \* I leave you to make a prudent use of what I have written. I am yours in Jesus as ever,

Francis Asbury

*Alexander M'Caine*, Letters of the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1850, 153



## ENDNOTES

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- [1] This letter was sent through Alexander M'Caine.
- [2] Evidently the letter to the Baltimore Conference was similar to that sent to other conferences.
- [3] A bad guess on the size of America.
- [4] Edward Dromgoole was a local preacher living on the Greensville Circuit, one of the earliest American preachers. He traveled from 1774 to 1780 and from 1783 to 1786.
- [5] William P. Chandler, presiding elder on the Delaware District.
- [6] Stith Mead was presiding elder on the Richmond District, Virginia.
- [7] Philip Bruce was presiding elder on the Norfolk District, Virginia. Later in this letter Asbury says Bruce will tell Dromgoole about the conference. The conference was voting on the proposal of the delegated General Conference. The minutes of the conference say: "The New York conference having written a circular letter to the several Annual Conferences, proposing a plan to strengthen the Superintendency, the letter was read in this Conference, and a vote was taken yesterday, 'shall we concur in the subject?' Only seven were in favor of the motion. The subject was called up again to-day, and a second vote was taken; fourteen were in favor of it. It is therefore the decision of this Conference not to be concerned in it.

"The purport of this measure is thus given by Bangs, in his *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*:

"This year [1806] a paper was submitted to the Annual Conferences, beginning with the Baltimore Conference, by Bishop Asbury, in favor of calling a General Conference of seven delegates from each Annual Conference, to meet in the city of Baltimore, in May, 1807, for the purpose of strengthening the Episcopacy.

"This paper was referred to a committee to consider and report thereon, and all the Conferences except Virginia reported in favor of the proposition, and elected their delegates accordingly." (See Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, 507-8.)

[8] James O'Kelly, who led the schism into the Republican Methodist, later Christian, Church. It finally united with the Congregational Church to form the Congregational Christian Church.

[9] As the conference of 1808 is approached, Asbury is wondering as to whether they will vote for a delegated General Conference or not.

[10] Letter defaced in these places.

[11] Father of William McKendree.

[12] William McKendree.

[13] The reference is to Jesse Lee and his opposition. It is not clear whether O'Kelly is Simeon and Jesse Lee is Levi. (Also see Genesis 49:5-7.)

[14] A preacher, but not related to Francis Asbury. Envelope addressed Beaties Ford, Catawba River, North Carolina. He was presiding elder on the Swanino District, South Carolina Conference. Daniel Asbury was born in Fairfax County, Virginia, February 18, 1762. We are told that his parents, who are not named, differed as to the doctrines of

Christianity and that Daniel grew up without religious instruction. At sixteen he went to Kentucky, where he was captured by a band of Shawnee Indians and taken to the West. He was adopted and kindly treated but endured many hardships. He was later taken up into Canada, and during the Revolutionary War was taken prisoner by the British, put in irons and imprisoned in Detroit. He made his escape and got back to his father's house in Virginia after five years of captivity. His mother did not know him, but her joy was unbounded when she discovered her boy. He was converted and entered the traveling connection in 1786 and was appointed to the Amelia Circuit in Virginia. He was a useful preacher and served as presiding elder on the Savannah, Camden, Catawba, and Broad River districts, a total of fourteen years. He died on Sunday, April 15, 1825. It is said he was born on Sunday, captured by the Indians on Sunday, returned home on Sunday, was converted on Sunday, and died on Sunday. He was buried at Rehoboth Church, Catawba County, North Carolina. (See M.H. Moore, *Pioneers of Methodism in North Carolina and Virginia*, 167-80.)

[15] The conference was held at Newbern, North Carolina, but there is no reference in Asbury's *Journal* to this in his remarks on the conference. (See February 4, 1807. See letter of February 11, 1807.) Asbury's statement here does not agree with what is reported by Bennett. He says, "It was vigorously opposed by Jesse Lee and received only fourteen votes." (See W.W. Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, 508.)

[16] The reference is not clear.



[17] "The Memorial of the Trustees of the African Methodist Episcopal Church called Bethel, to the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, ministers assembled. Greeting. To prevent any misconstruction and to guard against a wrong understanding of our motions and designs in the late strife we have taken in procuring a Supplement to our act of incorporation. We judge it prudent to declare to you in your official capacity in the most explicit manner as follows Viz.

"1. We have no purpose or intention whatever of separating ourselves from or of making ourselves independent of the Methodist Conference and the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"2. Our only design is to secure to our selves our rights and privileges, to regulate our affairs, temporal and spiritual, the same as if we were white people, and to guard against any opposition which might possibly arise from the improper prejudice or administration of any individual having the exercise of discipline over us.

"3. We wish and expect that the minister having the charge over us should preach and exercise discipline among us as formerly they have been accustomed to do, in conformity to the Discipline and the act and supplement of our incorporation, and it is our purpose to contribute toward the support of the ministers.

"4. We do advise you of our cordial attachment to the Methodist Connection and of our full and entire purpose to continue Methodists in future as heretofore. Signed in behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Richard Allen, Pastor, Philadelphia, April 8, 1807"

- [18] Date not known. However, Sharp was returned to Philadelphia in 1807. He moved in 1808.
- [19] Nelson Reed was presiding elder on the Baltimore District in 1807. Probably this note was written to Reed.
- [20] Perhaps Thomas Budd, who in 1807 was assigned to Fell's Point to change with Henry Smith on the Fell's Point Circuit in six months.
- [21] Address on envelope is Beaties Ford, North Carolina. Presiding elder on the Swanino District, South Carolina Conference.
- [22] Evidently James O'Kelly. Reference seems to be to Robert Williams' farm and books. O'Kelly had been presiding elder on the district where Williams lived.
- [23] The memorial had to do with the matter of a delegated General Conference.
- [24] Again James O'Kelly. There are many references to his schism in the *Journal* and *Letters*.
- [25] The horse.
- [26] Presiding elder, Richmond District, Virginia Conference.
- [27] See *Journal*, 1852 ed., July 27, 1807.
- [28] This is interesting since all historians claim an earlier date, namely about 1760.
- [29] See next letter.
- [30] Mrs. Tabb lived at Toddsbury. She was a good Methodist, and gave Mt. Zion Church to the Methodists in 1797. Asbury visited there last in 1812 (*Journal*). This letter was sent to Stith Mead with the request that it be sent to her.
- [31] Lakes in northern New York.
- [32] Jacob Gruber, presiding elder on the Greenbrier District, Baltimore Conference. He followed James Ward.

- [33] The *Minutes* of 1807 show John Richards was on the Canestio Charge on the Susquehanna District.
- [34] Pastor on the Lyons Charge on the Genesee District in 1807.
- [35] Henry Boehm had German background. (See *Discipline*, Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress.)
- [36] Presiding elder on the Greenbrier District in 1806.
- [37] Thomas Lyell and Ralph Williston became Episcopal preachers.
- [38] Roman Catholic Church.
- [39] Greek Orthodox Church.
- [40] Presiding elder, Richmond District, Virginia.
- [41] Though on September 6, 1807, Asbury refers in the *Journal*, 1852 ed., to receiving a letter from Stith Mead, there is no reference to the difficulties. Mead's home was in Lynchburg, Virginia; and it seems as if something may have happened in his family there.
- [42] Presiding elder, Baltimore District.
- [43] Daniel Hitt was traveling with Asbury. (See *Minutes*, 1807.)
- [44] This is interesting in view of Wesley's letter to Asbury of September 20, 1788.
- [45] It is assumed that the date was the same as Asbury's letter. Daniel Hitt was Asbury's traveling companion. It was customary for Asbury's traveling companions to attach a letter. Their letters went along together.
- [46] Though the letter is not addressed to Nelson Reed, it is quite clear that it is to him. The first person mentioned in the salutation at the end is Sister Reed.
- [47] Assistant Book Steward.

- [48] Rembert Hall was near Camden, also Rembert's Chapel. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., December 7, January 6, 1807).
- [49] Elijah Hedding was presiding elder on the New Hampshire District. He was born in New York in 1790 and died in 1855. In 1824 he was elected a bishop.
- [50] Letter defaced.
- [51] John Wesley.
- [52] Asbury was at the Baltimore Conference which met at Georgetown, March 2-9, 1808. (See *Journal*.)
- [53] Book Agent. The *Minutes* show him stationed in New York. He was pastor also.
- [54] John Wilson was Assistant Book Agent. He is shown in the *Minutes* stationed at Brooklyn in 1807 and New York in 1808.
- [55] Joseph Totten was presiding elder of the Jersey District in 1807 and 1808.
- [56] On the General Conference.
- [57] The conference in New York began on April 6 and closed on April 13. Asbury arrived in New York several days ahead.
- [58] Coke was in England.
- [59] He means in marrying. He indicates in this paragraph that he is still quite human as he refers to the "worthy sister," Mrs. Coke.
- [60] Letter is not addressed. It seems to be to M'Caine.
- [61] See letters of August 30, 1804, and December 27, 1806, including Coke's letters; also Coke's letters of February 2, 1807, and November 16, 1807. See Paine, *Life and Times of William McKendree*, 144, 145.

**FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1808  
THROUGH 1810**

*May 27, 1808 - September —, 1810*

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1808 THROUGH 1810

May 27, 1808 - September —, 1810

*Thomas Roberts was an old friend of Asbury's. The letter is really a report to his friend in England of some of Methodism's progress in America.*

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

May 27, 1808

[To Thomas Roberts]<sup>[1]</sup>

My very dear Friend and Brother:

May great grace be multiplied to you and yours, in our Lord Jesus Christ! I have heard of and from you. I thankfully accept your letter, and love. Our American letters to the British Conference,<sup>[2]</sup> and Bishop Coke, you will see; and by them you will know our state. We in the United States, have had great liberty, peace, and plenty. It is a wonder we are not worse; and our shame, we are not better. We have upwards of one hundred and fifty thousand members; and possibly between two and three thousand official men, in our church; and no small number, gone to glory. Yet, may we not fear that, in our membership of multitude, we have unawakened, half-awakened, or hypocritical, or formal, or backsliding souls!

In our ministry, are we all free from the love of honour, ease, or interest? We rejoice, with trembling; notwithstanding, the seventeen states are open to us, and our spiritual prospects are great and good. I have nothing of consequence to send you; but my love and good wishes, and frequent prayers, are engaged for the Methodists in Europe. The superintendents did not sign the letters to the venerable Conference: we felt modest, lest we should applaud our own praises. Assure them, we bear great good-will to the Conference. We have, as we think, established a moderate Wesleyan Episcopacy; perpetuated, in words, the good old Methodist doctrine, and discipline; with a representation of one,<sup>[3]</sup> for five members in every yearly conference, to meet once in four years the General Conference. Except our orders, in the ministers, and church-form, and members, we keep as close as we can to the first rules and principles of old Methodism. To the God of all grace I commend you. My love to all the holy brethren and sisters in Jesus. I am your's in Jesus,

Francis Asbury

P.S. Please to inform any or all the brethren, that their letters will be acknowledged by me, with any books or pamphlets. We ought to increase in knowledge. Farewell. Let us meet in glory. I am now in the sixty-third year of my age, and forty-sixth of my labours, travelling and locally. Time is short! May we be always ready!

The Arminian Magazine, XXXII, 131-32.  
*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

*There are two of these extracts from letters. Ezekiel Cooper and Joshua Wells, the "city lords," had led attacks on the presiding eldership. They wanted the office to be elective.*

BALTIMORE, MD.

May 27, 1808 [?]

[Extracts of a letter to T. L. Douglass]<sup>[4]</sup>

[*To Thomas L. Douglass*]<sup>[5]</sup>

Such a deliberate attempt to take away the last remains of Episcopacy, deprives us of our privileges, wholesale and retail. Ah! have I lost the confidence of the American People and preachers? or of only a few overgrown members that have been disappointed? and the *city lords* who wish to be bishops, presiding elders, deacons, and to reign without us—over us?

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh, to assault a man they know can neither fight nor fly! For was it a man's covenant, I could soon show General George Washington<sup>[6]</sup>—resign.

[Francis Asbury]

*William W. Bennett, Memorials of Methodism in Virginia,*  
584

*The General Conference, meeting in Baltimore in 1808, sent this address to the British Conference. In the address they acknowledged the British Address and endorsed many of its remarks.*



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND  
May 27, 1808

[*To the British Conference*]<sup>[7]</sup>

Your request for the continuance of our beloved Brother, Dr. Coke, among you, has been taken into the most serious and solemn deliberation in our Conference: and in compliance with your request, a vote has past, that he may be continued with you, until he may be called to us by all the annual conferences respectively, or the General Conference. We are, however, not insensible of his value, nor ungrateful for his past labours of love.

Our venerable Father, Mr. Asbury is still spared to us; and not withstanding he carries the weight of threescore and three years, he had been enabled regularly to visit all the annual conferences, and to preside in our General Conference. We esteem this a peculiar blessing.

As the pious Whatcoat<sup>[8]</sup> is taken from us to his eternal reward, we have elected and set apart our beloved Brother, William M'Kendree . . . to fill his place as joint superintendent with Mr. Asbury. . . .<sup>[9]</sup>

By the Committee,

Ezek. Cooper  
Daniel Hitt  
Joshua Wells  
Wm. Penn Chandler, Secretary

P.S. Our Brother, Samuel Coate,<sup>[10]</sup> has returned from England under a deep impression of gratitude for the kindness he has experienced among you. Among due investigation, we are satisfied concerning the purity of his motives and integrity of his conduct in his late visit to make collections for the Montreal church; and we join him in thanks for the many marks of favour and love he has received from you.

Francis Asbury  
William M'Kendree<sup>[11]</sup>

*"Minutes of Several Conversations, at the Sixty-Sixth Annual Conference, begun in Manchester, July 31, 1809."*  
*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

A Letter of Henry Boehm  
to Mrs. Brightwell

*This letter of Henry Boehm's has a postscript which is Asbury's. As the letter and the Journal indicate, Asbury had been sick at the Brightwell's.*

JOHN BECKS [WEST]  
OHIO COUNTY, VIRGINIA<sup>[12]</sup>  
*July 31, 1808*

[*To Mrs. John Brightwell*]

Very dear Brother and Sister:

Agreeable to promise I now lift my pen to give some information how we are and how we got along. After we left your house on Thursday<sup>[13]</sup> last, we came on about ten miles when we stopt about one hour and got some refreshment, then

we made another move and rode to Washington,<sup>[14]</sup> about 17 miles, about 8 of which we rode in a heavy rain. This was a day of toil and pain on behalf of Father Asbury, but he was much better next morning than it was possible to expect according to human appearances, so that we set off about seven o'clock and rode to our friend Becks about 20 miles, and rode about 4 miles out of our way. We came in about 3 o'clock. He is now very much fatigued, but pain is rather subsiding.

For my part I bless God for health of body and peace of mind. Through grace I am bound for Canaan's happy land. I trust, my dear friends you're blest with health and much of the presence of the Lord. The kindness shown to us by you will never be forgotten. May heaven bless you and yours. I am,  
Yours in the Lord,

Henry Boehm

P.S.<sup>[15]</sup> Great grace be with the whole family. Incredible toilsome is sitting so dead upon the horse, every step down hill deep pain, and ready to pitch over the horse's head, but a good hot bath helped. Oh sister, your kind hand and offices will not be forgotten on earth or heaven. Pray three times a day. Seek perfect love. Farewell. Remember to all friends. Peace, peace.

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Pittsburgh Conference.  
Transcribed with notes, W.G. Smeltzer*

*The interest that Asbury had in his preachers is expressed here in his reference to praying twice a day for Jacob Gruber. The chief object of the letter seems to have been to direct Gruber to find a place for the conference. The Baltimore Conference had been set for Harrisonburg, Virginia, to be held on March 2, 1809.*

CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA  
November 18, 1808

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[16]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

Great grace, great peace and prosperity attend thee as a Christian and minister. I thank you for letters and thank God that hath helped you to be faithful and crowned your labours; possibly I never fail to pray for you twice every day. My friends may think I flatter when I talk of being unwell, did not the loss of health and limbs proclaim, and crutch and staff declare, from Baltimore to Charleston 2000 miles, 7 states and one territory. Be assured our prospects never were so great in the western continent, 2 new districts, 3437 increase, 84 preachers stationed, our camp and quarter meetings are prevalent all over the continent. I hope we have gained in the summer and fall, what we lost in the spring by conferences and changeable weather. As to a place to hold conference, I have no choice. I know no houses now, but Mr. McWilliams near the church, you must do the best you can. Bishop

McKendree has visited the Missouri and has travelled 200 miles more than I have, he is in health, I am as ever thine,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Asbury was smarting under the attacks on the presiding eldership which he considered attacks on himself. Here he refers to the opposers.*

—1808<sup>[17]</sup>

[To Thomas L. Douglass]<sup>[18]</sup>

In former times I have been impartial, indifferent, and have appointed good men that I knew were for a Presbyterian party;<sup>[19]</sup> but since they have made such an unwarrantable attack upon the Constitution in the very first General Conference after adoption, I will only trust such men as far as I can see them; and let such men know that I know their principles, and disapprove them. One argument might have been used at General Conference—that at the Constitution Conference (i.e., of 1808 which formed and adopted the Constitution) when the Constitution was ready for adoption, it was suspended to try what afterwards would be secured in it—who shall appoint the presiding elders?—last then, and three or four times over. But behold and wonder! Oh, my son, we must fix our eyes steadily upon pages 23, 24 of our Discipline.

[Francis Asbury]

*William W. Bennett, Memorials of Methodism in Virginia,*

*It is said that Methodist hymnody had its beginnings in America. John Wesley in 1737 at Charles Town, now Charleston, South Carolina, published his first book of hymns. In 1780 he and Charles published the large hymnbook entitled A Collection of Hymns for the Use of People Called Methodists. In 1781 Robert Spence published a pocket hymnbook which was largely a compilation of the hymns of the Wesleys, but without their permission. In 1785 John Wesley published a pocket hymnbook for the use of Christians of all denominations. Wesley sent over to America a number of psalms and hymns to be attached to the Sunday Service of the Methodists of North America. With other occasional services. London. Printed in the year MDCCLXXXIV. These books and a letter were presented to the Christmas Conference in Baltimore, 1784, and the book adopted. It became the first official Methodist hymnal and was called A Collection of Psalms and Hymns. It was not very satisfactory and was used only a few years.*

*The Pocket Hymn Book soon came into America, and it became very popular. It was reprinted in 1790 and became the second official American hymnal. It can be seen from this preface and letter that several hymnbooks were used in the early days of American Methodism. The earliest came from England. However, the Congregational Church had a hymnbook in America earlier. The title page to this shows that it was the first edition of the hymnbook A Selection of Hymns from various authors. The twenty-first edition of the*

*Methodist Pocket Hymn Book was published in Philadelphia in 1796.<sup>[20]</sup> It was revised and improved and had already gone through thirty-five editions in 1805.*

*Methodism was born as a singing church. There is evidence of Asbury's interest in the hymns. It should be remembered that all these hymns had to be learned, that there were no instruments in those Methodist churches and no choirs. One could wish that Asbury had related something of the methods of teaching the people to sing in the churches. A question was asked in the conference of 1784, "Question 14, How shall we reform our singing? Answer, Let all our preachers who have any knowledge of notes, improve it by learning to sing true themselves and keeping close to Mr. Wesley's tunes and hymns."<sup>[21]</sup> A copy of the Pocket Hymn Book published in Philadelphia in 1798 has been found. It has essentially this same preface.*

— 1808

To the Members and Friends of the Methodist Episcopal  
Church

Dear Brethren:

You are presented with a choice and complete Pocket Hymn-Book, revised, containing a collection from the Rev. John and Charles Wesley, and other authors, of excellent and evangelical Hymns, suitable for private devotion (when you would wish to speak to yourselves in Hymns and Spiritual Songs) as well as for family, social and public worship: and

we trust you will be much assisted by the present publication, in the performance of these important parts of divine service.

The Hymn-Books which have been already published among us, are truly excellent—The Select Hymns, the double collection of Hymns, and Psalms, and the Redemption-Hymns, display great spirituality, as well as purity of diction—The large Congregational Hymn-Book is admirable indeed, but is too expensive for the poor, who have little time and less money. The Pocket Hymn-Book, lately sent abroad in these States, is a most valuable performance for those who are deeply spiritual, but is better suited to the European Methodists, among whom all the before-mentioned books have been thoroughly circulated for many years. But all the excellencies of the former publications, are in a great measure, concentrated in the present, which contains the choicest and most precious of the Hymns that are to be found in the former editions; and at the same time is so portable, that you may always carry it with you without the least inconvenience.

We are the more delighted with this design, as no personal advantage is concerned, but the public good alone—For, after the necessary expenses of publication are discharged, we shall make it a noble charity, by applying the profits, arising therefrom, to religious and charitable purposes.

No motive of a sinister nature has therefore influenced us in any degree to publish this excellent compilation. It has received the approbation of the Conference, and contains



many valuable Hymns which some of the former editions have been scrupulously applied as above, so the same appropriation of the profits of the present shall be conscientiously observed. We must therefore earnestly entreat you, if you have any respect for the authority of the Conference, or of us, or any regard for the prosperity of the Connection, to purchase no Hymn-Books, but what are signed with the names of your Bishops. And as we intend to keep a constant supply, the complaint of our congregations, "that they cannot procure our Hymn-Book," will be stopped.

We exhort you to Sing with the Spirit and with the Understanding also: and thus may the high praises of God be set up from East to West, from North to South; and we shall be happily instrumental, in leading the devotion of thousands, and shall rejoice to join you in time and eternity.

We are, Dear Brethren, Your faithful Pastors in Christ,

Francis Asbury,  
William M'Kendree

*A selection of hymns from various authors, designed as a supplement to the Methodist Pocket Hymn Book, compiled under the direction of Asbury, 1808. Rare Book Department, Library of Congress*

*From Charleston,<sup>[22]</sup> South Carolina, to New Hampshire was almost from one end to the other of Methodism in that day. Thus Asbury was keeping in touch with the whole connection. Trouble with his foot has handicapped his getting*

*around, but he has gone along on crutches. He reports on the work to Elijah Hedding.<sup>[23]</sup> Asbury shows a keen interest in camp meetings.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.  
*December 3, 1808*

*[To Elijah Hedding]*

My dearly beloved in the Lord:

Grace and peace be multiplied to thee as a minister and Christian. What a consolation it is to hear of the glorious work of God in every conference, district, circuit and station, more or less [so] in the course of the year. I heard a little boy named after our bishop at or [near] 18 months<sup>[24]</sup> of age, sing after other children to "shout, shout, we are gaining ground, Halelujah." It is so in no age or place, never was there in any country such a work of God and so great order, number for number. I do hope that 3 million out of 7 million are in some sense, gracious, praying souls.

In a journey of 2000 miles I had to attend conference, camp meeting, 8 or 9 meetings by encampments, and as I was on crutches like an old soldier not in garrison, but on the fields where victory over sin, sinners and Satan was gloriously gained. God in his Providence and my own imprudence, travelling 70 mountainous miles in 24 hours and drinking cold water gave me an awful fit of rheumatick pains, and rendered me unable to stand, walk or kneel, but I sat down, and taught the people. The Lord must humble me under such a weight of honour, and love, and to correct my imprudence.

One Western Conference commands the Western Empire territory far beyond the boundaries of the old 13 United States, 7 districts, increase of members, 3437, stationed preachers 84, land rich, emigration and population, incredibly great. We who superintended the West and South Conferences cannot answer our own minds and the people and preachers for riding less than 3000 miles each year, sometimes when it is proper together, and when we have time to labour, we take different directions.

We think that our Annual Conferences cannot be held in solitary towns, but by encampments, 30 or 40 tents. The preachers could be boarded by friends from small towns around upon the ground; only 40 have a retired place for the sitting of conference. Great frugality, prudence, diligence, and good order are fitted for these times of outpouring of the spirit of God. You must bear with the old man and 6 preachers in town besides visitors. My heart is full of good wishes. We have to redeem times. I came too at Camden, but behold a campmeeting called our attention. The people set traps, cut down branches of trees to make tents and cabins and our summers all the year. December here is like June north. My love to all our charge if you please. I am firmly, faithfully, loving, the servant of you all, for Christ's sake.

F. Asbury

*Historical Society of Pennsylvania*

*This is an unaddressed letter and is very much like the preceding letter to Elijah Hedding. Asbury is reporting on the growth of the church.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.  
*December 6, 1808*

[*To whom?*]<sup>[25]</sup>

My dear Son:

Peace be with thy spirit. If my children all love me as I love them; and would take as great a pleasure in hearing of the work of God as I do, they would stand in need of my rule of discipline to order them to write to the Bishop, an account of the work of God, yearly. In the west, increase, two new districts, 3437 members, stationed 84 preachers in the western Empire. Possibly 2000 miles in length, 600 miles in width, only the [length] of 20 years. What hath God wrought. In travelling west through Maryland, from Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, high, low and middle lands, town and country, the work of God is visible and glorious. Conference, campmeetings, quarter meeting, campmeeting every district, circuit, more or less, two upon one ground in a year. We shall prevail, we do prevail, God is with us, better and better, order everywhere.

The Lord has been pleased to humble me under such prosperity and affliction of the people, by putting me out of the use of my knees, and feet, yet then I did not fail to preach, and pray and carry my crutches as the sentry conquered fields of spiritual victory. Oh brother, wisdom, moderation, energy, order, union, love, fervent prayers, fervent exhortation,

unremitting diligence, frugality! Temperance, charity to the poor. Our poor preachers in the east now are, and will be in the most distressing cases, not receiving at quarter meetings more than their travelling expenses. We must help them or they will sink beneath their burden. The superintendency must bestir themselves. We have collected for them already in the city. The Philadelphia Conference ought to give up both dividends to the north and east, indeed, it seems as if the Book Concern would be done if we are not very careful. I am ever thine, my love to all the preachers and people in the Lord.

Francis Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*A statement from Alexander M'Caine makes a good introduction to this letter. M'Caine was a follower of O'Kelly. It is to be remembered that M'Caine was a severe critic and withdrew from the church.*

*"Previous to the year 1808, it was the right of every travelling preacher who had travelled four years from the time he was received on trial by an annual conference, and was in full connexion, to attend the General Conference; but from this period, none but those who were elected by their respective annual conferences as delegates, had a right to a seat in that body. This change proceeded from the same principle which induced Mr. Asbury, in former years to prefer a 'council' to a conference; because the latter was, or might be, too unmanageable for him, who wished to have everything*

*done according to his own good pleasure. The 'council' was composed of but few, and these were presiding elders, who always were, and always will be, the bishop's creatures and tools; but in a conference there might be some staunch republicans, and noble-minded ministers, such as James O'Kelly, who would disdain to prostitute their talents to subserve the ambitious views of any ecclesiastical despot. That this change in the economy of Methodism was brought about by the influence and exertions of Mr. Asbury, the following extract from one of his letters, now lying before me will prove." (M'Caine's Letters, 163.)*

— 1808[?]<sup>[26]</sup>

[To Alexander M'Caine]<sup>[27]</sup>

If our title had not been the Methodist episcopal church, and if the English translation had not rendered the Episcopi, Bishop, in the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, well contented am I to be called superintendent, not bishop! I was elected and ordained superintendent,<sup>[28]</sup> as my parchment will prove. Does the Scripture say the Elder shall be the husband of one wife? by some man's rule of reasoning, we might prove, because we have no express Scripture, but they say we are the same order, then why not the same name in Greek and English? Why not Deacons and Bishops of the same order? this all churches agree in, they are not. It is an easy matter for our brethren, members and ministers, that move in narrow circles, to talk to little purpose. Be assured, if there ever should be an equitable Delegated General Conference they will have no power to change the constitution, but to choose

men to superintend the whole continent, as their predecessors have done, married or single.

Francis Asbury

*Alexander M'Caine*, Letters of the Organization and Early History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 163

*One method that Asbury used to keep in touch with England is shown in this letter. He had several friends who were in constant touch with their kinsmen in England, and he corresponded with them with a view to getting news back and forth. In a day when means of communication were slight, Asbury felt the importance of spreading news and information.*

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.<sup>[29]</sup>

January 5, 1809

[To Zachary Myles]<sup>[30]</sup>

My dear Friend:

God be gracious to thee and thine, now and ever! I thank you for your letter. I greatly rejoice to hear from my mother's house, the chamber of her that bore me. My mind shares in the prosperity, and mourns in the adversity of that venerable branch of our society, the British Connexion. I think the missionary plan is greatly owned of God. We have sent two from the Western, and three from the Southern Conference. Our Western Conference extends over the Western Empire of the United States, about 1700 or 2000 miles. We have seven districts belonging to that Annual Conference. The last time it met we admitted seven preachers, stationed eighty-four, and

the increase of members in the last year was 3437. The Conference was held, by encampment, eight days. At the Southern Conference, we admitted sixteen preachers upon trial, the increase of members belonging to that Conference, was 3088. Finding the travelling ministers to be only about 62, I called for an extemporaneous account of the local ministers. The names and number then given were 201.

I think that the preachers belonging to each of the seven annual conferences (separately taken) in the United States, are about 300, including such as are local, and that they preach to about 3, if not 400,000 souls annually. I feel myself failing in my strength, being in my 64th year, and 43d of my travelling ministry; and each conference being five times larger than it was formerly. Bishop McKendree and I travel together at present, and no earthly consideration has, and I trust never will have, for a moment, any influence on our minds. If we live in the confidence of the preachers and members of society, and above all, in the approbation of our God; and see the increase of the kingdom of Christ we are happy. But all we do is nothing without Christ. I am, to you and Sister Myles, the same in affection.

Francis Asbury  
The Methodist Magazine (1809), 265

*This letter was said to have been written in 1809. It was written at the Baltimore Conference. The Baltimore Conference met at Harrisonburg, Virginia, March 2 to March 8. The Journal indicates that they had German preaching.*



*Asbury had been most friendly with the German brethren. Philip Otterbein assisted in his ordination. Others were lifelong friends.*

March —, 1809

[*To the Conference of the United Brethren*]

Very dear Brethren:

We, the members of the Baltimore Conference, being deeply sensible of the great utility of union among Christian ministers and members (as far as circumstances will permit) in carrying on the work of God and promoting the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, viewing you as friends and brethren engaged in the same glorious work with ourselves, have, after mature deliberation, thought proper to offer to you the following terms, in order to establish a closer and more permanent union among us.

1. We think it advisable for your own good and prosperity that each minister or preacher who is acknowledged by the United Brethren should receive from your conference a regular license, which may introduce them to our pulpits and privileges and prevent impositions, as there are many who profess to be in union with you that are not acknowledged by you. And we would further advise that you favor each of our presiding elders with a list of the names of those ministers so acknowledged and licensed by you within the bounds of his district, that there may be no difficulties in admitting them to our privileges. And we would further observe that all our traveling ministers and preachers have their names printed in the minutes of our annual conferences, and our local ministers

and preachers have credentials of ordination, or a written license, and we hope that you will admit none to your privileges calling themselves Methodist preachers but such as have their names on the minutes, or as are licensed as above mentioned.

2. As we have long experienced the utility of a Christian discipline to prevent immorality among our people, we would earnestly recommend to you to establish a strict discipline among you, which might be a "defence of your glory." Our Discipline is printed in your language,<sup>[31]</sup> and we would recommend it to your consideration, to adopt it, or any part of it that you in your wisdom may think proper, or any other form that you may judge best. And that under a discipline so established you make use of every Christian and prudential means to unite your members together in societies among yourselves. By these means we think your people will become more spiritual, and your labors be much more successful under the blessing of God.

3. All those members among you who are united in such societies, or may hereafter be united, may be admitted to the privileges of class-meetings, sacraments, and love-feasts in our church, provided they have a certificate of their membership signed by a regularly licensed preacher of your church. And to prevent inconvenience, we wish you to furnish each of our preachers with a list of the names of all such members as may be in the bounds of their respective circuits, that they may know who are your members.

In order further to establish this union, which we so much desire, we have given particular instructions to our presiding elders and preachers who have the charge of districts and circuits where the United Brethren live, to admit your preachers and members, as above specified, to our privileges, and also to leave a list of the names of your preachers and members in the bounds of their respective districts or circuits for their successors, that they may have no difficulties in knowing whom you acknowledge as preachers or members.

Thus, dear brethren, you may see that we sincerely wish to accommodate you as far as we can consistent with the discipline which binds us together as a spiritual people. We think that we have proposed to you such terms of accommodation as will meet your wishes, and if carried into operation among you, we hope and believe a door will be opened for the general usefulness among and with each other. We are persuaded that the great Head of the church will smile on us and own our labors of love, and we shall be blessed in seeing our children converted to God and become useful members of that church which they may choose.

And now, dear brethren, we commend you and your charge to God, praying that the Lord may be with you, and bless you in your conference, and bless your honest labors to promote his glory and the interest of Christ's kingdom in the world.

We are, dear brethren, your sincere friends and brethren in Christ.

Signed by order and in behalf of the conference.<sup>[32]</sup>

Francis Asbury

William McKendree

*A.W. Drury*, History of the Church of the United Brethren  
in Christ, 796

*The Brightwells of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, had befriended and nursed Asbury in his illness the year before. He had received a letter from Mrs. Brightwell, and this is the answer.*

ROCKINGHAM, VIRGINIA<sup>[33]</sup>

March 4, 1809

[To Mrs. John Brightwell]

My very dear Sister:

Since I wrote my former letters, yours came to hand. Many a time I have thought of and prayed for you. It gave me uncommon satisfaction to receive a letter. For although I have been a child of pain and affliction from my birth to the 64th year, my affliction at your house<sup>[34]</sup> excelled, and I was afraid that I might have spoken or done something that might have grieved your mind, as you had to run to my help all hours of day and night, and in cases the most delicate even to lift me off the stools.

But oh my sister, what kind returns? You do not want for this world. It must be your soul, you will never know heaven upon earth till you gain sanctifying grace. *Seek Seek it!* Seek it *now*, in every means by faith, and in bearing every cross! And doing every duty, be fervent in family and private prayer. Let your religion be God, let him be your home, your all!

I thank you sister for all your kindness. Next summer<sup>[35]</sup> I hope, and if I do not see you then I hope to meet you in glory. If we meet on earth let it be full of God, if in heaven full of glory. My love to Brother Bright-well and all friends.

F. Asbury

P.S. A little token—only year pin. Books are an encumbrance or I would send one.<sup>[36]</sup>

*The Historical Society of the Pittsburgh Conference.  
Transcribed with notes by W.G. Smeltzer*

*Seely Bunn, one of the preachers, was appointed to Baltimore. Evidently Neal and Burneston were prominent laymen in the church at Baltimore, and Asbury needed their help in getting Bunn received there. He takes advantage of the opportunity to make observations on the difficulties he was having with local and retired men.*

BATSTO FURNACE, NEW JERSEY  
*April 21, 1809*

[*To Brethren Neal and Burneston*]<sup>[37]</sup>

My dear Sons:

Great grace. I cannot command you as my children but humbly entreat you to take another burden and blessing. Seely Bunn<sup>[38]</sup> cannot ride a circuit if he had a horse, our stations are full in the Philadelphia Conference; the brethren in Wilmington boldly refuse to receive him, on no other consideration, but inability to support him. I have been visiting these parts in pain, and peace, and power. I heard that there was a wish for another preacher in Baltimore, when conferences are wide in magnitude as [New] York, and Philadelphia, 100, each or upwards; it is not so easy to support them and find them work. My abstinence, my daily labour, and such shocks of opposition, such locality<sup>[39]</sup> in the ministry called travelling; it is very serious. Philadelphia Conference holds 10 or 11 preachers, supernumerary and superannuate without stations, claiming 1800 dollars or 2000<sup>[40]</sup> annually. The doctrine is you have no right to locate a man without his consent.

What the end of these things will be possibly I shall not live to see, but I doubt it will not be good. As you are all oecconomy and tho you have wives you have not children. Sister Roberts,<sup>[41]</sup> and Bunn are blessed women. I think it providential, as we could not foresee you had but 3 preachers sent from conference. I hope you will receive them gladly. The peoples' feelings are fine, and so are mine. I told the conference in Philadelphia I was willing to serve as long as I

could please, and if not I must be supernumerary as Bishop McKendree brought it out, and he expected to be absent from some conferences if the preachers, and I may say, people do not accommodate themselves to me; but you have obeyed present and absent, you have collected some money. I applied it, some a part, to our chair,<sup>[42]</sup> now rendered useful by stiff new shafts and I have bought a horse at 76 dollars out of my own pocket, my own, and reserved the balance of the money over what paid the carriage for the suffering brethren in New England. I am, very dear sons, yours in the Lord

Francis Asbury

P.S. To Brethren Neal and Burneston. We have need to give ourselves wholly to God and seek the Lord by fasting and prayer that the spirit of the world may be cast out the Church.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Here are three letters put together. Asbury included in his letter to Thomas Coke a letter to Mrs. Coke. Coke sent the letters on to Joseph Benson to be published in The Methodist Magazine, and Coke's letter is attached. In Asbury's letters to Bishop and Mrs. Coke he shows his great devotion to Coke. There are indications that Benson edited the letters.*

STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

May 2, 1809

[*To Bishop Coke*]<sup>[43]</sup>

My dearly beloved Brother:

May the goodwill of him that was with Moses, dwell with thee, and bind thy soul, and the soul of thy dear wife, in the spiritual, and eternal bundle of life! Myself and Bishop McKendree feel gratitude to thee, in receiving thy double letter. Our present prospects upon the continent, for piety, are exceeding great, and good. I fear, yet I hope temporal prospects will not operate against the work of God! First we congregate exceedingly largely in all the 17 states. A greater decency and attention are manifest in cities, towns, and in all parts of the country (whether we have tired opposition; for you know we American Methodists pray, and preach, and sing and shout aloud); but so it is; and I am inclined to think a general conviction prevails.

In some of our towns and cities, thought to be the most unpromising, we have had signal revivals of religion, for instance, Charleston and Camden in South [Carolina], and Fayetteville in North Carolina and New York. In Georgia admissions in one circuit last year about 600. In the West [Conference] with about 84 travelling preachers we spread over a tract of country, taking of the western claims of Virginia, and North Carolina; a space nearly equal to the ancient 13 United States (on the east side the continent.) Here the attention of the General Superintendency is drawn every year, by a northern passage near or upon [Lake] Ontario, and Lake Erie, on our return from Kennibek River in the East. Its



our country, we have to expand over 5000 miles in about 8 months, 7 conferences of six hundred preachers. And there are belonging to the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences about 100 preachers each, and it is now time to form a Northern, for the eighth conference.

As to quarter meetings, woods, and campmeetings, we have left off to number the congregations, or the subjects of grace, of hearers it is thought sometimes from one to ten thousand, converts from 80 to one hundred on a common scale of things at a meeting. In the State of [New] Jersey last year at 5 campmeetings in the district, it was hoped 500 souls converted, one hundred at each meeting. In Bohemia Manor,<sup>[44]</sup> near Richard Bassett's Mansion house, a campmeeting held ten days; most wonderful day and night. People from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Baltimore, and perhaps Virginia and [New] Jersey, it being near the waters of the Chesapeake. We have made greater impressions in the States of Pennsylvania, [New] Jersey, and New York, in 4 years last past than in 30 in times past, it is nearly so in the southern states. Our numbers may rise to 8 or 10,000 upon our minutes for the last year but the wastage by death; removals, and expulsions will be felt with you, and with us, according to the *whole number*.

We have a weighty married ministry. Our insolvency will be possible 8 or 10,000 dollars this year, our eastern brethren possessing nearly equal numbers with other conferences of preachers and more married preachers, and only about 10,000 people to support them. We have been begging near 1000

dollars from Georgia (onward as we came along, only private donations chiefly from preachers) they feel the *want*, and *use*, of a *General Superintendency*. I am now sinking under the weight of labours, and the 64th year of my life. Last year I had to travel upon crutches several hundred miles. The face of the country is such that I cannot use wheels without great trouble, and expense, yours is a very different country.

One thing, my dear, respecting yourself, *I think you should quit by degrees too much composition*. I am afraid you may injure your health by writing so much. My journals lie by, I cannot permit them to be published unless a third copy was taken. I have not time, nor men. They were written in such haste, and my feelings are very fine and perhaps, if the people knew my sufferings, I should be in more danger than I am in at present. Now only the person<sup>[45]</sup> that attends me, can know the whole and he the outward man only knows. I am reduced to sit down now to preach. I avoid preaching every day, and twice a day if possibly I can, but often drawn by plans I am made to preach every day, and my Assistant is to help, but it is sometimes midnight or break of day, before he comes to his lodging, he by night, myself by day, and twice in the day. I feel at times so in the spirit; a whole hour is soon gone, the people say it is so many years since you were here, and we never expected to see you again; and whether Bishop Coke is a small man, or great man, if an appointment were made for him, all the British Conference would not substitute *him to the people*.

I feel distressed for Bishop Whatcoat's poor relations, what he left will be of little consequence if they ever get it. Was it not that my calls are great I would out of my own pocket do something about it. A widowed family in this country, whose Father served God, the connection and myself; this family<sup>[46]</sup> reduced by their careless management of property have called my all . . . in what words will not express.

F. Asbury

*May 2, 1809*

My dear Sister Coke:

I have had nothing to plead for my want of Christian politeness in not personally addressing thee, elect lady, in my letter to Bishop Coke. Let your goodness pardon me in this. I am happy to hear from persons that have seen your manners, as being meek, modest, and unassuming, that you take a part in the work of charity, piety, and labour, in the word and doctrine. Excuse me Madam, I am a friend to female followers of Jesus, possibly. I preach to millions, and am served by thousands annually, add to all, my Mother was a woman of and among millions.

No country upon earth can produce finer women than we have in America, but connections, affections, relations are such that few enter into a sort of exile, and have no certain dwelling place. I am now sitting in a room in Conference with you, altho 3000 miles apart. And a sudden pang went through

my heart, farewell my Country, my dear friends, oh my dear,  
my paper! my heart! my eyes! my tears!

F.A.

P.S. I am almost unmanned. Take care of Brother Coke, he must not write so much at this time of life. No words shall speak my love to you two in one.

*The following is written down the inner margin and is obviously addressed once more to Coke himself. It was intended to be a postscript.*

I am sorry my letter is so incorrect. But still the full heart hath not imparted half. I think with pleasure that there are very few sea ports or inland towns, but what we have posted ourselves in from Savannah to Boston, a coast, in its bays, creeks and shores possibly 2000 or 3000 miles and we are going on to Portland and utmost limits of the Eastern United States line. We strive to do all we can for the Africans, the poor sailors, and soldiers. O what a field we have, we *have you*. We read carefully our dear Father Wesley's *Journal*.

Bishop McKendree is the man of your choice and mind; the General Conference was certainly directed of God. Beyond all expectation he is received with great confidential respect by all the conference and people, he helpeth me greatly but you know the mill-stone of appointments. This may possibly be my martyrdom but there cannot be better company of men upon earth to govern, but we have the

people, the gifts, the support. You understand it will please me to present officially my Christian and ministerial salutation to my brethren in the British Conference most heartily.

F. Ay.

*The following letter as an appended note to the letter above was sent by Coke to the "Revd. Joseph Benson, the Connexional Editor of Publication."*

My dear Sir:

I beg of you to copy out just what you judge proper of this that I may have it returned to me, when I have the pleasure of meeting you, Deo volente, in London. You may add, if you judge it expedient, as a note as follows:

Dr. Coke begs leave to inform his respected friend the Editor, that this letter was mislaid, otherwise it would have been sent to him sooner. I am, my dear sir

Yrs, affy, & faithy.

T. Coke

*Lamplough Collections, British Conference. Transcribed  
by Frank Baker*

*According to the Journal, August 6 was Sunday, and Asbury preached in the courthouse in Bedford. He was staying in the home of a Yorkshire man. He says that a presiding elder put his feet upon the banister of the pulpit*

*while he was preaching, and that it was like a thorn in his flesh.*

BEDFORD, PA.  
*August 6, 1809*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[47]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

Grace, peace, wisdom, diligence, prudence, courage, and everything a preacher and a presiding elder needeth be multiplied to thee in Jesus our Lord. Our prospects are great and good. I have seen 3000 miles since January 9 to July 31, along shore and northerly to the Canadian lines. I have tried awful roads, and dreadful rides upon horses or upon wheels. Campmeetings, campmeetings. Oh Glory, Glory! But I fear backsliding among old professors,<sup>[48]</sup> and some sudden conversions not sound nor not lasting, and many Methodist families have neither the form or power of godliness; yea practical religion is greatly wanting. I have started for 2000 miles by Cincinnati to Charleston, there you will meet me with a letter if you get in a good harvest this fall in campmeetings.

Bishop McKendree took his route from Genessee to Erie in order to make a visit more extensively in the west. I have to answer his appointments, and mine, and letters also. I have been sorely set by water, and too many appointments, 30 letters to answer and but a day to stop, high waters. I am not on crutches yet. Increase of preachers 103, located 40, increase of members 11,000. It might have been 20,000 had

not General Conference taken the attention of 130 chief men, some 2, others 3, others 6 months from the work.

Union is found, New York conference paid \$112 to married in proportion to single. New England paid after making the preachers account for all they received in property, \$100 married, 50 single some near a thousand dollars of charity sent that was collected in conferences. Mark, I am most fervently in prayer night and day. Thine,

F.A.

*Methodist Historical Society of Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*It is evident from the contents of the letter that Asbury is upset by some of the brethren, especially by James Smith. Smith held some of the prominent appointments and was a leader among the reformers who started the Methodist Protestant Church. However, he died in 1827 before the Methodist Protestant Church was organized. Asbury associates him with the other disturbers from O'Kelly on down.*

PELHAMS, OHIO  
September 15, 1809

[To William McKendree]<sup>[49]</sup>

Francis Asbury's advice submitted to the united and better judgment of the President Bishop, and Ohio Annual Conference.

1—the spirit of error, superstition and schism is rising and spreading in the west, when it is dying in the east. Would it not be well to appoint a committee to answer Mr. James Smith<sup>[50]</sup> completely, once for all, and those of the same party. Suppose to print it in Cincinnati and appoint some person to correct the press.

2. Make an apology, we are not on equal ground to bring railing accusations, hearsays, or write, by—that we cannot follow Mr. O'Kelly,<sup>[51]</sup> from first to last, the progress of his opinions and party, neither Mr. Elias Smith,<sup>[52]</sup> that has sent his abuse and false reports to the Gospel Herald. Neither are we at liberty to retail truth upon Mr. William Guirey,<sup>[53]</sup> neither Mr. William Hammett<sup>[54]</sup> or perhaps, we might dig up something bad as sheep or hog stealing, either to trace or tell all we know of persons that have separated from and spoken perverse things of us, to draw disciples after them.

3. Be careful to take correct testimony from all persons accused, written by their own hands, day and year and month!

4. The conference doings of B. Burke, Blair,<sup>[55]</sup> our troubles show there must have been eavesdropping and that we were wise, to admit none but such as we know are parties concerned because we may see when they will be offended, and leave us. They would clown and misrepresent many things to our disadvantage and tell them to the world and send their books about the continent to people, that must receive their testimony, true or false, because they can receive no



other, men that have left us, men we have expelled, our bitterest enemies.

5. As to sovereign majesty bishop, pope, we do not play with titles and names.

6. As to politicks, it is a delicate subject. The Methodist individually, by individuals, have been insulted but not as a body, they are better known and have better confidence from the Government. We do not believe till better informed that there is a travelling or local preacher among the 3000, but embraces conscientiously the 23 articles of our religion, but it is the common cry, mad dog, popery; popery, the keys. Politicks, enemies to the American Government, even of men, that estimate it above every other Government, but this is not strange when this reproach has fallen upon some faithful continental officers, that passed all the toil of eight years continental Revolutionary War.

7. His mistakes<sup>[56]</sup> in his not being permitted to come into conference to plead his own cause or bring his witnesses did appear at the conference.

8. Anything severe or that cannot be vindicated in any person in dealing with him concede, say perhaps this might have been done better or we wish it had been done better, or it might have been done better.

9. Of his ordination and examination, let Brother Quinn<sup>[57]</sup> and Finley<sup>[58]</sup> give testimony. If he did not submit to a growth

in grace and salvation from all sin, as taught by John Wesley, even if men are justified and sanctified at once.

10. Of his ordination, if he was not asked all the questions proper in ordination and if he did not answer those questions and if the bishop had not the form of Discipline in his hand which he always attendeth to, and if Smith did not design to make out, the bishop wished to give J. Smith a dispensation from the letter of ordination and not give him the whole of the questions, and answers in deacons order, that punctuality is always observed that it is not the bishop's manner to depart from rule and order and letter.

11. Tell him that if we have mistaken his meaning, his written statement gave us room to believe that he believeth in infant purity directly opposed to Watts, Wesley, Fletcher and all gospel divines, that we believe he denieth the doctrine of original sin and the depravity of the human minds and souls of infants and he must maintain infant purity, that he has refined upon Fletcher till he is carried from Calvinism to Arianism and has mistaken Fletcher.

12. Ask him what the Methodists have done for him and what he was before he knew them. Ask him if his divine portrait of a Christian will justify his saying or writing so much evil of some good men — and if we are to judge — of his piety, by his practice, if he has not written by guess, by hearsay. Is that according to Scriptures any more than speaking evil, and above all evil speaking, printed falsehood (evil speaking) is the most dangerous, it is by this

thousands will be misled, writing and speaking evil of us and that to our bitterest enemies, and suppose the general or state governments, should take up our preachers and raise a general persecution. One that has left them says they are enemies to America, he passes for a wise goodman and shows his innocency; and their guilt.

Let men take care how they alarm. We arm the civil government against the church or state or preachers of the gospel. Be sure to get their correct testimony in certificates, be correct in printing, he or his printer has blundered greatly, be very particular once for all, a complete answer only, let all our preachers travelling and local subscribe for me and sell them generally and stop the triumph. Conclude he and his church will be nonentities, no body, no party, must conclude J. Smith is one of the un-accountables of the unaccountables as all heretics and schismatics generally are, they dash at the most sacred truths, holiest characters and say [they] are not in sport. Let [it] be urged he denieth the doctrine of original sin that cannot be generated, it is the transgression of the law in adults.

The transgressor must know the law and wilfully act the transgressor, the law is a transcript of the divine nature, the image of him that is invisible and will oppose sin in the root but to suppose that infants have no sinful nature or anything to do with sin, will they know the law and wilfully commit sin, is like Baptist logic (that) infants cannot repent and believe, infants are not fit subjects of baptism, indeed I think preachers and writers have spoke and wrote. We know by

Scripture inference, infants are subjects of baptism, we know by pure revelation infants have been subjects of heavenly glory and it would seem that infants martyred by Pharaoh and Herod might shine among the martyred saints and Christians. But that infants are justified, regenerated and sanctified as adults, I doubt if Scripture will bear us out. I perceive J. Smith wished to save his own bacon and writing and railing against government, he should be suspected of opposing all government, human and divine.

All men of sense know that our church government was founded before the Federal Government<sup>[59]</sup> and state rights in that x [cross] system, so that whether they designed it or not they copied our government as far as humans could follow or ought to follow a divine government, all offices being elective except offices of special trust and confidence as presiding elders and bishops. To submit the reelection of bishops once in 4 or 6 years, would they subvert the divine, we [do] not reelect an elder or deacon local or travelling unless they forfeit the right by immorality and are suspended or expelled. I think a master reputation may be made that will make them appear very small in their own eyes, great as they are in their own.

We grant our Presbyterian brethren, they freely confessed they were mistaken when certain documents were given. But what to those that have to do with men, that know nothing about writing controversy, that will not ask fair questions or give an answer, that cannot understand an argument, admit no Scripture but the Bible and that when it condemns their

system and conduct. We see the cloven foot, what high praises, Mr. Smith giveth to each of the preachers, whilst he bitterly reflected upon others. We shall do well to observe that the levelling system, it goeth directly against the order and government of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the whole Patriarchal church government when these ancient saints were prophet, priest and king, each in his order—nay the order of the church in the wilderness by Moses, in the house of Aaron, then the 3rd order by Solomon when the temple was built. 4th. The order of Christ in his ministry and church. The complete order of the apostles in the Acts and the Epistles, to Timothy and Titus, apostolic men.

The apostle did not say the old Testament and the apostles are sufficient. They wrote forms of discipline for separate churches when cases of order and discipline called for such. These levellers say the scriptures are sufficient, granted, but in mass the Holy Word gives many changes in doctrine, we only select from Scripture for doctrine, and for discipline in epitome or very small selections. If these levellers were consistent why not only the Scriptures, and quit preaching or any comment at all. How shall we try a man's doctrine but by a standard, so his spirit and temper, his word and practice. If any man appeals from the Scripture where shall we follow him, where shall we find him, how shall we judge him, [support] his cause against our conduct dealing with him, shall not we appeal to Scripture against his conduct toward us, by the same rule.

Mr. Smith from his own account has been tried and tenderly dealt with by Elder Gruber<sup>[60]</sup> [?] once at quarter meeting, then by conference, and the bishop at his ordination and lastly by the quarter meeting at which he was expelled and 5th, he did, Mr. Smith did not come to his grand court of appeal where justice would have been done, all valid testing would have been admitted for and against him and he would without doubt have been proved in judgment of Scripture an heretick by denying the foundation doctrine of the Scriptural original sin and held as such by all the ancient and present churches in the whole earth. As a schismatic by attempting a division in the ministry and membership of the church to which he belonged and with [?] great policy and address, now ask is this the kindness to thy friends, fathers and brethren. Then ask is this doing as you would wish to be done by. Then ask if you believe either the Methodist church to be corrupt in doctrine and discipline and administration as your book represents, do you wish to be a minister or member in it.

Are we not in a free country, what right have you or any man to preach by the hour and speak and write by the day against us and put a weapon into the hands of wicked men and all that hate us to beat us. We will be pleased no doubt to hear it told, the Baptist and other denominations read your book, pleased that you have found out the Methodists and come forth like an honest man, and expose them and give suitable warning to the churches, and the states to take care: that there are men of desperate minds, enemies to all churches, but their own, enemies to the American Government; the best upon earth. But let it be told that Mr.

Smith, order or no order, church or no church, he is drawing away disciples from the Methodist but he is no party man. Oh, yes Brutus is an honorable man and so they are all, when they revile the mother that has born<sup>[61]</sup> them—Yea when the lame are turned out of the way—who was it that brought this hand upon her, Jesus was agonizing and sweating in dust and [blood] in the hour of darkness, the midnight of suffering, who brought this band here, it was Judas! What Judas, Judas, the steward, the leader, the local preacher, for money, small sum, 30 pieces of silver, yet Judas was an honorable man or how could he be taken notice by honorable men. Judas was an honorable man.

If men would leave the Methodists like men, not to say like Christian members and not preach so violently, and not write so bitterly against the people. But we cannot form peace, not truce with such men. This is the way Satan leads these men to keep up their credits, they lose as Methodists, when they withdraw from our union and set up for themselves. These dwellers rail out against Kings, why not against the president of the United States that in his election right professes kingly and imperial powers and with his Senate can form treaties of peace, or make war. With these levellers all the historical information of the primitive churches for 4000 or 5000 years standeth for nothing and Scripture on that subject is a blank.

It is an open attack upon every reformed church upon articles and confessions of faith and on Convocations, General Assemblies, Synods, all associations or meetings of ministry of every order. They are not fifth monarchy men that

would not set up the kingdom of Christ but anarchy men. Let every man and—do what is right in his own eyes, and if called to an account let him appeal from the judgment of any man or men to his own; plead Scripture corrupted, teach heresies, new and old errors, wolves in sheep's clothing and wolves in wolves' clothing.<sup>[62]</sup>

*Methodist Historical Collection, Ohio Wesleyan University  
Library*

*Though there is no name to indicate to whom this letter is written, it had a letter attached written by Boehm to Jacob Gruber; therefore it must have been written to Gruber. Asbury has had letters from some local preachers in Kentucky. It seems that one had been in Douglass' district, and Asbury wished to know what had happened.*

GREEN COUNTY, TENNESSEE  
*October 22, 1809*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[63]</sup>

My dear Son:

Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied unto thee in Jesus our Lord. Excuse my employing my aid<sup>[64]</sup> and your brother. As Bishop McKendree takes his part of the work, I am not so correct in answering letters; in the 65 years of my age, and 39 years of my ministry in the service. After some serious conversation and letters, I have prevailed upon Bishop McKendree to preside on all the Conferences, it is with pleasure and peace I retire. If we had another man of equal mind I could as cheerfully give up the stationing the ministry;



this I must do a little longer, the work is too great for one man: it must be divided. To compose the minutes, obtain the knowledge of all *the* circuits, to be well acquainted with gifts and qualifications of all the preachers, and to visit the whole continent is an Herculean employment. The local ministry in Kentucky last addressed us on the subject of elders or ministers, and the result of General Conference on that subject. We wrote them a passivick letter desiring them to be temperate and meet us; as they have done this year, one or two seemed warm, one said he had been in your district and in Brother Douglass' charge; that men of great respectability, of that order were waked up to join in address with their brethren in Kentucky in ministry.<sup>[65]</sup> I wish you to be *very prudent* and cautious not to irritate in the least degree but advise them to speak or write their minds to the Bishops and General Conference, rather one by one, than in united address; only expressing their firm attachment to Methodism and the travelling connection. We Bishops are prepared to meet any thing they say being as we always have been friends to their cause properly brought forward, in the union of the body. Refer them if you please to write unreservedly to us. If you please write to us in Charleston, if you have time to reach us before the 5 of January. We see great prospects, and great difficulties. Many different preachers sent from the Western

Conference, single 40, married 80, very few over. I have enjoyed great health of body and peace of mind.

I am as ever yours,

F. Asbury

*There is in addition to Henry Boehm's letter a P.S. of Asbury's—same handwriting as above. Boehm's letter omitted.*

P.S. If you will give us the most perfect character of every circuit, and every preacher, travelling, yea local preacher in your charge, promote if possible Fridays, by the order and authority of the quarter meetings, Fridays as days of fasting, humiliation and intercession. The church, the continent calleth loudly for it [to] hear the rod of God on Europe, how awfully upon the seat of the beast,<sup>[66]</sup> oh and possibly most parts of Europe and the world. May we hear and fear. I hope 8 conferences will give, in the year 1810, 600 campmeetings and thousands converted.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

A Letter of the Rev. William Spencer to the  
Rev. John Robinson Concerning James O'Kelly

*Here are introduced a letter and a part of the Journal of William Spencer whose unpublished manuscript The Experience &c. has been preserved. The letter throws light on the O'Kelly controversy in the South District of Virginia by a preacher who served under O'Kelly, the presiding elder on*

*the Williamsburg Circuit in Virginia 1789. O'Kelly was the leader of the schism which split the church in 1792.*

*November 14, 1809<sup>[67]</sup>*

*[To John Robinson]<sup>[68]</sup>*

Well-beloved Brother:

You will receive this as a mark of pure, disinterested Christian friendship. I think you may with propriety say that if you are acquainted with no other man upon earth, you are, at least, acquainted with me. Our friendship and Christian acquaintance began about the memorable year of our Lord, 1788; and notwithstanding there has been, since that time (from appearance, at least) some little differences between us, which caused much sorrow to my mind, yet I can, with much truth say, that I have never lost sight of old times, when, like a well-match'd yoke, we sweetly, and blessed be God, most successfully pulled together in the GospelploUGH,<sup>[69]</sup> to the astonishment of multitudes, who were constrained to acknowledge the finger of God! The blind did indeed receive their sight, the lame walk, yea, leap and praise God with joyful lips; the spiritually deaf heard the joyful sound of salvation, and great was the consolation of believers.

Numbers told me that it was the most convincing proof that it was God's peculiar prerogative to send by whom he would send, that ever they knew in all their lives. They had been favoured with what is commonly called wise and great preachers, and yet no visible good was done! A sad gloom seemed to rest upon the minds of the people, when, all on a sudden (as it were) two poor little, unimproved striplings

entered the circuit, with nothing scarcely, but "Repent or perish, believe or be damned, turn or burn; Hell fire will be the doom of all the ungodly, &c." The mighty power of God attended these poor Endeavours! At the sound of these Rams' horns (crooked as they were) the towering walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground! The devil's strongholds were attacked, and many, yea, vast numbers of his faithful subjects deserted their infernal prince, and came over on the side of our adorable King Jesus. Surely if ever there was a Work of God since the World began, it was this! Robinson and Spencer never performed such wonders as these! God does, sometimes, yea, commonly, make choice of such instruments to carry on his work, as man would never think of; and his reason for so doing is very obvious, namely, that "no flesh (as Father Paul asserts) should glory in his presence." God will have the honour of all the good that is done upon earth: and O! how glad my soul is of it.

What transpired this first year of my endeavouring to sound the Gospel trumpet, left such a blessed, sweet, reviving, animating savour upon my spirit, that it has never worn off, and I hope in God, never will, in time, nor through Eternity. I hope to meet many in the Day of the Lord, who were brought home to our dear Jesus this memorable year! Some are gone before us, and many are still behind, "burning and shining lights," who do, by their upright and holy lives, "shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of the darkness into his marvellous light."

When it so happened, my dear Brother that by the means of one poor, fallible man (you know who I mean [O'Kelly]) a spirit of division crept in among us, my soul did truly mourn in secret places before the Lord. Instead of "Glory to Jesus, Glory to God, I am happy I am bound for Heaven, O Brother! I love you, O! Sister, I am bound to meet you in Heaven, &c." I say, instead of this blessed, heavenly talk, it was "Government, Government, Government, we shall all be ruined, we shall be oppressed to death, we and our children are lorded over! Popery, popery! Despotism! Despotic power, and whatnot!"<sup>[70]</sup>

Now it was that Hell triumphed with infernal joy! Now it was that Brother had his sword, oh! the ugly-looking sword of contention, drawn against Brother and even Sister and Sister were at it too! Was this a work of God? No! No! No! Well, what is the upshot of the whole? Let truth speak for itself. In the name of God, I ask, where is the fine Church that poor man talked so much about? I have never seen nor heard of it yet.<sup>[71]</sup> Poor man, sure enough; well he may be dejected. I do by no means "rejoice at calamities;" far from it: at the same time, I am glad, and do most heartily rejoice when I see such characters mortified; because I am fully convinced that nothing else under heaven is likely to give them a true sight of themselves.

Mr. Bunyan talks about one "Will-be-Will." "This Will-be-Will (says he) is a clever fellow when he is in the right, but, when he is in the wrong, he is a terrible, mischievous fellow indeed." O! when a man has truth on his side, or even has

probability in view, in the name of God, let him be bold, let him be zealous and courageous. But before all this appears, a man ought to be possessed with good evidences that he is in the right. All is not gold that shines; neither is everything that looks like zeal, true and genuine zeal. Jehu had a mighty zeal, but what sort of a zeal was it? Exactly such a zeal in my humble opinion, as poor old, unhappy Dadda O'Kelly has.

Meantime, I would ask, what has become of the old despotic church, its government, its human heads, its rules, &c. &c. &c. Answer, Glory to God, I am quite willing it should answer for itself. Where is the despotism? Glory to God, I feel it not. I, for one, am a blessed, happy, free member of this oppressive church, as it is called by some: and it is at this very day in a growing, thriving condition.

Now, my beloved Brother let me tell you my whole heart (as it were) about you. From my first, happy acquaintance with you, I have looked upon you, not only as a man of genuine piety, but as a man of good sense and sound understanding, and therefore, a man of this description, will, I think, when he is convinced that he is in an error, retract, and pursue a different course. "What is honour?" (says one.) Answer "To confess what is wrong, and do what is right." Now, is there anything dishonourable or ugly in this? By no means. No man living is in a state of infallibility; therefore, it is noble for me and all to say to God and man, "What I know not, teach thou me."

My dear, I am by no means, labouring to convince you that you erred in leaving the Methodists; the matter is so plain that no argument is necessary. You are fully convinced, I make no doubt: but I do not think you erred so much yourself in any thing, as in putting too great and too implicit a confidence in the judgment of a poor, fallible man. I, myself, loved the same man, even to a fault, and if there was a man upon earth better calculated than any other, to proselyte or lead me astray, he was the very man: this I believe, you think is the real truth; and I was, in reality upon the very tilt (as it were) of following you and him when you turned your backs upon us; but, if I had, I should, in a little time, have acknowledged my mistake, and taken shelter again most joyfully, in the old fold, with my beloved, happy, free Brethren. Our present new Bishop William M'Kendree, broke off when you and others did, but in a little time, saw his error, acknowledged it, and behold, what he has come to! Has he dishonoured himself by acknowledging that he was not infallible?

I write to you, my dear Brother in the manner I do, because, since we were together at Rough-Creek, it has been hinted to me that you do not intend to come back into the old fold. I was surprized to hear this because, if you remember, in our conversation the night we staid at Sister Madison's you told me that you fully expected to come back, and moreover, you said that I might tell it to whom I pleased. I am, by no means persuading you to come back; if you can grow, and thrive, and fatten in your present pastures, better than you can among us, do pray, my dear, enjoy yourself where you are. I only tell you what I do think will be best for you and your rising family, as

well as for those who stand off with you: if you do not see and think as I do, no harm done, no harm done! If there are defects in our Government, we are still improving, and often meeting together, to see what amendments can be made for the better. Our Church Rules are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians: all these things you know, therefore, come back, come back, and help to fight the devil, &c., and gain more souls to Jesus. Farewell! "Come on, my Whitefield, since the strife is past,

"And friends at first, are friends again at last."

These were Charles Wesley's words to George Whitefield, after a long separation between them. Let David and Jonathan now come and unite closer than ever, and live and die in the Gospel-harness. Amen.

I remain your loving Brother,

William Spencer

N.B. You may, if you please, communicate the main drift of this letter to Brother Almond, as equally intended for him. W.S.

*The following is quoted from The Experience &c. of William Spencer, Volume 1. This part of The Experience &c. is in journal form; and the excerpt is an account of what happened at Chickahominy Church, Virginia, in 1789. The first and last volumes of Spencer's books belong to Dr. Robert B. Pierce, pastor of Broadway Methodist Church, Indianapolis. The other volumes have not been found but are*



*supposed to be in Williamsburg, Virginia. Asbury gives a similar account of his visit to Chickahominy Church on September 3, 1790. See Journal for that date.*

"I shall never forget a meeting I had one memorable Sabbath Day at a noted, large, brick church called Chickahominy Church in James City County near the town of old Williamsburg. No doubt but that they and the awful things that happened there that day are still fresh in the memory of the inhabitants of James City. A vast multitude of people used to assemble at this church both from the town of Williamsburg as well as the country round about, and on this day there was (as usual) a numerous congregation. Numbers who met here came for no other purpose but to make sport of the worship of God, to curse the preachers, and mock and laugh at those who would cry aloud to God for mercy, or shout the praises of their blessed Redeemer. Such bold champions for the devil would take care to be at church time enough to get choice of the pews, and the most advantageous parts of the galleries to serve their turn, in order that they might have a clear view of the shouting Christians, or, noisy fools, as they were pleased to call them; and after they had diverted themselves with them in the church, they would go out in great numbers and set up a mighty huzza in the churchyard, by way of derision. But on this memorable, awful day, of which I am now speaking, it pleased Almighty God to give these daring, infidel rebels such an alarm, that they entirely forgot their devillish sport.

"As I was riding by myself to the church, thinking how I had been repeatedly grieved at the shameful, ill behaviour of many who attended here and fully expected to meet with the same trial again to-day, unless God was pleased to work in some unusual way to prevent it, I turned out into the woods, alighted from my horse, fell on my knees, and cried to God to make use of some means that day that might alarm those daring enemies to religion, who might be at church with no other design but to mock at, and despise his worship, &. I went on my way to the church; vast numbers were there before me, and they were still coming on every side.

"It was in the month of August, and the weather amazing sultry. I began to preach about 12 o'clock; presently after, thunder was heard, and an awful cloud came up, which looked terrible indeed! The people ran out to secure their saddles, &, in the mean time I gave out a hymn, which was sung till the congregation was composed: presently the rain began to descend, the lightnings to flash, and the thunder to roar! The poor, daring, wicked rebels were pretty quiet and tame, while the Almighty seemed to threaten them with immediate death and destruction! A trifling countenance could not be seen among them! It was the most awful cloud that I remember to have seen in my life, and it lasted a considerable time. A carriage was struck with the lightning but a few steps from the door, and such alarming peals of thunder never did I hear before! There was no running out of the church now! All were glad to keep their places. So we had a listening multitude for once, at this place.

"It was awful to behold the fine ladies in their rustling silks, almost frightened to death with the streams of lightning and the awful thunder. They would catch hold of one another, in the greatest consternation, as if they expected every moment to be struck dead, or, as if they expected Christ was then coming in the clouds to judge the world! I made use of the opportunity; and while my awful God was thundering from heaven, I endeavoured to thunder out the terrors of his holy law against the workers of iniquity! Christians shouted aloud the praises of King Jesus, while mourners fell and cried for mercy and every sinner's countenance was as pale as death! In the midst of this truly awful meeting, one woman got powerfully converted, and a shout of praise and thanksgiving seemed to pierce the very heavens! Who but the devil will refuse to praise God when a poor sinner finds mercy and obtains forgiveness for all his sins? Jesus says 'there is joy in heaven among the angels when a poor sinner repents and turns to God;' and surely, there is great reason to praise him upon earth for the same mercy. This woman leaped up, and praised God with a loud and joyful voice, while the dear children of God joyfully joined in the heavenly work. Sinners were astonished to see Christians happy at such a time as this! The louder it thundered, the louder the Christians shouted, and the more awful did the poor sinners look! It brought to my mind that terrible day, when 'the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.'

"Between three and four hundred souls were added to the church this year in Williamsburg Circuit. The people were constrained to acknowledge that this was indeed the work of God, and not of man. I heard some of the old professors observing that 'they had had wise and experienced preachers among them for several years past, and that they saw little or no revival of religion. God was pleased to send two striplings, Robinson and Spencer, among them, and a great revival through their instrumentality had taken place!'"

*The Experience &c. of the Reverend William Spencer.  
Property of Dr. Robert B. Pierce, Broadway Methodist  
Church, Indianapolis, Indiana*

*Jacob Gruber was one of Asbury's most dependable preachers. He was of German extraction. He was ministering in a section of the country where there were many Germans, and Asbury shows his solicitude for them.*

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA  
*January 26, 1810*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[72]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

God be gracious to thee my son, the presiding elders of our Israel, are always on my mind, frequently named by me, before the Lord, always twice, if not thrice a day. My letters are all valedictory, for what I know (I mean the last). I did not answer yours in Charleston finding nothing that called special attention, presuming you had not received a letter I wrote from Buncombe. The South Carolina Conference held in

Charleston, was great to the members, society, and citizens. The increase of members 3000, prospects of the work far exceeding our most exalted expectation. Lovely blossoms of young men of families, a little above par, for learning and estimation.

I have felt a great concern for the lost sheep of the house of Germany, we have but only you two boys.<sup>[73]</sup> that can Germanize, one with me, hitherto. You will expect that the superintendency would be unwise to remove you from one field and not put you with a larger if possible to meet and serve your father's countrymen. Prepare, prepare my son, be always ready for every call of God and your Guides. I lament the want of pure practical religion, family and private prayer, and fasting, reading the scriptures, teaching, instructing the children. Our presiding elders should lecture the people closely in quarterly lovefeast, about class meeting, dress, and many Christian duties.

The rich are coming in, they bring their daughters, Methodist preachers marrying, falling! Oh Lord help [the] locating, *leaving the work*, never counting the *cost* [preachers]. Lay these things together my son! You may lay this letter among your papers, you may read it when I am absent, perhaps when I have done riding at the rate of 10,000 (yet but 3000 as we are so much detained,) miles a year, *200 miles a week*<sup>[74]</sup> or in 4 days meeting, 8 conferences of between 6 and 700 ministers, writing 100 letters, preaching 200 sermons, but what is this without the power of God to bless the Spirit, to aid the merit of Christ, to atone. Great

prospects, great dangers await us this year. Let Zion's watchmen all awake and take the alarm and advice they give, I am yours in the Lord.

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Two main concerns disturb Asbury's mind, his Journal and the Baltimore Road prisoners. For some time he had been trying to get his Journal into print. He wanted to leave something for posterity.*

BETHEL, MARYLAND

March 22, 1810

[To Nelson Reed]<sup>[75]</sup>

My dear Nelson:

Great grace support thee. Die! Die! my brother in the field, in the harness! Our conference was not as bad as I feared, nor as good as I hoped, believed, desired and prayed. It is reappointed, I am content. I have not done it. I wish to do all for the best. Some circumstances; his family; and visiting Virginia,<sup>[76]</sup> extensively, will prevent Bishop McKendree from visiting the west of Maryland next year, as I wished. I purpose not to be at Georgetown near the first of March. You will lay out in your wisdom a plan of 10 or 12 days through Prince George's, St. Marys and Calvert, so as to come in the day before the eve of conference. I have this in view; not to go by Baltimore again, but from the Federal City.<sup>[77]</sup>

I wish to spend 5 or 6 days at Foxalls,<sup>[78]</sup> in reading about 1000 pages of my journal<sup>[79]</sup> in the 3rd copy now taking by John Dickins, and Dr. Wilkins,<sup>[80]</sup> in order to correct some names of places, and some other matters, and leave as perfect a copy behind me as I can. Every thing personal, geographical, and prolix will go out, the most spiritual, and historical parts will be reserved. My reason for stopping at Georgetown will be to take my appointments right; I shall be welcome; I shall be retired. You will write me fully to Lancaster by the last of July, you will scan a plan, and prepare to travel with me. Be assured my dear son I have no jealousy of your administration, no want of confidence in you. You have, you will labour for souls, you and myself at this time of life might seek our ease, but we dare not, least [lest] we should be damned.

My dear I feel! I feel! for the Baltimore Road prisoners. Oh that some local brother would consent to preach to them every Sabbath, one that could gain their confidence, they are degraded far below domestick slavery, but their rights as they respect the Gospel, they ought not, no State should dare to rob them of this. Oh help those outcastes, those dregs of human nature, precious, perishing souls. Like going from Jerusalem to Jericho, they have fallen among thieves, they have stript them by leading them into sin, wounded them, leaving them half dead, politically dead by the law, sunk into heathenism, but oh let them have the Gospel, do, do my dear do something for them if possible, save these from utter destruction and sweeten the bitters of their affliction, I advise not any other persons but the preacher and his prisoners, be [?] his

congregation, perhaps two could attend, one to preach and one to exhort. Your last letter came back to Baltimore. I am thine,

F. Ay.  
*Drew University Library*

*The reports in the conferences on additions to membership seem to have been poor. Asbury thinks that the preachers and people are resting on their lees. He calls for special days of fasting and prayer.*

SMYRNA, DELAWARE  
*March 24, 1810*

[*To Lewis Myers*]<sup>[81]</sup>

My dear Lewis:

God be gracious unto thee, my son. Nothing but official duty and the glory of God, and good of the church moves me to write. Our Baltimore conference has addressed a most serious epistle, to the people, their charge, failing, they are upon their lees, a small increase in numbers June, first Friday, and November, Friday first, as days of most serious fasting, and prayer, solemn worship, and service of God. If you will write to all the presiding elders, for as many of the preachers and people as find liberty to join with us. Our country, our church, will call loudly upon us to cry mightily to God. I fear both the Virginia, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York [conferences] in part are on their lees. In the New England conference God the Lord is breaking out in the uncovering of the arm of his power. Bishop McKendree in good spirits, on



the Chesapeake while I am on the Delaware District, 1200 miles since we left dear Charleston.

G. Pickering<sup>[82]</sup> present, (begging) from house to house, and congregation to congregation for Boston Chapel, we must collect 8000 dollars or our credit will fail. Mark it well, we do not command, only recommend these days of fasting. I was well pleased that our brethren in the Baltimore conference were prompt in duty. The address or epistle is exceedingly close to the point, prints to be read in our quarter readings by presiding elders, in the societies by the preachers. We began and ended the Virginia and Baltimore conferences in great harmony, humiliation, abstinence and prayer, perhaps we might have about 20 souls converted in each.

Brother Boehm<sup>[83]</sup> is greatly taken up with his friends, his horses, and temporal burdens. Love to thyself, and all my brethren and joy in Jesus.

F. Ay.  
*Duke University Library*

*There had been some correspondence between Wesley and Asbury and others concerning recognition of preachers in America who had been members of the British Conference or vice versa. This was not a great problem.*

NEW YORK, N. Y.  
May 12, 1810

To any of the Preachers and Members of the  
Methodist Episcopal Church in America<sup>[84]</sup>

I recommend Reverend William Blagborne<sup>[85]</sup> for many years a member of the British Conference and well recommended to me by Dr. Coke and others.

Given under my hand this twelfth day of  
May one thousand eight hundred and ten.

Francis Asbury

*Transcribed by Frank Baker from the original formerly  
owned by him*

*In writing to Coke, Asbury is emphasizing the fact that the church is resting on its lees. As usual when he writes to Coke, Asbury reports in general on the connection. Part of the letter is addressed to Mrs. Coke.*

WINCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
June 2, 1810

[To Thomas Coke]<sup>[86]</sup>

My dear Bishop:

God be gracious to my dear brother and sister in Jesus. It would be my duty, and delight to write to you every six months from the south and north end of our world, if I had time, and things of equal consequence to you, me and others.

I lament, our centre, ancient conferences,<sup>[87]</sup> preachers and people, in towns, cities are too much on the lees. The first Friday in June past, and first Friday in November, appointed as days of abstinence [abstinence] and humiliation, exhortation, prayer and rigid fasting. Oh that God would hear and answer. I doubt if in the 8 conferences we shall have an increase of more than 10 or 12,000. We feel, oh we feel! The burden of located men in our travelling connection, loss of time, expenditures of money, and in moving great families expensive, and difficulties, many. Admissions of preachers may rise from 80 to 100 or perhaps not so large; but we have received 70 in 6 conferences.

As to building houses, taking new places, extending to the extremities of our borders, to the most distant settlements, and forming, and enlarging congregations, we excel. Now is the time of danger, many rich people have joined us, we monopolize religion in some places, all together; as if the offence of the cross was ceasing. At Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Stephen Bamford from Nova Scotia, received ordination to deacons, and elders orders. I fear we do not prosper as we ought to do in Nova Scotia, as well as we might. In 1795 the number on our minutes<sup>[88]</sup> was 1000. I have not seen the returns on the British minutes. It is possible our New England Conference next year will be held in Vermont, this will place me very accessible to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and lower and upper Canada; I have long wished to explore British America,<sup>[89]</sup> if it would be your wish, and the desire of the British conference, which I highly venerate; also the

advice of the New England Conference; and not disagreeable to the missionaries, in these provinces.

I fear that unless you could appoint travelling superintendents, that would annually visit all the societies, circuits, towns, and stations, to exercise some episcopal powers, in superintending, and stationing, you will not prosper. We collect, if I may speak by guess, funds, and collections, 10,000 dollars per year, expended upon less than 700 preachers, 400 of which are married at least. We have committees, attitudes! returns from stewards and elders, also some married men loose, one thing, and some almost half their time, family afflictions and such like that we may give at the rate of 300 dollars per year to married men when we pay well for half work. People in the states, and provinces are growing wealthy, and able in many places, to support their preachers, and ought to support them. I have seen circuits and districts, just tied on, to Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences to be supported, when the people have been well able to support their own preachers. I am looking forward to the next General Conference, to lighten my load, of another grand branch; increased as this connection may be by that time to 200,000 members, 1000 travelling preachers, possibly 2000 local. It will be too weighty for me; at 67, and 41st year of my age in America; should I be able to move, as one of the fathers, only to give advice, it will be well.

My dear Sister Coke, you continue to sit at the feet of Jesus, you wash the saints' feet, you feed the poor, you council the preachers' wives; and cement the body, they will

know you, and love you. Hold your hours of devotion morning, noon, and evening. Do by soft persuasion if you can restrict Bishop Coke from too much *pen work*. I am most heartily your brother, and friend. My dear Bishop and wife, and all friends.

F. Asbury

P.S. My task is in riding 5000 miles 8 months of the year ——— Sabbaths, quarter meetings, and campmeetings, and indispensable rest, and 8 conferences 6, 8, or 9 days each conference. God is my house, the Church is my *spouse*, and my mother, the preachers my brethren and sons in the Lord, the sisters, my sisters, and daughters, in Jesus. Oh pray! pray! for us as we do for you frequently.

F. Ay.

P.S. Mark it well when the people and conferences pay their own preachers, they will see that they do their work; I fear that our charter and book concern that give 440 dollars per year *per share* to 8 conferences, will be a snare to us. When the Philadelphia Conference loaded on supernumeraries, the people shut up their liberal contributions; and sunk a 1000 dollars in one year; resolved their money should not go to support those that did not labour. If you have given the Brethren support to foreign missions, you will hardly ever wish to take it away! British charity is great, it is able ——— if it should be abused, I do not say *it is*, but I fear *it is*, or *will be*.

If I was to have it in my power to visit Nova Scotia I fear the brethren would not name me. I hear you ordain for foreign mission publickly, its well; but who shall rule, and station? I feel we are all one in Jesus; and ought so to feel. Not many days since I saw Brother Blagborne; I honoured him, as recommended by you. Stationed this year, Southern Conference 72, Western 82, Virginia 75, Baltimore 85, Philadelphia 73, New York 84, N. England 85. If I was to guess it would be that the Methodists annually in the 17 States, and territories, we congregate 2 or 3 million. I should hope half a million in British America. But my calculation may be far too large, and incredible was it not for our towns and cities, and conferences encamping and being to —— in the States, and great quarter meetings and campmeetings —— 2 to 3 and 5000 people. I fear they fail in Canada and Nova Scotia in camp meetings and field and meeting. I have recommended you can ——

*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*It is not known who Mrs. Mary Warfield was. It seems quite evident that she had been a preacher's wife. Asbury is giving her advice as to her spiritual life and family responsibilities. There was a Charles Warfield on the Huntingdon Circuit of the Susquehanna District in the Baltimore Conference in 1807.*

WORCHESTER, N.H.

June 4, 1810

[To Mrs. Mary Warfield]<sup>[90]</sup>

My dear Mary and loving Sister:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you and family and all the sisterhood that labor with those that labor in the word and doctrine. It was impossible for you to count the cost of being a wife and mother and a traveller. Great the care and burden you must and will bear but it will daily increase as your family groweth up and you will become weak. Oh, my sister, be careful of the morning, noon and evening, private moments. Speak to all the sisters, aged and young, rich and poor. Pray with them, preach to them powerfully in companies. Do a good part in these works of God. My time is short. Old Moses has but one war and a few months to be in the wilderness till forty.<sup>[91]</sup> This charge is gone in part and will be in hands [defaced]. We are all mortal, let us haste to meet our God, our Christ, our Kingdom, our crown of glory, our rest from suffering and pain. I am making ready, so are you Mary I hope, now in Jesus, farewell and prosper. I am sincerely, your father, brother, servant, friend for Jesus sake.

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Zachary Myles was one of Asbury's close lay friends who kept him in touch with England. Here Asbury reports of the work, as he frequently did to the preachers.*

SHIPPINSBURG, PA.  
*August 9, 1810*

[*To Zachary Myles*]<sup>[92]</sup>  
My dear Brother:<sup>[93]</sup>

The God of all grace and consolation be with, and bless you and yours. Our Minutes were sent late to the press, and are not yet in circulation. We have stationed at the Western Conference 82 preachers; at the Southern 72; at that of Virginia, 75; Baltimore, 85; Genesee, 63; New York, 84; New England, 85; and Philadelphia, 73; in all, 619 preachers. The annual duty of our superintendents is great. They have to visit eight conferences; and make arrangements for near 620 preachers. They have to ride near 6000 miles in eight months through wildernesses and devious lonely wilds: sometimes are water-bound, but never weather-bound. We added 99 preachers this year, 51 have located. I do not doubt but some of our preachers labour and suffer as much as ever, but I fear others of us are growing slothful. I rejoice that we hold the truth of the Gospel.

I know not a man in the ministry among us that holds the unconditional infallible perseverance<sup>[94]</sup> of the saints. Sabbath-meetings, quarter-meetings, and camp-meetings are very numerous, and of building preaching-houses there is no end. Other denominations are imitating us in watch night-meetings, society-meetings, and women's prayer-meetings. I expect this fall will be a time of great ingathering. I must smile at the strictures of men of small and sour minds upon our administration. What was America 200 years ago? What was Methodism 40 years ago? There was everything to be



done, things were not made ready for our hands. Could the preachers come from Cumberland and Kentucky to Baltimore Conference? Or from Georgia and South Carolina to old Virginia? Or from Boston and the District of Maine to New York? Or from Upper Canada to New York? Or from Lake Ontario to Philadelphia or the Eastern Shore? These questions must be answered in the negative. It was no small task for young men to go among the Indian depredators; and from fort to fort, as Wilson Lee did, with his life in his hand, to preach the Gospel.

I thank you for your European information. Present me to your Brother.<sup>[95]</sup> Write to me whenever you please, as most of the letters fall into my hands. I have no retreat. I cannot do what I wish, i.e. answer all the letters sent me by preachers. But I do not write, save on special occasions, to any but those that write to me. Bishop M'Kendree is not in good health. He had taken the North-West-Route, intending to go to the banks of the Missouri, from whence he was called by his Episcopal office. We hope to meet at the Western Conference. I commend you to God, and the word of his grace.

Yours in Jesus,

Francis Asbury

The Methodist Magazine, 1810, 483. *Transcribed by Frank Baker*

*The Genesee Conference has been held, and Asbury is passing through Pennsylvania on his way to the western country. He makes a report to Lewis Myers of his travels and*

*the state of the church. It is interesting to note the report of the work in Canada.*

CHAMBERSBURG, PA.

*August 10, 1810*

[*To Lewis Myers*]<sup>[96]</sup>

My dear Lewis:

The God of all grace and consolation help them to war a good warfare. It is not all gold that shines, we must or shall have some chaff among the wheat, but thank God it is not all chaff. I might add to the catalogue of evils, our married as well as young men failing, elders spending half their time at home and bending for a morsel of bread. We are losing the spirit of missionaries and martyrs, we are slothful, we can only tell how fields were won, but by our brethren and sisters, not by us. Since I parted from Charleston about 4000 miles and 2000 more to close the year, but what is that to the arrangement of 620 travelling preachers, to hear their murmurs and complaints. I say let me like old Moses fill up my 40 years. I shall soon be out of your way.

Genesee Conference has exceeded our hopes. For an infant conference great, near 40 members, some aged and wise, stations 63. Upper Canada preachers came in a body. Our societies, circuits, preachers, all stay in the tides in that country, the preachers had to scatter along 5 or 600 miles to conference, to Philadelphia 3 or 4 months, and New York Conference. Sometimes no representation of circuits but presiding elders. Many evils are now provided for, and will be cured but woe to the bishops, 6000 miles in 8 months,

taverns, bridges, toils, tolls, woods, wilderness. Oh what scenes await us, poor Bishop McKendree, in ill health, but he has gone on to sweet Missouri Banks, from whence he was called to the Episcopal chair.

I have lately read Milner, he is too unctuous but a modest writer, but a gentle Calvinist of considerable information, but he did not live to finish his work: the (4th) volume was written by his relation, a D.D. Thank you for your account of places but we shall hardly clear Kentucky by the 15 of November. Possibly I may aim at Georgia. Oh let us not lose sight of original depravity, the witness of the spirit, diligence in duties and all good works. I am in brief—so let us teach and live.

Thine,

F. Asbury  
*Duke University Library*

*It is not clear why Asbury is writing to Henry Smith as if he were a presiding elder. He takes up the case of Brother Clark, but who this was is not clear. One wonders about the reference to Cassell. Here are other references to the recent Genesee Conference.*

LITTLETON, PA.  
*August 11, 1810*

[*To Henry Smith*]<sup>[97]</sup>

My dear Brother:

God be gracious to thee in all thy labours, and sorrows. We serve the Lord Christ; let us be faithful, time is short. Thomas Budd<sup>[98]</sup> is gone. Oh! how anxious apparently, was he and dear Cassell about the church, as if afraid to trust their father. Especially at the General Conference could I be so correct in matters of evil tidings; I have felt, I have feared, I have heard of the state of that society; I am glad matters are no worse. I hope your labours will be blessed yet, in the town and country. If Brother Clark will not be satisfied, why not try his gift in another place or places.

This year, hitherto, has been marked with conferences, building house beyond any former years. Genesee Conference promises to be among the foremost in number, and prosperity; near 40 members, in its infancy, some aged; stationed 63; commands 600 miles length and 200 in width, seated at the distance of 400 miles from Philadelphia, and [New] York Conference seats. Increase this year 11,000, preachers 51. The 8 Conferences will cause the Episcopacy to ride 6,000 miles in 8 months through strenuous lonely wilds to lodge and live any where, at vast expenses. It is no small matter to support 2 men and horses one fourth of our time at Publick expenses, swimming, wading deep waters, hanging over hazardous rocks, black swamps, mountains.

Oh keep close to the doctrines of deep depravity, salvation by grace, good works, holiness. The August packet has fallen into my hands, 20 or 30 letters to answer and to pay. Brother McKendree is gone to Missouri, if he does not faint or die by the way. He is in ill health. Pray for him, for me, for all. Fit up your house where it is before winter if you can. I cannot retreat to write letters, we must move along daily. I am very heartily thine,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Some account is given here of Asbury's travels with especial reference to the new Genesee Conference and his visit to Canada. Bishop McKendree has not been well but has gone on to Missouri. Asbury was visiting Martin Boehm.*

LITTLETON, PENNSYLVANIA

*August 11, 1810*

[*To Christopher Frye*]<sup>[99]</sup>

My dear Frye:

God be gracious to thee my son, and give grace, wisdom, faith, patience, diligence to rule in righteousness in our Israel and that among a wise and a jealous people, that will have intimations that we lord it over the Lord's heritage. We must suffer persecution if it is among imperious or false brethren. It is my method only to speak when spoken to, when upon paper unless something special comes in my way. But modesty keeps you from writing I presume being new in the

Station. The present year hitherto had been remarkable for conferences, congregations, crowds; building houses beyond any former year: woods meeting, campmeetings, quarterly meetings, multitudes! multitudes! As this has been a fruitful year, temporally I hope in the end, it will be spiritually and our Genesee Conference exceed by far our greatest expectations near 40 members! This new infant conference could boast—first institution stationed 63 preachers.

Canadians generally attended conference, commands 600 miles at least in length, 200 in width, 400 miles from former seats of conferences held in [New] York and Pennsylvania. It promised to cure evils that could not have had a cure in preachers admitted into connection, such as a preachers being 4 months absent, spending 20 dollars in going to conferences and losing the time.

You will write to Camden, Columbia or Charleston, South Carolina in November. Oh, Brother preserve harmony among both orders of our ministry. Call all you can into operation! I lament the ill health of Bishop McKendree, may I never be called back to hold the chairs of annual conferences. I retired for life. The Bishop's stomach and bowels fail, but he has gone on to Missouri, if he does not droop or die by the way.

Minutes not in circulation, increase of members 11,000, of preachers 51, netted by taking out location. Episcopacy to ride 6000 miles in 8 months! Not *rest* but labor at conferences, the August packet of 20 or 30 letters fallen into our hands. Our labour, our expenses, our devious roads, bring upon publick

expenses one fourth of our time; 2 men, 2 horses, 4000 miles we calculate already this year and 2000 more if we live and move as you design. Oh the power of God and prayers of the people. I am thine, as ever in Jesus

Francis Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*The camp meetings are very much on Asbury's mind. He is setting down directions for the buildings. He wanted more permanency in the places they were held.*

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

August 25, 1810

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[100]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

God be gracious to thee in all thy sorrows and joys, labours and cares. Nothing but the spirit of martyrdom and apostolic labours and suffering can succeed in the day of prospects and difficulties and opposition. If our encampments could be paid in every circuit and the bottom part of a meeting house (built) about 100 feet long and equal width, fences up about 5 feet height, a good floor, strong back benches, partition in the middle, passages on the sides, strong gates that would be the holy place, as much as one seat space left before the pulpit for mourners. In the front seat let all the officials sit. If the ground was floored it would be dry very soon for publick worship. I have happily laid my hands upon Baxter's "Reformed Pastor," printed at Washington, excellent, I had one but lent it till I had

lost it. I recommend it to you and wish you to recommend to all the travelling and local preachers. I rejoice that the Presbyterians have piety enough to abridge such a book.

Mr. Wesley had a mind to abridge it, oh that he had done it. I believe they have taken the essence.

I am yours,

Francis Asbury

Charleston, Columbia, or Camden in South Carolina, write me in November how you come out in general when you get your Campmeeting wheat-fields in. Myself or Bro. Boehm will write to thee.

F. Ay.

P.S. Portrait Smith Lectures.

Baxter is excellent, super-excellent and excells the whole. Oh that it could be printed in our press.<sup>[101]</sup>

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*The date of the Short Creek Camp Meeting is the reason for this letter. The camp meetings were becoming so numerous that it was necessary for Asbury to pick some and miss others.*



PITTSBURGH, PA.  
August 26, 1810

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[102]</sup>

Dear Son:

I think now so far as we can look into futurity, I have no intention to be at Pike Run next year nor Pittsburgh. About 7 weeks after the 26 of July, 1811, I might possibly get up to Short Creek after taking [New] York, Philadelphia and Baltimore in the way to the west. In which case you might appoint Short Creek campmeeting. It might come near the second or third week in September.

F. Asbury  
*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference*  
*(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*For the third time in recent days Asbury is writing to Jacob Gruber. He is attempting to satisfy the West Wheeling Circuit. He gives his views on the duties of the presiding elders.*

BARNESVILLE, OHIO  
August 30, 1810

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[103]</sup>

My dear Son:

God be gracious unto thee and grant that thy bow may always abide in strength and the arms of thy hand made strong by the mighty God of Jacob. As it is the wish of the West Wheeling people, that the circuit should be under your care; and I am told you are willing, to take the charge, I submit. I shall make no change in the minutes. I think the loss of time

and expenditure of money is so much that it would be well if half the preachers could stay on the district, if they would not stay all the time at home, instead of the circuit. This western country is rich, ought to support their preachers; if not in money, in property of any and all kinds, except whisky, skins, wheat, rye, oats, corn or any victuals for the family, which the stewards ought to have an account of, and charge as quarterage; that the quarter meetings ought to know what is done for the preachers upon the circuits.

Tell the preachers plainly you must get your reward where you do your work. I hope as you reform in other things in the district you will in the money business. Our Funds are small enough to support our widows, orphans, superannuates and worn out preachers. I feel [the] burden, I can scarcely help seventy married preachers losing one 4th or one 3rd of their time and paid for the whole, presiding elders losing half their time or not spending more than 23 weeks in a year in the districts. It is such men that bring this weighty office into dishonor. Oh Timothy keep that which is committed to thy charge.

I am still thy Father,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*It can be seen from this letter that the presiding eldership was still under attack. The General Conference of 1812 was the first delegated General Conference. Asbury considered an*

*attack upon the presiding eldership to be an attack upon the episcopacy. Here he asserts the fact that he had been appointed a general superintendent before the first General Conference of 1784. He is referring to Wesley's appointment of him.*

*September, 1810*

[*To Christopher Frye*]<sup>[104]</sup>

Perhaps there may be a struggle in the next General Conference, whether the government shall be Presbyterian and local, or Episcopal in its small remains. If the poison of electioneering obtains, woe to presiding elders. They are the Bishops' men; keep them back. But it will remain to know what powers are recorded, what the General Conference ceded to the delegated Conference—and if in dismembering the Episcopacy they will not dissolve themselves and violate the constitution. Bishop McKendree may say, "They made me; let them unmake me." I cannot say so altogether; if I was made *at all* by the hand of the Lord and good men, I was made before *they* were; before some forward children were born or born again. I cannot cast them off. I cannot do without them, if they can do without me. I must continue in the ship, *storm* or *calm*, near the helm, or before the mast. As long as I can, I will be with them.

[Francis Asbury]

*William W. Bennett, Memorials of Methodism in Virginia,*  
583

*This letter has no date or place. It seems to be in connection with some trouble Nathan Bangs had in New York City.*

[ — 1810]

[To Nathan Bangs]<sup>[105]</sup>

My dear Son:

God be gracious to you and remember you, like David, in all his troubles. I am sorry, seriously sorry, I have not written to you, if I have not written. I am almost sure I had your name upon the docket; but I run, I flee, I forget. I feel for you, my dear, in a tumultuous city, a numerous society, and strange mixtures of people. And we have our work; I suppose I have at least near a thousand letters and papers put into my hands a year, all calling for some responsibility. From the first day I saw and read you I loved you with peculiar affection. I love Brother C.:<sup>[106]</sup> I love you all; you have been my good, obedient, suffering children.<sup>[107]</sup>

[F. Asbury]

*Abel Stevens, Life and Times of Nathan Bangs, D.D., 187*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] A preacher in England. He married Coke. Probably at his and others' request Asbury sat for his picture. (See *Journal*.)
- [2] Those letters were not received by the conference. (Editor's note in the magazine.)
- [3] Asbury is reporting the decision of the General Conference of 1808, which established the delegated system of representation.
- [4] Bennett, *Memorial of Methodism in Virginia*, indicated that this letter was written after the close of the General Conference of 1808. The conference met May 6-26.
- [5] Presiding elder on the Yadkin District, North Carolina, in the Virginia Conference.
- [6] Reference is to Washington's refusal to run a third time for President.
- [7] A reply to the request from the British Conference.
- [8] Bishop Whatcoat.
- [9] The address was signed by the committee, the P.S. by Asbury and McKendree.
- [10] Samuel Coate was appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church to Canada in 1796. He married a niece of Philip Embury, and they were known as "The Handsome Pair." Coate was eloquent; "he swept like a meteor over the land, and spellbound the wondering new settlers." Coate was again appointed to Canada in 1804, becoming presiding elder. The conference of 1807 set him free to canvass funds for a new chapel at Montreal. Although Asbury and McKendree vouched for his trustworthiness, this mission

was the beginning of Coate's deterioration, which led to his withdrawal from the ministry in 1810 and to his failure in business and a penurious death. (Frank Baker.)

[11] McKendree was born in King William County, Virginia. He was presiding elder of the Cumberland District when elected. (See excerpt of Asbury's letter to Douglass, page 396; Paine, *Life and Times of William McKendree*, 132; also ordination certificate, 119.)

[12] Beck's farm, just across the Pennsylvania line, was a stopping place of Asbury.

[13] This letter was written back to the Brightwell home, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, where the bishop had been so ill for the ten days July 18 to 28, 1808, to reassure them of his condition. (See Asbury's *Journal* for these days.)

[14] Pennsylvania.

[15] This postscript by Asbury is crowded into five lines at the extreme bottom of the letter.

[16] Jacob Gruber was presiding elder on the Greenbrier District, West Virginia. This letter was sent to him at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

[17] Bennett indicates this letter was written a few months after the close of the conference. Conference closed May 26, 1808. (*Memorials of Methodism*, 584.)

[18] Thomas L. Douglass, presiding elder, Yadkin District, Virginia Conference.

[19] The presiding elder question had been agitated almost from the beginning. In 1800 it was attacked in the General Conference. In 1808 this effort was repeated. Some wished to make the office elective. Ezekiel Cooper and Joshua Wells led the fight. The effort was defeated. However,

Asbury considered these efforts an attack on the episcopacy. Asbury refers to those who would overthrow the episcopacy and the presiding eldership.

[20] Signed by Coke and Asbury.

[21] See McCutchan, *Our Hymnody*, 9-10. Also *Minutes of Some Conversations between the Preachers in Connection with The Rev. Mr. John Wesley. Begun at Ellis's Preaching-House, Virginia, April 30th, 1784, and ended at Baltimore, May 28th, following*, 65.

[22] Asbury arrived in Charleston in time to preach twice on Sunday, December 4. (See *Journal* for these days.)

[23] Presiding elder, New Hampshire District. He became a bishop in 1824.

[24] A very precocious child if true.

[25] There is no evidence as to whom it was addressed. Since it seems to be to a presiding elder, and since Philadelphia and the Book Concern are mentioned, it could have been to William P. Chandler, presiding elder of the Chesapeake District which included the city of Philadelphia.

[26] The letter is not dated.

[27] One of the preachers.

[28] Reference to conference of 1784.

[29] According to the *Journal*, 1852 ed., Asbury was in Georgia on the fifth. He did not reach Fayetteville until the twelfth. However, this may be one of the mistakes in the *Journal*.

[30] Zachary Myles, the merchant in Baltimore, gave Asbury news from England. He was a brother of William Myles, the English preacher.

- [31] German. (See copy, Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress.)
- [32] The answer to this letter was written by Martin Boehm *et al.* in May, 1809, and printed on pages 796 ff. of *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, by A.W. Drury. (Otterbein Press. Used by permission.) (Lawrence Sherwood.)
- [33] This letter was written by Asbury during the time he was holding the Baltimore Conference session of 1809 at Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Virginia. (See *Journal*, March 2, 1809.)
- [34] On his trip through western Pennsylvania in 1808 the bishop suffered a severe illness, and he was cared for in the home of John and Mary Brightwell from July 18 to 28. This letter refers to that experience. The Brightwells lived in Fayette County.
- [35] (See *Journal*, August 16, 1809.) He did visit the Brightwells again.
- [36] The reference to the token and the books appears at the end of the letter. One can only conjecture about them.
- [37] Evidently two laymen in Baltimore.
- [38] Seely Bunn, a preacher, was appointed to Baltimore.
- [39] Reference is to preachers locating. Not clear as to meaning of abstinence here.
- [40] Total claims upon pensions.
- [41] Wife of George Roberts. He had located in 1806 and was practicing medicine in Philadelphia. He was at this time a local preacher.
- [42] Carriage.



- [43] Part of this letter was published in *The Methodist Magazine* of February, 1810. (See Coke's letter at close of this letter.)
- [44] The Bassett plantation in Delaware.
- [45] Bishop McKendree was traveling with Asbury. (See letter, January 5, 1809.) However, Henry Boehm was assigned to be his traveling companion in 1809. (See *Minutes*, 1809.) Asbury speaks of McKendree preaching on May 5. (See *Journal*, May 5.)
- [46] Reference to family of Robert Williams.
- [47] Presiding elder on the Greenbrier District. Letter addressed to Oldtown.
- [48] Professing Christians.
- [49] Bishop McKendree had been traveling with Asbury. However, Asbury says in the *Journal*, "As I cannot often meet Bishop McKendree, and meeting we cannot be alone for talk, I wrote a letter of counsel to him." There is no salutation. (See *Journal*.)
- [50] James Smith was on the Lancaster Charge of the Philadelphia District in 1809. Also there was a James Smith on the Washington City Charge of the Potomac District and a James M. Smith on the Pownal Charge of the Rhinebeck District. The James Smith referred to here is the one who came to be known as "Baltimore" Smith in contradistinction to "Philadelphia" Smith. James "Baltimore" Smith began to preach at sixteen years of age. He was a man of high intellect and an able debater. He died in Baltimore in 1827, after taking an able and earnest part among the reformers of the church. From 1822 to 1825 he contributed to the *Wesleyan Repository* and to

*Mutual Rights*. (See Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 545.)

- [51] Asbury lists several persons who were disturbers in the church, beginning with O'Kelly, who withdrew in 1792. It is clear here that the movement for reform did not lack for leadership.
- [52] Elias Smith was born June 17, 1769, the son of Stephen and Irene Smith of Lyme, Connecticut. Elias Smith was ordained an evangelist in 1792 while living at Lee, New Hampshire. He was ordained as a Baptist. For a time he preached in New England. For a very short time he was a Universalist. He began a journalistic career in 1802. In 1803 he composed "The History of the Anti-Christ." In 1803 he published a brochure, "The Clergyman's Looking Glass," in which he severely attacked the clergy, especially the ministers of the Episcopal Church. He was against public taxation for preachers. Sometime after 1804 he started a magazine entitled *A Christian's Magazine, Reviewer and Religious Intelligencer*. On September 1, 1808, there appeared the first issue of the *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, "the first religious newspaper ever published, so far as is known." His publishing ventures caused him barely to escape mob violence at times. He moved to Portland, Maine, in 1810 and published the *Herald of Gospel Liberty* there. However, the next spring he moved to Philadelphia and published it once in two weeks in Philadelphia. In 1815 he moved back to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and published his autobiography in 1816. In 1816 he moved to Boston and practiced medicine for a time there. However, he continued the *Herald* in Boston

for a time. In October, 1817, he again embraced Universalism. He had been in connection with the O'Kellyite Christian Church for a time. At a session of the New Hampshire Christian Conference in 1823 Smith publicly renounced Universalism and did again before the same body in Durham in 1827. He was restored to fellowship in the Portsmouth Christian Church (O'Kellyite) in 1840. He died in 1846. He was considered one of the reformers who worked with the O'Kellyite Christians. He died on June 29, 1846, in Lynn, Massachusetts. (See J. Pressley Barrett, *The Centennial of Religious Journalism*, 299-316. Christian Publishing Association.)

[53] William Guirey was author of *The History of the Episcopacy in Four Parts*. (Rare Book Collection, Library of Congress.) Guirey embraced religion under Dr. Wrangle of the Reformed Church of Sweden, who held a successful meeting in Philadelphia. Wrangle returned to Sweden, leaving his converts without a shepherd. Guirey welcomed with six others Captain Webb when Webb came to Philadelphia. In 1795 and 1796 Guirey was a member on trial in the conference and traveled in Virginia. In 1797 his name disappeared. He became associated with O'Kelly but later separated from him on a doctrinal difference. (Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, 111.)

[54] William Hammett occasioned the split in the church of Charleston, South Carolina.

[56] William Burke and J. Blair were on the Hinkstone Circuit of the Kentucky District in 1809. (See *Minutes*.)

- [56] James Smith.
- [57] Isaac Quinn was on the Clinch Circuit, Holston District, in 1809. (See *Minutes*.) James Quinn was presiding elder on the Muskingum District in 1809. It is not clear which Quinn is meant. Both were in the Western Conference.
- [58] The *Minutes* show that James Finley was admitted on trial into the Western Conference in 1810.
- [59] Asbury claims that the Federal government got some of its pattern from the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church was set up in 1784, and the Constitutional Convention took place in 1787, and the union was formed in 1789.
- [60] Jacob Gruber was presiding elder in the Greenbrier District. There is no James Smith shown in Gruber's district from 1807 to 1809. (See *Minutes*.) Asbury seems to be reporting Smith's grievances. There is no record in the *Minutes* of expulsion.
- [61] An expression frequently used.
- [62] The conclusion to the letter has been lost.
- [63] No addressee, but believed to have been written to Gruber.
- [64] Evidently Henry Boehm was his traveling companion. Boehm included a letter.
- [65] The sentence is not clear.
- [66] Reference to book of Revelation.
- [67] This letter was written to John Robinson by William Spencer who had served with Robinson on the Williamsburg Circuit in Virginia in 1789. Spencer had married and desisted from traveling in 1797. Robinson left the church in 1792 when he went off with James O'Kelly and others to form the Republican Methodist Church.

[68] John Robinson was one of the preachers who walked out of the General Conference of 1792 with James O'Kelly. The others were Rice Haggard, John Allen, William McKendree, and perhaps some others. Robinson did not follow O'Kelly into the Christian Church, but he with Edward Almond and Thomas Hardy continued for a while to carry on the Republican Methodist Church. (See MacClenny, *The Life of Reverend James O'Kelly*, 126.)

[69] Spencer refers to his appointment as junior preacher with Robinson on the Williamsburg Circuit in 1789. It was a tremendous circuit and extended from Richmond to Hampton. O'Kelly's district included Amelia, Mecklenburg, Bedford, Orange, Hanover, Williamsburg, Cumberland, Brunswick, Greensville, Portsmouth, Sussex in Virginia, and Bertie, Camden, and Halifax in North Carolina.

[70] "Is it not shocking, my dear Brother, that a man of his despotic, or overbearing spirit, should pretend to cry out against Despotism? I felt his spirit many times while he was my presiding elder, and it made me tremble and dodge like a puppy: and I dare say my dear Brother felt something of his spirit in that sad day when Dameron was about to be ordained. Thank God, I am not now under his Tyranny. We may, with propriety say to such a man, 'Physician, heal thyself.'" (William Spencer, *The Experience &c.*) The note was appended to the letter to Robinson by Spencer.

[71] "He came through my circuit shortly after he separated from the Methodists and, in order to proselyte me, told me that he was going to form a new church, not suffering one Brandy-stiller, Brandy-seller, nor Slaveholder to be a

member of it. The next thing I heard of him was, he was taking into his new church those slave-holders he himself once expelled from us! I said, Lord, what is man? And took my leave of him." (William Spencer, *The Experience &c.*) The note was appended to the letter to Robinson by Spencer.

[72] In 1810 he was presiding elder, Monongahela District, Baltimore Conference.

[73] Henry Boehm and Jacob Gruber spoke German.

[74] At the rate of two hundred miles a week he would have traveled more than ten thousand miles a year.

[75] Presiding elder, Baltimore District.

[76] McKendree was born in King William County, Virginia. However, he became identified with what was then the West. His grave is on the Vanderbilt University Campus, Nashville, Tennessee.

[77] Federal City. "The first communication on record, in arrangements for laying out this city, is from the pen of Gen. Washington dated on the 11th March, 1791: which in a subsequent letter of the 30th of April 1791, he calls the Federal City. The name which it now (1830) bears, City of Washington" was adopted about four months afterward, probably without the knowledge of General Washington. In a letter addressed to Major L'Enfant by the first commissioners as follows, dated "Georgetown, Sept. 9, 1791." (The letter follows.) "Historical sketches of the Ten Mile Square forming the District of Columbia with a picture of Washington, 1830," by Jonathan Elliot, 95, 96. (Jacob S. Payton.)

- [78] Henry Foxall, an Englishman, who knew Asbury's mother, was converted in Ireland. He came to America and had foundries in Philadelphia and Georgetown. He was a wealthy man and gave the site and provided the funds for the new church, the Foundry in Washington. He died in England in 1823. (See Boehm, *Reminiscences*, 412-13.)
- [79] Several persons worked on the *Journal*—Dickins, Wilkins, Haskins, Hollingsworth.
- [80] See note on Wilkins, Preface to Wesley's *Physic*, — 1814, note 4.
- [81] Presiding elder on the Ogeechee District, South Carolina Conference.
- [82] Presiding elder on the Boston District.
- [83] Henry Boehm, his traveling companion.
- [84] "This is one of the few examples of an official transfer from British to American Methodism. William Blagborne was born in 1754, admitted on trial by the British Methodist Conference in 1785. He came under Coke's eye. He adopted 'some singular opinions . . . respecting the uncertainty of all things, arising from the evil effects of the French Revolution' and settled as a supernumerary at Fulford, near York. In 1808 he came once more into the active ministry, at Stroud, but for a short time only. His stay in America was not very long. He returned to England and died Saturday evening, March 2nd, 1816. He was buried in the City Road Chapel, London." (Frank Baker.)
- [85] (See *Journal*, May 12, 1810.) Asbury saw Blagborne.
- [86] Coke was in England.
- [87] Reference to older conferences in central part of country.
- [88] See *Minutes*, 1810.

- [89] Some of the Canadian churches had gone along with British Methodism. The churches along the St. Lawrence were under Asbury. In 1828 these separated from U.S. Methodism. (See George F. Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada*, 239.)
- [90] The letter is addressed to Lane's Creek, Maryland.
- [91] Asbury was referring to almost forty years of ministry.
- [92] Merchant in Baltimore.
- [93] Although this purports to be a "copy" of one of Asbury's letters, there is little doubt that the editor of *The Methodist Magazine*, Joseph Benson, has taken considerable liberties with the original. (See *The Methodist Magazine*, 1810, 483.) (Frank Baker.)
- [94] Asbury was contrasting the Methodist theology with that of Calvinism.
- [95] The Rev. William Myles, Methodist preacher of England. (See letter of August 16, 1804.)
- [96] Presiding elder on the Ogeechee District, South Carolina Conference.
- [97] A preacher stationed at Fredericksburg, Virginia. (See *Minutes*, 1810.)
- [98] Budd, a preacher stationed in Philadelphia, who died of a pulmonary affection. (See *Minutes*, 1810.)
- [99] Presiding elder on the Greenbrier District, Baltimore Conference.
- [100] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District, Pennsylvania.
- [101] These notes were at the bottom of the letter. Reference to portrait not clear.



- [102] Letter not designated but probably to Jacob Gruber as Asbury is writing about Pittsburgh and affairs on Monongahela District, where Gruber was presiding elder.
- [103] Envelope has Jacob Gruber, St. Clairville, Ohio.
- [104] Excerpt from a letter to Christopher Frye, presiding elder on the Greenbrier District, now West Virginia.
- [105] See letter to Bangs, page 459.
- [106] Probably Joseph Crawford, presiding elder on the New York District. Formerly he was a traveling companion of Asbury.
- [107] Probably more to this letter, but not preserved by Stevens.

**BEGINNING THE SECOND DECADE OF THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY**

*January 7, 1811 - May 9, 1812*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# BEGINNING THE SECOND DECADE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

January 7, 1811 - May 9, 1812

*It is not known who Mrs. Mary McDowell was, but she was evidently in charge of the work of the Methodist Female Friendly Association.*

THE PARSONAGE (CHARLESTON)

[January 7, 1811]<sup>[1]</sup>

[To Mrs. Mary McDowell]

We have read with attention the Constitution of the Female Society,<sup>[2]</sup> the rules are good, the discipline strict, the property well secured, such an institution, in which the sisterhood may preserve their rights and privileges, and in time of prosperity provide for the days of adversity; women so weak, so unprotected, and strangers in the land, widowed and forlorn.

I advise two things, the presiders be called governesses or directoresses; and that when you have founded the sum of 2,000, you would make a clause in the Constitution to appropriate a certain sum of the annual income to charity to meet female distress of any and all descriptions. This will like [tythe?] to sanctify the institution.

Francis Asbury

The Wesleyan Journal, *February 10, 1827. Transcribed by  
Albert D. Betts*

*Joseph Marsden was a British preacher stationed in Bermuda who wished to come to the United States on a visit.*

CHARLESTON, S.C.

*January 8, 1811*

[*To Joseph Marsden*]<sup>[3]</sup>

My dear Friend and Brother:

God be gracious to thee and thine. Meeting your letter at this end of the continent, I give it a short answer, as life and time are short with me. As to your spending a few months in [New] York; as a visitant, I presume it may be advisable, and it may not be attended with any great expense to you; but as a stationed preacher, the conference will say who shall be stationed in their oversight, the Superintendency may say where.

The American Methodist character is always to treat our European Brethren with respect, they always recollecting that they are in the United States. I am very thankful you have planted a church in Bermuda, and humbly hope; yet fear it will suffer in a change; without God should send with man, a man after his own heart. I send you our Minutes. We have visited our Western Conference, stationed 92 members, increase 4,552. We have visited for the present year our Southern Conference, stationed 82, increase of members 2543. There are only two conferences in eight. You will see the epitome of our history in the printed minutes. There is a universal spreading wide of the gospel on the continent, if it

was but deep in our hearts, and universally in our practices.  
Here I fear we fail.

I am yours in the gospel,

Francis Asbury

*Asbury Methodist Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia*

*Though Coke and Asbury were separated by the Atlantic, they kept up a rather continuous correspondence. Asbury shows his familiarity with the work of the British brethren, both in the field of literature and in their missionary endeavors. The reference to the Presbyterians is interesting. They had united with the Methodists in many campmeetings. Asbury's relations with other denominations were generally good.*

CHARLESTOWN, S.C.

*January 9, 1811*

[*To Thomas Coke*]

My venerable and dear Brother:

Last October I wrote to you from Lexington<sup>[4]</sup> in the west, by the way of this city. The epitome of our annual history, the printed Minutes, and my scraps of letters, will afford but a very imperfect account of our work.

I venerate the Europeans for their exertions in spreading the Bible<sup>[5]</sup> far and wide, and likewise for their missionary spirit. I am surprised at the increase of men of great talents in the European connection. They have almost as many commentators among them, as appeared in the whole of the

last century.<sup>[6]</sup> In almost every little town with us we have a house of God. The Gospel spreads in word and in power: O that all who receive it may manifest the truth of their profession by an universal practice of godliness! Our prospects in this city exceed all former calculation. I still entertain a good opinion of the Presbyterians. An elder among them said, some time ago, that were it not for system and salary, they and we might unite.

I am your unchangeable friend,

Francis Asbury

The Methodist Magazine, XXXV (1812), 315

*Again Asbury is concerned with correspondence to and from the preachers. He is also concerned about the preachers leaving the work. His observations on Raleigh (North Carolina) are most interesting.*

PETERSBURGH, VA.

February 22, 1811

[To Daniel Ostrander]<sup>[7]</sup>

My dear Elder, Friend and Brother:

The good will of him that dwelt with Moses in the bush be with thee, and thine. I have written a double letter to save paper and money, and insure the delivery of the letter. I must answer the preachers' letters; if with 6 lines, having 90 or 100 days located to conferences. I have to travel 5000 miles; all roads, and all weather, in 9 months, Sabbaths taken out, also I have to keep at my work daily. I see! I feel! the difficulties you have suggested. When I consider the greatness of our

work spread over 2000 miles in length, 1000 in width, poor old bishops, more like supernumeraries than effective men, leaden with age, care, infirmities, and reproach, by some that ought to be their sons; but it is as well, for it is well known that thousands load them — affection, attention and company that they can scarcely pass along, and are obliged to stay at home, in one place in towns and cities to do their business and avoid difficulties, and partiality.

Our prospects are in the other side<sup>[8]</sup> of this letter, but I fear for Zion; so many leave the work. In the West, South, Virginia, conferences added about 50. I doubt if we need more than 20 or 25, the youth, and inexperience of many, the locality,<sup>[9]</sup> and formality of others, but the work is the Lord's, we have most to fear now and the rich are coming. These I fear will corrupt our preachers in the city of Raleigh, preaching in the state house 3 times a day, in the House of Representatives,<sup>[10]</sup> conference sitting in the Senators' room. I hope 100 souls were subjects of awakening grace or justification, persons only in Friendship Tavern, [do] not receive every mark of attention, our church very small, all among our ——. <sup>[11]</sup> Mark well we have a grand snow 6, 7, 8 inches deep. I am yours and Mary's friend,

F. Asbury  
*Garrett Biblical Institute Library*

*We are shown in this letter the plan Asbury had for compiling a history of early American Methodism. It would have been largely a statistical history under this plan.*

*Methodism has been poorer because his plans did not materialize.*

RICHMOND, VA.  
*February 24, 1811*

[*To Thomas L. Douglass*]<sup>[12]</sup>

My dear Son:

May the wisdom of God direct thee, and the grace of God protect thee. I will neither speak nor write as a fool upon my labours and sufferings. Others labour and suffer also; and why complain when we have so great a present, future, and eternal reward? I have stricken out a plan for a complete letter-history<sup>[13]</sup> of Methodism, by our presiding elders taking the work by districts from the time the first circuit was formed in the district, and the state of the district in 1812. This will be done by the minutes in my hands. To tell the year the first circuit was formed, &c.; then give,

Firstly, the number of meeting-houses in the district.

Secondly, the number of congregations established in private houses, meeting-houses, or chapels.

Thirdly, the number of societies and members in the district. Fourthly, the number of travelling and local preachers in the district.

Fifthly, the general number of annual campmeetings in the district, numbers attending, souls professing converting grace, days of continuance.



Sixthly, names of any preachers or members, brethren and sisters, that from good testimony have been known to die in triumph, and any notable characters that have been useful, whether travelling or local preachers, that have lived and died, useful in life, happy in death.

Seventhly, the nomination of the circuits, the counties, &c., the district embraces, the rivers it lieth upon, and boundaries, and tract from east to west, north, south.

Eighthly, some revivals that have been in several parts of the district, as well also, the present state of the work.

I wish each presiding elder to collect his materials, and to get a complete historical letter neatly, correctly done, these letters read in annual conference, then handed to the General Conference. It will make a grand history in about fifty letters. You will ask, How shall we obtain correct information? I answer, by the circuit preachers. Let them give names, numbers, the name of every local preacher, every congregation by the name of the man at whose house they meet, or meeting-house, also the name of every chapel. You might collect the approbation, as well as the information, of some of the aged and most respectable men, or get them to sign your letter, as believing it to be true. Our doctrine is known and read by thousands. Of our Form of Discipline we have printed thousands. I desire you forthwith to write this as the wish of the Episcopacy to all the presiding elders in the Virginia Conference.

I also desire you to write to Wm. Burke,<sup>[14]</sup> Shelbyville, Shelby County, Ky., the rules I have given, that he may write to all the presiding elders in the west. I also wish you to write to Wm. M. Kennedy,<sup>[15]</sup> Columbia, S.C., to write himself as above to all the presiding elders in the South Conference to be ready by the next Conference. The plan is plain and possible. We can ascertain the first circuit of the district, and what year formed, then how the district grew till 1812. Tell the presiding elders to lose no time. A particular history must come from the district to the annual conference, from the annual to the General Conference. It will be proper to give a distinct account of our cities and towns, the general number of houses of God, the number we probably preach to weekly.

You will think the whole letter will be a task. It will be a focus: it will be much in little. One line may be a history. I am sensible it may be done, with attention, in one day. I saw the Bishop<sup>[16]</sup> was taken with the plan. I have now matured it in riding through the snow and frost. You will be very swift and correct to write to both secretaries. Send on the plan I have suggested. I am now doing my work in company. Write to us, Lancaster, Pa., by the last of July. Let us leave a little to the children that may be borne.

Yours,

F. Asbury  
Christian Miscellany, 1847, 116-17.  
*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

*Coke married Penelope Goulding Smith in 1805. Asbury had received a report that she had died. He is sending his sympathy. He also is admonishing Coke against altercations with Adam Clarke. Asbury informs Coke of what is being done about the proposed history.*

[NEW] JERSEY<sup>[17]</sup>

May 12, 1811

[To Thomas Coke]

My dearly beloved in [the] Lord:

The God of all, and all sufficient grace, after we have suffered awhile, may He make us perfect in, and through suffering. If report is true, thou hast sustained the greatest earthly loss<sup>[18]</sup> in life, thy beloved wife; of this, having never tasted the sweets, I can not judge of the bitters of domestick life. Dear sister, Ah! the female parts of human nature, are not in constitution formed for the perpetual motion of constant travelling; or to bear a long absence, of another self. This is an apology for me. I am most seriously sorry, that there should be anything between you and Dr. Clark in print; I hope your hearts are one in love.<sup>[19]</sup> I more regret it ever appeared on our side the water, you! know, I love you.

Dr. Clark I respect as a most indefatigable man, in mind, and labours. But your (fill the blank)<sup>[20]</sup> crossing the Atlantic is not out of sight. We respect you, preachers and people respect you, *hundreds thousands*. My health is better, visiting 8 conferences, 5000 miles per year, preaching every day, and sometimes twice; but in long rides, wildernesses, and mountains, often times, once in a week. I saw a letter of mine

in the magazine, it might seem among the marvellous, *10,000 at a campmeeting*. I explain. I suppose that a meeting continues 6 days, that there shall be that number from first to last and perhaps not above 2 or 3 at one time, but coming and going day after day till the close of the day, daily hearers not in the encampment on nights.

As to my authorship, I have neither the benefit, the blush, the blessing, or the blame, my Journal is safe in reviewed manuscript, in the hands of Dr. Wilkins,<sup>[21]</sup> my children say let it be as archives and memoirs of primitive Methodism. The conferences have devised an American History of Methodism by letters written by the *presiding elders*, of the rise and progress of the work in each district, from the first circuit in the district,<sup>[22]</sup> say congregations, meeting houses, numbers, description of the face of the country, deaths, revivals, eminent persons, preachers and members that have died. In a line or two I can inform you the Virginia Conference sat in the State house at Raleigh, North Carolina, (where you once preached.) At conference there was a great time, citizens rich, and poor, attended, day after day, night after night. Possibly 100 souls, subjects of awakening or converting grace, publick as well as private houses, all devotion and solemnity, rich and poor.

Other denominations are ready to cede Maryland, Virginia, Carolinas and Georgia to the Methodists. Oh that we could but dispossess Satan, and sin. The conferences in our large cities do not answer our wishes, notwithstanding we preach, and pray, almost night, and day, in St. Georges, Philadelphia,

and Light Street Baltimore and preaching to 6 or 7 congregations, every evening. Ah. Brother we must *fast, pray, love, suffer* and *obey*, and remember the *poor*, the *widows*, the *fatherless*, and *poor of all descriptions*. I greatly doubt if you have received my letters, I have been better than good and contract, I have written every quarter. I feel it natural, acquired, and gracious, I hope not to be stopped from boasting. 25 dollars from each of the 8 conferences, to find 2 horses, travelling expenses, quarterage for me and my aid<sup>[23]</sup> and my aid feels independent also, that if there is a deficiency it will come out of our own pockets.

Our congregational numbers immensely large, on ordinary, and extraordinary seasons, infidelity hides its head. Our boasting as to increase &c. may cease as we come abreast of the Mother connection, for total numbers. Our annual increase will possibly be as small, among the mass of a few millions, while you have many more millions in mass for operations; Present me to the few aged men of God, and the young men [of] conference, on whom under God . . . the work will prosper. I am your very dear praying Brother that divine love may support you, everlasting strength hold you. I am,

Fr. Asbury

*Lamplough Collection, British Conference. Transcribed by  
Frank Baker*

*The report of Mrs. Coke's death has been confirmed, and Asbury writes another letter of sympathy, though somewhat queer.*

SUSSEX, NEW JERSEY  
May 12, 1811

[To Thomas Coke]

My ever dear Friend:<sup>[24]</sup>

I have your *seal in sable, she's gone!* gone to rest to glory. Her toil of labour and of love is over. There is but one earthly cure for the death of a wife. Some I have feared would have died themselves without it. It maybe, it is the duty of thousand millions to be conjugal. Our Heavenly Father cares for you, *know it, far, far be it.* My Dear, say it, write it now in the anguish of thy spirit, perhaps I loved her more than God.<sup>[25]</sup> I feel my full heart, my tears like death swollen stream. I offer one relief, I offer if I cannot relieve. Everlasting love support thee.

Oh the happy toil, the labour and the labyrinth of a conference every month for 7 together. Near 50 married preachers out of 85 or 90, the conferences are greatly on a par as to numbers. It seems I have been kind in letters of late to my dear Brother never to be forgotten. Oh may you meet a thousand soliloquies to your afflicted soul. So pray

Francis

*Lamplough Collection, British Conference. Transcribed by  
Frank Baker*

*Solomon Sias had been on the Withersfield charge on the Vermont District in 1810. He was moved to the New Hampshire District at the conference in 1811. Asbury was concerned over the elections to the General Conference to be*

*held in 1812. The elections in the New England Conference had left the Vermont District unrepresented. Asbury, it seems, wanted Joel Winch to be in the conference; and this letter was the result.*

PERU, [NEW YORK]<sup>[26]</sup>

*June 30, 1811*

[*To Solomon Sias*]<sup>[27]</sup>

Dear Son:

Oh my child, my dear child, I have no doubt but you will be wholly given up to God; conscious of the great charge, your Lord, and your elder brethren, have called you to perform. You know our love for you, and confidence, and unshaken dependence on you. Nothing that you will be called to do, will be hard or impossible, if your strength is with you, the God of power. Brother Frost<sup>[28]</sup> will give you my journal hitherto. I greatly admire the wisdom and skill of our New England Conference, correct, impartial, expeditious, with such brethren I would spend my life, and fifty more years labours, if it was given me so to do. I have recollected one case; yet undesigned, unforeseen, in the election, yet they aimed at Apostolical uprightness. How needful that every district should be represented. But the Conference knew not the stations, at the elections. You only represent New Hampshire District. Who will represent Vermont? Every member in the delegation no doubt; but will not some preachers, and people say, Vermont District is not represented, by any person immediately sent from it. Who will represent New London District? Elder Hedding<sup>[29]</sup> was upon it last year. Unless some of the members fail and Joel,<sup>[30]</sup>

which is in reserve and in the very neighbourhood of General Conference, and one stay back out of the redundancy of the Maine or Boston District, Joel Winch cannot take [the] place. From the Maine Districts and members with the reserve, 5 members elected from Boston District, 8 members with the reserve. You might remind our elders Beale,<sup>[31]</sup> Soule,<sup>[32]</sup> Pickering<sup>[33]</sup> of this case, if a way . . . might be open for Joel Winch to attend.

I wish it may not be understood or thought that I have any partiality for men, or that the Conference courts men or wishes to exclude two important districts in the union of a respectable delegation. They knew not what would be the case at the time of election. It was not proper for me to change my plan I had digested with great care and much deliberation, and information, and lastingness. The wisdom of our General Conference may in future order that one or more delegates be always taken from each district in the annual conference. General Conference may improve and mend the Constitution, they in their wisdom may order that annual general conferences shall sit in rotation in every district in the union to prevent a corrupt partiality for great cities and towns, and to indulge none in local habits for those that will not willingly take high and mountainous stations, who will grow too lazy to attend Conference in such parts.

An arm of just and decisive authority in our General Conference and the same in the superintendency will be necessary. Other denominations have it not, they are local, they are all bishops. I have no objection to you sending a copy



to Brother Pickering and Soule. You will not fail to write us to Camden, South Carolina. It would be well for the stewards to send a statement of the temporal supplies of the stationed preachers and the quarter meetings to send letters of information of the work of God and spiritual state of the circuits and the usefulness of their preachers and success in the work to the Superintendency every year at conference.

I am most heartily yours,

F. Asbury

P.S. I have only to observe in systems of human religions the extreme parts have been neglected while the interior and more populous have grown into absolute authority with corruption as a rising people. [?] We ought to have our eyes about us, be purer and purer and very lively guard against evils in the smallest bud of being.

Farewell.

*Drew University Library*

*Martyrdom is one of the subjects of Asbury's writing, and here is a good example. The camp meetings are much upon his mind. He shows his concern because of the criticisms leveled against the episcopacy.*

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA  
*September 1, 1811*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[34]</sup>

My dear wrestling Jacob:

Oh what manner of men we ought to be in labor, in patience, in courage, 6000 miles a year to ride, we to meet 8 conferences, you to hold camp-meetings, quarter-meetings, give me the number, and nomination, number of people upon probability that attended, preachers present; and guess at the number connected. I rejoice that camp-meetings still prevail more or less, in all the states, provinces of Upper Canada, Tennessee, New York, Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Brother Boehm<sup>[35]</sup> may tell you. The minutes are out, *increase* 10,000 members, preachers 669, weights, cyphers, drones, free men to go where they please, whilst some are chained like slaves to the galleys of labor.

We must prepare for martyrdom, in office, in life, if some do but little we must do the more, the work of God must not be slight. Witness the poor lame man for 800 miles in inexpressible pain, feet and bowels, yet travel on in company with the strong, but the lame must labour. We must guard against covetousness. We must watch against the sin of old Moses treating the people with hard language or ill temper. Oh what we have to suffer, from false brethren, and true. In families we shall be always preaching to children, to parents privately, plainly. Oh for the deep work of God upon our own souls. We have general prospects, in the union, houses, congregations.

Doubtless, if the state and provinces hold 12 million, we congregate annually 3 if not 4 million in campmeetings! Campmeetings! The battle ax and weapon of war, it will break down walls of wickedness, part of hell, superstition, false doctrine, persecution ceased without but will rise within, of our own selves. Will men arise to change and cripple the administration, men that want to be great without labor, and martyrdom in the glorious cause. Write Camden, South Carolina, December next. I am all in haste, but great love.

F. Asbury

P.S. We should most carefully examine the characters and qualifications of our local preachers and exhorters, leaders and stewards, Woe! Woe! to us if the Sanctuary is corrupted, we should have class books written or printed, and it would be well if every class leader was to present his class book for inspection at every quarter meeting or at least once a year to the presiding elder in quarter meeting. You will mind well the general fast October 4; most sacred humiliation, our country, our church calleth for it.

This has been a year of plenty from one end of the continent to the other, but excessive heat. In 7 months we have traveled upwards of 3000 miles on horse back, in taverns oft our expenses out of 200 dollars, \$90 for a horse, \$50 expenses besides, gifts in charity no account. Our constitutional income will never find us 2 horses and bear all the expenses of 2 men, 4 dollars for a ferry, 6 dollars for a lake, 6 to 8 dollars a week for travelling expenses. But these are our secrets. I shall have to draw from a few funded

legacies to keep me when I grow old, these must go to help me on annually. I shall have to gig it 3000 miles east and north to attend the Genesee Conference in Niagara. I am determined to keep close to the Connection. They may do without me, I cannot do without them, or leave them near the helm or before the mast. I will not leave the ship. I will spend my all, my life, by grace.

Next month, my 40 years will be out, in this wilderness. Children may with more ease cast off a Father, than we fathers can cast off our children. I never knew how well I loved the Americans, when out on the other side of the St. Lawrence, in sight of the opposite shore. I never knew how well I loved the Canadians<sup>[36]</sup> till present with them. I find indeed we overseers, voices, pens and eyes, out to be as much as possible, in every part of our charge, once a year.

F.A.

P.S. I hope you will continue to run well and long. You have dear Bishop McKendree. His advice you have taken in any cases of doubt. In my weakness I went to Morgantown. I was nearly come over 70 miles out of my way, had joint campmeeting been near the Great road, I would have tried it with you. It is my folly if I go from Conference, instead of one, I go 300 miles, instead of 300 I go 600—but I do not lament going to Canada, which has been the cause of my late affliction.

I purpose if I live many years and see matters loved prosper, I will not spare any part of the continent where souls

are there. I can communicate knowledge. My greatest grief is if I grieve at any thing we are obliged to ride from Monday to Saturday, seldom find time or opportunity to preach only on Lord's days. My love to all my friends. Stir them up, all my children to pray for me that I may finish well. I should write more correct but in fact I have not time from house to house, tavern to tavern we read, we pray, go on, this is our way. If [you are] a friend and brother, house me a favor indeed or one a night.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Coke was kept up to date on what was happening in America by Asbury's reports of the work. Again, as in a preceding letter, he refers to ten thousand persons attending a camp meeting. This reference is to the over-all attendance.*

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA  
*September 2, 1811*

[*To Thomas Coke*]

My dearly beloved in the Lord:

May great grace rest upon us and the church of God, and the ministry in which we are engaged. Next month, by divine permission, I shall close my fortieth year in America. When I came hither in 1771, we had 500 in society, who were more nominal than real members, and now we number 185,000.<sup>[37]</sup> Our former circuits are become districts, and our present ones are like little parishes! Our campmeetings, I think, amount to between four and five hundred annually, some of which

continue for the space of six or eight days. It is supposed that it is not uncommon for ten thousand persons,<sup>[38]</sup> including all who come at different periods, to be present at one of those meetings. On such occasions, many become subjects of a work of grace; and many experience much of the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit; backsliders are restored, and the union of both preachers and people is greatly increased.

I never felt as I do now, for Upper Canada. I visited that part at the hazard of my life; having ridden 800 miles, with my feet in a high state of inflammation. Our prospects are great in the provinces; and I must, if possible, extend my labours. An overseer among us ought to be, as it were, all eye, all ear, that he may rightly discharge the various and important duties of his office. He ought to ride 6000 miles annually, attend, and preside in eight or nine Conferences, and, in addition to preaching about 200 sermons, help to make arrangements for 700 preachers. It is a serious matter, for a man, aged sixty-six, to ride thirty miles unshaded, through such burning heat as has been seldom known, and then to preach at night.<sup>[39]</sup>

The Methodist Magazine, XXXV (1812), 316

*Again Asbury is reporting to Coke. He is referring to his forty years of ministry in the United States and to his hopes of preaching not only to the Americans but to the British and Spanish people surrounding the United States.*

——, [GEORGIA]<sup>[40]</sup>  
*November 27, 1811*

[*To Thomas Coke*]

I set up my Ebenezer, hitherto hath God helped me. The 20th of October last was the anniversary of my arrival in our new world. O how short, on review, does all the time appear since I landed in America! And, Oh! how great have been my unfaithfulness and unfruitfulness! Greatly as the Lord hath multiplied us as a people in this part of the world, the most junior state can boast of more citizens than we have members in our whole union. In our populous cities, the whole population of which is supposed to be upwards of five millions, perhaps between six and ten thousand sit weekly under our ministry. Many of our meetings are attended by men of all descriptions, Representatives,<sup>[41]</sup> etc., with the single exception of the President.<sup>[42]</sup> Great and gracious signs follow our meetings at our annual conferences, our quarterly meetings, and encampments. Never before did I witness such scaffolding for the divine building among us as there is at present.

Should my life be spared a few years, I shall push to preach the gospel in all the world of America, though I should find it three thousand miles in length and as many in breadth. I long to preach the gospel to all the British, Spanish, and the United States of America. I hope the Lord will open an effectual door for thousands in your happy isle, by village missionaries, or other ways and means. My dear brother, I hope you excel me in every thing that is good. O let us preach inward and outward holiness in all its branches. We have

revived weekly fasting, and recommended two general fasts annually. Were I to suffer my mind to wander into the state of other churches, I should say they are orthodox, they have gracious ministers and members, and praying societies. Our local preachers, who are more numerous than ministers of other denominations, fill up vacancies, and preach in new places. The campmeetings prove a general blessing to both preachers and people.

I am, as ever, your's,

F. Asbury

The Methodist Magazine, XXXV (1812), 316

*Jacob Gruber was one of Asbury's most dependable men. The camp meetings are again upon Asbury's mind. He urges Gruber to diligence by the suggestion of his own example.*

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

*December 17, 1811*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[43]</sup>

My dearly Beloved:

I only honor you as you honor God. I pray for you daily twice. I write to you. The God of all grace help me, thee, and all his children, and ministers. Surely it is America's Day. The prospects are great beyond description in the outward search; hundreds are converted. So many popular meetings in one year. I think river will be the line of the 2 districts. As to the nomination, we shall know hereafter, you will make out the plans. The preachers, as many as can, will meet in Leesburg, [Va.]. We have lamed 2 horses, and one man twice. We are so



simple when we set off from one conference to another. We ride so crooked; that where we might go for six, we take 1200 miles. Oh for men like Baxter's<sup>[44]</sup> pastors, for doctrine, discipline, duties, diligence.

My painful 40 years expired the 20th of October. Oh! what have I been doing, the chief of sinners saved, less than the least of all, and was I to live over again perhaps no better my poverty the purity of my intention, the souls gone to glory, and those that now preach and live the gospel, comfort me. Letters and life will shorten. I feel as if the year 1812 will be great in the new and old perhaps in grace and judgment. You heard we stationed 101 in the West Conference, added members between 3 and 4000. I expect we shall station 100 in the South. We must form new districts, circuits and conferences, in the west and other parts, I am,

Fr. Ay.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*A day of prayer and fasting is announced in this letter to one of the pastors. They are looking toward the General Conference of 1812, and Asbury is anticipating attacks on the episcopacy.*

CAMDEN, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*December 23, 1811*

[*To Robert Birch*]<sup>[45]</sup>

My dear Son:

Oh what graces and grace we need to conduct ourselves as sons of God, without rebuke. Great grace we need to guide men of murmuring minds; and called, justified, sanctified ministers of Jesus, to answer all questions, hear all spirits. This year with us is begun; in the West and Southern Conference, the Day of God, the Day of Glory is begun! Near 7000 added this year; besides the numbers triumphantly gone, to join the church above. The wastage filled up, these 2 conferences would be a great field for the poor supernumerary [?] superintendents who but wander through the new world. We have recommended the first Friday in May as a day of general humiliation and fasting, that if we must have some radical changes (as some say) and transfer of power to appointing the principal officers in our church government, the change must be of God, and not of men, who have partially for years been their own bishops. May you watch, flee youthful desires, follow after every grace.

F.A.  
*Syracuse University*

*This is an excerpt of one of several letters which Bennett included in his Memorials of Methodism in Virginia. Bennett does not tell to whom they were written, nor where he got them but probably the Stith Mead collection. Asbury is evidently well along in years. He mentions the forty years. If*

*the reference is to his American ministry, then the letter was written in 1811. At times he refers to the beginning of his ministry in England. However, he usually refers to the beginning in America. He began that ministry in 1771.*

[ ——— 1811]<sup>[46]</sup>

[*To Stith Mead?*]<sup>[47]</sup>

May the great Head of the church prepare us all to preach all the gospel doctrines in their order; to saints, sinners, backsliders, legalists, deists, and hypocrites. Alas! what little have I done, what little have I suffered! Me, who am less than the least of all saints, not worthy to be called a preacher, much less a Bishop, and an apostolic successor. I want to live to make the best of a poor day's work. The longer I run, now forty years, the further I am behind. Never had we such scaffolding for the work of God; far beyond all former appearances or calculations. But above all, Oh the souls already gone to glory!

[Francis Asbury]<sup>[48]</sup>

*William W. Bennett, Memorials of Methodism, 618*

*In 1810 Nathan Bangs, pastor of John Street Church, New York, attempted to correct some excesses in the services at the church. Some persons wrote to Bishop Asbury protesting against Bangs' action. Asbury's answer did not satisfy Bangs. He did not think he had sufficient support. Bangs wrote to Asbury requesting an explanation.*

NEW YORK, N. Y.  
May 7, 1812<sup>[49]</sup>

[*To Nathan Bangs*]<sup>[50]</sup>

My dear Brother and Son:

It is impossible for me to enter into explanations. Unhappy suspicions have taken place (I said, I think) among us, and something like guile; including myself. I confess I had better not have said anything; I did not mean it for any but those that were charged with it. I did not mean a charge against you or any innocent person. There may be the appearance without reality. I am sorry I am not more prudent, but when I am called upon so often to speak and write I am not sufficiently on my guard. I hope you will bear with me. I am persuaded of your uprightness. Brother Hitt<sup>[51]</sup> has spoken in the highest terms of you to me, in word and letter. You will pardon me, and pray that I may say, do, preach, and write better. I remain thine in Jesus.

F. Asbury

*Abel Stevens, Life and Times of Nathan Bangs, D.D., 187*

*According to the Journal the Episcopal Committee had under discussion the question of adding to the episcopacy. A motion was made in the conference on May 16 to do this. Evidently Asbury felt it necessary to reassure the brethren that he would not leave the country.*

NEW YORK<sup>[52]</sup>

May 9, 1812

[*To the Episcopal Committee of  
the General Conference of 1812*]<sup>[53]</sup>

My dear Brethren:

Whatever I may have thought or spoken in former times upon strengthening the Episcopacy, I am not at liberty to say to you at this time, do this, or that. I am bound in duty to serve the Connection with all my power of body and mind, as long and as largely as I can; and, while I am persuaded that my services are needed and acceptable, to give up all thoughts of visits out of the American Continent. I feel myself indispensably bound to the Conference and my colleague, never to leave them nor forsake them upon the above conditions.

F. Asbury

*J.J. Tigert, A Constitutional History of American Episcopal  
Methodism, 331*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Probably written January 7, 1811. (See *Journal*.)
- [2] "The Methodist Female Friendly Association was founded (in Charleston) in 1810, and incorporated in 1819." (Chreitzberg, *Early Methodism in the Carolinas*, 269.) This organization was confined to Charleston. (Albert D. Betts.)
- [3] The letter was addressed to the Rev. Joseph Marsden, Hamilton, Bermuda.
- [4] Kentucky.
- [5] The occasion for Asbury's remarks here was probably the perusal of the society's sixth *Report*, lengthy extracts from which had been included in the issues of *The Methodist Magazine* for June and July, 1810. These extracts noted how the British example was being followed in Philadelphia, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Jersey; noted, too, that generous grants had been sent to aid these infant American societies. (Frank Baker.)
- [6] It is amazing to realize that within a generation four massive commentaries on the whole Bible were published by British Methodists: Thomas Coke, six volumes, 1801-9; Adam Clarke, eight volumes, 1810-26; Joseph Benson, five volumes, 1811-18; Joseph Sutcliffe, two volumes, 1834-39. (Frank Baker.)
- [7] Presiding elder at Albany, New York, on the Hudson River District.
- [8] It is not clear to what he refers.
- [9] Reference is to those who located.
- [10] Reference is probably to Jesse Lee, who was chaplain of the House of Representatives in Washington from 1809 to

1815. During that time he served mostly in Virginia and at Annapolis, Maryland. (See Buckley, *History of Methodism*, 429-30, and *Minutes*, 1809-15.)

[11] Last part of letter very difficult to read.

[12] Presiding elder on the James River District, Virginia Conference.

[13] A study of Asbury's *Letters* and *Journal* shows that he was most anxious to have this history done. He speaks of it at times as "The Focus," as in this letter. (See letter, February 11, 1802; also letters to M'Caine, 1815.) However, it was never done.

[14] Presiding elder on the Green River District, Western Conference.

[15] Presiding elder on the Seleuda District, South Carolina Conference. William Kennedy did as requested. A copy of his letter to Daniel Asbury, presiding elder on the Camden District (South Carolina), is extant in the *Southern Advocate*.

[16] William McKendree.

[17] The *Journal* shows that Asbury was in Sussex County. On the twelfth he preached at Union Chapel and stayed at Albertson's.

[18] Mrs. Coke died in London on January 25, 1811, and was buried near Coke's parents in the Priory Church at Brecon. (Frank Baker.)

[19] On February 16, 1810, Coke tried to promote the sale of his own commentary by a circular letter to British Methodism, as one invited by conference to prepare a *Commentary*, and added: "I have now about two hundred sets of my commentary on the New Testament. I have

therefore, I think, a claim to your indulgence, and to your assistance for the sale of the remainder of my edition, prior to that of any other person whatever." Coke and Adam Clarke, the commentarian, were not the warmest of friends—indeed, Clarke had stepped in to prevent Coke having too great an ascendancy in his native Ireland immediately after the death of Wesley—but there seems no evidence of an open breach between them. (Frank Baker.)

[20] Asbury's words about "fill the blank" are puzzling. Does he mean put in "possible," "probable," "speedy," according to when Coke expects to revisit the United States? (Frank Baker.)

[21] See note on Wilkins, preface to Wesley's *Physic*, 1814.

[22] See letter of February 24, 1811, in which he says, "*I* have stricken out a plan for a complete letter-history of Methodism." This history was never written.

[23] Henry Boehm, who added a postscript.

[24] A note from Henry Boehm appears between this and the preceding letter. Asbury adds the remainder of this letter above and below the address, on the parts which, when the letter is folded, are tucked inside. Since Boehm's postscript has been added, he seems to have received a letter from Coke. (Frank Baker.)

[25] Asbury's suggestion that Coke's wife may have died because he loved her more than he did God, when put thus bluntly, seems very harsh. This is not an isolated example, however, and springs from a very different approach to the fact of death. (Frank Baker.)

[26] Letter has no state. *Journal* shows New York.

[27] Presiding elder, New Hampshire District.



- [28] The letter has a note, "special attention of Leonard Frost." He was pastor on the Norway-Plains Charge of the New Hampshire District.
- [29] Elijah Hedding was changed in 1811 from the New London District and appointed to Boston. He was elected a bishop in 1824.
- [30] Joel Winch was the new presiding elder on the New London District.
- [31] Oliver Beale, presiding elder on the Kennebeck District.
- [32] Joshua Soule, Portland District.
- [33] George Pickering, Boston District.
- [34] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District, Baltimore Conference.
- [35] Henry Boehm was Asbury's traveling companion. He was a German and especially helpful because he could preach in the German language.
- [36] Asbury went over from the New England Conference to Canada. Since the Christmas Conference of 1784 appointed Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell to Nova Scotia, there had been some Methodists in Canada who were connected with American Methodism. In 1811 there were about three thousand Methodists across the border in Upper and Lower Canada. There was already prospect of the War of 1812. The American preachers could hardly remain in Canada. The societies and congregations could scarcely get along without pastors. Congress passed a declaration of war on June 17, 1812. The General Conference met in New York on May 1, 1812. There was no preacher from Canada present. The New York Conference gave over the Lower Canada

circuits to the Genesee Conference, retaining only the Dunham Circuit. The New England Conference retained Stanstead. All the work in Canada along the St. Lawrence River was in the Genesee Conference except the two circuits. The conference met on July 23, a month after President Madison's declaration of war. The Canadian preachers were not present. However, the appointments were made for Upper and Lower Canada.

The preachers of British and Canadian birth were to remain in the provinces. Nathan Bangs and Thomas Burch were sent from the United States, Bangs to be presiding elder on the Lower Canada District and Thomas Burch to be pastor at Quebec. Nathan Bangs relinquished his charge by the consent of the bishops. Burch went to his appointment. When Canada declared war, the Americans had to leave. The war went on for three years with disastrous effects, as is always the case. The Genesee Conference met at Lyons on June 29, 1815. It was resolved to go ahead with the work in Canada, and American appointments were made for Upper and Lower Canada. The English Conference had preachers in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Quebec; and the membership was 1,759. American responsibility for Canada continued until the General Conference of 1828. There were five preachers from the Canada Conference present. "The separation of the Methodist connection in Canada came before the meeting, and was duly considered and finally settled." (George F. Playter, *The History of Methodism in Canada*, 103-315.)

[37] *Minutes* for 1811 show 184,567 members,

- [38] See letter, May 12, 1811.
- [39] Evidently there was more to this letter. Only this extract in *The Methodist Magazine* of 1812.
- [40] Written from Georgia. No place on letter. He was on his way to Camden, South Carolina, to preside at the conference. (See *Journal*, 1852 ed., November 27, 1811.)
- [41] Members of Congress.
- [42] James Madison was President in 1811.
- [43] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District.
- [44] Asbury makes frequent references to Richard Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, also *The Saints Everlasting Rest*. On August 19, 1810, Asbury writes, "Saturday—O what a prize! Baxter's Reformed Pastor fell into my hands this morning!"
- [45] Pastor, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.
- [46] Bennett puts this letter in with the last letters of Asbury. However, it seems to have been written in 1811.
- [47] The letter was evidently written to a preacher, and Asbury is making an appeal to preach the gospel. Bennett had letters which had been written to Stith Mead, a collection which with Mead's *Journal* was lost in the Richmond fire of the Civil War. Mead was on the Buckingham Circuit, Virginia, in 1811.
- [48] The letter was unsigned.
- [49] The date was taken from Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, II, 404.
- [50] Bangs, a pastor of John Street Church, New York, was a historian of early Methodism.
- [51] Daniel Hitt, the Book Agent.

[52] Not addressed. (See Tigert, *A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism*, 331.)

[53] See *Journal* entries for General Conference, May 1, 10, 17, 1812.

**FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1812  
THROUGH 1813**

*September 3, 1812 - August 29, 1813*

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### FROM THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1812 THROUGH 1813

September 3, 1812 - August 29, 1813

*This is the only letter that has come to light for the months between the May, 1812, General Conference and this date. One wishes that there were more. Asbury is talking about two conferences. He has recently held the Genesee Conference, but he reverts to the General Conference and the fight on the presiding eldership.*

[WIDOW HENTHORN'S], [PENNSYLVANIA]<sup>[1]</sup> *September 3,*  
*1812*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[2]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

The days of visitation are come, Israel shall know it. Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of his time; salvation, and the fear of the Lord is his treasure. This is an evil time, let the prudent, and pious keep silent. But what shall one answer the messengers of the nation that God hath rounded Zion, that the poor of the people may safely trust in it. If you wish to hear how we came out in Genesee Conference, Henry [Boehm] can tell you. It is clearly seen that in our General Conference there was an hidden, and *desperate attempt* to level the least; and last remains of Episcopacy; and change the Federal Constitution of

Methodism by men that have chiefly been at their choice and locality.

Alas do not the superintendency and presiding elders keep the whole body in harmony; our book concern would soon be in ruin but for these. That any presiding elder should be opposed to our appointment of that our city gentlemen, handed from obscurity by us, should swell out so soon. We mean to hold the right to prevent division, in towns, cities, or districts by timely removals. For on my part I am now become vice president. heartily resign the chairs. I cheerfully submit my plan of a year's, week's labour, to the bishops and elders. If they alter it, in a single case it is not mine, but theirs, they sometimes say there must be a change; and call upon me to make it. I think it duty in the episcopacy and presiding elder-ship to take warning to do every part of duty, great and small, to be very loving but very strict.

Unhappy case, poor Timothy Lee,<sup>[3]</sup> honorable delegate had only gone 4 times round his circuit in the whole year, and attended General Conference, voted against the presiding elders; well, why well he might, for the presiding elder came forward in conference to tell what Timothy had been doing. If I live another 4 years; I shall not expect to be qualified for a great deal of executive duty; but under divine wisdom, I have had a large share in forming and executing the plan.

As to their talking at Conference, it was mean, it was childish to compare our preachers, and presiding elders, to Africans, and African overseers, what said Cicero, he

Snethen<sup>[4]</sup> he had not been opprest by presiding elders, they cannot feel. If Gidion had been elected by Timothy Lee, he might have winked at his, Timothy's, neglect of duty. Timothy was to have had the district too. Perhaps they were to make the saddle, and get up and ride directly. You see where we were going. I hope you will act the man and leave the district in great order, and be prepared to assist us in the best arrangements should we live till next Conference, as this district belongs to Baltimore, they will always go begging. But when the pike road is opened to Conference, the Baltimore Conference to sit at Union once in 5 years and so in every district in the Union of Baltimore Conference: If virtue and equality could be obtained, and Baltimore Conference might be the first in the Union and be met in the fall; but this is only a dream, while the grand lords of cities use their mighty influence. But I must stand in my lot and leave you to go to my long home, or elsewhere. Be faithful. We hear of campmeetings, and good success, the work of God must go on rapidly, work Lord, I am

Yours,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Henry Willis had been one of the faithful preachers of early Methodism, and at one time he had traveled with Asbury. He was born in Brunswick County, Virginia, and died in Pipe Creek, Maryland, in 1808. There is an interesting memoir of Willis in the Minutes of that year. He left a widow,*



*Mrs. Ann Willis, and six children. Mrs. Willis was an accomplished woman and did some work on Asbury's Journal.*

UNION CAMPMEETING, [PENNSYLVANIA]<sup>[5]</sup>

*September 7, 1812*

[*To Mrs. Ann Willis*]<sup>[6]</sup>

My dear Sister:

Grace, peace, prudence, courage be with thee. As I feel a Christian confidence and partiality for you three, I hope, widows indeed in Israel; I have written a line to each, so to thee also. Be a mother in Israel; pray on this coming, as well as the past winter. May you have souls not only justified, but sanctified in your house, this fall, and winter. Camp meeting has been blest to my mind, preaching every day. I am paid for the desperate roads and 5000 miles riding this year; but hope it will be 6000 next. Only let me retreat at night and I am ready by grace for duty every day, 2 campmeetings, all and conference in less than a month; help me sister by your prayers.

I live for millions of sons and daughters of Adam, and of God. I fear you will slack your hands, watch on, pray and suffer on, believe on, fight on, like a *woman! Like a man for God.* When I saw you stemming the weather up the hill like an heroine or shining mite riding on, stop not to get to the —; be Frank's<sup>[7]</sup> *sister* and his *mother* and prompter to all good. The borough of Pipe Creek shall be ours, we will not, if God is with us leave a hoop behind. I shall keep the campmeeting in mind. If the Lord spares us we will settle at

conference, if not we, our spiritual children, by these campmeetings. We Bishops are seen by thousands that only wish to see, and hear us a little.

I am most sincerely to you, mother and children

Asbury

P.S. Take my Soul, and ——, and some of your *paperbark*. If I recommend you to read any Book but the Bible it will be Fletcher's Life by Joseph Benson which I have nearly read during this campmeeting.

*Drew University Library*

*James Quinn was for nearly half a century a Methodist preacher. Asbury, as usual, at this time was emphasizing a strong episcopacy. His emphasis on sanctification is characteristic of his preaching.*

[JUDGE VANMEATER'S, OHIO]<sup>[8]</sup>

*September 24, 1812*

[*To James Quinn*]<sup>[9]</sup>

My dear Son:

The God of all grace and wisdom, grant to us grace and wisdom as Christian ministers, and eminently, to rule in our Israel. The days of visitation are come. Israel ought to know it. The prudent should keep silent in this time; it is an evil time. But ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence. Move heaven with your prayers, and earth with your cries. *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet!*

Diligence, prudence, courage, perseverance. You will care for every circuit, every society, every preacher, every family, and every soul in your charge. You will be planning continually to extend and establish the Church of God in your section. You will be eyes, ears, mouth, and wisdom, from us to the people; and from the people to us. You will be in our stead, to supply our absence. 'Tis order, 'tis system, under God, that hath kept us from schism, and heresy, and division, till we number near two hundred thousand in membership; congregate, possibly three millions. No doubt, in forty-eight years four thousand have died in Jesus, nearly or remotely have died in faith by our means.

You will be planning all the year. You will collect all the information you can for the superintendents. *Know men and things well. See sanctification, feel it, preach it, live it.* I pray, invariably, for all the presiding elders, by name, twice in the day. When the connection was small, I prayed for every travelling preacher and circuit; now by districts. *Let us be as one soul—one great soul of the body!*

We ought to teach our brethren the impossibility of existing as a people without union, and an able executive; for thousands of our people know not their right from their left hand, in government. If there is treachery, or disorder in the body, what damage will ensue to spiritual life, liberty, and prosperity! The more sacred the interests, the greater the

damage. O, how careful we ought to be what men we take into the ministry, and spy out their motives and manners!

F. Asbury

*John F. Wright, Sketches of the Life and Letters of James Quinn, 304-5.*

*Transcribed by Lawrence Sherwood*

*Zachary Myles was one of Asbury's good friends over a long period of time. Evidently Myles was about Asbury's age, as can be seen from the reference in the last paragraph to closing life. Asbury is still pursuing his reading. His knowledge of books was remarkable.*

BUNCOMBE, NORTH CAROLINA

*December 3, 1812*

[*To Zachary Myles*]<sup>[10]</sup>

My dear Brother:

All hail in Jesus! Excuse my long delay in answering your letters. I rode by day, and wrote by night. In my letters, I write as a fool, when I say, we have (mean the superintendents in company) visited nine annual conferences, and the General Conference, with nine campmeetings. The latter excelled in life, multitudes, and power. While attending those meetings, my soul was inexpressibly blest; and in reading Mr. Benson's<sup>[11]</sup> excellent Life of Fletcher, my soul was brought into God, deeply into love. This has sweetened the toils of between 4 and 5000 miles travelling.

With humble surprise, I found that our western conferences gave an account of about 12,000 increase. Emigrations, earthquakes, &c. have been made favourable to the work of God. We have high expectations, that the light affliction will work for our good; that all orders among us will be humbled, and consent to hear the word of God; and that thousands, if not millions, shall see the salvation of the Gospel.

We shall find it necessary to appoint another conference in the West, upon Mississippi, and form an annual episcopal circuit of ten conferences. This circuit to be travelled in nine months, is about 6000 miles, and reaches completely round the United States. Thus hath God in the space of forty two years, enlarged our borders.

Now, my friend, let us strive to close life in perfect love, in order to our obtaining perfect glory. Farewell.

F. Asbury  
The Methodist Magazine (1813), 557

*An interesting résumé is given here of Asbury's life and travels and their relation to early American war history. One wishes he had elaborated on the persons to whom reference is made in the letters.*

FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA  
*January 16, 1813*

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[12]</sup>

My dear Son:

Great grace attend us. How shall we be wise like the serpent, harmless like the dove? Beware of men! said one that knew what was in man's heart and actions. Serious times with me, an old soldier of Jesus. I hand my crutch and say how fields have been won. In the 68th year of my age, 52nd year of my ministry, 42 year of my American mission, I have lived to see above 200,000 in Methodist fellowship, 3000 local laborers, 700 travelling laborers. Ohio, Tennessee, South Carolina Conferences, these three, held in the last of the year 1812, to be returned 1813 [members], increase 18,000! beyond all calculation. Great General Conference year, 30 of the most valuable men in those conferences absent<sup>[13]</sup> 6 months of the best part of the year, delegates to General Conference. Alas I have lived to see the French, the Revolutionary and the present war.<sup>[14]</sup> But may all our church, and national afflictions be sanctified to all, when they come to press on rich, and poor, patience, faith, prudence, love, diligence, long-suffering, gentleness, guidance. I am yours,  
F. Ay.

P.S. I have established the 9th and appointed the tenth Conference on Mississippi, a complete circuit for the president round United States lines, and 5000 miles and meet Conference in 12 months. Your letters made your friends laugh, to hear how you had —— the fox. You made him mad,

he will bite me again, and worry [?] the Baltimore bull,<sup>[15]</sup> if Smith<sup>[16]</sup> will hold the rope.

*Drew University Library*

*Again Asbury is writing to Jacob Gruber. He refers again to the membership in the United States as compared to the British church. Since Asbury refers so often to preachers marrying, it is interesting to note in this letter that he is referring to Clarke's mention of the sin of not marrying.*

NEW RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA  
*January 29, 1813*

[*To Jacob Gruber*]<sup>[17]</sup>

My dear Jacob:

Oh for the grace of apostles if we must do the duty, and fill the places of them that say they are apostles. O how unpleasing is example and unsuccessful when it calls me to labour and suffer. After the wormwood and the gall<sup>[18]</sup> of General Conference we have had great peace, union, discipline and increase. Ohio, Tennessee, and South Carolina Conferences total in the trinity 18,000. In 45 years the poor little daughter mission church, in America has overgrown her mother in Europe of near 70 years standing. We have no Doctors of *Law* and *Divinity*, no *Commentators*. I am at a loss to tell what Dr. Clark<sup>[19]</sup> means, unless if a man marrieth he does well; he can not sin, but he that marrieth not, do what he will he sinneth? I am happy to inform you campmeetings *prevail* with general use in great success. In the Allegheny mountains late, in storm, and rain, hail, and snow, with frost!

I felt, and now feel, the loss of the use of both *feet*; for 3 weeks, handed from place to place, you will stand prepared to give us all the help you can, in sowing our salt at conference. I must lean on about 60 men: but henceforth I will never appoint an enemy to the constitution, if I can find a better man among its friends. The presiding elders are my council of safety, my eyes and ears and mouth everywhere.

The Lord guide us all,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*When Asbury addresses a letter to the British Conference, he always uses a more stilted style than in his normal writing. He has been interested in paying a visit to England. It is remarkable that he never went back. However, the fact that he did not shows his great devotion to his work in America.*

LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA

*April 5, 1813*

To the Ministers and Preachers late in Connection with the Rev. John Wesley; assembled in Conference in Great Britain, we send greeting.

Dear beloved in the Lord, Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry of the Gospel of the Grace of God:

A few days past, your generous invitation came to light,<sup>[20]</sup> your brother feeleth the honor, the pleasure, the unmerited



respect you have paid to his wishes, to see your divine body of ministers, your order, the stedfastness of your faith in Christ, your zeal to spread the written and preached<sup>[21]</sup> Gospel thro' Europe, Asia, Africa and the Isles of the Sea, prison-ships and prison-houses.<sup>[22]</sup> You are not to be informed of the sacred obligations of your writer to the American Methodists, and inhabitants of the whole earth. He had hop'd the sea should grow calm *from shore to shore*; that he might be accompanied with two younger men in the ministry; to have sail'd in May, landed at his native shore in June, passed or employed about three months and returned. We have not used lightness that ill becomes one in the 8th month of the 68th year of his age, and 53rd year of his ministry, travelling and local, in Europe and America.

If the thought of visiting Europe is thought to be in the birth of a second childhood, you will find a mantle! Indeed it appeared like the birth of my first *childhood* in coming to the continent. I shall look forward to the years of 1814, 1815. It may be thought a forlorn hope; so it may, come or stay; if your friend is bound to attempt in the unevenness of this continent, with all the inclement changes to ride 5,000 miles in 8 months, and meet ten conferences as one of the Superintendents; and add to this, subject to periodical lameness every year, and to be handed [carried] into congregations, houses and ferry-boats; to visit conferences with crutches and staves.

When I wrote to my friends Roberts<sup>[23]</sup> and Coke, of my intention to visit the spot that gave me breath, I fondly hoped

our General Conference would have seen their way opened to have elected one or two Superintendents. In this we were disappointed. Be assured, we feel ourselves unworthy to address you as at the first; and knowing the readiness of our beloved brethren as above, we signified our wishes. You will believe, should a visit be made, it will be to give and receive spiritual information, in mutual love. You improve as we in popularity, in building houses; may the spiritual building grow *more and more*, and may we always leave room for the poor. The year 1813 promises to be wonderfully great in numbers; in five conferences we have an increase of more than 31000 members; but it is properly 1812, as we meet two conferences in the fall, and one in every month till July. Our increase was so much the more extraordinary, by the absence of 80 preachers at General Conference, some two, others three, and five months from their work.

Dear Brethren the Days of Visitation are come! Your writer feels his task in addressing you but he hopes great and good minds will be candid in his cause. He hath written briefly, his beloved Coke will explain; but he corrects himself; you are men of minds. His body, soul and spirit, his heart, his thoughts, his pen, shall express his gratitude for your favor to one you have never seen, but is most

affectionately yours in Jesus,

Francis Asbury

*Lamplough Collection of British Conference. Transcribed  
by Frank Baker*

*The Journal indicates that Asbury was the guest of Governor Bassett. Bassett was an old friend. The letter is to the editor of The Methodist Magazine. It, with the appended letter, has much information on Asbury's proposed visit to England which, however, did not materialize.*

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

April 22, 1813

[To Joseph Benson]<sup>[24]</sup>

My venerable Brother:<sup>[25]</sup>

Will be so benevolent as to present this letter to the Conference at their next sitting. He may feel himself at liberty to present the original to the President; and to smooth<sup>[26]</sup> and point and print a copy for each member, as a token of my love, if it should be eventually as my last Will and Testament.

Your brother<sup>[27]</sup> well presumes that the Methodist society hath done more in Missions than other societies, or all the European societies put together. He says America was a mission; the daughter, as to names and numbers little inferior to the Mother; as to men of talents, as great *speakers, great learning, great writers*, we boast not; we trust in missions you will abound *more and more*. Should two of our young men volunteer with me on a visit of love, will the British Conference and people accept their services, should we find our way open?<sup>[28]</sup> This I submit to your gracious consideration, and wait your will, that we may perfectly understand and harmonize; possibly these young men will

obtain recommendations from their conferences, and wherewith to bear their expenses.

I remain yours,

Francis Asbury

The Methodist Magazine (1813), 877

## FRANCIS ASBURY'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

*In the name of Almighty God, Amen!*

*June 6, 1813<sup>[29]</sup>*

I, Francis Asbury, native of Great Britain, born at Great Barr, Handsworth Parish, Staffordshire County, Superintendent and Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, in common health of Body and firm exercise of mind, having deliberated upon the shortness of human life and the certainty of death. I make my last Will and Testament revoking all others. *Item*, I give my body to the dust, from whence it was originally taken, in hopes of a Glorious resurrection to everlasting Life! I commit my Spirit to the Father of all Spirits, in the justifying, sanctifying, preserving, and Glorifying Grace of the Son of God and only Saviour of the world. *Item*, I give and bequeath all my wearing apparel to the travelling and local preachers of the Methodist E. Church that shall be present at my death. *Item*, I give and bequeath my Horses or Horse and carriages, together with all my Books and Manuscripts, to William McKendree,<sup>[30]</sup> first American Bishop of the Methodist E.

Church. *Item*, I give and bequeath in Special Trust and Confidence to William McKendree, Daniel Hitt, and Henry Boehm, the sum of Two Thousand Dollars, now deposited in the Book Concern, be the same more or less, to be applied in printing Bibles and Testaments, with other pious. Books and Tracts and Pamphlets upon experimental and practical Godliness; and upon the decease of said Trustees, then and in that case I devise the trust and Confidence shall be founded upon the Bishops elected by the General Conference in succession on the one part, the Baltimore Annual Conference on the other part, shall elect two Elders of their Body, in joint Trust and Especial Confidence to insure the deposit in the Book Concern as long as the General union of Order and interest shall be maintained, and an equal dividend is made to all the Conferences in Union and within the United States. Should the present order of things be changed, then and in that case I wish the money to be funded, and the Interest by the Special Trust and Confidence to be equally and annually divided among the Ten Conferences as now appointed by order of the General Conference, or if the number shall hereafter be increased, there shall be an equal dividend to the whole number. Be it known that I have not laid up treasure upon Earth; more than the sum I have bequeathed, in the principal and interest, has been left to me in Legacies by persons that died childless, some thinking possibly I might live to advanced age, and to need an Independent Support; these legacies were left me chiefly by persons of the first Generation of Methodists. I have appropriated the Interest and some of the principal, and as a faithful steward return it to the Church; should Elizabeth Dickins survive me and continue in

her widowhood, it is my will she should be paid, during her natural life, Eighty Dollars annually; as to all my nominal Children, Male and Female, whose parents have thought proper to put any part of my name upon them, I wish the Book Concern to give these each a Bible, as one of my nominal Children. Lastly, I appoint my three before-mentioned friends, viz: William McKendree, Daniel Hitt, and Henry Boehm, as sole executors of this my last Will and Testament, revoking all former Wills by me made; my Burial decent and solitary, a Gravestone or not, but plain; my Funeral expenses paid by money in my Pocket, or from the Interest of the deposit in the Concern. Given under my hand and seal this Seventh day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirteen.

FRANCIS ASBURY (SEAL)

Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the above named Francis Asbury, to be his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us, who have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses in the presence of the testator: Baltimore County, to wit:

Michael Coate

Asahel Coate

John W. Bond

*Emory University Library*

*Jonathan Lyons and Francis Ward for some reason had been changed by Freeborn Garrettson, the presiding elder.*

*Asbury here puts his approval on what has been done. He urges Lyons to additional consecration.*

WESTMINSTER<sup>[31]</sup>

*July 3, 1813*

[*To Jonathan Lyons*]<sup>[32]</sup>

My dear Jonathan:

Great grace attend us, for indeed to bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ, given twice in the 13th and 15th of John's Gospel. Ah what changes, in health, in life and friends. Brother Garrettson<sup>[33]</sup> informed me of the change between you and Brother Ward.<sup>[34]</sup> I wish it may be for the best and I am satisfied. The general union in the New England and Genesee is great. Now the world is at war, the church is at peace. You will watch and pray, believe and love, preach and meet the classes and societies, instruct the children and visit from house to house. We have had to ride 700 miles since New York, steady and shall [carry] on our work in sickness and heat and pain, but in faith and prayer we must out preach and pray and live our former selves and all others.

Let them build houses, we must build churches and build up souls in holiness whilst others are contenting their minds with 4 hours work once in 7 days. Let us preach every day, from morning to evening, every day in the week, let us have souls for our hire, God for our portion, heaven for our home. We live upon God and feel answers to the prayers of God's

people and we are invulnerable, Immortal till our master's work is done. With respect to thee and thine.

In our Saviour, as ever

F. Asbury

*Drew University Library*

*The Valedictory Address is a most important paper. Here is Asbury's philosophy of the ongoing Methodist Church. He referred to the valedictory in his dying words when, in answer to a question as to whether he had anything to communicate, he replied that he had expressed his mind in reference to the church in his address to Bishop McKendree. One is reminded of the valedictory of Paul addressing Timothy. The paper was evidently meant for the press. It was most carefully prepared and was printed in Paine's Life and Times of William McKendree. There is a copy of the Valedictory Address in Lovely Lane Museum, Baltimore. There are differences but not essential between that copy and the copy used by Paine. The copy in Baltimore is dated August 5, 1814, contrary to the date shown in the Journal. The address to the General Conference, 1816, has been called incorrectly by some the Valedictory Address.*



LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA  
*August 5, 1813*<sup>[35]</sup>

[*To William McKendree*]

A Valedictory Address to William McKendree, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. By Francis Asbury.

Speaking to the Genesee Annual Conference in your presence on the subject of apostolical, missionary, Methodist Episcopal Church government, I was desired to commit my thoughts to writing. I feel the more disposed to do this, that I may leave a written testimony which may be seen, read, and known when your friend and father is taken from the evil to come.

Sir: My advice is that there be only three effective bishops, as from the beginning, traveling through the whole continent, each one to preside alternately in all the Annual Conferences, one to preside during the sitting of the same Conference, the other two to have charge of and plan the stations and perform ordinations, assisted by the elders in both branches. The plan of stations should be submitted to the President of the Conferences, in triune order, to give a final decision before it is read out. I wish to warn you against the growing evil of locality in bishops, elders, preachers, or Conferences. Locality is essential to cities and towns, but traveling is as essential to the country. Were I to name cities, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome, with all the great cities, both ancient and modern, what havoc have these made in the Churches! Alas

for us! out of seven hundred traveling preachers, we have about one hundred located in towns and cities and small rich circuits. Guard particularly against two orders of preachers: the one of the country, the other for the cities; the latter generally settle themselves to purchase ministers, and too often men of gifts and learning intend to set themselves to sale.

I am bold to say that the apostolic order of things was lost in the first century, when Church governments were adulterated and had much corruption attached to them. At the Reformation, the reformers only beat off a part of the rubbish, which put a stop to the rapid increase of absurdities at that time; but how they have increased since! Recollect the state of the different Churches, as it respects government and discipline, in the seventeenth century when the Lord raised up that great and good man, John Wesley, who formed an evangelical society in England. In 1784, an apostolical form of Church government was formed in the United States of America at the first General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church held at Baltimore, in the State of Maryland.

You know, my brother, that the present ministerial cant is that we cannot now, as in former apostolical days, have such doctrines, such discipline, such convictions, such conversions, such witnesses of sanctification, and such holy men. But I say that we can; I say we must; yea, I say we have. And can men claim the rights and privileges of apostles if they are impostors and not true ministers of the holy sanctuary? Instead of going to preach, they stay to preach. Hence it is that

schools, colleges, and universities undertake to make men ministers that the Lord Jesus Christ never commanded to be made. The present Episcopal Churches are greatly independent of each other. All the numerous orders of Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists are also local. If we wish to see pure and unadulterated Church history, let us go to the Acts of the Apostles and mark the characters of those ministers in the time of persecution— such as Paul, Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, Archippus, Trophimus, Artemas, Luke, Epaphroditus, etc.—men who did honor to themselves as ministers of Christ. But there are too many the opposite of these, whom we can view in no other light, at present, than as men going into the ministry by their learning, sent by their parents or moved by pride, the love of ease, money or honor. Are not such moved by Satan more than by the Holy Ghost to assume the sacred office of the holy ministry? Mark well what a situation the apostles were in. If unfaithful in the discharge of their duty, God would condemn and punish them the most severely. On the other hand, the people were ready to starve, stone, or beat them to death. Modern priests will please the people, that they may not be starved or beaten; but will not God condemn such teachers to everlasting destruction? We lay no claim to the Latin, Greek, English, Lutheran, Swedish, or Protestant Episcopal Church order. It will be seen that we are so unlike them that we could not stand as related to them. Would their bishops ride five or six thousand miles in nine months for eighty dollars a year, with their traveling expense less or more, preach daily when opportunity serves, meet a number of camp meetings in the year, make arrangements for stationing seven hundred preachers, ordain a hundred more

annually, ride through all kinds of weather, and along roads in the worst state, at our time of life—the one sixty-nine, the other in his fifty-sixth year?

When the Methodist preachers came first to this country, one-half of the continent was overspread with different names and orders of Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, English, French, German, Holland, Scotch, and Irish, with many Quakers. In the Southern part were Episcopalians. They had but few churches and no bishops. At this time the Methodists were, among others, not organized and had not the ordinances among us. As some in pleasantry said: "We were a Church, and no Church." In some places we communed with the Episcopalians. In 1779, some of our brethren in Virginia attempted to organize themselves into a Church; but in 1780, the writer of this address visited them, when they agreed to suspend their administration, and with united voice call upon Mr. Wesley to make some provision for them. Accordingly, in 1784, our faithful father, Mr. Wesley, ordained Thomas Coke, bishop, or general superintendent, and Francis Asbury was elected by the General Conference held in Baltimore, Md., December, 1784, general superintendent; was first ordained deacon and elder; on December 27, bishop, or general superintendent; Richard Whatcoat in May, 1800; and William McKendree in May, 1808. Dr. Coke was ordained deacon and elder by two scriptural English bishops, and so was John Wesley. Do any ancient or modern Churches stand on any better ground than we do with respect to ordination, with John Wesley's apostolic right? Probably Paul was ordained with Barnabas. (Acts xiii, 1-3.)

Should any ask why we did not seek ordination from other Churches, we answer them by asking if we should go to local men to be ordained traveling bishops. Should we go to Presbyterians to be ordained Episcopal Methodist? or to Episcopalians, who at that time had no bishop or power of ordination in the United States till application was made to the British Parliament, and that legislative body passed a law for the express purpose authorizing their bishops to consecrate and ordain bishops for the thirteen States of America, in 1785? Here let it be observed, that the Methodist was the first Church organized after the establishment of peace in 1783, and that the Protestant Episcopalians were not organized as a Church until after there was a law passed by the British Parliament. Or could we subscribe to Calvinian articles? Surely, no. Or could we submit to locality? By no means. Let local men ordain local men, baptize, or rebaptize local men; we must shape our course otherwise and prepare to meet the different Annual Conferences from Maine to Georgia and the Mississippi, and to retain all the ancient essential branches of Methodism in all its parts and try sacredly to maintain our traveling plan and support a true missionary, apostolic Church. And suppose this excellent constitution and order of things should be broken, what shall the present or future bishops do? Let them do as your noble countryman<sup>[36]</sup> did—resign and retire to private life.

It is a serious thing for a bishop to be stripped of any constitutional rights chartered to him at his ordination, without which he could not and would not have entered into that sacred office, he being conscious at the same time he had

never violated those sacred rights. Comparing human Church history with the Acts of the Apostles, it will manifestly appear that the apostolic order of things ended in about fifty years. With the preachers and people of that day, the golden order was lost. But we must restore and retain primitive order; we must, we will, have the same doctrine, the same spirituality, the same power in ordinances, in ordination, and in spirit.

Joseph Pilmoor had been but a short time on his mission to this country before he saw that it would not be proper for the Methodists to continue an Episcopal society. He was for forming an independent Church of England. Mr. Wesley was called for near twelve or thirteen years, repeatedly, to do something for his people in America. Dr. Whitehead reproached Mr. Wesley, in writing his "Life," for ordaining preachers in America, unless he had the voice of preachers and people in America; yet, if my memory serves me right, the Doctor grants Mr. Wesley's right so to do if he had had their voice; and this he most assuredly had, and it had been communicated to him by word and letter; or why did every heart leap with joy and the members of society and the congregations in America embrace our Church form and order and by thousands giving up themselves to the ordinances and presenting their children for baptism for nearly thirty years last past?

You have often heard me say that Church governments changed with the Church into strange, incredible forms—as monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, and legal establishments—when scholars, lawyers, doctors, and peers

became bishops and bishops became kings, temporal princes, and peers, and presbyters became assemblymen and senators; in this country they become chaplains to Congress; yes, members of Congress! It will come to this conclusion, that ours is the apostolic plan. But say you, Are all apostles? Are all that we have ordained holy men? They might have been. Were Judas, Simon Magnus, and Demas faithful unto death? Ministers may fall from grace and office; and no wonder if we, on ordaining four thousand local and nearly two thousand traveling preachers, should find some to turn out apostates.

Thus I have traced regular order and succession in John Wesley, Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, Richard Whatcoat, and William McKendree. Let any other Church trace its succession as direct and as pure, if they can. Does any one doubt the experience, piety, or labors of these men, so long tried, known, and read of all men, both friends and enemies, for so many years?

William P. Otterbein,<sup>[37]</sup> of Baltimore, a regular Presbyterian—the German apostle to America—whose piety, labors, and learning were great, this man of God assisted T. Coke, R. Whatcoat, and T. Vasey in the ordination of Francis Asbury. You will say if our Church were as pure as the primitive Church, will it not, may it not, like other modern, decline? I answer, We live in a purer age and in a free country. If discipline be maintained, men that carry sand instead of salt for the sheep will be constrained soon to leave us, to join some more honorable, but perhaps fallen, Church where they can have more ease and greater emoluments. We

have lived to see the end of such persons who left us and set up for themselves— witness Hammett and O'Kelly.

Thomas Haweis,<sup>[38]</sup> a moderate Episcopalian, fifty years a beneficed minister, is one of the most impartial historians on the subject of episcopacy. I shall close this address with several quotations from his work, wherein you will see that he, without knowledge or design, has given the order of Episcopal Methodism the plume of honor above all others:

"From the morning spread upon the mountains to the meridian splendor of the Sun of righteousness, I wish to trace the progress of his gospel amidst the storms of persecution, till his glory shall be finally revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Contemptuous infidelity, proud philosophy, bigoted superstition, atheistical immorality, heretical and schismatical depravity, may unite their powers against the child Jesus and his everlasting gospel, but the gates of hell shall never prevail. His persecuted Church shall rise. I have continued to prefer an episcopal mode of Church government, unless I can find a better. I am satisfied that the Methodist mode of episcopal government is more apostolic than the Church of England ever was, will, or can be, without a radical reformation from its essential form of locality, written sermons and prayers, State laws, and human policy." (Vol. I, p. 12, of his Introduction.)

"When I speak of episcopacy as most correspondents in my poor idea to the apostolic practice and general usage of the



Church in the first and generally esteemed purer ages, let no man imagine I plead for that episcopacy which, rising very early on the stilts of practical pride and worldly-mindedness, has since overspread the earth with its baneful shadow; or suppose those to be true successors of the apostles who, grasping at power and preeminence over Churches which their labors never planted nor watered, claiming dominion over districts, provinces, and kingdoms beyond all power of individual superintendency." (P. 14.)<sup>[39]</sup>

Here, Bishop, mark: "Planted or watered." We have planted and watered; although our continent is three thousand miles in length, we have measured it year after year, embracing fifty-one or two districts, about six hundred circuits, and nine Annual Conferences, all which, with very few exceptions, we have visited. Then, according to our author, we are apostolic bishops; for we have both planted and watered, and do water still. As to temporal power, what have we to do with that in this country? We are not senators, congressmen, or chaplains;<sup>[40]</sup> neither do we hold any civil offices. We neither have, nor wish to have, anything to do with the government of the States, nor, as I conceive, do the States fear us. Our kingdom is not of this world. For near half a century we have never grasped at power.

"All united in one Church fellowship [so the Methodists] under the superintendency of apostolic men at first and on their decease, the most distinguished for zeal, wisdom, sufferings, influence, or respectability of any kind, was called by the suffrage of the elders and people to be their

superintendent, president, *praeses*; *hegoumenos*, a leader; and thus the name of bishop (*kat' exochen*), on account of preëminence, became very early appropriate to one who was *primus inter pares*; and, as Archbishop Usher says, differed only in degree of advantage and not in order. These were, I apprehend, always from the apostolic days raised to their station by the voice of the people and their fellows. They preside in the deliberations of their several Churches, with the presbyters, their assessors. They were deputed to all synods which treated of ecclesiastical matters; and whilst every congregation judged its own members, they received the accusations against elders who were charged with offenses and censured or removed them. They examined the chosen candidates for the ministry, and, with the presbyter, ordained them by imposition of hands. This dangerous eminence marked them as peculiar victims in days of persecution. Far, therefore, from being an enviable or desirable situation, no man dare to aspire after or occupy it but such as counted their lives not dear unto themselves, that they 'might finish their course with joy, and the ministry which they had received from the Lord to fulfill it,' whether as confessors or martyrs." (P. 16.)

"The sudden ability of illiterate men of so great a number in a moment, and with perfection, to speak in all languages, to express themselves with such propriety and force as not only to be dearly understood, but impressive on the consciences of the numerous foreigners then at Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, such a phenomenon could not but strike the hearers with astonishment and afford an

evidence of divine agency too incontestible to admit of a rational doubt." (P. 28.)

Now, Bishop McKendree, I will make this remark, that to take this transaction of the Divine Spirit prophetically, it saith to every minister, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; and that in all ages to come, unlettered men should be raised up to preach the gospel with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. One may say, This man speaks well!—ah, he is a college-taught man! Again it may be said, This man speaks well; he is a scholar! But you are mistaken. He has only a common education—a plowman, a tailor, a carpenter, or a shoemaker! Then he must be taught of God, if he is not taught of man. Then we may rationally conclude that learning<sup>[41]</sup> is not an essential qualification to preach the gospel. It may be said no man but a fool will speak against learning. I have not spoken against learning. I have only said that it cannot be said to be an essential qualification to preach the gospel. It was once reported that two impostors (Roman priests) came to England, entered themselves as porters or draymen, but said they had received the gift of tongues and were called to preach. But Dr. Doddridge, being in the city, was requested to examine them and found they were scholars; but when he examined them in Welsh, the cheat was found out. And too often the learned priests deceive the people by their learning, or professing so to be; because the first preachers were blest with the gift of tongues immediately from heaven; so that a man must spend four or seven years in learning languages before he is permitted to preach the gospel. And who is to decide the

question? Their practice and that of our Lord does not strictly agree.

But to our author. "The Church at Jerusalem seems to have been under the presidency of the Apostle James. The great luminary was now rising to carry the light of the everlasting gospel into the heathen nations and to display a scene of labors and successes unequalled in the records of the Christian Church. The greater part of the Acts contain the account of his (Paul's) life and labors, recorded by his faithful attendant and companion in the work, Luke the Evangelist. Paul stands allowedly in the first ranks of eminence, in nothing behind the very chief of the apostles, whilst the generality of the others were out of the lowest orders of society (*agrammatotai kai tidiotai*), unlettered or private and laymen (Acts iv, 13) men of no literary acquirements. Paul seems to have been born in the superior rank of life." (Pp. 30, 31, 33.)

Thus not many wise or rich men of the earth, in the past as well as the present age, have obeyed the call of the gospel.

"He (Paul) flew as with the wings of a seraph over the habitable globe; and the vastness of his success corresponded with the rapidity of his movements and the indefatigable labors of his ministry. From Damascus to Arabia, Judea, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and round about Illyricum, he had fully preached the gospel of Christ. Returning with the same unwearied diligence to visit all the Churches his ministry had planted, he received a divine intimation that he must shortly visit Italy also. And he extended his views into Spain. An eye

(geographical) cast over this immense tract of country will fill us with astonishment, how one man's labor could fill so extensive a sphere, and demonstrates how much may be done when the Spirit of Jesus animates and the benedictions of the Holy Ghost accompany the Word with power and much assurance. There is one particular I may not forget and which we Gentiles are bound to acknowledge with peculiar thankfulness, that he is our apostle. A ministry of more than thirty years was terminated, it is probable, by martyrdom." (Pp. 36, 37.)

"I regard Paul as the first of human beings, to whom more are indebted for salvation, under the great Head of the Church, than to any other creature. If his labors and preaching, as recorded, be taken into the account, if we consider his Epistles to the several Churches—the inestimably blessed effects of which must be felt and acknowledged in all Churches to the end of time." (P. 38.)

"It seems to have been a matter decided by the Church respecting the two *itinerant* apostles that Paul should go to the Gentiles and Peter to the circumcision. I suppose there was great wisdom herein displayed." (P. 40.)

"A multitude of worthies have their names recorded in the Acts of the Apostles whose itinerant labors, with those of Paul, had the most powerful tendency to spread the Christian faith." (P. 47.)

"A Church without evidence of the influence and experience of the operation of the Holy Ghost hath but a name to live and is dead, and whatever may be its forms, or however sound its confession of faith, it hath no more title to be reckoned a Christian Church than a statue or corpse to be esteemed a living man. The form in which the Church appeared in the best, the primitive age, under the immediate inspection of the apostles and disciples of the Lord, deserves our consideration. And here, drawing around me the sacred circle, I wish to confine myself to the words of the Holy Ghost without any regard to the traditions of men. And I shall begin at Jerusalem. This was the fruitful womb from whence issued the noble army of martyrs, confessors, and evangelists, who, holding up the word of light, diffused the blessings of the glory of God the Saviour to the ends of the earth. These were the fruits of our Lord's ministry during his labors in Judea and the adjacent countries. They consisted of twelve men, first chosen, called apostles, or *persons sent*. To these were added seventy others, who were sent out to preach and teach. They were all endowed with miraculous powers; and on their return from their itinerancy through the nation, reported with triumph the wonders they had wrought. About five hundred brethren were summoned to behold our Lord's ascension into heaven." (P. 52.)

"Three thousand believed on the first day (Pentecost), and myriads followed them. The immensity of this number affords us two views of their Church order: First, as necessarily distributed into various congregations, no one place being capable of containing such myriads or any one bishop or elder

sufficient to administer the ordinances among them. We accordingly find them breaking bread from house to house (Acts ii, 46), preaching and teaching in every house (Acts v, 42), which seems to describe the Church at Jerusalem. Second, these several *house Churches* formed one united Church body under the presidency of James, and not Peter. (Acts xv, 13.) He was at the head of the first council. To him Paul addressed himself (Acts xxi, 18) when all the elders or presbyters being assembled by him he reported to them the happy success of his ministry among the Gentiles. The necessity of a president where so great a number of elders resided and so many congregations were formed seems as natural for the preservation of order as it appears actually the case in this mother of all the Churches." (Pp. 54, 55.)

"The care of the poor widows led to the institution of the order of deacons. This originated in a complaint of real or supposed partiality in the distribution of the alms of the faithful to the native Jewish widows, in preference to the Hellenists. (Acts vi, 1.) The apostles themselves being too much engaged to attend to these temporal concerns, recommended it to the Church to elect seven persons for the discharge of this office. These were accordingly chosen by general suffrage, not for each separate congregation, but for the whole body, and were set apart by the apostles after solemn prayer and imposition of hands, to this service. Though the care of the widows was immediately intrusted to them, it prevented them not from being employed in other labors of love. Philip was an evangelist and Stephen a like zealous advocate of Christ and his cause. In consequence of

his boldness in the synagogue of the Libertines, the blood of this first martyr was shed by the fury of his enemies, and a great and general persecution following, all the principal disciples were dispersed except the apostles who remained at Jerusalem. (Acts viii, 1.) These, flying in different directions, everywhere preached the gospel and with great success through Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and some as far as Antioch, Damascus, Phenice, and Cypress. They were village preachers, highway preachers, and were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Paul (Acts xxiv, 23), in revisiting the Churches which had been planted principally by himself, edifies, comforts, and establishes them by ordaining elders in every Church with prayers and fasting." (P. 56.)

"Returning through Pisidia and Attalia, they arrived happily at Antioch, communicating the glad tidings of their success and of the Gentile Churches which they had planted. I can only observe here that I find in all these widely dispersed and numerous congregations no mention made of any appointment but that of presbyters, all cemented in one bond of union under the supervisal of the great *itinerant evangelists*." (P. 62.)

And so it should have continued, and would have continued, if there had been a succession of a faithful seed of holy men to follow apostolic order, but as early as the second century they must have their *local* bishops or local apostles.

"Though James was not superior to Peter or the other apostles at Jerusalem [he may mean he was not superior as to



age, gifts, or standing; but certainly he was superior, inasmuch as he had never so publicly denied his Lord], he had been evidently appointed to fill the place of president, or *primus inter pares*. Yet neither he nor any of his apostolic associates assumed to themselves authority to decide but by the suffrage of the whole body of the Church under immediate divine direction." (P. 63.)

Our Annual, or more particularly our General Conference resembles this grand council at Jerusalem, where James presided and all the other apostles, elders, and brethren solemnly discussed the cause or causes before them, and James pronounced sentence according to the unanimous suffrage of the assembly, and the definitive decree was in favor of Gentile liberty.

Paul and Barnabas separated for a while (Acts xv, 39); but probably God overruled this for good, and perhaps the Churches were more profited by their distinct labors than if they had traveled in company.

Dr. Haweis continues: "It is evident that Timothy was still but a youth (ch. iv, 14), and whatever office he sustained or with whatever gifts he was endued he received them by the laying on of Paul's hands and of the presbytery. (1 Tim. iv, 14.) Did presbyters then ordain bishops, or were the terms synonymous?" Query, Had there not been two distinct acts in his ordination? Compare 1 Timothy iv, 14, and 2 Timothy i, 6: "The laying on the hands of the presbytery, stir up the gift of God, which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." That

Timothy was left at Ephesus with *superintending* authority, where there were many bishops, is evident. (1 Tim. i, 3.) He was enjoined to encourage and honor those who presided over the congregations well, and especially such as were more actively laborious in preaching and catechising. (V. 18.) Respecting hands, he was to lay hands suddenly on no man; and, without partiality or personal respect, he was to admit none into the ministry but after proper examination and conviction of their call and qualifications. He was also cautiously to receive and weigh all accusations against elders who should give offense and pronounce the sentence due to their unfaithfulness, acts strongly marking superior jurisdiction, and I hence infer that particular Churches neither ordained nor censured their own ministers, although they elected and recommended; and, if faulty, accused them by two or three witnesses before the great itinerant evangelists." (P. 76.)

Mark well the similarity of apostolic order and government and the Methodist Episcopal form of things!

In the Second Epistle to Timothy, Paul appears to have "returned again to the house of his prison at Rome, and ready to be offered up on the altar of martyrdom. He had detached his faithful itinerant helpers to a variety of services [although a prisoner, yet clothed with the authority of Christ, he appointed men of God their work], Cresens, to Galatia; Titus, to Dalmatia; while Timothy himself had been left in Asia, from whence he was shortly to proceed to Rome with Mark, who had once departed from the work, but had now returned

to the labors and dangers of itinerancy. The principal subject of the Epistle is the dying charge of the great apostle to his beloved son respecting his own teaching and conduct and worthy the attentive consideration of every bishop or presbyter upon earth." (See p. 77.)

Paul's two favored sons, Timothy and Titus, were his chief companions, and greatly employed in the regulation of the congregations which had been raised by his labors. The postscript of his first Epistle calls Timothy the first bishop of the Church of the Ephesians; but there is no such title given him by Paul or any intimation of his being at Ephesus but as one of the great *itinerant evangelists*, the companion of Paul and deputed by him to assist in bringing the congregations into a regular order of worship and discipline.

"It nowhere appears that Titus was more the Bishop of Crete than of Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv, 10) or of Nicopolis (Titus iii, 2) or had any fixed residence or diocese, he being one of the great itinerant evangelists who went about preaching everywhere in season, out of season. And therefore as soon as he had settled the Cretan Church in the most edifying manner, he was ordered to come and winter with Paul at Nicopolis, and Artemas or Tychicus should be dispatched to fill his place in the Cretan congregations.

"A general superiority in all the Churches which they visited appears to have been exercised by these great evangelists, though none appears stationary in any one place. They ordained, censured, regulated, were the cementing bond

of union to the different Churches [so should the Methodist bishops be], maintaining a unity of order and procedure through the whole. They all bore the name of apostles (2 Cor. viii, 23), were everywhere received with reverence and obeyed with filial affection. ['Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.'] They assumed no domain over their faith, but were helpers of the joy of the faithful wherever they went. The gifts, abilities, and zeal which they displayed, with every divine temper which adorns the Christian ministry, could not but give them weight and procure them influence by whatever name they might be distinguished, and in every Christian Church, in the very nature of things, such men must possess superiority, whatever be its constitution. Even where the most absolute parity is established, to these their fellows naturally give place. They are the presidents in all associations; heard with respect, commanding obedience; capable of swaying the decisions of their brethren; consulted in all difficult cases, and placed foremost in the hour of danger. To them is intrusted the care of eleemosynary distributions for the benefit of the body to which they belong, and in private and public all concede to them the seal of honor." (P. 78.)

If the elders that rule well are worthy of double honor, then the bishops that rule well must be worthy of triple honor, especially when they do so large a part of ruling, preaching and presiding in Conferences.

"In the primitive Church [in speaking or writing it was common to consolidate the first churches into one, although they consisted of many societies, so we say the Methodist Episcopal Church], this superiority, was vested in the apostles and their companions, the great itinerant evangelists, Barnabas, Silas, Artemas, Tychicus, Titus, Timothy, and many others, *chief men among the brethren.*" (P. 79.)

Notwithstanding all these were great men in the Church of God, yet, as we have seen, none of them were writers. The Epistle to Titus bears some resemblance to that to Timothy. Men placed in similar situations were called to act under the same principles and to employ the same means. If we are willing, here we may see the propriety of our superintendency, presiding elders, as in the second part of the primitive Church, which order was lost in the first and not found again until the seventeenth century, partially in Europe but more perfectly in America in the organization and establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"I conclude, as soon as a little society was formed of Christians, a room was opened for their assembling and the most apt to teach appointed to minister to them in holy things [perhaps not unlike a class leader and local preacher in one]. He was a man of gravity, generally of the more aged, approved by his fellows and willing to devote himself to their service. His appointment was signified by prayer and imposition of hands by the Apostle Paul or some of the itinerant evangelists and the presbytery, and without this I meet no ordination. Every Church that is, every society

exercised discipline over its own members, to admit, admonish, or expel. Before these itinerating evangelists all accusations against offending presbyters were brought. [These evangelists seem not to have been stationary, but to have gone about everywhere, chiefly under the direction of the apostle Paul.]

"These evangelists were usually supported by the Churches or societies but often, like Paul, maintained themselves by their own labors. During the first ages, the ministry was not appropriated to gentlemen or scholars. No man was bred to it as a profession or went into it for a maintenance. They were pastors of a different stamp. The stationary presbyters, or bishops, during the lives of the apostle and his associate evangelists, were under their superintendency. But it will appear very early in the second century, when the first race of great itinerants departed [or were slain for the testimony of Jesus], that one among the ministers in every place began to have the name of bishop (*kat' exochen*) on account of preëminency, with presbyters, his coadjutors, acting with him as one body." (Pp. 86, 87.)

This leads me to conclude that there were no local bishops until the second century; that the apostles, in service, were bishops, and that those who were ordained in the second century mistook their calling when they became local and should have followed those bright examples in the apostolic age. I am not under the difficulties that some are respecting the same men who were ordained elders being called sometimes bishops, I am not sure that what was written to

Timothy and Titus, that *they themselves must be blameless as bishops, or overseers*, excluded them from being evangelists. As to those at Ephesus who were elders in office, they were in charge and duty overseers. In some sense among us every leader of a class, every local preacher, traveling preacher, and every officer in the Church may be called an overseer. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons, seem to have been the established form in all the Asiatic Churches in the second century.

"Hitherto not a man eminent for science or letters had appeared in the Church. All those whose works have come down to us bear a stamp of simplicity divested of human attainments. Yet by these the gospel had been supported in its purity, afforded a noble army of martyrs, and been spread to the ends of the earth, from the Pillars of Hercules to the Parthians, from the savage nations of the North to the Indies and Abyssinia." (P. 146.)

"Considering the time and regarding the persons called to be saints, a learned ministry cannot be supposed in the primitive Church. The presbyters have been, in general, men simple and unlettered, though full of faith and the Holy Ghost, the qualifications which then determined the suffrage of the several flocks. And after all the fine things so elegantly written (by the heathen philosophers) about virtue and morals, their own conduct afforded a pregnant example of the impotence of the doctrines which they taught, whilst the Christian bishops not only lived what they professed to teach, but were every day ready to go to prison and to death for the

name of the Lord Jesus." (P. 126.) No man counting his life dear who stood for Jesus, "bold to seal the truth with blood."

"A learned and ingenuous age prides itself on its superiority in defense of revealed religion and apologizes for the Bible, but what hath (this mode) of arguing proved? The plain story of a plain unlettered man telling of the sufferings of Christ and the glory which hath followed with their consequences hath done more in the way of conversion to real and vital Christianity than all these great polemics put together. [The learned may smile in Saul's armor, but give me the sling and the stone, and the gigantic Goliath falls.] I see the smile on the wise academician and the contemptuous infidel, but I am not ashamed of that gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, nor of the sound though unlearned teacher who, having diligently read his Bible and then taught of God himself, is blessed with their conversation." (P. 148.)

O my son, by *diligence, discipline, and faithfulness*, God hath made us a blessing to hundreds and thousands of those who have died within these last thirty years! Thus our work and reward have gone before us and more work and reward are given to us daily. Let the Annual Conferences, the quarterly meeting Conferences, let the presiding elders, deacons, and preachers, all feel their dignity, do their duty, and especially guard against every danger and innovation. Alas for us, if ever our excellent constitution and order of things be changed or corrupted! (It is said that a good old bishop prayed that he might be taken away if Arius were



restored, but the heretic himself was taken away.) I believe that those who would divide the body of Christ will be "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel." Thirty years' labor and experience have taught us something.

Be diligent to see and know how the different charitable contributions are disposed of. Sign no journals of an Annual Conference till everything is recorded, everything appears correctly and fairly. Should there be at any time failures in any department such as you cannot cure or restore, *appeal to the General Conference*. Be rigidly strict in all things. Examine well those who come as candidates for the ministry. It is ours to plead, protest, and oppose designing men from getting into the ministry. It is the peculiar excellence of our Church and the superintendents' glory and stronghold that the character of every minister among us must undergo a strict examination once a year. Put men into office in whom you can confide. If they betray your trust and confidence, let them do it but once. Of all wickedness, spiritual wickedness is the greatest; and of all deceptions, religious deception is the worst. Beware of men who have a constitutional cast to deception. Let every office, grade, and station among us know his place, keep his place, and do his duty; then you need not fear for the ark of God. The Lord Jesus will take care of and support his own cause.

If we have not men of great talents, we have men of good hearts. Endeavor to obtain and preserve a noble independence of soul, the willing servant of all, but the slave of none. Put full confidence in men who merit your confidence. Never be

afraid to trust young men; they are able, and you will find enough willing to endure the toils and go through the greatest labors; neither are they so likely to fail as old men are.

"The simplicity of gospel truth ill accords with a *farrago* of rites and ceremonies. Nothing could be more unadorned than the primitive worship. A plain man, chosen from among his fellows, in his common garb, stood up to speak, or sat down to read the Scriptures, to as many as chose to assemble in the house appointed. A back room, and that probably a mean one, or a garret, to be out of the way of observation, was their temple. Hymns sung to Christ, as their God, appeared to the heathens a prominent and striking feature of the Christian worship. The Holy Scriptures were read in portions; and the presbyter, or bishop, or two or three of the congregation who were endued with talents, spoke a word of exhortation to the people agreeably to the scripture which had been read. Prayer from the heart, without a prompter, followed, to which the people replied with a loud and audible *amen*. He that led the worship prayed from his heart, and out of its abundance. I have no doubt the Lord's Prayer always made a part of their public services. The Supper of the Lord closed the devotions of his day. I think it was as constant as the return of that day, and every member of the Churches as constantly participant. A friendly feast, or meal, called *agape*, from the love and union with which they kept it, served at one as an opportunity of ministering an act of charity to the poor, where all distinctions of rich and poor were laid aside and no man took before others his own supper, but all with humble equality

acknowledged themselves members of the living head, Christ, and of one another." (P. 150.)

"Then, also, I apprehend every man produced, according to his ability, weekly what he had laid by for charitable purposes, which formed a fund of obligations under the control of the Church, through the ministration of the bishop, presbyter, and deacon, for all the various purposes of general good such as purchasing the elements for the Lord's Supper, the provisions for the table of the *agape*, for the necessaries for the poor, the support of evangelists, the relief of the persecuted, and for the welfare of such Churches and persons whose indigence called for the help of their richer brethren. As yet I can perceive no part of this fund appropriated to pay the salaries of any minister of the sanctuary, unless he came under the title of an itinerant evangelist, and, being incapable of providing his own maintenance and wholly occupied in the gospel work, was justly entitled, as preaching the gospel, to live by the gospel. I very much doubt if the bishop or presbyter and deacons received anything for their labors of love. I am persuaded they thought their work their best wages.

"Amid the flames of persecution kindled without and the corruptions and errors broached within the Church continued to raise her scarred head, encircled with glory, and to enlarge her borders farther and wider. After the departure of the great itinerant evangelists to their rest in glory and on the increasing extent of the Christian Church in every place the desirableness of a *stationary president* seems to have introduced a change in the government of several evangelical

cities and churches. The very learned Chancellor King<sup>[42]</sup> endeavors to prove that in the largest cities there was but one Church and one bishop. I have already given my reasons for differing from him and for supposing the necessity of many house congregations where the body of Christian professors was so great, and as they sought to avoid observation and to attract as little as possible the attention of the rulers, they would not, assuredly, in such immense multitudes, have assembled in one place. That about the beginning of the second century a bishop appears at the head of a presbytery, can hardly be doubted, and the name became appropriate to one which before all the presbyters had equally borne. Being now no longer under the superintending care of the great apostolic evangelists, who went about everywhere to establish, to preserve the unity of the Church, and be the cementing bond of the whole body, the several presbyters and Churches seem to have chosen one of their own body to supply the precedence these had before exercised. Whether the largest cities, as King argues, formed only one congregation with many presbyters, or rather, as I think, consisted of many congregations with presbyters in each of them, the whole seems now to have formed one body under a superintendent (or *episcopus*, overseer) chosen by themselves. Every Church exercised discipline over its own members, in which the whole assemblage of the faithful gave their suffrage. Their reverence for their pastors was great; but clerical dominion had, as yet, found no place." (P. 126.)

We have a few more thoughts to add. It is my confirmed opinion that the apostles acted both as bishops and traveling

superintendents in planting and watering, ruling and ordering the whole connection; and that they did not ordain any local bishops, but that they ordained local deacons and elders. I feel satisfied we should do the same. I found my opinion on Acts xiv, 23: *"And when they had ordained them elders in every Church, and had fasted and prayed with them, they commended them to the Lord."* "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou should set in order things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee." (Titus i, 5.) That is, do what Paul has left undone. Mark! it was in the *second* visit that Paul and Barnabas established order; and why was Timothy or Titus sent if elders could ordain elders? And why had the apostles to go or send, if it was not held as the divine right of the apostles to ordain? I shall not unchristian any Church or Churches that have the truth of the gospel and the power of God among them, as I have already said.

The Presbyterian Churches, at the first, should have established a moderate episcopacy and apostolic form from whence they came, one from the high steeples of the Church of Rome and the other from the high steeples of the Church of England. An elective, easy government, and a traveling and local ministry, with a judicious discipline, would have been better than steeples, bells, schools, colleges, and universities to make men ministers whom the Lord never called. The ninth century appears to have been the time of midnight darkness. The light of the Reformation began to dawn in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The reformers were great men; but such was the state of affairs that no doubt there was yet much

darkness mingled with the light; hence, it might be said: "All heads, and no heads." And I should be more afraid of a many-headed monster than of a single-headed one.

You know that for four years past I have, with pleasure, resigned to you the presidency of the nine Annual Conferences. This has removed a great burden of care from me and given me much ease. You have my letters addressed to you on the subject. It may be objected by some that our form of Church government partakes too much of the government of the nation. It does not partake of its nature; but there are some similitudes of form, but not of nature. The one is civil, the other spiritual and entirely disunited. Our government being spiritual, one election to office is sufficient during life, unless in cases of debility, a voluntary resignation of the office, corruption in principle, or immorality in practice.

The great diversity of gifts, both among our traveling and local ministry, is happily diffused abroad by our mode of circulation, to the benefit of hundreds and thousands. Many of our local ministers are men of approved abilities, with grace and gifts worthy to fill any pulpit. Many of them travel hundreds of miles in the year, are gladly received, and readily employed to preach by their traveling brethren, and feel themselves at perfect ease and completely at home on the different circuits and at camp meetings where they visit, having no fear they will be considered as intruders.

Further, it may be asked, Is it proper to have no learned men among us? Answer: Men who are well read I call learned men; and we have men of learning among us, both traveling and local. Where are our young men who are bred to the law? and some are doctors; and many others who are very studious and making great progress in Latin and Greek; and many have competent knowledge of the English language. Particularly, see in the British connection such men as Drs. Coke and Clarke; a Benson, Creighton, and others. And in many instances men who profess the least know the most.

A venerable German divine once wrote in Latin to the English doctors; but he had to complain that they answered him in English. But you may say, Would we not derive great advantages from reading the Scripture in their original tongues and judging of the correctness of the translations? Undoubtedly; but these advantages are in the margins of the best editions of the Bible. As to our translation, it is, perhaps, one of the best and most correct upon earth. To attain to a proper knowledge of the etymology of all the words used, even in the Septuagint, I know not how many languages you must know besides the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. If you suggest anything more, I will maturely consider it.

My dear Bishop, it is the traveling apostolic order<sup>[43]</sup> and ministry that is found in our very constitution. No man among us can locate without order, or forfeit his official standing. No preacher is stationary more than two years; no presiding elder more than four years; and the constitution will remove them; and all are movable at the pleasure of the superintendent

whenever he may find it necessary for the good of the cause. It is the privilege of every traveling minister with us to say: "I am not obliged to serve you another year; I will speak to the superintendent who will not impose on you a second year." We must conclude that all the ancient, imperial, Latin, and Greek Churches were episcopal from their foundation to this very day, though in a crooked, muddy succession; perhaps all corrupted in ordinances, and many of them in doctrines; and, in too many instances, the vilest of men have filled the most sacred offices in the Church. The Reformed English, Scotch, Danish, Swede, Episcopal Churches, have all corrupted their ways before the Lord. Let Presbyterians say and write what they may, as if episcopacy never existed, it must be granted that in the first, second, and third centuries many of the bishops were holy men, who traveled and labored in the ministry very extensively, not unlike their grand pattern, St. Paul, and the other holy apostolical men, of which we have good historical evidence, which is all the evidence that can now be given. To the people of our day we give ocular demonstration, and the generations to come may read our Church records and Conference journals, where they shall see what vast tracts of country we traveled over in visiting the nine Conferences annually. As to the doctrines of the Reformation, we have said, in a second reformation they were the real gospel. They have been well introduced and complete



forms of Church government established. Presbyterians and Independents were formed too about the sixteenth century.

Finally, farewell in the Lord!

Yours,

Francis Asbury

*Robert Paine, Life and Times of William McKendree,  
185-201*

*Joseph Frye was evidently one of the younger preachers. He must have had responsibilities for the camp meeting near Winchester. Asbury calls upon him for greater devotion and consecration, suggesting that his ministry may require great sacrifices. Asbury reports in the Journal on this date that he had had encouraging reports from the encampment near Winchester.*

MIDDLETOWN, MARYLAND

*August 21, 1813*

[*To Joseph Frye*]<sup>[44]</sup>

My very dear Joseph:

Great grace attend thee. We are kept alive with death so near. I doubt if you are like St. Paul, that was it possible, or proper could wish himself accursed or insipid. Yea after they had hunted him like a deer, and beaten almost to death like a dog and still his Lord had to forbid him and tell him to depart and then Paul humbly disputed the cause with his Lord! Oh the Jews! What continual sorrow, what inexpressible grief! Oh Winchester help them! You will be called for greater services and suffering in the ministry, prepare, be faithful,

keep thyself pure, make great sacrifices for God! I am never afraid to trust young men. The same measure that has been meted to me, I meet back. Great confidence was put in me, a boy!

Young men are strong in body, and mind, not skilled in craft, not the same temptation to ease and indulgence as aged. I have never repented of the confidence I have put in you and thousands. Increase this year not ascertained. No returns from Upper and Lower Canadas. Some circuits dismantled and the people scattered, upon the lines. Great peace in conferences, serious afflictions and deaths among preachers and people. I have a few appointments for the west, the brethren will wish to see me. Editors left out the Mississippi conferences thinking we shall not go, but the work suffers and dies. We are growing old every year perhaps serious times, more and more serious coming.

I am

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*We have noted some of the people who worked on Asbury's Journal, such as John Dickins, Thomas Haskins, and Hollingsworth. This letter shows that Henry Wilkins, to whom reference has been made before, Joseph Lanston, and Mrs. Willis also had a part in editing it. Again Asbury shows his concern for correcting it. He was most anxious that it should be not only correct history but letter perfect in form.*

BANKS MONONGAHELA, PA.  
August 29, 1813

[To Mrs. Ann Willis]<sup>[45]</sup>

My dear Sister, Daughter:

Where shall we begin? Where shall we conclude the song of goodness or of grace. Oh, eternity will it be too short, to utter all his praise, that hath bought us, washed us, with his own blood! Joseph<sup>[46]</sup> will be a journal of our passage over the Alps of Columbia.<sup>[47]</sup> Your *fathers* father in — Like Laban, I say these are mine. The adopted spiritual father of dear Henry the first,<sup>[48]</sup> your once beloved husband, Joseph Lanston, and myself have concluded he shall devote his time to finish the transcription of my journal. I wish a number or two at a time may be sent to Doctor Wilkins<sup>[49]</sup> to correct and abridge, because only the most interesting parts will be preserved. You will have to board Joseph among you, and ask his *mother*<sup>[50]</sup> keep him to his work, you may read or cause to be read any parts you please.

Now let me tell you that I feel for your health, I feel for your soul! that you might do more good. As to your temporal economy I leave that, you have helps, counsellors, friends. I am persuaded that wealthy widows are the most exposed to temptation, if not of one kind, yet of another, its rich men have many snares set for their feet. Pray if feeble, once a day in your family, let who may be in your house, I mean preachers. You ought to have band meeting, the difference of married women or widows is not great, nor pious maids. You should have a woman's prayer meeting to keep your souls in weekly exercises! *I fear! awfully*, and almost presume that we

shall hear on our once happy Columbian plains the blood of thousands<sup>[51]</sup> is shed. (If as is expected) a formidable dissent be made! Oh Sisters! Oh mothers! wives! widows! What may they feel, in future days. You have sons! I wrestle and pray for, and keep a watchful, jealous, pitying, praying eye over them, the cup of affliction goeth around the old and new world, we cannot tell who will sip, or drink the drugs of this bitter cup of trembling. I am greatly thankful to you for past favors. I am yours,

F. Asbury

P.S. Present me to all the brethren and sisters you speak of me to. My sacrifice was not small in coming to the Pipe Creek encampment. I hope not in vain and God be glorified in many souls.

F. Ay.  
*Drew University Library*



## ENDNOTES

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- [1] Place supplied from *Journal*, 1852 ed. Asbury speaks of Clark's and Judge Van Meeter. The Widow Henthorn's was one mile from Union Town Camp Meeting.
- [2] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District.
- [3] Pastor on Canestio Circuit in Genesee Conference in 1811.
- [4] Nicholas Snethen. Reference not clear. The language seems to be confused. Something took place in the conference which is not clarified in the letter.
- [5] This camp meeting was near the Pennsylvania-Maryland line in Pennsylvania. Jacob Young, *Autobiography of a Pioneer*, p. 291, says: "Before I went to the above conference I was requested to meet Bishop Asbury near Uniontown, Pennsylvania, at a Mrs. Henthorn's. [See Asbury's *Journal*, 1852 ed., September 3, 1812.] Here I found a campmeeting in successful operation under the pious labours of Jacob Gruber, John Meek and Joshua Monroe. . . ." Young gives four full pages of description of this camp meeting, of Asbury's sermon to the soldiers, and so on. There seems no doubt that this was in Pennsylvania. (Lawrence Sherwood.)
- [6] Mrs. Ann Willis lived at Pipe Creek, Maryland.
- [7] Evidently her son.
- [8] See *Journal* for place.
- [9] Presiding elder on the Muskingum District of the Western Conference.
- [10] Merchant of Baltimore, a brother of the English preacher William Myles.

- [11] Benson based his life of the great Methodist saint on John Wesley's biography.
- [12] Stith Mead was pastor in 1813 on the Amelia Circuit, Virginia Conference. He had been at Williamsburg in 1812.
- [13] This gives some idea of the difficulties of travel in those days.
- [14] War of 1812.
- [15] Asbury had been characterized as the Baltimore Bull by William Guirey in his magazine. A cartoon of a bull with horns represented Asbury.
- [16] Reference is probably to James Smith who was called "Baltimore" Smith. He also attacked Asbury.
- [17] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District.
- [18] Reference to the attacks on the episcopacy.
- [19] Evidently Adam Clarke, the commentarian of Methodism.
- [20] Asbury's *Journal* for March 7, 1813, states: "We have news from the English Conference. It has given me an invitation to my native land, engaging to pay the expenses of the visit." Actually (as this letter shows) the invitation came partly as a result of hints dropped in Asbury's own letters. The 1812 conference, which apparently offered to pay his expenses, had met in Leeds the previous July, so that there had been some considerable delay either in transmitting the invitation or in Asbury's receiving it. The latter possibility is supported by Asbury's phrase about its "coming to light." However, the invitation may have come from a committee, perhaps the Committee of Privileges. In any case, there is no record of it in the printed *Minutes* of the English Conference. It is the more remarkable for being

issued during a year when both general funds and missionary funds were sadly in debt, and the conference had demanded a careful scrutiny of all connexional expenses. (Frank Baker.)

[21] "Word" is struck through by Asbury.

[22] Asbury had in mind evangelism in Australia. (Frank Baker.)

[23] Thomas Roberts. (See letter, May 27, 1808.)

[24] Joseph Benson was looked upon as the agent of American affairs in London. He published the letter in *The Methodist Magazine* in 1813, p. 720. It was odd that Asbury did not send the letters to Coke.

[25] See Asbury's letter of January 15, 1816: "When I was a youth, between fifteen and sixteen years of age, you were a man." Actually Asbury was two-and-a-half years older than his "venerable brother," for Benson was born on January 25, 1748. Asbury's memory is at fault, for he himself was twenty when John Wesley appointed this grave-looking youth of eighteen to be classical master at Kingswood School. (Frank Baker.)

[26] Another instance of Asbury's desire to have his letters edited and corrected.

[27] Asbury refers to himself.

[28] It is obvious that Asbury was far from abandoning his projected visit to England. An interesting illustration of this comes in a letter from his correspondent Zachariah Myles of Baltimore to his brother William Myles, the English preacher:



"June 18, 1813

My dear Brother,

We had our annual Conference in March last. Sixty preachers, and our two good bishops, were present. I lent Bishop Asbury, the *Methodist Magazines* for 1811, and gave him extracts from your letters. He is still of the mind to visit England, if peace should take place, wishing much to see the Parent Connexion. He travelled four years in England before he came to America. He feels very grateful to the British Conference for their generous offers to him. He thinks of taking two preachers with him, and of staying about three months in England. . . . Bishop Asbury has a great desire to have Mr. Benson's Commentary on the Bible printed for our Connexion: He thinks it calculated to be very useful. . . ."

*Transcribed by Frank Baker*

[29] See references to the will in *Journal*, June 6, 1813.

[30] McKendree was the first native American bishop. He was born in King William County, Virginia.

[31] This letter is a copy of the original which Jonathan Lyons made on February 14, 1841, at New York. A check of the *Journal* indicates that Asbury was at Rensselaerville, New York, on July 3, 1813. Either the date and place are incorrect or the place changed names.

[32] Pastor, Jamaica, New York. (See *Minutes*, 1813.)

[33] Freeborn Garrettson, presiding elder on the New York District.

[34] Francis Ward was pastor on the Suffolk Charge, New York District.

[35] See *Journal*, 1852 ed., August 4, 1813.

[36] George Washington. "The unanimous vote of the electors made him the first President of the United States; their unanimous vote elected him for the second time in 1792-1793; and even after he had positively refused to serve for a third term, two electors voted for him in 1796-1797." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "George Washington," 347.)

[37] Asbury's testimony in reference to the German fathers, and especially Otterbein given in 1812, while Otterbein was yet living, was as follows: "Pre-eminent among these is William Otterbein, who assisted in the ordination which set apart your speaker to the superintendency of the Methodist Episcopal Church. William Otterbein was regularly ordained to the ministry in the German Presbyterian Church. He is one of the best scholars and greatest divines in America. Why, then, is he not where he began? He was irregular. Alas, for us! the zealous are necessarily so to those whose cry is 'Put me into the priest's office, that I may eat a morsel of bread.' Osterwald has observed, 'Hell is paved with the skulls of unfaithful ministers.' Such was not Boehm, such is not Otterbein; and now his sun of life is setting in brightness. Behold the saint of God leaning upon his staff, waiting for the chariots of Israel!" (Drury, *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, 181-82. Otterbein Press. By permission.) (Elmer T. Clark.)

[38] He had charge of Lady Huntingdon's College. (See *Letters of Wesley*, II, 206.)

[39] Page references are to Haweis' *History of the Church of Christ*, Vol. I.

[40] Jesse Lee was chaplain of the House of Representatives in Washington at this time.

[41] An interesting observation for Asbury to make since he studied so hard to be learned.

[42] Peter King (1669-1734), lord chancellor of England.

[43] It is interesting to note that less than two years after this address was read at the General Conference of 1816, two of the oldest and most loyal retired preachers, William Watters and Edward Dromgoole, were discussing the value of the episcopal form of government. The following postscript is taken from Watters' letter to Dromgoole, dated Fairfax, Virginia, February 7, 1818, and preserved in the Dromgoole collection in the University of North Carolina Library.

"P.S. Query. If Bishops and Presbyters are of the same order as the venerable Wesley asserts in his circular letter and the new testament knows nothing but one order of ministers (excepting the apostles) would it not be safer if we had but one order amongst us—that the general conference might be at liberty to appoint once in four years one or more to superintend the whole work without any suspect to their being ordained for that purpose? Is not the English mode of directing their districts by a chairman better than ours by presiding elders? If Mckendree was gone to his rest could the late elected men fill their places? These are not questions I have agitated but which I wish [there] in your ears, they arise in my mind—I look forward. W. Watters."

- [44] Joseph Frye was pastor on the Berkeley Circuit, West Virginia, Baltimore Conference. The letter was directed to Camp Meeting, near Winchester, Virginia.
- [45] According to the address on this letter Mrs. Willis lived at Linganore, Pipe Creek, Frederick County, Maryland. (See former letter, September 7, 1812; also reference to Henry Willis in *Journal*, Wednesday, August 11, 1813.) Mrs. Ann Willis was the widow of Henry Willis, the preacher.
- [46] Joseph Lanston was ordained an elder in the Baltimore Conference in 1813. He is listed as the junior preacher on the Allegheny Charge in the Carlisle District. However, it is clear here that he was an older man, since he was the spiritual father of Henry Willis, the husband of Mrs. Willis.
- [47] Reference is to Allegheny Mountains.
- [48] One of Mrs. Willis' six children was evidently named Henry for his father.
- [49] See reference to Wilkins, June 22, 1799, and note to Wesley's *Primitive Physic* in next letter.
- [50] It is not clear how a man evidently as old as Joseph Lanston should have required a mother's oversight.
- [51] Reference to war of 1812, which had not ended.

**THE LAST TWO YEARS, 1814 - 16**

*February 9, 1814 - March 4, 1816*

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE LAST TWO YEARS, 1814 - 16

February 9, 1814 - March 4, 1816

*The most interesting thing in this letter is Asbury's reference to Coke. Coke's wife had died, and he was free to travel again. Like Asbury, he had a roving disposition. He was to die on the Indian Ocean and be buried in its waters as he sailed on his missionary journey.*

NORTH CAROLINA<sup>[1]</sup>

February 9, 1814

[To Zachary Myles]<sup>[2]</sup>

My dearly beloved in the Lord:

May great grace support us in these days of judgments! Such has been my prayer. The weather, my affliction (having had six or seven serious fits of the breast-pleurisy) have prevented me from making much use of books or pens, and I have not preached much. I have had to groan, being burdened, not that I would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Indeed I have felt more like a man of eighty than one in his sixty-ninth year.

Oh Asia! Oh Africa! Oh that the seed of Abraham by his Isaac might live before Jehovah! Of the work of God in America, I cannot say but saints and citizens are humbled; but perhaps not enough. When and where the people can hear the word, they give attention to it. I cannot speak of great

numbers coming into fellowship. If we number two hundred and fifteen thousand this year, we shall do well. I begin to hope, as our troubles become more serious, they will be more sanctified. I hope Dr. Coke will devote the last of his days nobly, not in making many books, but in his apostolic mission in those two vast quarters of the globe, Asia and Africa. My prayers and good wishes shall follow him and his missionaries.

I have nearly finished my mission, having travelled annually a circuit of 3000 miles, for forty-two years and four months; and if young again, I would cheerfully go upon another. We are well kept, if the Lord keepeth us. Your letters are always welcome to me and my select friends. At any time or place, your presence and letters will be invited and accepted by me.

I am, yours,

Francis Asbury  
The Methodist Magazine, XXXVII (1814), 639

Preface to Wesley's *Primitive Physic*  
Republished by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury

*In the days when there were few doctors, Wesley thought it necessary to do some practicing medicine himself. He published a book, Primitive Physic. On the frontiers of America there were even fewer doctors than in the British Isles. Asbury at times, like Wesley, thought it was his duty to prescribe for the sick. Sometimes his prescriptions were very*

*crude as, for instance, a concoction of sugar and rusty nails. However, this book was edited by Henry Wilkins, who seems to have been an eminent doctor.*

— 1814<sup>[3]</sup>

To the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church

Friends and Brethren:

The grand interest of your souls will ever lie near our hearts; but we cannot be unmindful of your bodies. In several parts of this extensive country, the climate, and in others the food, is unwholesome; and frequently, the physicians are few, some of them unskilful, and all of them beyond the reach of your temporal abilities. A few small publications excepted, little has been done by physical books, in order to remove these inconveniences; and even those have been written in Europe, and do therefore partake of the confined ideas of the writers, who could not possibly be fully acquainted with the peculiarities of the various diseases incident to a people that inhabit a country so remote from theirs.

Simple remedies are, in general, the most safe for simple disorders, and sometimes do wonders under the blessing of God. In this view we present to you now, the *Primitive Physic*,<sup>[4]</sup> published by our much honored friend John Wesley. But the difference being in many respects great between this country and England, in regard to climate, the constitution of patients, and even the qualities of the same simples,—we saw it necessary for you, to have it revised by physicians



practising in this country, who at our request have added cautionary and explanatory notes where they were necessary, with some additional receipts suitable to the climate.

In this state we lay the publication before you, and earnestly recommend it to you.

As we apply all the profits of our books to charitable purpose, and the promoting the work of God, we think we have some right to intreat you (except in particular cases) to buy only our books, which are recommended by the Conference, and signed with our signatures: and as we intend to print our books in future within the States, and on a much larger scale than we have hitherto done, we trust we shall be able soon to supply you with as many of the choicest of our publications, as the time and temporal abilities of those of you, who do not live a life of study will require.

We remain, dear brethren, as ever,  
Your faithful pastors,

Thomas Coke  
Francis Asbury  
*Library, Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tennessee*

*After reporting on the state of the church in the United States and a little on England, Asbury reverts to another denunciation of the married preachers. It is clear that the difficulties caused by traveling made it hard to keep the work*

*supplied with preachers, and, being a bachelor, he had some obsession against the marriage state.*

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA  
*February 16, 1814*

[*To David Young*]<sup>[5]</sup>

Dearly beloved David:

Great grace attend us in this day of trouble and casting down. I am sorry you should feel any difficulty, or delicacy; in writing to the dearest friend, and father you have in the world: that twice, every day, speaks for you at a throne of grace: feebly in body and mind, yet claiming sincerity. I presume not one of the nine conferences, but are straightened for preachers, and more abundantly, for holy zealous men. Alas! Alas! Nine conferences, a charge of souls, scattered from Quebeck to New Orleans, from St. Marys to Lasco Bay near 3000 miles; and 1500 from east to west. We two poor aged worn out men are the chief, scattered shepherds over the scattered sheep! our presiding elders crying out, like the woman to the king, in a famine, "help oh King!"<sup>[6]</sup> Then said the king, that felt as a poor man; where with all shall I help thee, if the Lord does not help, out of corn flour or the wine vat.

A sentimental practice prevails, that it is only proper for single young men to travel; so after they are married quit the work, possibly they may allow it proper for aged married men to travel. As to age, the property, the connection and incumbrances of some preachers' wives it will be best to pass into shades! I am grieved to hear that in your section as in

Brother Quinn's;<sup>[7]</sup> there are roots that have wormwood and gall. Alas my dear brother, oh let *great David see to his own house*; yet little David and the preachers must pray on, preach on faithfully. We have European good news, an African mission—Bishop Coke gone to Asia, one report says with the other 10 missionaries, I hope they will join Buchannon.<sup>[8]</sup> All societies in Europe stirred up to send missionaries. Increase in the mother connection 7000 in the Kingdoms. In the missions 2000. A church built in the city of London for the seed of Abraham.

The Tennessee Conference,<sup>[9]</sup> in a conference capacity, as one of the nine, acting for the whole, decided upon the impropriety of our intended journey to Mississippi, the shortness of time [?] the desperate rupture of the Greeks. The sacrifice was thought none too great a risk; the nine conferences for a small half of the 10th. I find no cure for almost perpetual motion, only ride a day, and stop another to breathe and strengthen. I am ill able to perform the half of family duty. I find no cure for old age! finally I am afraid of being a bill of cost to the people. You must certainly employ local aid if it is good, and do the best you can. Of the general state we are humbled in the ministry and united in conferences, we have Discipline; as to increase, I calculate on little or none; if we fill up our wastage, expelled in one circuit 250. Frank Travis,<sup>[10]</sup> Travis them.

The American people have not at any period in my judgment manifested a more open or willing ear to the Gospel than at present, but oh marrying and giving in marriage, as in

the days of Noah, primitive celibacy long before popish had any existence, is totally to be abolished, the bachelors at 69 despised. But if leaving the travelling connection was not almost as canonical as priests marriages we would not dare to open our mouths or scratch a pen about celibacy. Bible Societies 60 pound sterling in one year in all possible languages. The Gospel word shall be spread over the whole earth! I heard a Presbyterian minister say the Emperor of Russia was president of a Bible Society. Some of our people complain we present preachers, do not preach our own experience; that we do not preach sanctification as a distinct work, that we have changed sanctification into justification, and do we want to change our Episcopal form of church Government into Presbyterian? as well as change the Doctrine?

As ever yours,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Collection, Ohio Wesleyan University  
Library*

*Asbury is sending on to Stith Mead some of his plan for visiting in the Virginia Conference. The references to Augusta and Georgia were personal to Mead as he had been in that section of the church.*

HANOVER, VA.  
March 7, 1814

[*To Stith Mead*]<sup>[11]</sup>

My dear Stith:

Great grace attend us. We have had many cold hungry rides together but there remaineth a rest for the people of God, and ministers of our Saviour, the son of God. If, by divine permission and divine assistance, we shall visit the south in 1815, in the 70th year of my age, and 54th of my ministry; and 43rd of my American Mission, it will be my wish to come from Milledgeville to Salisbury, by the month of January 25. My wish will be to pass through the Yadkin District, to good advantage, travelling one day, preaching the other. That is travelling every other day, and preaching every other day, on my way to conference, to be held at Lynchburgh.

I shall request you to write to Brother John Early,<sup>[12]</sup> to write to Edward Cannon,<sup>[13]</sup> to meet me at Salisbury January 25, and to order my appointments through the Yadkin District, and travel with me. I also desire John Early to make some appointments over in Bedford, that he, John Early and Brother Hines,<sup>[14]</sup> to come up with me as soon as convenient, and that I shall wish to be in Lynchburgh two days before the sitting of conference. This will we do if God permits. Georgia, is in 2 Districts—Oconee—Ogeechee—Lewis Myers resides in the former, Joseph Tarpley in the latter, in Augusta Whitman Hill. The work groweth in Georgia, and South Carolina. Oh my brother let us make the best of time, it is *short!* because iniquity will abound. The love of many *people*

and preachers is *waxing cold*, and we should be warmer than ever we were in the work of God.

I am as ever yours

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Criticisms have been made of Asbury that he was not interested in the German-speaking people. The letters, and especially this one, show how great his interest in the Germans was. He had, as is shown, a very real problem; and that was getting preachers. Asbury had had the Discipline and the Hymn Book published in German.*

CHAMBERSBURG, PA.  
July 7, 1814<sup>[15]</sup>

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[16]</sup>

Great grace be with us. Brethren my heart's desire and prayer to God is that Israel might be saved. I am willing to go and to die, I could wish myself accursed from the example of Christ, perhaps he might mean crucified. I suppose we English Americans hold 4000 traveling and local preachers and living exhorters to supply 3 million of souls annually. I say 200,000 Germans, and their descendants, on the east side of the Ohio including Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, not one gospel minister among them; perhaps 100 settlements and congregations vacant.

What are the Lutherans, what are the Reformed, the Friends, what are the Albrights, but—and opposers of

Methodists, what are the United Brethren [among so many]? But you may ride a circuit or let it alone, you may meet in class—or let it alone. Should my life be spared, to return which is very doubtful, one more attempt for a German missionary, a kind of presbytery preaching at least half their time in German. Lay out the country perhaps for various meetings quarterly but taking our complete form of discipline (and hymn books), German translation and putting them into every settlement house. And when there is a good German settlement and a prospect, let one missionary stay and work till a regular society is formed, and given unto the circuit preachers. Yet let the missionary visit them quarterly to remove difficulties, to explain things the English preachers cannot, for want of language.

Where is the money to support 4 missionaries? Make collection once a quarter and let them dividend<sup>[17]</sup> with Baltimore and Philadelphia conferences. Where are the men, Jacob Gruber, Henry Boehm, John Swartswelder and William Folks.<sup>[18]</sup> Now, think on this, for God's sake, for Christ's sake; and for the sake of many thousands of souls, that live in blindness. Mind you preach English half your time, and receive all the help they can give of entertainment. But see if in 45 years we have preached in Pennsylvania. We have 6000 members in the old circuits and need Philadelphia left out as a city. Think it over, consult your God, and your brethren. As the most active man I think, you ought to preside, as a ruling elder, and there ought to be a strict discipline, like a well regulated flying army.

I am your feeble Father; and let it be known, that one of the grand acts of his life was a capital mission to the American Germans, but lived not to finish it, or that the conferences did not see eye to eye with the Bishop in the undertaking or that the missionaries, the men of his choice, though well qualified, and of full descent from father and mother, and educated in the German language and of sound constitution; yet would not nobly volunteer; but I hope better things though I thus write. I hope the Lord will direct us; and make the path of duty plain. My soul has been without a doubt, or a cloud in all my affliction, though the greatest, I have ever experienced, and the most difficult to recover from. My copy was incorrectly made, employed an amanuensis not having written more than three letters 13 weeks. I am if possible more than every yours,  
F. Asbury

P.S. You let John Swartswelder see this letter.

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*America was in the throes of war. The church had suffered losses, preachers had died, and Asbury had been ailing more than usual. He was in very poor health and describes himself as a walking skeleton. As usual he is reporting statistics and urging the preachers to watch and pray.*



PITTSBURGH, PA.

July 23, 1814

[*To Christopher Frye*]<sup>[19]</sup>

My Son:

Great, great grace attend us in these evil exile days [a line marked out], Oh may churches, pastors, people escape the dreadful slumber and be all awake! I hope you are pleased and diligent and useful in your new station. No more the glorious increase of 8, 10 or 18 or 20,000 added to the church; thro wasting sickness! and the thousands called to expeditions! The never to be forgotten Otterbein<sup>[20]</sup> said to me many years ago that war was the greatest judgment of God, and unproductive of any good because we would always be looking to men, means, and measures, and naturally forget God! Who should set every man against his brother?

Last year Wm. Mills,<sup>[21]</sup> hale, healthy, was found dead in his room or bed! This year Peter Moriarty<sup>[22]</sup> was found dead in his bed! and formed [?] for his coffin, carried next day to one of his quarter meetings; one of the healthiest men in the New York Conference. At Philadelphia Conference Bishop McKendree and myself parted, some thought never to meet in times. Six weeks confinement, almost, given up by my doctors and friends, if the gates of death were near, they were gates of glory to me! Reduced beyond measure, total loss of appetite, 16 times blistered, 6 glistered,<sup>[23]</sup> 3 times bled—heaven glory all in sight! the work of God plain to view the rectitude of my intention in all my labours, my martyr's life and readiness for a martyr's death! If God did hear the prayer, incessant prayers of the church in

Philadelphia and New York, I can say, but my desire was certainly a touch of the prevailing epidemic. The head, the whole organical powers, the chest, the vital powers all prostrate! 3 hours rest only in a night, incessant cough! powerful expectoration! I am now a walking skeleton. I go in the way of duty. The greatest soul to preach and do duty, but bodily and mental powers weak!

Oh brother attend to all parts of your important duty in health next to the atonement and assurance of the justifying and underlying practical righteousness of Christ. It comforts me that I began so soon, and made such haste and to think on the souls sent to glory! Oh if the Methodists will walk by the same rules; in 50 years more British and Spanish America will be peopled with the gospel, and saints if it is 6 or 10,000 miles in length! Oh the Bible societies in Europe and America, spreading truth over all the world! Oh Africa! Oh Asia! The Isles of the sea! Come home the seed of Abraham! I hear of nothing special in the work of God. I write very few letters. I am sorry I shall not see you but I must weep over our eastern brethren. The New England Conference insolvent, in almost starvation. We have been longing for our Western Conference. I guess we do not fill up our loss by wastage expulsion and death this year. We shall come short in numeration, with lost 1,000 and so I fear every year as long as the war lasts. And no marvel we have not subjects by hundreds and thousands to attend our meetings, they being called out by thousands east, west, north and south.

You will write, on to Milledgeville, Georgia in November, if you please. Bishop McKendree his horse, his money fails, 200 miles to New England, his benevolence would not let him take his dividend. Possibly we receive this year only 140 dollars. I ride in state but what is to support me, a horse, 5 dollars in change, 20 dollars from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, from Jan. 16th to July 23rd, still on road we go in the strength of our God in the line of duty. I suppose Bishop McKendree will pass in about the 5th or 6th of August, but we must creep along as well as we can. If you have an opportunity of writing to Cincinnati, send on my love to all the fathers and mothers in travel, brethren and sisters. Tell them pray on, pray on, watch on, fight on, to the end. I remember the little children. God be gracious to us all as I am if possible more than ever yours with all the church of God, father, friend and brother,

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*Nelson Reed was one of Asbury's tried and truest friends. He has been a presiding elder and is coming to the time when he should be moved. Asbury wishes Reed to know of his interest in him. Senator Worthington according to the letter is to deliver the letter, and Asbury recommends the Senator.*

WORTHINGTON, [OHIO]  
August 26, 1814

[*To Nelson Reed*]<sup>[24]</sup>

My dear Nelson:

Here we have Perry Hall,<sup>[25]</sup> as also Bazaleel Wells, Stubenville, [Ohio]. Perry Hall continued. Oh my dear, I can truly say with Fletcher;<sup>[26]</sup> that the uncommon attention of my friends; the unwillingness they have showed, to let me go to glory; (of which I have had the fullest confidence; the brightest views; is my greatest trial.) Well I pant! I cough! I speak hoarsely! I pray, I speak, sitting. I am slowly gaining strength. I love my own, the church: I hope to love them to the end of life, to love forever! I am willing to move in the line of duty, little in state, like the great. Our travelling is expensive in 600 miles, we have found by the founder<sup>[27]</sup> of one, of the purchase of another horse and road expenses, a call to appropriate near 100 dollars; but hope to save the lame horse. Could I be an hewer of wood, or drawer of water, a beggar for the camp of Israel, here I am a moving skeleton.

Oh my soul feels for our bleeding country, bad times! worse to come! Oh what a desire I have to preach, Oh what bodily debility! What am I spared for and that I shall not leave this new world in distress; be taken from the evil to come like hundreds of the people of God that have died with the prevailing fever. Am I given back to the prayers of the Church of God? Am I spared to mourn over the judicial blindness! Egyptian darkness! that hath taken riveted hold, of the rulers of the united kingdoms, and United States, and provinces? Am I spared to see the spirit of heresy the spirit of schism rise

up in the Church of God? Am I spared to see a laxity in discipline among the ministry and members in the Church of God? Am I spared to see numeration decreasing 1,000 in a year? the work of God drooping, and dying generally. Newspapers read with such attention, Bibles shamefully neglected, conversation that ought to turn upon God, religion, and his work, all about the world. Shall I be spared to see two men God hath shewed me ought be appointed in unity, and trinity, in our Episcopacy, one high in merit, long in labours every where. Oh Daniel highly favoured of God, Oh Saul, man of mind.

It is not proper, after 40 years friendship we should tell our friends, could we tell how we love them. Dear brother you for age stand as such, and an equal, you always sat like a son at my side. It will be mercy, yea miracle, if ever I see Baltimore, again, or if Baltimore seeth another conference in peace. I rejoice to hear, (but not *officially*, that the work revives) in Baltimore. I presume your term will expire in the District next March. You will think (should it rest with me in part), a district, a circuit, a station. For this cause sometimes it seems the case, shall man leave in some degree his spiritual father, and his mother, the *Church* and cleave to his wife. Philip Bruce<sup>[28]</sup> either to save himself, or the Church; said he would quit the district; because if he rested, those under his charge would do the same, without considering the difference of age, or strength and that he had borne the burden for near 40 years. I have feebly spoken in almost every place, feeble enough! I have taken the holy Book into my hands but twice to preach

or expound. I have friends in fellowship, and only congregational Methodists.

I need not be a burden to city societies, that collect and expend annually 2,000, 3,000 or perhaps 4,000 dollars per year church expenses, *poor preachers*, and collections. Select friends, seeing my ease have housed me in a conveyance, if possibly they may restore my health. My whole affliction (unlike my last sickness was epidemical) I lay it wholly to unseasonable exposedness in travelling, and damp weather.

*Senator Worthington*<sup>[29]</sup> will bear this letter, should you see him treat him with respect, he is a worthy friend of mine; but not joined with any society of religious people. John Wesley Bond<sup>[30]</sup> without exception is the best aid I ever had, of a young man, only too attentive to me. I shall be highly indebted to Baltimore Conference for my present aid. Oh, when brought by affliction as low as dribbling infancy, and even now a boy 6 years of age would excel me in strength, and motion. My mouth has failed. I cannot even eat without difficulty, food to supply; the late physick or age or affliction, thank God for eyes. I have read Saurin,<sup>[31]</sup> Oh he makes me feel little. When I review my life, and labours, I say *purity of intention, diligence* no more. My justifying, sanctifying, practical righteousness all in and from *Christ*, heaven opens *Glory Glory Glory*. I cannot give any account of Bishop McKendree. I am waiting his arrival in the neighbourhood of Chillicothe. Present me to dear Nancy and all my male and female friends. We will pray on, suffer on, we shall rest, and

reign with Jesus, there all our family, national, and personal,  
and church troubles shall end, I am thine,  
Still, in the Saviour

F. Asbury  
*Drew University Library*

*Asbury's zeal and spirit are revealed here. The Norfolk society seems to be in a good spiritual state. Asbury is reporting on Europe as well as America.*

[MYRICK'S, VIRGINIA],  
*February 8, 1815*

[*To the Society at Norfolk, Virginia*]

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

Grace and peace and health and life, spiritual and temporal and eternal, attend us in our Great Redeemer. You are happily united. You use all the means of grace. You love as brethren and sisters in Jesus. You are frequent and fervent in prayer, you visit the sick and comfort the mourners and sooth the sorrows of the afflicted and dying. Surely we will not fear the terror by night, the arrows that flyeth by day, nor the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.

Let a thousand fall at our sides and ten thousand at our right hand, the Almighty, can preserve us, if we set our love and confidence on, and in Him.

John Early<sup>[32]</sup> wrote you your friend, Francis, was coming quick to see you. Sampson like, he at other times would go out, as his body cannot keep pace with his mind, a failure in his health, the providence of God, and things generally preventeth his visits once a year. It is not enough we have rode since the month of June 3,000 miles, I would have rode 1,200 from the South Carolina to the Virginia Conference, but the man, the horses fail, roads in bad order, of the affliction in head not heart, we are in immortal [?] till our work is done. So after traveling 700 miles last month, so after coasting from Milledgeville to Charleston, and New Bern and Tarborough, we are taking a straight course to Lynchburgh.

You ask, watchman, what of the night! We believe the morning cometh and also the night! in the Church of God and this continent. But God's ministers are greatly humbled and united; so also the people of God. Your friend feeleth for you, he still moveth as he hath done from 15 years [old] to the 6 month of 70th year of his age, for 49 years he hath visited seaports in Europe and America; he delighteth to do it, still the popularity of these places, the communication, the privileges, the opportunity of preaching to such multitudes of the inhabitants of the sea, upon land.

The brethren help those sisters that are doing good. The pious of all denominations in Europe are awake. Sending the printed word into all lands and languages, sending missionaries to Africa, Asia and isles of the seas, educating children in Sabbath schools, the bringing home Abraham's children, and if two parts of the earth should be cut off and



die the third shall come through the fire; and yet a little while and Lebanon subject to high cultivation shall be counted for a forest, yet judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The increase of about 30,000 in two years in the Methodist Society in Europe still declareth God is with His church, His ministers and the latter day glory sweetly drawing near.

We must commend you to God and the word of His grace.

Yours in Jesus,

F. Asbury

Roanoke [Chapel],<sup>[33]</sup> Brunswick County, Virginia

P.S. We desire the stationed preacher or some person may read the epistle to the Society in Norfolk.

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Methodist Church, Philadelphia*

A Letter of Jesse Lee  
to Bishop William McKendree

*In 1814 Jesse Lee was on the Cumberland and Manchester charge in the Virginia Conference with Jacob Hill. At the meeting of that conference at Lynchburg on February 20, 1815, it was announced that he would receive his appointment at the Baltimore Conference at Baltimore on March 20, 1815. He was there appointed to Fredericksburg in the Baltimore Conference. Lee objected to the method of appointing him. It was in fact a transfer. Lee took the position*

*that he had been left without an appointment. In order to explain Lee's controversy with Asbury, this letter is included in the collection.*

PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA  
March 15, 1815

[*To William McKendree*]<sup>[34]</sup>

Dear Brother:

Since I have returned home, I find it will be necessary for many reasons, for me to abide in this part of the world the present year. Had I have been treated<sup>[35]</sup> as a Methodist Preacher at last Conference, in having an appointment made me, if it had been at Boston, I should have acknowledged it as a regular appointment. But to say I should have my station "*From the Baltimore Conference*" was a right that no Bishop possesses, and such treatment as I never received from any Bishop before. Of course, you have *now* no power to give, and I have no inclination to receive any appointment within the bounds of the Baltimore Conference. If you send me an appointment within the bounds of this Conference, I shall attend to it as a regular appointment.

Observe, my objection lies against sending a preacher to any other Conference to receive his appointment, and not against his being appointed at his own Conference to a Circuit in the bounds of another Conference. Admit the principle, that you have a right to give me no appointment now, and to say I shall receive it at Baltimore; when I come there, you may say I shall receive it at Philadelphia &c &c. Thus I might be sent around the States the whole year, and have no

appointment, in violation of that Rule which says "The Bishop shall appoint the Preachers to their Circuits." I shall expect you to send my appointment from Baltimore<sup>[36]</sup> as soon as convenient. I am as ever yours &c.

Jesse Lee<sup>[37]</sup>

*Emory University Library*

A Letter of Jesse Lee  
to Francis Asbury

*Jesse Lee was one of American Methodism's earliest and greatest pioneers. It was he who wrote A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America. He came very near to being elected to the episcopacy at the annual conference of 1800 when he tied with Richard Whatcoat on the second ballot. On the third ballot Whatcoat was elected by a majority of four votes. This letter is one of the most interesting in the collection; and though not an Asbury letter, it was written to Asbury.*

NANSEMOND, VIRGINIA

*April 10, 1815*<sup>[38]</sup>

[*To Francis Asbury*]

Dear Sir:

When I went to the Conference at Lynchburg last July I went prepared to meet with great opposition from you; knowing that it was your time for electioneering for the next General Conference, and according to custom I expected you would try to sink me in the esteem of the preachers, and give

me some appointment that you believed I could not well attend to, in order that I might not be elected to the next General Conference. But I was fixed to go to the worst place you could appoint, and at least make a trial. But I was surprised to find when the appointments were read off, that it said that I was to receive my appointment from the Baltimore Conference. I said nothing, but knew you had trampled Methodism under your feet. I afterwards spoke to McK.<sup>[39]</sup> and told him that I had no idea of leaving this Conference, and in certain cases I could not; but told him, after I returned home and saw how matters were, I would write to him: and he promised that he would write to me from Baltimore, and let me know where my appointment was.

I wrote to him that for certain reasons I could not leave this part of the country, but was willing to take an appointment in the bounds of this Conference. He did not comply with his promise. I waited at Petersburg till April, and on *All Fools-day*, I received a few lines from one of the preachers stating that McK. said I was to go to Fredericksburg. But he did not say whether it was for the Town, or the Circuit, and I have no inclination to go to see.

The Rule is that. "What are the duties of a bishop? To fix the appointments of the Preachers for the several circuits?" You gave me no appointment, you violated this rule. I never was treated so before at any Conference. If you had asked me if I would go to Baltimore to take an appointment, I would have told you No. If you had made me an appointment to Boston, I would have acknowledged you had a right to do so,

if it had been read out in our own Conference. But it appears as if you were determined to be my enemy till you die.

It is high time for you to lay aside all anger, wrath and malice. After you have degraded me for years in my appointments, and cannot make a tool of me, or induce me to fall in with all your whims; you at last have trampled Methodism under your feet, and usurped a power that never belonged to you, in refusing to give me an appointment, thinking thereby to sink me. But you are mistaken. Yet I will not say of you and myself, as you once said of yourself and Wesley. When you wrote to Shadford you said, "Wesley and myself, are like Caesar and Pompey: one would bear no equal, and the other would have no superior." I am willing to have a superior; but I never will submit to your unconstitutional proceedings. I wish you to [act] immediately on receipt of this, and give me an appointment.

I shall be at Petersburg about the first of May. I shall expect your letter; if you determine to give me no station say so, and then I shall declare open war against you. If I receive no direction from you, my plan is to go into Brunswick Circuit, where there is a vacancy. If you write to me, and say I may go there, I shall let the matter drop. You know I have business in Georgia that calls for my attention, and I wish to go from next Conference and settle it, if I can.

I am as ever yours,

Jesse Lee<sup>[40]</sup>

*Emory University Library*

*Asbury had come to Wilmington to attend the Philadelphia Conference. He had received another letter renewing the invitation of the British Conference to visit England. Gradually his health has been getting worse. He speaks in terms of "changing worlds." He expresses the hope that, if he cannot visit England, he might be able to get to Canada.*

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE  
April 18, 1815

[*To the British Conference*]<sup>[41]</sup>

Dearly beloved in the Lord:

Fathers and Brethren in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, we wish grace, mercy and peace to be more abundantly multiplied unto you through the merits, intercession, and righteousness, of the son of God. We have rejoiced to hear of your prosperity and increase of professional members of society, and on the other hand, we are humbled and deplore our decrease of professional members of society, but we are looking forward when the Lord God of Glory will uncover the right arm of his power and give you or our sons in the Gospel to see greater days than we have ever seen, of the pouring out of the Spirit of the God of Glory.

We have received your last letter, of your readiness to receive us, could we visit you according to our former wishes and intimations, and we hope should the divine providence and will of God be fully manifested to us, we shall be ready, not only to change countries, but to change worlds; but your aged friend is now in the ninth month of the first period of the

age of man, having been more or less asthmatic for about sixty years, feeble in his limbs, but more abundantly in his lungs, unfitted for public service in a great measure, as also for social intercourse and common communication. And Oh! was he to visit his native land it would not be in all the strength and health and vigour of the former days of his youth, that could satisfy the wishes of his soul in congregations; nor in social or personal interview even to answer questions consequential and satisfactory to his friends and his own good wishes.

For a few years past, we have had serious times in the Church and in the land. In the Church many of the labourers have been taken from the evil to come both from among the aged, middle aged and young travelling and local preachers, and among the people more than ordinary number have peaceably and many triumphantly died in the Lord, so that with us if not universally yet generally to die is to die in Christ, and this hath greatly comforted us in all our tribulations, so that many precious souls the fruit of forty seven years labour and are clear gains in glory. In the land the rod of affliction still is felt and more than ordinary mortality among our citizens.

We hope you continue in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship and breaking bread and in prayer. Oh my brethren, plainness of dress, plainness of speech, simplicity of manners such as marked the primitive Methodists and the Apostles and Martyrs of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us be cautious not to feed the pride of the understanding of the people by fine

words and elegant composition, neither by building grand houses and making fine music either vocal or instrumental. It is a strange way to think of feeding people's pride to convert their souls. Remember one saying, fasting, said our Father,<sup>[42]</sup> "God led us to this at Oxford," and he certainly led that order of men to many great and good Gospel truths and practices. We have the fullest confidence if we had asked the nine annual conferences, "Shall we present your Christian salutations to your Brethren in the British Conference assembled?" that in a moment they would have lifted the right hand of approbation and fellowship. Bishop McKendree feelth a great interest in your spiritual prosperity and usefulness.

And we wish you great success in the Lord and we shall consider ourselves as highly honoured to receive an official letter from you every conference. And take a pleasure in making a communication to our annual conferences. And if we cannot visit the United Kingdoms we are not without some feeble hope of visiting the United Provinces.<sup>[43]</sup>

And now dear brethren we commend you to God and the word of his grace, and are yours, in the bonds of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

Francis Asbury<sup>[44]</sup>

*Methodist Book Room, London: Letters of Methodist Preachers, V, 2. Transcribed by Frank Baker*



*M'Caine had been retired since 1806, having gone into teaching. Colhouer in Sketches of the Founders of the Methodist Protestant Church gives the background of Asbury's request for "The Focus."*

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

April 30, 1815

[To Alexander M'Caine]<sup>[45]</sup>

Dear M'Caine:

This following I write is highly momentous, "The Focus"<sup>[46]</sup> upon the great book. Have you begun? Keep your book always by you. Begin book after book; general history and contents: mind, mind, mind. I stir up your pure mind; make the best of every moment. A small introduction, of a few pages, will tell what stations the author hath filled. It hath been upon my mind for years; but who I should fix upon, it is Alexander M'Caine. I must as your Bishop, father and brother, bind it upon you.

As formerly and as ever, thine,

Francis Asbury

*T.H. Colhouer, Sketches of the Founders of the Methodist Protestant Church, 95*

*M'Caine had located in 1806 to support his family. It seems he was not satisfied with his work at the boys' school and wanted to travel again. Asbury had designated M'Caine as the person best qualified to write a history of early American Methodism and a commentary on the Scriptures, one to be called "The Focus." He had modestly protested that*

*he could not find the inspiration to get the commentary started. This letter was sent to M'Caine shortly after Mrs. M'Caine's death and about nine months before Asbury died.*

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA<sup>[47]</sup>

July 1, 1815

[*To Alexander M'Caine*]<sup>[48]</sup>

My dear Son:

You cannot ride a district or circuit; you are past the meridian. Still we have work enough. Should you return to your mother's house, the chambers of her that bore you, perhaps you might be employed orderly and quarterly in Augusta, Savannah, Columbia, Charleston, Camden, Fayette, Georgetown, Wilmington, Newbern, Norfolk. You could not be too much confined. You are very positive about the key; but where materials can be had of the very best kind, you can do it, if you give up your time and mind, and only be called off to preach. Those leisure hours might be well spent for future generations. I have been reading these fifty years, and have never seen what meeteth my mind, I mean an universal focus taken from all authors worthy of notice.

Thine the same,

Francis Asbury

*T.H. Colhouer, Sketches of the Founders of the Methodist Protestant Church, 95*

*The Chartered Fund was the basis of the pension plan of the church. Asbury was not satisfied with what the Baltimore Conference was doing.*

MARTIN BOEHM'S, PENNSYLVANIA<sup>[49]</sup>

July 5, 1815<sup>[50]</sup>

[*To Nelson Reed*]<sup>[51]</sup>

My dear Brother:

As Senior Presbyter we send the inclosed papers to use, or not as you please. But I think it is time, after 40 years, to decide whether the people in the charge of Baltimore Conference can support their preachers, whether they will have to be on the sickly fund 3 or 400 dollars annually. If you hand these mite subscriptions, they will be located to Baltimore Conference, and then if you as conference are supplied the draft of funds will go forward to other conferences. As to our Book Concern and Charter<sup>[52]</sup> [Fund] may like — if the Presbyterian party gained ground. But if God Almighty and his Eternal raise me up again I shall shew how they have already taken my right, that of judging what was proper to come before annual and General Conference. Ah I move, and I move, there it began,

I am unalterably thine

F. Asbury

*Drew University Library*

*Asbury was becoming more feeble, though his Journal says he was better because of the hot weather. However, this letter, as some of the others, shows that he was not as alert. The letter deals with the criticisms which had come from the preachers and people in reference to the appointments on the Carlisle Circuit.*

SHIPPENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA[?]<sup>[53]</sup>

[July 10, 1815]

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[54]</sup>

Dear Son:

You will find a large letter at Littleton from your best Friend. We have missed our mark, or the conference, in receiving unqualified men. As for the people, they rise up, and the preachers also, as if there was only one station, of consequence, that's our own. The preachers often, as there was only my beloved self the Superintendents might with great ease provide for me much better than they do. Oh we have heard their murmurs, felt their discontents, rounded chiefly in self and discontent, and ignorance but I murmur *Hanna*<sup>[55]</sup> *must be changed*: with whom we are not clear. Leech,<sup>[56]</sup> as Sam Montgomery pleases so well, Brother Hanna by no means to have a charge, any where. I had R. Burch,<sup>[57]</sup> had Will Hunter and [had] the society done right William Hunter would have managed well in Carlisle, as it is, they are upon low water mark. And among a people so wealthy to talk about quarterage not be paid, in the circuit, if the town is taken off.

If you think it will not do to strip Carlisle off Jingling<sup>[58]</sup> *Leech* can do better, and Leech would jingle in Bedford. When I see, hear, and feel the state of the church, my soul is roused relief to offer but cannot relieve, Brother Reily<sup>[59]</sup> is all in all, he can please if Awkwick<sup>[60]</sup> would spare him. Bro. Hunter James, will oversight a little, and Thomas Askins and local men might spring up, a little. The quarter meetings coming together, the change would possibly be done with

greater ease immediately, the sooner the better. In the excessive heat we move slow. I feel now no steam boats, no dodging through the woods. Upon smooth roads and good horses, I would ride 10 thousand miles a year. I cannot tell who to trust but the Great Shepherd. We are dying, dying, dying, we see it, feel it not. I would attend 5 Conferences, out of ten alone that we might visit districts and circuits and stations to converse with our local official members to know the signs of the times. I feel in the neighbourhood 70, what do young men feel?

F. Asbury

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

*A second letter to Jacob Gruber within a few days shows clearly that Asbury was not up to his old self in composing his thoughts. Here he is concerned with ordination. The letter is difficult to read, and phrases are not always connected. However, the letter is remarkable for its interpretation and defense of the American system.*

LITTLETON, PENNSYLVANIA<sup>[61]</sup>

July 19, 1815

[To Jacob Gruber]<sup>[62]</sup>

My dear Son:

Great grace attend us in this evil prosperous [world], as in the day of adversity. Now if ever wrestle, preach, pray, cry aloud, stamp with ye foot, smite with both hands, wake saints, sinners, seekers, preachers also. The Lord help us, we are

going down stream. I fear a ——<sup>[63]</sup> The ——; our own not excepted. The delegates in [New] York 16. Daniel left, Thomas Elected.<sup>[64]</sup> New England hath seen enough of Presbyterianism, and independence not to covet more of it amongst our Methodism. I hope we shall have but one Presbyterian Conference in which the Presiding Elders, how *aged, pious, useful, or wise* they be, they shall be reprobated, for taking an office P.E. [presiding elder].

After 20 years the cloven foot of heresy is coming. J. O'Kelly denied the God that bought him, pleaded for a universal appeal from the Superintendency in point of stations. His wisdom did not say, to whom, to where they should appeal! But that I presume it to be the presiding elder upon the district, as long as he pleased, the stationed, and circuit preacher back to his own place. Then instead of custom, orders had to take place 40 years, presiding elder too, stationed elder. The Doctrine now by Swillers [?] thought all Bishops, all elders. Oh friends and Delegates of the General Conference will be all Bishops. Presbyterians say where are your 3 orders? I answer in the oracles of God. Deacons, Acts vi, 6. Elders, Acts xiv, 23, Apostles ordination, Acts xiii, 2, 3. Where the Deacons Apostolic Elders No. 1 men, the Elders, apostles not No. 1.

But this thundering tale, John Wesley was not ordained, with a third Apostolic ordination, say wise men his election by the preachers was amply complete; this Mr. Wesley had [trouble] from the American preachers, from first to the last till he sent ordained men to the continent. In thirty years he

has proved himself an apostolic man. John Wesley executed ordination by hundreds, had exercised all the powers of an apostolic man of God! for 30 years. Query, had the elders a right to administer ordination in the Apostolic Days? They had not, nor supreme rule in the church. They had a ruling power subject to Apostolic control, by person or letter. See it in Ephesus by Timothy, an apostolic man! Paul's Epistles to Titus, and Timothy, that Timothy had the same power in Ephesus as Titus in Crete; Paul, I have left there in Crete, to ordain elders in every city as I appointed thee. *Bischoff* is a German word, a chief minister of the church, it is neither Latin, Greek, nor Hebrew, but *German, Saxon, Tuetonik*, the most ancient German language.

John Wesley was ordained I presume by 2 English Bishops, first deacon, second elder, then according to Presbyterian talk a bishop. Some say some pillars in our order will give way the Church, will be formed and ——<sup>[65]</sup> not —— men, sensible —— among the Presbyterians. —— own Government no right of imminence, to be up with equality and a few men dare travel, that wish to do it but afraid. Ah a thousand vacant congregations, one man has charge of 3 congregations Lutherans and Reformed 6, 8, or 12 high and low Dutch. Dr. Coke died near the land of Asia, was found dead upon the cabin floor! Buried at sea! Possibly with intense application to the Portuguese language, as thousands in Asia speak that language. I cannot speak his excellency, the last and greatest of the Oxford Methodists and —— taken in every ——.

You have in the mite subscription, miniature. If the —— and people will approve you can get a book like a long folding Psalm Book. present to yourself and all the official department, every member, every friend. There is no compulsion; do it or not but do it right if at all. When Baltimore Conference will be independent of the friends we cannot say. Twelve pounds sterling British Quarterage England conferences settles as in the subscription paper. Bishop McKendree being unwell, left me to serve alone in New England. To preserve life, as I thought we have left him to serve alone in Genesee.

My health is by this means better. I go on in heat but prudent haste to Ohio Conference. In the printing press, Dr. Coke's legacy and mine, scripture notes on the discipline —— evils and —— of —— it will —— but we must attend the Conferences one after another, but as long as I can do anything and am welcome to call, I shall do my best to see as many conferences annually as possible. I could seriously wish one letter annually from all Presiding Elders, copied by the senior Presiding Elder in quarterly [?] reports of the work from all the Presiding Elders, compiled by Nelson Reed if you all send in November 30, 1815.

Still as ever yours

F. Asbury

P.S. Our legacy is for our own ministry and all these our people breaking union in spirit is schism, false doctrines of God, heresy whether to Son or Spirit.

*Drew University Library*



*David Young was in that part of the country where the camp meetings were going strong. Asbury had just come into his district and was writing to him defending the Methodists in their ordination of preachers. This was very much on Asbury's mind at this time. It seems that there was more to the letter; but if so, it has been lost.*

MUSKINGUM, OHIO  
August 12, 1815

[To David Young]<sup>[66]</sup>

My dear David:

Oh what rich supplies of grace we need for penitence, in such degenerate and desperate sinners, oh justifying grace, yet more sanctifying grace always and always pure. But to the ministers of the Gospel of penitence, pardon, and purity, to such characters and cases, we have to do with. Oh the things impossible with men. Surely our sufficiency is, has been and shall be from God. I am now about writing my valedictory to you among 52 of the order of presiding elders. Oh when I scan the spot of earth, from the north and northeast, and south and southwest, and due west, I say 3000 miles length 1000 to 1500 width. And this to be laid out and oversighted by 10 or 12 conferences and superintendents, dividing the work.

Oh when I consider the sections of the work in districts from 52 to 62 presiding elders quarterly superintendency, oh what men of steel they ought to be in their bodies. Oh what men of God, they ought to be, each in charge of from 12 to 15

travelling, 150 locally official men, holding perhaps 220,000 members in the church of God. I presume to congregate 2 million annually, taking our charge by weeks, months, years, in families, classes, societies, quarter and campmeetings and conferences. We have a slender body of 700 travelling preachers, some old drones, some pert ignorant boys like partridges with the shell. It helps not to say we ourselves were boys, but not such as some of these that will possibly never be men of God, blessed by God, for a more invisible able body, 3000 local men.

As to our Apostolic order, you are as well satisfied as the pure oracles can make you. First that the great apostle of our profession ordained the 12 and 70 which were not only disciples but apostles, that cried out (Lord increase our faith) see Mark iii, 14; Luke x, 1; John xv, 16. That these chief men that the Germans call *bischoffs*, our translators often put in a German, or French, word and this is the dreadful name, that has been butchered by so many who have borne it in the Latin, Greek and English Church. You are perfectly convinced of three orders in the Apostolic Church *deacons, elders, apostles* from Acts vi, 6. Men expressly nominated deacons (by Paul), full of the Holy Ghost and great preachers at the time of their ordination. You are well satisfied from Acts xiv, 23 as also Titus i, 5 expressly named ordained elders; and as is presumed, that Paul and Barnabas, not having received apostolic orders from the great head of the Church; that at the grand Antiochian Conference for the opening the Gospel to the heathen world Paul and Barnabas were ordained. See Acts xiii, 3 with a clear statement of that

conference, chief men present the election of the holy. Let no man come to quibble and say were these deacons elders by gradation. Were these elders ordained afterward, chief men apostolic? The sacred history is silent. What Church has been so minute as to publish all their acts and orders. If I give *names, acts and orders deacons, elders, apostles, chief men*, take my testimony or deny the gospel ordination altogether.

It is acknowledged this country is the capital of Presbyterianism, being supplied from different nations, and orders from the Baptist independents as are the Eastern churches. As to the Episcopacy of the Latin church, we totally disavow it. As to the Episcopacy of the English church, their local Episcopacy, deacon and elders, we equally disavow it. Its introduction would locate and disorganize. What a surprizing case it is, our Presbyterian brethren in connection are desperate against Calvinism,<sup>[67]</sup> and yet contend for their government. Oh locality,<sup>[68]</sup> love of ease, let us fleece the people; let them pay us a great price for one seventh of our labour, let us choose our stations and the people choose their ministry, let us take something for little or no services. They might see in Philadelphia, in New York Conference that God is and will depart from them.

In fine how will the travelling plan be supported without apostolic order exercised by Paul, a prisoner by Epistles, authoritative sent from Rome into Greece by truly apostolic men, Timothy and Titus, one to Crete, the other Ephesus. These holy men could show their letters of orders to the churches from a man they well knew. And what must we do

to gratify our brethren? Confess we have been out of gospel and order? candidly; confess we have appointed 3 orders and there is but one? not yet. Perhaps we have ordained 4000 deacons, 4000 elders and 4 bishops all wrong? John Wesley was ordained but twice, first deacon then elder, 40 years exercizing apostolic powers but some say he was ordained by —— a Greek bishop. Some of his preachers were ordained I know but I have never fully believed the testimony. John Wesley was called upon to ordain for America by all the people and preachers.

As one man called I told you my knowledge of Presbyterianism was small having forgotten their history. I doubt of the existence of that order of things to have been more than three or 400 years, and till that it was not contended for one order and the government of the church by elders altogether. This order of things must have grown out of the dissensions from the Latin, and English Church, the bishops not dissenting with the elders.

I believe that the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists stagger too in faith to this day, or why ruling ordained elders in the Presbyterian Church that take so great a part in the Discipline of the church, and the Lord's Supper? Why deacons so honorable in the Independent and Baptist Churches? How can we support a travelling ministry without apostolic order? it is next to impossible? You will ask how do our people do in England by committee? bad enough, Dr. Coke was Bishop of the missions, he chose men and found money. So must we, one doctrine? one discipline? one quarterage?

I presume the [English] committee sit; making cobweb hangings, building ropes of sand. I am told they begin to read, off Staffordshire, if stationed. You please to stopt sir, he cannot go, it will not do, and so on they go. Oh said one, that we had been under the order of Methodists in the United States, thats the plan, Brother Asbury can do better and preachers formed, graduated in time, the superintendents are here and everywhere, and there. It is not so, but some brethren, hence I believe some of the dear aged men died broken hearted, overrun with boys and want of good order. Oh, say their power, usefulness and order of presiding elders, numerous and well regulated quarterly meetings, but [they] have so few official members can attend. Their families<sup>[69]</sup> wont starve<sup>[70]</sup> ——— ———.

[Francis Asbury]

*Methodist Historical Collection, Ohio Wesleyan University  
Library*

*The main interest of this letter is the reference to the inflammatory letter sent by a member of the Baltimore Conference. The following letter, which is almost certainly a letter to Joseph Frye, throws considerable light on this. Appended to this letter is a letter evidently from John Wesley Bond on the same matter.*

NEAR ORANGEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA  
*December 9, 1815*

[*To Joseph Frye ?*]<sup>[71]</sup>

Oh Timothy! Oh Joseph! keep that which is committed to thy charge; fear as all the dreadful calamities of life and death and hell; a departure from God, as a Christian, a preacher and presiding elder. Take care of thy health, thy soul, thy district. Of myself I die daily. Do the prayers of the preachers and people of God prevail for me? The Lord is coming forth generally; the fishermen are about minding their nets, the hunters beating the mountains. I was sorry to hear that a brother, a member of your conference, should send out an inflammatory letter, if pursued will destroy Methodism, root and branch; who shall appoint the presiding elder? the answer; the Annual Conference. This motion, and question last General Conference, could only be the opening wedge to split the whole system to pieces. Poor man he was not appointed presiding elder. Thine as ever in the Son of God Christ, Jesus our Lord.

F. Asbury

P.S. I thank you for your letter.

[Alexander] M'Caine<sup>[72]</sup>

Dear Brother,

As Bishop Asbury is kind, etc.<sup>[73]</sup>

*Drew University Library*

*The care of the preachers was a lifelong burden upon Asbury. He shows his concern for them continuously. He has*

*almost reached the end of his road; yet the distressed ministers, wives, and children must have relief. Thus he attempts to raise a subscription. A dollar was a real gift then. This is a most interesting document, and it is fortunate it has been preserved. However, the totals of the figures do not seem to balance.*

*January 1, 1816*

A SUBSCRIPTION<sup>[74]</sup> PRESENTED TO THE MINISTRY, TRAVELLING AND LOCAL: THE MEMBERS AND BENEFACTORS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH: FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING, BY SMALL DONATIONS, A SUM SUFFICIENT TO AID AND RELIEVE THE DISTRESSED MINISTERS, AND WIVES AND CHILDREN OF THE MINISTERS, AND TO INTRODUCE AN EQUALITY OF QUARTERAGE AMONG OUR BRETHREN, AS FAR AS MAY BE PRACTICABLE.

It is the boast of the British Connexion that they have continued their quarterage at the same rate as fixed by their venerable founder, Mr. Wesley! When the American General Conference raised the quarterage of the preachers, they calculated on an increase of their funds by the Book Concern, and the establishment of a Charter Fund: After all these sources are drained by different appropriations they come greatly short of supplying them agreeably to the Form of Discipline. Some of the Annual Conferences settling at thirty-one dollars the unmarried, and sixty-two dollars for the

married preachers; and the children are generally excluded from receiving anything in the settlement.

No person is permitted to give more than one dollar.

Francis Asbury

*There follows a passage signed by Asbury as below. It does not seem to be in his handwriting.*

### SUPPLEMENT

British Methodist preachers' quarterage is £12 sterling per year. American Methodist preachers' quarterage per year until 1800 was \$64, when the General Conference with long debate and a small majority raised it to \$80. And we seriously doubt whether it has ever been paid to more than one-sixth of our number of preachers, and that only in the most wealthy parts of our work. The mite subscription made general and universal first promises that when any of our young preachers are stricken with any uncommon affliction; when not [knowing] where to go for support, that their quarterage and travelling expenses may be paid them quarterly. It will also provide for those sudden, great, and injurious vacancies, between conference, by putting it in the power of the presiding elders to employ faithful local preachers who may travel for a quarter of a month as the case may be, that they may have their quarterage paid to them as travelling preachers—and lastly to enable us to send out German, French, and Spanish Missionaries.

F.A.



Jany. 1st 1816<sup>[75]</sup>

## SUBSCRIPT

Amount<sup>[76]</sup> brought over from  
old paper . . . . . \$102.00

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Rev. James Smith . . . . .               | \$ .25 |
| Stephen Nichwin . . . . .                | 1.00   |
| Reuben Harris . . . . .                  | 1.00   |
| Rev. John Crawford . . . . .             | 1.00   |
| Rev. Samuel Bushnell . . . . .           | .50    |
| John Taylor . . . . .                    | 1.00   |
| Rev. William Swayze . . . . .            | .50    |
| Reuben Taylor . . . . .                  | 1.00   |
| Rev. Elijah Wooley . . . . .             | 1.00   |
| Nancy Taylor . . . . .                   | 1.00   |
| Rev. Wm. Anson . . . . .                 | 1.00   |
| Matthias Swain <sup>[77]</sup> . . . . . | 5.00   |
| Rev. L. Marvin . . . . .                 | .40    |
| Rev. Gersham Pierce . . . . .            | .25    |
| Rev. W. Sharp . . . . .                  | .25    |
| Rev. Heman Bangs . . . . .               | .50    |
| Rev. Wm. Pop . . . . .                   | .25    |
| Rev. Joseph Bangs . . . . .              | 12½    |
| Rev. Peter Bussing . . . . .             | .25    |
| Pierre Van Cortlandt . . . . .           | 1.00   |
| Rev. Gilbert Lyon . . . . .              | .25    |
| Arnold Scholefield . . . . .             | 1.00   |

|                                  |      |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Lewis Russ . . . . .             | .25  |
| Rev. Smith Arnold . . . . .      | .50  |
| Rev. Wm. Jewett . . . . .        | 1.00 |
| Rev. Daniel Brayton . . . . .    | .25  |
| Rev. T. Ostrander . . . . .      | .50  |
| Rev. Tobias Spicer . . . . .     | .50  |
| Rev. Jacob Ward . . . . .        | 1.00 |
| William Snyder . . . . .         | 1.00 |
| Henry Snyder . . . . .           | 1.00 |
| Abel Inliss . . . . .            | 1.00 |
| William Boyle . . . . .          | 1.00 |
| John Ward . . . . .              | .75  |
| Wm. Spire . . . . .              | 1.00 |
| Rev. Robert Green . . . . .      | 1.00 |
| Rev. Lenas Adams . . . . .       | 1.00 |
| Abraham Bowie . . . . .          | 1.00 |
| Lewis Packard . . . . .          | .25  |
| Rev. George Picketing . . . . .  | 1.00 |
| Rev. Joseph D. Merrill . . . . . | 1.00 |
| Rev. Joel Steele . . . . .       | 1.00 |
| Ephm Wiley . . . . .             | .25  |
| Jerusha R. Steele . . . . .      | .50  |
| Rev. Oliver Beale . . . . .      | 1.00 |
| Rev. Orlando Hands . . . . .     | 1.00 |
| Rev. John Lindsey . . . . .      | .50  |
| Rev. Wm. Winman . . . . .        | .50  |
| Rev. Wm. Marsh . . . . .         | .50  |
| Jno. Wittelby . . . . .          | .75  |
| Rev. Joshua Thondell . . . . .   | .50  |
| Rev. Solomon Sias . . . . .      | 1.00 |

|                                   |            |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Rev. Jacob Sanborn                | 1.00       |
| John Warren                       | 1.00       |
| Rev. John W. Shandy               | 1.00       |
| Rev. Edward Hyde                  | 1.00       |
| Rev. Francis Asbury               | 1.00       |
| Rev. John W. Bond <sup>[78]</sup> | <u>.50</u> |

Amount brought in by

J.W. Bond . . . . . 31.62½

|                      |            |
|----------------------|------------|
| Rev. J. Baker        | 1.00       |
| Rev. P. Munger       | .50        |
| Rev. David Kilborn   | 1.00       |
| Rev. Ben. Sabin      | 1.00       |
| Rev. Ebms Blake      | .50        |
| Rev. Warner Banister | .50        |
| Artemas Stebbins     | <u>.50</u> |

\$5.00

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Amount brought over   | 5.00 |
| Elias Marble          | .50  |
| Rev. Barry Jones      | .50  |
| Rev. Daniel Fillmore  | 1.00 |
| Rev. Daniel Wentworth | .40  |
| Rev. John Atwell      | .50  |
| Rev. Richard Emery    | .50  |
| Joel Winch            | 1.00 |
| Rev. Benj. Hazelton   | .25  |
| Rev. Martin Rutter    | .50  |
| Rev. Elisha Streeter  | .25  |
| Rev. John Adams       | .50  |

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Rev. Jeremiah Davis        | 1.00       |
| Rev. Benja. Burnham        | .50        |
| Rev. Thomas Tucker         | .50        |
| Rev. James Jaques          | .25        |
| Rev. Robert Hayes          | .50        |
| Rev. Orin Loomis           | .50        |
| Rev. Isaiah Emerson        | .50        |
| Rev. Joshua Nye            | .50        |
| D.H. Osburn                | .50        |
| Rev. Eleaser Wells         | 1.00       |
| Jason Walker               | .25        |
| Rev. Ebenezer Newall       | .25        |
| Rev. Leonard Frost         | .50        |
| Rev. Josiah F. Chamberlain | .50        |
| Rev. Philip Munger         | <u>.50</u> |
|                            | \$18.69    |

Amount brought on by  
J.W. Bond ..... 31.62½  
\$50.22½

Received of the above of John W. Bond

Daniel Fillmore }  
John Lindsey } Stewards  
Jacob Sanborn }

Received also one hundred dollars private donations

|                 |   |          |
|-----------------|---|----------|
| Daniel Fillmore | } |          |
| John Lindsey    | } | Stewards |
| Jacob Sanborn   | } |          |

Unity June 2nd, 1815

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| Rev. Daniel Fillmore | 1.00 |
| Rev. John Lindsey    | .50  |
| Rev. Jacob Sanborn   | .50  |

The N.E. Conference<sup>[79]</sup> not being able to meet the salaries of the preachers raised them only to 31 dollars to the single and 62 to the married preachers and children in proportion—

|                 |   |          |
|-----------------|---|----------|
| Jacob Sanborn   | } |          |
| Daniel Fillmore | } | Stewards |

|                                   |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Amt. brt. over . . . . .          | \$250.26 3/4 |
| Rev. Walter Griffith . . . . .    | 1.00         |
| Rev. Thos. Verstrom . . . . .     | 1.00         |
| Rev. Robert C. Matton . . . . .   | 1.00         |
| Rev. Daniel Fraley . . . . .      | 1.00         |
| Rev. David Sharp . . . . .        | 1.00         |
| Rev. Isaac Quinn . . . . .        | .50          |
| Cynthia Quinn . . . . .           | .50          |
| Rev. Francis Sandrews . . . . .   | 1.00         |
| Rev. Samuel Brown . . . . .       | 1.00         |
| Rev. Charles L. Weidell . . . . . | 1.00         |
| Rev. Moses Cramer . . . . .       | .50          |
| Rev. Wm. McMahan . . . . .        | 1.00         |

|                               |               |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Rev. Kresley Morris . . . . . | 1.00          |
| Rev. Benj. R. Hoten . . . . . | 1.00          |
| Rev. H.B. Bascom . . . . .    | <u>1.00</u>   |
|                               | 263.76 3/4    |
| Paid the Ohio Conference . .  | <u>100.00</u> |
| Balance . . . . .             | 163.76 3/4    |

Received of these within subscriptions, in behalf of the Ohio Annual Conference one hundred dollars; given under our hands Sept. 15, 1815

|                  |   |          |
|------------------|---|----------|
| Marcus Lindsey   | } |          |
| John Dew         | } | Stewards |
| Thomas D. Porter | } |          |

Received of these within subscriptions 92 dollars to be appropriated to the children of the married travelling preachers who had received nothing from the quarterage or circuit. From under our hands Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1815.

|         |             |
|---------|-------------|
|         | M. Lindsey  |
| \$92.00 | T.D. Porter |
|         | John Dew    |

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Amount brought down . . . . . | \$163.76 3/4 |
| Rev. John Dew . . . . .       | 1.00         |
| Rev. William Adams . . . . .  | 1.00         |
| Rev. O.W. Spencer . . . . .   | 1.00         |
| E.G. Case . . . . .           | 1.00         |

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Amount brought over . . . . . | \$263.06 3/4 |
| Eliza Baker . . . . .         | .50          |
| Eliza Sheppard . . . . .      | .50          |
| Edward Sanderson . . . . .    | <u>1.00</u>  |
|                               | \$264.06 3/4 |

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Warren Moore . . . . .   | .50          |
| Clarissa Moore . . . . . | .50          |
| William Babb . . . . .   | <u>1.00</u>  |
|                          | \$267.06 3/4 |

Received October 27 in behalf of the (Tenn.) Annual Conference Two Hundred and Sixty-Seven dollars, six and a quarter cents from the Mite Subscription.

James Dixon }  
James Gwin } Stewards

The preachers deficiencies in the Tennessee Annual Conference for 1815 was \$1313.73 1/4.

The different collections for the benefit of the preachers afforded a dividend of \$55 to the single and \$116 to the married preachers from the Mite Subscription for the benefit of the children of married preachers \$100 affording a dividend of ten dollars to each child. J. Dixon.

Mite Subscription opened and continued for the year 1816.

|                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Rev. Francis Asbury . . . . . | \$1.00      |
| Rev. John W. Bond . . . . .   | 1.00        |
| James Wynn . . . . .          | 1.00        |
| Rev. Jeremiah Sell . . . . .  | .25         |
| Rev. John Bloom . . . . .     | .50         |
| James Jenkins . . . . .       | .25         |
| John M. Cherry . . . . .      | .25         |
| James Mills . . . . .         | .25         |
| Isaac Moore . . . . .         | 12 1/2      |
| John Mitchel . . . . .        | .25         |
| Millie Holt . . . . .         | .25         |
| Claudius Allen . . . . .      | .25         |
| Pleasant Reed . . . . .       | .06 1/4     |
| Elliott Grills . . . . .      | 1.00        |
| Wesley Harrison . . . . .     | <u>1.00</u> |
|                               | 7.45 3/4    |

Proceedings of Wesley Historical Society, II, 203, description of a printed leaflet owned by H.W. Ball, to which Asbury has added in writing the "Supplement." Transcribed by Frank Baker. The original is in Drew University Library. One part of it is reproduced here.

### Address to Conference of 1816

*This is Asbury's last address to a General Conference. It was written on January 8, 1816. Two addresses were read to the General Conference which met in Baltimore in May. One was the valedictory address (not this as some historians say)*



*which was written to Bishop McKendree in 1813 and which is included in this volume of letters. The address of 1816 was also read to the conference as Thomas L. Douglass, the secretary, affirms at the end of this document.*

*Copies of the address of 1816 were printed in the New York and Nashville Advocates. The address appeared in the New York Advocate of March 16, 1916, page 344. It also appeared in the Nashville Christian Advocate, March 10, 1916, page 305, though the copies differed. The original of the New York Advocate copy is not in the handwriting of Asbury. The original of the Nashville Christian Advocate copy is in the Wofford College library. This also is not in the handwriting of Asbury. Both of them are thought to be the handwriting of Thomas Mason who served as Asbury's amanuensis for the Joseph Benson letter of January 15, 1816, which follows.*

*The copy used here has been taken from the New York Advocate. It has been compared with the Wofford College copy. The original of the copy in the New York Advocate is in the Drew University library.*

*It is interesting to note how great a part the O'Kellyite schism played in the life of early American Methodism and how Asbury even twenty-four years after had it so much upon his mind. By that time the Christian Church (Republican Methodist) had become a very important movement in eastern Virginia and North Carolina.*

*In this address Asbury has much to say about the Book Concern, and he makes suggestions about the constitution with some proposed changes. Also there are references to other matters to be brought before the conference. This letter and the Benson letter were written at the home of John Whetstone near St. Matthew's in Calhoun County, South Carolina, and dictated to John Mason, the presiding elder.*

UP THE RIVER SANTEE,  
70 MILES FROM CHARLESTON, SO. CA.  
*January 8, 1816*

Francis Asbury Senr. Superintendent in the 45th year of his charge in and over the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, in his address, counsels, and advices to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church appointed to be held in Baltimore the first of May, 1816.

Most dearly beloved in the Lord:

My loving confidential Sons in the Gospel of the grace of God, in Christ Jesus, great grace rest upon you. The God of glory cover your assembly and direct all your acts and deliberations for the Apostolic order and establishment of the Church of God in holy succession to the end of time. Only recollect as far as your observation or information will go, what God hath done by us in Europe and America in about 70 years in Europe, and less than 50 years in America, and what wonderful things he may do for us and our successors in future years if we stand fast in the Gospel doctrine and pure

Apostolic ordination, discipline and government into which we have been called and now stand.

We are prepared, and, if called upon, to prove and demonstrate even in your assembly, not from uncertain Church Histories and testimonies, but from the pure Oracles of the New Testament,—Three distinct ordinations, their distinct powers rising in gospel order by constituted degrees, one over another, and under the government, and distinct in names, that is to say Apostles, Elders, and Deacons. We will enter the sanctuary of divine truth, here we shall stand, this is our ground.

If we were called upon to prove and demonstrate 1st, the doctrine of depravity, 2nd the doctrine of redemption and justification through the Son of God, and 3rd, the doctrine of Sanctification, we would rest it wholly upon the pure Oracles of God; and as Church-order, government and discipline must be of God we believe, though it is not of equal consequence to the great and essential doctrines, we believe according to its importance and weight, plain and *pure*.<sup>[80]</sup> Apostolic example and testimonies from the word of God. We reject all human authorities, because they are human authorities. We receive all divine testimonies as testimonies from God and the Son of God.

We think that among the very best, and greatest human authors who have written *to admiration on the great truths of God, yet have written* large volumes on different subjects and have made large extracts from other authors, have been led

into seeming or real inconsistencies, which might be made use of by their enemies as contradicting some of the great truths of gospel doctrine and order, which they had nobly defended in some of their other writing, and that by oversight, and that we scruple not to say of our great John<sup>[81]</sup> the divine.

You yourselves having only read his own works think and believe you find some strong Calvinistic expressions in his own writing and doubtless you would find many more if they are not corrected in the fifty volumes of his *Christian Library* extracted from Puritan-Calvinistic writers. Our old Father in the last grand Fletcher controversy was most severely pressed by his Calvinistic opponents on these Calvinistic phrases left in his own works and in the *Christian Library*. Your Father<sup>[82]</sup> when a youth became possessed of Mr. Wesley's writings, and for some years almost laid aside all other books but the Bible, and applied himself exceeding closely in reading every book that Mr. Wesley had written because he had such ways and means of obtaining the use of them without a purchase. And lastly it is an argument of leaden weight with us against human authorities, that reformers in all ages have been exceedingly shackled by human authorities, and granting their validity when they would contend with the ancient Idolatry and superstition of the ancient and corrupt churches, they should be told that this great saint, and that great saint, and the other great saint, in the first second, third and fourth centuries, *and that they* had written or spoken in favor of pardons and penances and prayers to the Saints, and masses, transubstantiation and all the abominations of the ancient and fallen churches still more horrid and abominable.

With respect to the General Conference, not only the Senior Superintendent but many of the Eldership who are men of deep understanding and sound judgment and long experience, have lamented exceedingly that the Genl. Conference have not found out a happier method as well as temper of mind in doing their business; that they did not put upon themselves a stronger gospel bridle and a more spiritual curb and an Apostolic helm to steer like the Jerusalem and the Antiochian Conferences. They elected their Apostles or Bishops,—Barnabas and Saul, and ordained them by most solemn fasting and prayer and laying on of hands, possibly the hands of those which had been ordained by the Son of God himself, chief men, men of highest order of God in the Church.

As it respects the substance of the business which is to be done, it is common and plain and must come in order in every sitting, like the business which must be done every sitting in the Annual Conferences and brought forward by the President and that although it is very different from the Annual Conference, yet to be brought forward to regular and steady order by the president.

The Bishops and the most judicious Elders that have been members once, twice, thrice of Genl. Conference are of opinion that we ought to have a wise and most judicious and standing Genl. Committee of safety, of good council, men that know or ought to know what the Israel of God ought to do and deliver it in all cases of motions brought into Conference of a critical and doubtful nature, with the members of Genl.

Conference in Conference, and that they should be committed to the Genl. Committee for their most serious deliberation and consideration in order to know if possible their bearing and operation, through all the Conferences; and whether they are constitutional according to the established order of things in our Oeconomy and whether these motions tend to order or disorder, to union or disunion, through the whole body. Let every individual in the Church of God be assured and every body of ministers know that holy and good men in every age of the Church, that hundreds with us both godly and united and loving people believe it to be an evil and bitter thing, a sin of sins, a mass<sup>[83]</sup> of evils hardly to be described or enumerated, to divide the true spiritual body and members of Christ; and so destroy a number of souls for which Christ hath died, and to make those who are united in bonds of sacred union, to turn them into enemies to each other and to put weapons of destruction into each other's hands, and to be like one that<sup>[84]</sup> had been a great sinner—a great Saint—Witness of the grace of God, led away by James O'K.<sup>[85]</sup> to groan upon a dying bed with a backslidden heart! Oh! that unhappy division, witness Captain Butt, who died not far from Norfolk in Virginia. We believe that a correct testimony could be taken of this case and signed by his surviving Christian friends and kinsmen in the profession of religion, who know him well. Ah! nor he alone, but how many simple brethren and sisters and perhaps hundreds and thousands of poor slaves, when the Local preachers and leaders who had charge of large bodies of them were taken from us by James O'K.

A brother Hobbs of Brunswick county in Virginia, a respectable citizen and good member of society had the charge of about two hundred coloured people a few years<sup>[86]</sup> ago, and possibly at this time, and *kept them in good order*, defended *them* from violence and watched over their souls as one who should give an account of them to the preachers and to God. And what was the plea, or what were the reasons which many of these simple people gave who followed James O'K. He told them that the Bishop was so & so, and so, and of *such a character—and the Discipline was so, and so, and so*, as some of you must have heard or read. The people had been blessed and their passions had been moved under Mr. O'K. this was one reason. The second, "He was a wise and understanding man, he must know—he was too good a man to tell *known and wilful* lies upon men and things."

Indeed some of the most respectable men in the counties of Virginia were led away. Witness, Genl. Wells, whose brother Willis Wells was a faithful local preacher, liberated all his slaves in the midst of opposition, had a great charge, was a very useful man, influential among the white people and a great, great useful man among the slaves. This good man and his flocks scattered and broken would not come near us nor be seen by us till at a Camp Meeting near Suffolk. God reached Willis Wells' heart,— he came back deeply affected with the last and least remains of his flocks, and his family connections lived a few years and died with us we hope in the Lord. O the mercy! O the goodness! and the depth and the riches of the grace of God! Genl. Wells, of whom we wrote above, it is reported, we did not ask him *the truth of it*

ourselves, but we have some confidence in our friends that at the beginning of the division, as one of the chief officers of the county of Surry, when he heard the public report, delivered in sermonizing, concerning that "English man and Bishop," *that he* said "If he was that bad man as represented, he ought not to be suffered to travel through the country, but ought to be taken up and put in prison." This same Genl. Wells was afterwards we trust happily converted to God, he and his family united to the Methodists, and after a few years we hope died in the Lord. The Senr. Superintendent had a few happy interviews with the Genl., in one of which he told the Superintendent that his Bro. Willis after he had left the Methodists and had joined, what they called themselves "The Republican Methodist," began to be uneasy in his mind concerning men and things and the order of their Church; and told his troubles to his elder brother—the Genl., and the Genl. advised him to "go back to the old side," but no; not 'till he came within sight of us and had the cork of prejudice taken out of the bottle neck, and had the power of God to reach his heart as at the first, and cause him to know that God was with us still.

I was not able to attend the South Carolina Conference, but was seriously afflicted about 32 Miles off, and the Junr. Bishop<sup>[87]</sup> must know fully, that Mr. Hammett's<sup>[88]</sup> people, after many troubles and distresses, came over and joined themselves with us, a few of whom had once been members of our Church before, but a considerable number of them never had. But now after a partial union for several years we are told they are willing to come and stand in the same



relations to us as that all our houses and congregations are. And where are the scattered remains of the followers of James O'K.? Is there a small body at Ruff Creek, Mecklenburg County, Virginia where the division first began? Have they signified a great desire to return? and possibly have been prevented by our having had a Diotrephes<sup>[89]</sup> instead of a Barnabas for a leading character. Is there a small body in Caroline County old Virginia?<sup>[90]</sup> It must be small after Philetus<sup>[91]</sup> has scattered, torn and done his wicked part among them.<sup>[92]</sup>

First, on your grand stationary concern, in what City will you settle it? [New] York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore? Will you have it near the centre of 2000 miles of the Atlantic coast, where the disadvantage of shipping your books will not be great contrasted with any other port? Will you establish it on the United States grand Western road, preferable to any other road, where waggoners may drive 20-30 miles a day, no desperate rocks, no dead horses, no broken leg waggoners, horrible! horrible! It is almost a sin to trade upon the Pitt road. Will you establish the Book Concern where in about 280 miles you can have your books landed at Wheeling or elsewhere and shipped in good order to Chilicothe, to Cincinatti, at the mouth of Kentucky River, Louisville, *Nashville*,<sup>[93]</sup> Natchez, New Orleans, the whole Western country which promises to be the glory of America and a market for one third, if not one half of your books. Will you appoint your agents in every place where your books are to be unshipt and shipped, except where they are immediately consigned to the Presiding Elder in his District? Will you give

commissions to your agents as other men do that you may have your business well done? Will you appoint three agents, or book Stewards? First an Editor, secondly a clerk, and thirdly one to enumerate and pack and ship all your books in good order. Shall they be men that come to your employment not as apprentices or journeymen, but as complete masters of the business? and shall each in his order be accountable to the Annual Conference and Senior effective Bishop, each man for the failure of his own department and be subject to be put out of office, and another to be put in his place 'till the sitting of the next Genl. Conference and that by the Conference where the concern is stationed and the Steward may be a member of the Conference?

How will you keep your press pure? both from any new publications presented from Europe or America: not to print anything against established doctrines which you hold sacred, discipline and Church government? How will you order reimpressions of books in common use, how will you correct some things which many preachers and people now complain; that they ought to be expunged? How will you gather up broken fragments of Books? Will you charge every Presiding Elder to take care of these, to number and sell those that are saleable and to take the money to Conference and take the direction of the Senr. Bishop, as also to recover all doubtful debts—and that the Senr. Bishop shall hasten and direct all remittances in the best order. He shall enquire as he passes through the Annual Conferences what books are most wanting and not to be had and order an *immediate* impression. Shall he read, revise and correct all books which shall be

printed or reprinted at your press? Shall he do it or cause it to be done? Will you make him strictly responsible for this work? If he shall want aid he can command it, either out of the junior Superintendents, or the Presiding Elders, but make him accountable to the Genl. Conference.

And will you order that the Stewards in the Book Concern shall be held to a strict accountability to the Senr. Bishop and Conference where the concern is established and carried on? And now you know the man and his communication I recommend to you to put your concern in the grand office of Insurance, by giving away annually \$1000 or \$1200 worth of books. Let every annual Conference be equally privileged to give away \$100 worth of books of what is called unsaleable, books which our purchasers of taste either have purchased, or do not choose to purchase, but books which our poor, and other poor people will gladly receive and profit by them; and let the Senr. Bishop or junior by his order call for the account of books given away to that amount in every Conference in the union. See a part of the duty of a Bishop in Form of Discipline, Sec. 4.—

Ques. 3. What are the duties of a Bishop?

Ans. To travel through the connection at large.

5. To oversee the temporal and spiritual business of the Societies. And why should not this extend to the building of the houses, and not only to the collection and appropriation of monies to every claimant in the conference, and be more immediately exerted in our grand Book Concern in which

should there *be* a failure or an insolvency and a defraud what a lasting blot upon us as a branch of the Church or God! And who is security for us? and how shall our creditors be preserved from suffering by us? What confidence can they have now in us but that we have been able to meet our payments equal to, or perhaps beyond many other concerns; and that we have now stock in hand, and that our religious character and our oeconomy is such, that we shall be fair and honest and confidential traders.

The approaching General Conference we have confidence has been made up of men of such sound judgment and long experience, and such faithful labourers and coming together from such distances, at such labour and expense, not only equal to, but superior to all former conferences, that they will be purely Apostolic; that they will do away from among them deceit and guile and everything like electioneering, and any thing like what we call religious swindling in sacred things, open faces and united souls.

On the amendment of the Constitution, which they are authorized to do in the constitution, to reduce the delegation and representation, that is, instead of one member for 5,—one member for 7.<sup>[94]</sup> The<sup>[95]</sup> propriety, *i.e. the reasonableness, justice*, of the measure, at present we can say but little; but at a proper time and place, if called on, fill a small volume of argument. First should the Genl. Conference be located to the centre of the Atlantic coast? Here are four ancient Conferences, one is the centre and seat; what more, a second is little more than a hundred miles distance, and a third

another hundred more, and a fourth another hundred more. How easy of access is the Genl. Conference to these Conferences. How light their labour and expense, how much smaller their loss of time, how much greater security that every member of them will take his seat. Only take a short view and see the distances, and difficulties, and vacancies. And suppose forty-five Presiding Elders and thirty-five men of equal talents, great and highly responsible stations, in Towns and Cities where we have manifestly taken the lead and *stand* almost alone; and other societies pretty generally out of blast. Such prodigious congregations of white and black, and such large Societies of both—now to have such consequential preachers absent from their *respective* charges three, four, five, some six months—again be it known to us, to all, some member or members of this General Conference must come, must come twelve hundred miles, one thousand miles, eight hundred miles, seven hundred miles and six hundred miles the least. Several of them leave not only their charge, but their wives and children through changeable seasons and hard rides to Genl. Conference. Take it from the life, South Carolina and Georgia, one six, the other seven hundred miles, *representatives to come* to Genl. Conference. Six large highly consequential Districts, every One of the P. Elders elected, nine important Town Stations, and twelve preachers in *these nine stations* and six of them elected. You will not start, for many of you must see and know something of that great and yet unexplored and unsettled part of the great western country promising to be not only the glory of America but the glory of the whole Earth.

We think it our duty to inform you that before the sitting of the Genl. Conference in 1820 it will be our duty to have an Annual Conference for every month of the year, seven upon the Atlantic coast, members numerous, and in the Western country five, and for all the Bishops to attend according to order and old establishment of things, as many Conferences as they can, if their number is large and never be absent if they can possibly attend together unless the necessity of things should compel them to meet according to seasons, and circumstances and distances, to meet two Conferences at one time and to have time to cross the vast arrangement of hills and mountains from Tennessee to South Carolina, properly to begin the annual round.

Why we have not formed the Mississippi Conference, one of the Superintendents nearly superannuated, the wilderness at the seasons we had to go *and return often impossible and impassable*. But oh, what we have felt,<sup>[96]</sup> for the forming a flourishing Genesee Conference,<sup>[97]</sup> treatment! Oh! severer for severe! but not from any of you. O let the Lord judge and give judgment in this important case. We have suffered, we have suffered, but our judgment is with God. There is a clause in the minutes that shews, as we think, serpentine crooks,<sup>[98]</sup> form new Conferences if we had a sufficient number of new circuits, and that we should not do as we always have done, take any old circuits from ancient Conferences, without the consent of the Annual Conferences. Now where is our right to do as we always have done and been judged to do right? We must form a given number of circuits, a given number of districts and then form a Conference, and what number of

circuits, and what number of districts, and yet be open to implication, from vicious minded men? And, by the bye, where is the right of the Genl. Conference? May it not be suspended by the Episcopacy's forming all the future Conferences? may it not be usurped by an annual Conference? How will you secure your own rights, the rights and claims of the Superintendency in this business? Suppose you should direct the Senr. officiating Bishop for several years to gather the Eastern, Western, Northern lines and boundaries of the different Conferences, and suppose, what possibly will be the case with three Conferences, *they* can be settled and bounded, East, North and South, but the West unlimited, new purchases, new settlements, going out towards the South Sea. Suppose then for safety and good order and to give each his right, you should make it the duty of your Senr. officiating Bishop to prepare and lay before you a most correct statement and plan of each Conference, lines and boundaries, and give each its nomination. Then present it to the Genl. Conference that they may according to their order of doing things, approve and confirm, or condemn and reject.

There is one case that may be submitted to you after first observing that your Senr., almost Superannuated, Superintendent may doubt of his having done right in the goodness of his heart to lighten his load,<sup>[99]</sup> to silence the cry of power, power, and designing men who know how to exaggerate and make the worst of everything. "You can't have a Conference but when the Bishop pleases, and where he pleases, and he is wiser than hundreds of you. He cannot be mistaken. He is so virtuous he will always do right, and O that

this could be so said and proved by large and wise bodies." Suppose you should not take away the right of the Annual Conference in this case but give it a laudable direction and a regulating rule to go by, that if there are four, five, six or seven districts in the Conference, then and in that case the Annual Conference should take their seats in order, regularly through the whole. Yet still the Annual Conference shall have full liberty to choose any place they please within the district which may give a very agreeable choice, and their accommodations now *exceeding* greatly<sup>[100]</sup> excel those places where the first and second generation of the travelling preachers almost<sup>[101]</sup> commonly and constantly *assembled* in old times. This will prevent any Conference, or Conferences, if so disposed in future to sit in one place 13 times in 17 years and 10 times in 15 years, and the latter removed by compulsive necessity twice to other places, and when possibly there might be found in the districts composing this Conference half a dozen or a dozen, *comfortable*, good places, and the brethren in these places *sending* petition after petition, solicitation after solicitation, till they have been wearied, grieved, offended and might justly cry out, "Why this partiality?"

But O the great and grand and important question. How many additional Bishops shall we have? Shall we certainly want to oversee and direct this great work of God? Fear not, look to the great head of the Church. Your governors shall come forth out of yourselves, and the Holy Ghost shall direct your choice as in the Antiochian Conference. When they had fasted and prayed, the Holy Ghost said, by one holy man,



separate me Barnabas and Saul, yea, *and why not*, Timothy and Titus, for the work whereunto I have called them. They must be formed in all things after the pattern shewed us in the mount, able Ministers of the New Testament, real Apostolic men filled with the Holy Ghost. But what does our order of things require of them? Not such as can be performed by superannuated or supernumerary preachers, but by men just past the meridian, that have already proved themselves not only servants but mere slaves, *who* with willing minds have taken with cheerfulness and resignation frontier stations, with hard fare, labouring and suffering night and day, hazarding their lives by waters, by lodging indoors and out, and where Indian depredations and murders have been committed once a month or perhaps once a quarter, by *the sides of* the path they have trod, and *in* the houses and cabins *where* they have lodged, and upon some of the persons they have been in social habits and intimacy with, and even *upon* their own brethren of the local and travelling ministry. They ought to be men who<sup>[102]</sup> can ride at least three thousand miles and meet ten or eleven Conferences in a year, and by their having had a charge of local Conferences from sixty to an hundred Official characters, to have presided in and *to have* directed well all the business of the whole with every member, having received and graduated exhorters, preachers, deacons, and elders in the local line, ready to all the duties of their calling, always pleasant, affable, and communicative,—to know how to behave in all company, rich or poor, impious or pious, ministers and professors of our own and all denominations, but more abundantly to remember to the poor the gospel must be preached, and always to condescend to men of low estate.

But on the management of our temporal concerns we are not fully satisfied how they are to be corrected and made better, what part the Genl. Conference ought to take and have taken, and the Bishop should take in the annual Conferences, should be held and strongly bound, and to set justice always before mercy; and we have printed and told other churches and ministers and any persons who could read our books, that Single men should receive so much, Married men so much, and the preachers' wives and widows so much, and preachers' children so many dollars to seven years and so many dollars till fourteen years of age, and so the Orphans of preachers, that have died in the work. We have formed dwarf and stagnated funds and what have they yielded to pay these great demands? *\$340 per Conference.*

In 1800 with long debate and a small majority the Genl. Conference raised the quarterage from 64 to 80 dollars, and have one sixth, nay, one seventh of the traveling connexion<sup>[103]</sup> been paid up according to our order of things? Have not many received one third, others two thirds, and have gone from the Conference very easy and very happy, knowing that the Conferences had done them justice and they had no more for them, by fixing the standard and giving each man his dividend? If we pay up or attempt it, we must know what we have to pay. Doubtless many of our people and abundance of our preachers,—to be paying money to preachers' children till they are fourteen years of age,—we shall never be satisfied or reconciled to it, whether they claim it from the circuit or from the funds of the Conference, because it will draw almost incredible numbers to claim upon us! Moreover, many of

these children may have been born afore their parents were either Local or travelling preachers, and may be as it sometimes is the case that good men may have the very vilest of children. And we have known cases in which the Conferences have had deep exercises in their minds from year to year about employing preachers apparently because of the wickedness of their children. And possibly we may be giving money to children of desperate characters—who ought to be put to some business at eight years of age. This is the ground we, *i.e. the action*, recommend to the Genl. Conference. We will meet here and embrace a great number that have been born in the Church of God under the Ministry of their parents.

We will give to all children of travelling preachers twenty dollars or their parents may claim it first in the Circuits and Stations where they labour and be permitted to bring forward their own deficiencies and each man the deficiency of his wife and all his children not eight years of age and at that period they shall be dismissed and have no more claims on the Conferences, whether their parents are alive or if they are the Orphans of preachers that are dead. But what method shall we take? Add to all our other collections the General and universal mite subscription and that every preacher that has a charge in a Station, in a Town, or in a Circuit, to all the male and female members, to all the friendly people that shall come into his way or he shall go into their way, and bring his money to Conference in a proper book with every one's name and every one's money, and let every Annual Conference be watched and charged that they pay to every faithful labourer what is their due and no more; that they shall not receive from

any person or persons sums of money or make any appropriations of them but to answer just demands of their Conference, and let every One of the Superintendents take care, and especially the Senr. Superintendent, that all surplus of money shall be handed along till the whole of all the Conferences receive in justice what is due to them as quarterage, if not the whole yet as high and as equitable as we can possibly go.

[F. Asbury]

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I certify that the preceding unfinished Address was left by Bishop Asbury, in its present form, at his death, and was read in General Conference in Baltimore in May, 1816.<sup>[104]</sup>

Thomas L. Douglass, Secy.  
*Wofford College, original copy used in Nashville Advocate, March 10, 1916. Drew University, second copy used in New York Christian Advocate, March 16, 1916*

*As Asbury came to the close of his life, he put down in this letter which was written by his amanuensis, Thomas Mason, a résumé of his ministerial life and especially his relationship to Wesley. It is probably the most important of all his letters and perhaps the most interesting. It gives an insight into his relationship to the British brethren and especially tells of his conflicts with Thomas Rankin, whom he calls "Diotrephes."*

SOUTH CAROLINA  
*January 15, 1816*

[*To Joseph Benson*]<sup>[105]</sup>

My venerable and elder brother<sup>[106]</sup> in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ and the glorious ministry of the gospel of the grace of God, all hail:

We have lived to see better days than our predecessors and ancient contemporaries. I recollect not to have seen your face, to have known you, or to have the least passing interview with you; but when I was a youth between fifteen and sixteen years of age, you were a man, and President<sup>[107]</sup> of Kingswood School, which must be, in my calculation, between fifty and fifty-five years past. Though I was active some years, and frequently called upon to supply<sup>[108]</sup> for the traveling connection, and traveled the first year nine or ten months (though less or more, I cannot say correctly) in the Staffordshire Circuit, the Circuit in which I lived, in the place of William Orpe,<sup>[109]</sup> the four Conference years<sup>[110]</sup> that I traveled were in Bedford and Salisbury alternately. From thence I came to America and am now in the forty-fifth year of my mission, which will close next October the twentieth.

I have been broken, breach upon breach, by affliction, so that I am at present completely superannuated, having passed, last August, the twenty-first, the first period of the life of man; and it has been for some years past a permanent sentiment with me that in such a case no man high in office, however great in qualifications, should stand in high responsibility in the Church of God, but rather retire and give

place to younger and stronger men in body and mind, such as our junior superintendent, to whom I have ceded the presidential chair of every Annual Conference for these seven years past. It was also my pleasure, when present, always to give Dr. Coke the president's chair. Glory to God, our houses are set in order! Our order of things is such that we have about fifty-five presiding elders, that by turns of four years at farthest, yet movable at any time when the episcopacy judge of the importance of the case. These presiding elders serve a probation of seven or fourteen years in large and very consequential districts and have their quarterly meeting Conferences of the official departments of the local ministry, possibly in some large circuits of long standing, that compose from sixty to eighty, or near one hundred members and examine characters, try cases, admit and give authority to exhorters and local preachers, examine local preachers and local deacons for election and ordination to deacons' and elders' office in the Annual Conference. These presiding elders, in the absence of a bishop, and rule well, are counted worthy of double honor. In the absence of a bishop appointed by him, if not appointed to be elected by the Conference to preside in, and do the business of the Annual Conference. And we have the pleasure to believe that such is their age and improvement that we have not only a half a dozen, but a dozen, if called to preside in an Annual Conference, who would do it with ease, dignity, and correctness, assisted by their brethren, the presiding elders.

If a bishop, at any distance where a mail can go, has consequential business to the whole Conference, he has only

to communicate to one man; he to write to the other presiding elders; they to communicate to the men who have charge of stations and circuits; the work is done.

Bishops in Greece or Rome, what have they been in frightful forms? What have they been, men or fiends? Bishops in our age, among the Presbyterians and Independent Churches, the Baptists, and the commonality of the people are ready to suppose that a bishop is a tyrant, the same as a pope, dreadful, dangerous creatures. Possibly some very wise men, with all their Hebrew, Greek and Latin, have not found out the pure derivation of that word. It is very near to a perfect German word, in both consonants and vowels, admitting the German pronunciation and the English pronunciation to differ, "bischoff," the chief minister. With us a bishop is a plain man, altogether like his brethren, wearing no marks of distinction, advanced in age, and by virtue of his office can sit as president in all the solemn assemblies of the ministers of the gospel; and many times, if he is able, called upon to labor and suffer more than any of his brethren; no negative or positive in forming Church rules; raised to a small degree of constituted and elective authority above all his brethren; and in the executive department, power to say, "Brother, that must not be, that cannot be," having full power to put a negative or a positive in his high charge of administration; and, even in the Annual Conference to correct the body or any individual that may have transgressed or would transgress and go over the printed rules by which they are to be governed, and bring up every man and everything to the printed rules of order

established in the form of Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.

It is an established maxim with us that if a man is not well taught and practiced in obedience to know how to serve, he will never know how to have command or be fit to take any office in the Church of God, and that stubborn, disobedient men must be mended, though it will take much time and more labor.

Several brethren among us have sincerely wished that there could be some mode of communication and union, such as can take place, considering distance and circumstances, and administration, and order, between us and the parent society. We have hoped it would be for the best, then again we have feared we should not find safe hands to put our business into the British Conference to conduct, and that misunderstandings and misrepresentations might bring us into trouble and bring on a greater separation; and I can truly say for one, that the greatest affliction and sorrow of my life was that our dear father,<sup>[111]</sup> from the time of the Revolution to his death, grew more and more jealous of myself and the whole American connection; that it appeared we had lost his confidence almost entirely. But he rigidly contended for a special and independent right of governing the chief minister or ministers of our order, which, in our judgment, went not only to put him out of office, but to remove him from the continent to elsewhere, that our father saw fit; and that, notwithstanding our constitution and the right of electing every church officer and more especially our superintendent. Yet we were told,



"Not till after the death of Mr. Wesley" our constitution could have its full operation.

For many years before this time we lived in peace and trusted in the confidence and friendship of each other. But after the Revolution, we were called upon to give a printed obligation which here follows, and which could not be dispensed with, it must be: "During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel; ready, in matters belonging to church government to obey his commands; and we do engage, after his death, to do everything that we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America and the political interests of the States, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe."<sup>[112]</sup> Our people and preachers were coming out of their childhood, they thought for themselves. If this obligation was necessary, why not introduced in former years, in better times? Matters are strangely changed; much blood has been shed; the minds of the citizens of the United States and the United Kingdom must be exceedingly changed and soured against each other, and the state of things will never be as it has been between the two countries. Some said that the citizens of both countries are so much alike that we shall have war again in ten, twenty, or thirty years. Foreigners by thousands coming to our country and cursing their own; pushing themselves into office, and blowing the coals of strife; magnifying small offenses; raising mountains out of molehills; a word and a blow; stricken by wicked and imperious officers that don't know their duty; putting to death a most ancient and noble British character; and a grand and noble and generous and affable American

character dying swiftly. And yet both sides crying out, "If you cannot lead us, you shall not drive us"; and both sides going to driving as hard as they can with fire and sword.

Mr. Wesley is to this day, and always has been, respected and loved by hundreds and thousands in America as a great apostolic man; and hundreds of children continually named after him—yea, thousands. In America some of our enemies know that of all the good and holy men that our dear John the divine of London, and John<sup>[113]</sup> the divine of Madeley, at the time of the Revolution, had written more on worldly affairs than any gospel men in Europe or America. I spare the dead, and yet I think that a degree of justice is due to the memory of such an apostolic man as John Wesley, I perfectly clear him in my own mind, and lay the whole business upon Diotrephes,<sup>[114]</sup> of the Tower of London. Little did I think that we had such an enemy that had the continual ear and confidence of Mr. Wesley. This I believe from good testimony, eye- and ear-witnesses, who, some years after, when they saw that my mind was so deeply afflicted that I did not get clear of it for some years after Mr. Wesley's death. Dr. Coke and John Harper<sup>[115]</sup> told me what they had seen and heard and known and felt. Dr. Coke said that as often as Mr. Wesley went to see Diotrephes, he came back with his mind strangely agitated and dissatisfied with the American connection; that he did not know what to do to put him to rights; And the counsel of Diotrephes, in a full Conference, was in substance this: "If he [Diotrephes] had the power and authority of Mr. Wesley, he would call Frank Asbury home directly." John Harper was the man who was present in the

Conference<sup>[116]</sup> and heard this advice given and told me several years after in America with his own mouth. Yet I spare the dead and must write the truth, that he [Diotrephes] wrote to the Messrs. Wesley for counsel and advice in our critical situation, advice which we thought truly apostolic and worthy of the minister of the gospel of the Son of God, in substance was to give as little offense as possible either to Jew or Gentile or to the Church of God; to have nothing to do with the affairs of this world if he could help it, and mind the business of our spiritual calling. Diotrephes made this instruction pretty public among the preachers and the people, and then they charged him with violating every part of it. He was positive beyond all description that the Americans should be brought back to the old government, and that immediately. It appeared to me that his object was to sweep the Continent of every preacher that Mr. Wesley had sent to it and of every respectable traveling preacher from Europe who had graduated among us, whether English or Irish. He told us that if we returned to our native country, we should be esteemed as such obedient, loyal subjects that we should obtain ordination in the grand Episcopal Church of England and come back to America with high respectability after the war was ended.

Francis did not believe it; and he possessed a senior right after the removal of Boardman and Pilmoor,<sup>[117]</sup> and God had given him souls for his hire and souls for his charge among the people, and a number of eminent preachers, both traveling and local, wanted nothing but a man to go in and out before them to give them, if we had not books, order and discipline

by the word of mouth. Francis thought as he had possession, it was best to hold it, especially when abundance of respectable members said, "Will you leave us? Will you leave us?" And it was the general language of the American people and preachers that those preachers from Europe who were dissatisfied with the measures of the country, had better go home.

At the death of Mr. Wesley, two of his European disciples asked another, "Who will preach his funeral sermon? Who will write his Life?" They corrected themselves by saying: "Mr. Wesley has written his own life better than any other man can write it." And O that it had been so!<sup>[118]</sup> or that if anything had been done, it had been after the model of the Life of the Vicar of Madeley, compiled by Joseph Benson, which has been made an unspeakable blessing to my mind in reading it. It has been impressed with great weight upon my mind for several years that it was my indispensable duty to write to some person in London or elsewhere a true and correct account, because I think that Mr. Wesley has been reproached beyond anything that was thrown upon him before that period by the London writer<sup>[119]</sup> of his "Life." You will examine, as an early contemporary of the Oxford Methodists and the last branch of that order, you will see in substance that with respect to the American ordination Mr. Wesley is represented as invading and usurping all Church order.<sup>[120]</sup> And yet the author grants if Mr. Wesley had been elected and chosen by the American preachers and people, it would have been in gospel order and proper. Did that author know, or was he ignorant? Why did he write in the dark? When people of

Mr. Wesley's charge in America, many thousands, under total privation of the ordinances of God, and most of the Episcopalians had deserted their stations and Churches from almost every part of the continent. The Presbyterians held no open communion. The Methodists could not become Presbyterians in sentiment, they would not be Baptists, neither Independents.

When the preachers first came to the continent, with what affection they were received! Multitudes came forward as constant hearers and members of the society, and immediately the tables of the Lord in their former Churches were closed against them. When our brethren would say, "O that you had been ordained to administer the ordinances of God to us!" it was of no account to say the Episcopal bishops would not ordain us. "Mr. Wesley should have ordained you." And thus for fourteen or fifteen years hundreds and thousands of preachers and people crying continually the universal election of Mr. Wesley to ordain ministers for America, because he was, as we believe, an apostolic man, admitting upon trial and into connection the preachers of his charge, governing and stationing every one of them, that he came short only in ordination. Now, sir, I submit it to you, if Dr. Whitehead's "Life" of Mr. Wesley, if there is power and authority in any part of your body, in justice to Mr. Wesley (asking no mercy), when called upon by hundreds and thousands for so long a time to exercise the third branch of apostolic power in ordination, and that hundreds and thousands, preachers and people have blessed and praised God for the wisdom given to Mr. Wesley and the Baltimore General Conference in 1784,

to form upon such pure principles a truly apostolic Church, the success which has attended the labors of its ministers. We must say that Dr. Whitehead's history must be corrected according to this testimony, or suppressed, as containing a defamation of that man of God, Mr. John Wesley, and the whole body of American Methodists, We feel determined to stand in apostolic order and gospel ground. Acts xiii, 2, 3—"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And with fasting and prayer they laid their hands on them." And Acts xiv, 23—A distinct name, office and order—elders in the Church of God. (Acts vi, 6.)

Never since was any man, for so many years, called upon to ordain ministers for America; never since could a people be so overjoyed and conform so universally as with one heart and mind. This was what we wanted and requested from year to year; and we have obtained it at last. Bless God and bless Mr. Wesley!

We do not suffer one officer in the Church of God to assume or invade the rights of another; a licensed exhorter to be always attempting to preach; a traveling or local preacher must not baptize without ordination; a deacon, traveling or local, administer the Lord's supper but under the order of an elder. On no account will we suffer the elders to ordain alone, but to come forward when called upon by the bishop, in names and numbers, to assist in the ordination of elders. We do not suffer our presiding elders to invade any singular rights of the episcopacy.

This simple method which we have followed from the beginning in the management of our temporal affairs: our stewards are elected in every conference. They call first on every preacher belonging to the conference to know what they have received for quarterage in the stations and districts wherein they have labored the year past. By doing this they come immediately to a sight, what preachers have already received their full demand and what preachers are deficient, according to our rules of discipline. Then they call for all the collections that have been brought in, with \$200 per conference from the book interest and \$140 from the Chartered Fund, small matters! and the dividend must be made among twelve conferences in the year instead of nine.

We send you our mite subscription<sup>[121]</sup> to let you see what additional wonders we can perform by the blessing of God, more especially when we hear such accounts from your side of the water, of all the churches that have been maintaining the local ministry sending out traveling ministers to the ends of the earth. We wish them success in the name of the Lord. They are coming right at last! But hail Wesley, hail Oxford Methodists, who, seventy years ago, formed an apostolic society and sent forth their traveling preachers in apostolic order! Blessed be God that a number of simple men from the Oxford Methodists were directed to establish an apostolic Church and put the government in the hands of traveling preachers! And yet there must be men that cannot continue to travel and others that sincerely wish, but have it not in their power, to travel who may be useful and enjoy all their rights and privileges in their local state, and the traveling minister

held sacred and made the very best of all their superior privileges.

And concerning ordination, that it ought to be held sacred and considered as the helm of good order, we believe. In every age of the Church it has been, and now is, held sacred.

We have heard of a few simple people here and there, hardly worthy of being members of the church, pleading their right to sit down with each other, if it be every day, and receive and administer the Lord's supper one to another; therefore, we conclude that churches and societies ought to examine well what bearing their sayings and doings will lead to, whether they will introduce division and confusion, or unity and good order in the house of God, in the body of Christ.

Will you, my dear Sir, do what you can, at this late hour of life, as our agent to the British Conference? And, if you please, call a confidential and younger man to your assistance. Will you examine well any letters and communications from America, and judge how far it may be proper to print any of them in the United Kingdoms, and where and in what manner any difficulties may be explained and methods of gospel order be brought into operation? We have planted, we have watered, we have taken a most sacred charge of Upper and Lower Canada for about 22 years.<sup>[122]</sup> They form two respectable districts in the Genesee Conference. They lie side by side on the northern banks of the St. Lawrence, and the United States' districts and circuits on the south. The souls of



our people in Canada are exceedingly precious to us. They are a willing people; prompt to pay their preachers. They say: "Tell us what to do, and we'll do it."

Exclusive of the most ancient, who came from various parts of Europe, the additional and increasing inhabitants now, of both provinces, are multitudes of refugees who went from the United States at the time of the Revolution. Many others have preferred the Provinces to the United States; and there are at this time large family connections on both sides of the line; and many preachers that have changed and interchanged. The manner in which Montreal was taken possession of, and is now held, will not, cannot, be dispensed with by the General Conference, by the Annual Conference, or by the presiding elder of Lower Canada. Thomas Birch, one of His Majesty's subjects, late from Ireland, was sent to Montreal in the very moment of time, just at the commencement of the war, and was permitted to stay a year longer than our constitution grants, (the state of the case justifying it), and returned to the United States with an honorable recommendation from the society. That Samuel Montgomery should be sent, with the greatest expedition, six hundred miles to supply the place of Thomas Birch, that Samuel (one of His Majesty's subjects, late from Ireland) should be prevented from taking his charge by the British missionary! And who is to examine Mr. Williams's<sup>[123]</sup> conduct? Mr. Bennett, of the province of Nova Scotia? The British Conference or the Directors of the Missionary Society?

Henry Ryan, presiding elder of Lower Canada, made a visit to Montreal by order of the bishops and Genesee Conference, he has obtained testimonies which will be handed forward to the agent of our affairs, presented in their order. We, as ministers of Christ, think it a sin of sins to divide the body of Christ. There was special caution given to Thomas Birch, Samuel Montgomery, and Henry Ryan; and we have good reason to believe that, possibly two-thirds of the society in Montreal would put themselves under the government of the American connection. But we shall bear long, suffer long, and make every explanation, till the charge is given up to us. Whether the thing has been done through ignorance or through the influence of wicked and designing men, we shall give our fathers and brethren time to inform themselves and time to correct their conduct, for we are sure that our episcopacy could never act so out of order as to send a preacher to take possession of a charge so important under the oversight of the parent connection. And yet, in this business, we would touch that venerable body, or any authoritative part of it, with the tenderness of a feather dipt in oil.

Respected brother, may our presiding elders address their letters to you, when cases of a singular nature shall occur? At present, Francis, your friend, with great difficulty, has dictated this letter.

One thing more. Upon this continent we are crowded with French people, like polite heathens and barbarians to us. We want French Methodist preachers. Despairing of obtaining any from the traveling connection, since we have read your

reports, our only hope is that some of our brethren from Jersey and Guernsey will come over and help us. We have employed an accomplished young Frenchman, of an extensive acquaintance with the French Methodists in those islands, to write for us, and see if such a man as we want can be obtained. And can you aid in this matter? It is our wish that a preacher, that is willing to come to America, to be well recommended by our brethren that know him, to our agent, Mr. Benson, on whose recommendation we shall depend.

My love and a thousand thanks to Mr. Blanshard<sup>[124]</sup> for the Minutes; to Mr. Marsden,<sup>[125]</sup> for the reports, hoping they will continue their goodness from year to year. Let them direct to any part of the United States, to myself or the junior bishop or bishops, whose names will be known upon the Minutes of our Conferences. And should our Father and Brother Benson have any special call and communication to make, be sure to make it to one of the presiding elders, and the business will be taken up in good order. Instruction will be given by the bishops to the presiding elders, that they may be called to write to the agents of our American affairs, in London or elsewhere, and possibly to be written to from the men of our confidence in Europe.

And now may the God of all grace, with the eternal Son and ever-blessed Spirit, be with us through time and for ever and ever! Amen.

Francis Asbury

I, Thomas Mason, who wrote this letter, salute my fathers and brethren in the Lord.

P.S. Mr. Wesley could not come himself to America, but he sent one<sup>[126]</sup> that was well qualified. Dr. Coke and myself, were so liberal as to submit ourselves to an election, before Francis was ordained to his office as Bishop and Superintendent, at the first General Conference in Baltimore, December, 1784.

Dr. Coke, notwithstanding his visits were transitory, was very useful, both as a divine and as a classical man. He was esteemed by hundreds and thousands in America; his writings will be read with attention, his memory will be precious. The Americans knew his worth, and knew not only his labours and travels, but some of his sufferings, as he was oft compelled by necessity to take up with very mean lodgings through some of the extreme parts of our country, and at a very early settlement; as Francis who generally attended him, and many others can witness: add to this, that every visit, he had to cross and re-cross the Atlantic. 'Tis true Dr. Coke had his troubles in America, and it is as true, that Francis Asbury had his troubles. And we heard that Mr. Wesley had his troubles, and no wonder, when he was told, and possibly made to believe, that no sooner had he granted the Americans what they wished than they declared themselves independent of him.

Had we not lived in all good confidence and fellowship for fifteen years? no complaint on our side—and no complaint that we heard of from Mr. Wesley? Why then should our

generous minds be called to enter an obligation which we never had violated, and I believe there was no intention to violate? And I must believe that the Americans were the greatest friends Mr. Wesley had through Europe or the world. They had read all his books that had come to hand, they heard of all his excellencies, his labours, sufferings and success. And who with them but Mr. Wesley! almost every large and steady family among the old disciples must have a Wesley among the children. Francis had been charged (and perhaps very properly) with being a man of a gloomy mind, and sometimes a prophet of evil tidings concerning ministerial men, but many of his brethren after proper trial have confessed if they were evil, they were true in the end.

Mr. Wesley wrote concerning Diotrephes, honest George<sup>[127]</sup> and Francis, "You three be as one—act by united counsels." But who was to do that with Diotrephes? Francis had a prior right of government by special order and letter from Mr. Wesley a few months after he had been in the country; and if he could not exercise it in the cities, where the first missionaries that came over were located by necessity, having no proper men to change with them: yet Francis in the country endeavored to do the best he could. Matters did not fit well between Diotrephes and him, and poor Francis was charged with having a gloomy mind and being very suspicious and so, and so and so. It would be presumed because Francis was a little heady that Diotrephes wrote to Mr. Wesley to "call Francis home immediately." Be it as it might, Mr. Wesley wrote such a letter to Francis, and Francis wrote in answer that he would prepare to return as soon as

possible whatever the sacrifice might be. Then Diotrephes said, "You cannot go, your labours are wanted here." Francis said, "Mr. Wesley has written for me, I must obey his order." Diotrephes said, "I will write to Mr. Wesley and satisfy him." Shortly after came a letter from Mr. Wesley to Francis in substance thus, "You have done very well to continue in America and help your brethren when there was such a great call."

And now my father and brother, I know not a man in the British Connexion to write to, they are the children of forty-five or fifty years, you are the man and you were the Father when they were children. I leave these things with you to make any use, or no use of them. I have confidence in you that you will not make a bad use of them.

F.A.

This is endorsed by Joseph Benson, "Jan. 1816."

*Two copies of this address are extant: one in Methodist Book Concern, London, in Letters of Methodist Preachers, Vol. V, Folio 3, transcribed by L.E.S. Gutteridge, and the other is in Emory University Library.*

*Though Asbury is very near the end of his life, he still shows great concern for the appointments. There is reference here to the subscription which was being circulated in the church, a copy of which is included with these letters.*

[February —, 1816]<sup>[128]</sup>

[To David Young]<sup>[129]</sup>

I recollect your letter, I could not write. I was hawking up blood. I judged it lay with you as any presiding elder to take up a stray or mend a conference case. A man fit for no station was sent back in mending and accommodation. An old steady preacher said Brother B. Mervin must change a brother. The people will not receive him. He was in the circuit a few years back, he offended the people generally, he will not do. Yes, said Francis, I sent him back to the west end but accommodation altered it, but I was mute. I have wished one letter once a year, an abstract from all the statements of presiding elders showing the general state of the narrative<sup>[130]</sup> of the whole work in that conference it might be seen with other and a general narrative of the work printed, it would save money and labour. I cannot write now as in days past.

Francis Asbury

P.S. As to the printed subscription paper it is a plan of benevolence you may use or not. It has met with most general applause among our own people, and hearers and almost all. It should be booked as ours is. I presume we have furnished a relief to every conference and perhaps sent 2000 dollars and over last June—12 months.

*Methodist Historical Collection, Ohio Wesleyan University  
Library*

*This is the last extant letter of Asbury. Two great concerns are still with him. These are his preachers and the German-*

*speaking people. He shows his especial love for John Wesley Bond, who was his traveling companion and who was with him at the end.*

MYRICK'S, BRUNSWICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

[March 4, 1816] (?)<sup>[131]</sup>

[To William McKendree]<sup>[132]</sup>

My dear Son:

Were it proper and possible, I should greatly enjoy to be near thee and the conferences, but perhaps I should weary myself, as I have done, and hinder more than help you.

1. If I may say anything of the stations: does Joseph Frye<sup>[133]</sup> hold his zeal? If so, there is no man more fit to preside in the Monongahela District.

2. If we take up German missions, it must be spiritedly. I wish we had four men who would offer freely, and serve faithfully, married or single; our hymn book translated; a thousand copies of Discipline,<sup>[134]</sup> correct from the General Conference. If they will not sell, give them away to the people. Send a missionary to Schuylkill District, Susquehanna, Carlisle, and Monongahela, presiding elders holding cash to pay the missionaries quarterly, the missionaries making collections and being accountable for these also to the conferences.

I wish the change of Boehm and Roberts,<sup>[135]</sup> because of Henry's usefulness in German.



We have covered the three hundred dollars to Virginia Conference. If either Baltimore or Philadelphia is deficient one or two hundred, we are ready.

Had I power to be present, the stewards would have a correct account of all we have received at conferences and expended upon road expenses. In 1815 I asked thirty dollars, they sent forty.

The incredible toil of Wesley Bond<sup>[136]</sup> is only known to me; I must reward him. His character is good; he has attempted to moderate his sermons; preaches to acceptance, generally beloved by the preachers and the people.

I have written to the General Conference,<sup>[137]</sup> wish you to see it. I have written to Mr. Benson, and wish the General Conference to hear a copy of the letter read.

In great love,

F. Asbury<sup>[138]</sup>

*Robert Paine, Life and Times of Bishop McKendree,  
181-82*

## ENDNOTES

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- [1] No entry in *Journal*, 1852 ed., from January 23 to February 20; however, he was in North Carolina.
- [2] A layman of Baltimore. (See preceding letters, May 5, 1804, and January 5, 1809.)
- [3] The fifth edition was dated 1814. The Wesley work printed there was the twenty-seventh edition, corrected.
- [4] Henry Wilkins, M.D., was the editor of the *Family Adviser, or a Plain and Modern Practice of Physic: Calculated for the Use of Families Who Have Not the Advantages of a Physician, and Acquainted to the Diseases of America, to Which Is Annexed Mr. Wesley's Primitive Physic*, from 5th ed., New York, 1814. He was the son of Joseph Wilkins and was born in Annapolis, Maryland, in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. They moved to Baltimore. (Jacob S. Payton.) Asbury makes at least three references in the *Letters* to the work which Wilkins did on the *Journal*. However, Asbury is not sufficiently explicit to tell how much Wilkins did. He married the daughter of Samuel Owings, one of Asbury's early converts. His wife was the leader "of the first female class" in Baltimore.
- [5] Presiding elder, Muskingum District, Ohio Conference.
- [6] II Kings 6:26.
- [7] Quinn was presiding elder on the Scioto District, Ohio Conference.
- [8] "The Church Missionary Society began its work in 1799, and arose out of the discussions of the Eclectic Society, of which John Newton, Richard Cecil, John Venn, Charles Simeon, and other leading evangelicals were members. It

was at first called the Missionary Society for Africa and the East, but its present name was adopted in 1812. The men of Clapham were its ardent supporters, with Wilberforce and Charles Simeon at the front. The advance of ritualism has not diminished its intense evangelical fervor.

"It was through Charles Simeon's influence that Claudius Buchanan [Buchannon] and Henry Martyn were appointed chaplains of the East India Company, with Stipends of 1,200 pounds a year. Buchanan had been sent to Cambridge at the expense of Henry Thornton, having been previously brought to the feet of Christ by a sermon of John Newton's." (Hurst's *History of Methodism*, III, "British Methodism," 1190-91.) (Frank Baker.)

[9] See *Journal*, October 3, 1813, for references to Tennessee Conference.

[10] Francis Travis was the preacher on the Fountain-Head Charge on the Cumberland District in 1813. Asbury plays on Travis' name.

[11] Pastor at Hanover, Virginia, on Meherren [Meherrin] District. The district was named after the river.

[12] Early became a bishop. At this time he was presiding elder of Meherren District, which included Petersburg, Greenville, Mecklenburg, Cumberland, Amelia, Brunswick, Bedford, Lynchburg, and Manchester (now South Richmond), all in Virginia.

[13] Edward Cannon was a pastor on the Norfolk District, at Princess Ann, in 1813.

- [14] Cannellem H. Hines, one of the pastors, appointed to Greenville on the Meherren District, 1813. (See *Minutes*, 1814, for above appointments.)
- [15] The envelope has July 9th.
- [16] Pastor of Light Street Church, Baltimore.
- [17] Asbury occasionally uses this word in this connection.
- [18] These were the German-speaking preachers.
- [19] Presiding elder on the Monongahela District, Baltimore Conference.
- [20] Philip William Otterbein, who helped to ordain Asbury general superintendent at the Christmas Conference, 1784. (See Note 37, letter, August 5, 1813.)
- [21] Pastor of the Freehold charge on the West Jersey District in 1813.
- [22] Presiding elder on the Ashgrove District in the New York Conference.
- [23] Not clear.
- [24] Presiding elder, Georgetown District. Asbury was at Senator Worthington's. This letter was sent by hand of Senator Worthington to Reed. It was addressed to Nelson Reed in care of Dr. Samuel Baker, Baltimore, Maryland.
- [25] Reference to lovely Perry Hall, home of Mr. Gough in Maryland. (See *Journal*, August 21, 1814.)
- [26] John Fletcher, the English Methodist preacher who wrote the famous *Checks to Antinomianism*.
- [27] Horse disease.
- [28] He was a presiding elder for many years.
- [29] See the *Journal*, August 21, 1814.
- [30] Bond was his traveling companion.
- [31] Saurin's *Sermons* were read by Asbury frequently.

- [32] John Early, the Virginia presiding elder who later became a bishop.
- [33] Roanoke Chapel is by some (Coke and Rankin) placed in North Carolina. Asbury, Early, Bennett, Meade, and Mason placed it in Virginia. It is not clear where the original chapel was; but it was in St. Andrew's Parish, which was the Brunswick Parish. There is no evidence of any Established Church preaching in the section of North Carolina referred to before 1749; and Roanoke Chapel, an old Established Church, was built in 1733 or 1734. The quarterly conference records for 1798 to 1805 show Roanoke Chapel on the Greensville Circuit. The book kept by Edward Dromgoole is in the Dromgoole collection at the University of North Carolina library. (See William Meade, *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, II, 476-77.)
- [34] This letter was sent in care of Mr. Ryland, Preacher's House, Light Street, Baltimore.
- [35] See Jesse Lee's letter to Asbury, April 10, 1815, for the remainder of the story.
- [36] The Baltimore Conference began on Monday, March 20.
- [37] For a discussion of this letter and that of April 10, 1815, to Francis Asbury, see W.L. Duren, *The Top Sergeant of the Pioneers*, ch. xv, 145-55.
- [38] See letter to William McKendree, March 15, 1815.
- [39] William McKendree.
- [40] The Virginia Conference was held in Lynchburg in 1815. Asbury stated that the people of Baltimore wished Lee to be sent to that city and indicated that it was his wish. The bishop was indisposed, and John Early read the

appointments. Lee's name was not in the appointments. A note at the foot of the appointments said, "Jesse Lee will receive his appointment at the Baltimore Conference." Lee felt that he was transferred without notice or consultation. Some days later he received a letter from the Baltimore Conference telling him that he had been appointed to Fredericksburg, Virginia. He was very much disappointed at the appointment and refused to go. The General Conference of 1816 was in the offing. When he was removed from the Virginia Conference, the brethren there did not elect him, nor did the Baltimore Conference to which he was transferred. Lee felt that he had been transferred to prevent his election to the General Conference, and this accounts for the harsh letter. Lee had been chaplain to the Congress in Washington; and though this was not popular with the brethren, Asbury wished to place him close to Washington and expected to put him in Baltimore. Evidently he could not make the appointment. Lee persisted in not going to Fredericksburg. During the year he traveled through the Meherrin District, assisting preachers there. He also visited Norfolk and finished the year on the Brunswick circuit, acting as a substitute for C.S. Mooring. At the Virginia Conference, held in Raleigh, January 24, 1816, Lee took an affectionate leave of the conference and went to the Baltimore Conference at Georgetown. At the close of the conference he was stationed at Annapolis. While there, Asbury died at the Arnold home in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. When Lee heard of the death of the bishop, he felt as if a "friend had

been smitten down at his side." He published the following sketch of Asbury shortly afterward.

"He was always of a slender constitution and yet never spared himself, but ventured through the greatest difficulties and dangers, in order to preach to the people and to attend to the preachers. He was an excellent preacher; and his gift in prayer was exceedingly great. He was deeply pious, remarkably fervent and constant in prayer. His peculiar talent was for governing the preachers, and taking care of the Church of Christ. He generally rose early in the morning, travelled many miles in a day, preached often and slept but little. He was generally known throughout the United States, much esteemed and greatly beloved. His presence was generally courted, his advice requested, and his directions attended to. It pleased God to spare him for many years; and, at last, to give him an easy, safe, and happy passage out of this world. And his numerous friends have no room to doubt but that their loss is his infinite gain. He has not left behind him many, if any, to equal him in the Church to which he belonged. And notwithstanding, his loss is, and will be, greatly lamented. We have full confidence in the Lord and he will take care of and provide for his Church."

Asbury's body was removed from Spotsylvania County and placed for a time in Eutaw Street Church, Baltimore. There was a large procession which followed the body. Minton Thrift, who wrote his memoirs, said Jesse Lee "with a deep and profound sorrow, united in these funeral rites." "The scene was solemn and impressive. Mr. Lee's countenance bespoke the emotions of his mind. A

dignified sorrow, such as veterans feel, while following to the grave an old companion in arms, was evinced by his words and countenance. They had suffered together, and had long fought in the same ranks; the one had gained his crown, the other was soon to receive it." This account is from the *Life and Times of the Rev. Jesse Lee*, by Leroy M. Lee, his nephew.

Asbury's body was later moved to Mount Olivet Cemetery, Baltimore, where it rests today.

[41] This letter was sent to Joseph Benson, editor of *The Methodist Magazine*.

[42] Wesley frequently stressed the spiritual value of fasting and in his latter years bemoaned the fact that Methodists were neglecting this self-discipline. What Asbury has especially in mind is probably a passage in Wesley's sermon on "Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity," preached at Dublin in 1789 and published in *The Arminian Magazine* the following year. In it Wesley says: "While we were at Oxford, the rule of every Methodist was, (unless in case of sickness,) to *fast* every Wednesday and Friday in the year, in imitation of the Primitive Church. . . . I fear there are now thousands of Methodists, so called, . . . who . . . have entirely left off fasting." (Frank Baker.)

[43] Canada.

[44] This official letter of greeting to the British Conference was in the hand of a scribe. The signature is added by Asbury himself, very slowly and tremulously. (Frank Baker.)



[45] M'Caine retired to become principal of a boys' school. He later with Nicholas Snethen helped to organize the Methodist Protestant Church.

[46] Says M'Caine: "In order that all may understand the import of the following request, it may be proper to inform them that for several years before Mr. Asbury's death he had frequent conversations with me about undertaking the completion of a work to be extracted from the writings of the most pious and practical commentators of the Holy scriptures. This work he frequently urged me to undertake; and in this peculiarly sententious and emphatic manner of expressing himself, he used to call it a 'focus.'" (Colhouer, pp. 94-95.) Asbury called it "The Focus."

[47] July 1, 1815, Asbury met Francis Hollingsworth at Little York, Pennsylvania. He was in Philadelphia on June 25. Differences between dates of *Letters* and the *Journal* are hard to explain. (See letter to M'Caine, April 30, 1815.)

[48] M'Caine became the writer for the reformers' position in reference to the laity and the episcopacy. He wrote the *History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, the Defence of Truth and Letters on the Methodist Episcopal Church*. Drinkhouse says: "Unhappily, like James O'Kelly, he was irate, somewhat overbearing, bold to bluntness and handled personal characters ungloved." He was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1768 and was educated for the Roman Catholic priesthood. He came to America to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1788, when he was twenty. He volunteered for the ministry under William Hammett and was received into the conference in 1797. He retired in 1806, but re-entered the ministry in 1815 and traveled until 1821. After that he

worked with the reformers and the Methodist Protestant Church. (Drinkhouse, *History of Methodist Reform and Methodist Protestant Church*, I, 176, 271.)

[49] Martin Boehm was a Mennonite preacher, father of Henry. Martin, with Philip William Otterbein and Christian Newcomer, started the United Brethren Church.

[50] According to the *Journal*, Asbury was at Boehm's on July 27 and 28. He went from there to Hollingsworth's and was there working on his *Journal* on July 5. (See *Journal*.)

[51] Presiding elder, Baltimore Conference, Baltimore District.

[52] Sometimes called Chartered Fund.

[53] This letter has neither place from which written nor date. However, several of the names listed here were on the Carlisle District in 1815. (See *Minutes*.)

[54] Presiding elder on Carlisle District.

[55] Robert Hanna.

[56] Caleb Leech.

[57] Robert Burch was presiding elder on the Carlisle District in 1814.

[58] Asbury sometimes plays on words.

[59] James Reily.

[60] Auckwick, Pennsylvania.

[61] According to the *Journal*, Asbury was at Somerset on July 19, 1815.

[62] Presiding elder, Carlisle District, Pennsylvania.

[63] Not readable.

[64] Daniel Hitt and Thomas Ware were the editors and Book Agents.

[65] Three lines badly defaced.

[66] Presiding elder, Muskingum District, Ohio Conference.

- [67] There are many evidences of early Presbyterians being more Arminian in their theology than Calvinist.
- [68] Reference to preachers who located.
- [69] Preachers' families.
- [70] The letter is badly defaced at the bottom of the page, and the remainder is not clear.
- [71] Presiding elder, Potomac District, Baltimore Conference. The letter is not addressed, but it is very probably to Joseph Frye.
- [72] For some reason M'Caine is at the bottom of the letter. It could be that the brother referred to above was Alexander M'Caine. He was disaffected at the time and later left the church.
- [73] John Wesley Bond was Asbury's traveling companion, and he evidently wrote this letter. It refers to the "letter *Father Asbury* alludes to" and ties in with the letter to Joseph Frye. There is more to the letter, but it is badly defaced and cannot be put together. Dear Brother:

As Bishop Asbury is kind — a part of his paper I gladly embrace the opportunity of sending you this assurance not only of high esteem but of much affection. Dear Brother I rejoice much that you remain with the Fathers of Methodism in doctrine, discipline, and love, this I have never had any doubt of—but all are not so. The letter *Father Asbury* alludes to I found in the West, it manifests indeed that former proceedings were designed only as "an opening wedge." It calls for an electioneering spirit among our preachers and people to alter the present order of Church government. This is to be done by sending no member to General Conference who will not vote for

their new measures, it provides among other things that there should be but one grade in the ministry—all Elders. That we should have no more bishops but superintendents elected every four years—The presiding elders also elected—a committee also elected to station the preachers, with much more such *stuff*. I felt the more mortified that those letters (for there were three or four of them at least but all I believe from the same man) should come from a member of the Baltimore Conference —— I have no doubt that God will overturn the mat —— of uneasy men, but it is a serious thing that the —— should be exciting the people to holiness, should draw —— to vain jangling which do only engender strife —— holding the Church together should —— more than 20,000 —— land. Others may no doubt, will think for themselves but for my part I have no doubt a [meeting]? has been held in Hell how to stop the progress of Methodism. Its influence is extending—Campmeetings are bearing down all before them—something must be done—divide them—draw them from the simp——

John Wesley Bond

[74] One of Asbury's last administrative acts was for the benefit of those preachers and their families who were in financial distress. He sent around a circular outlining his plan and on at least one copy added a supplement in his own hand. For a facsimile of the first donations to the "Mite subscriptions opened, and continued for the year 1816," see E.S. Tipple's *Francis Asbury*, facing p. 294. (Frank Baker.)

[75] Since this is dated January 1, most of the money was collected in 1815. Asbury had started the new 1816

subscription on January 1. He was probably reviewing this at the Arnold house shortly before his death.

[76] Names not included.

[77] Though the preface says that "no person is permitted to give more than a dollar," Swain gave five dollars.

[78] He traveled with Asbury.

[79] New England Conference.

[80] The parts of the address put here in italics were not in the original draft now owned by Wofford College. In the two copies there are many differences in capitalization of words and some changes of prepositions.

[81] John Wesley.

[82] Francis Asbury.

[83] "Mother" instead of "mass" in Wofford College copy.

[84] "Who" instead of "that" in Wofford College copy.

[85] James O'Kelly.

[86] "About two years" in Wofford College copy.

[87] William McKendree.

[88] William Hammett's schism.

[89] Thomas Rankin.

[90] The reference is to the general meeting held in Caroline County, Virginia, in October, 1811. Caroline was William Guirey's home county. Most of the O'Kellyite churches in Virginia were represented. Elias Smith (see note to letter of September 15, 1800), editor of *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, was present. The unnamed church in which they met had formerly been Methodist. The question asked was "Can Christian Brethren of the South unite with Christian Brethren of the North?" (the New England group led by Elias Smith). They agreed upon a union; and in 1815 the

Virginia Christians were represented in the United States General Convention at Wyndham, Connecticut. The union was broken off in 1844. Sometime after the Caroline meeting William Guirey became editor of *The Christian Sun* in Suffolk, Virginia. It is not clear whether Philetus refers to Guirey or Elias Smith. (See MacClenny, *The Life of Reverend James O'Kelly*, 160-65.)

[91] Reference to O'Kellyites.

[92] In the *New York Advocate* this paragraph is included. It is not in the Wofford College copy.

[93] "Nashville" was not in the Wofford College copy.

[94] The amendment was adopted.

[95] The Wofford College copy begins "Of the."

[96] The Wofford College copy has "suffered."

[97] The formation of the Genesee Conference subjected Asbury and McKendree to much criticism. Several of the annual conferences took action in the matter, and finally the General Conference of 1812 was asked to pass upon it. This it did effectually by the unanimous adoption of the following resolution: "Moved that this General Conference do consider that the Genesee Annual Conference is a legally constituted and organized Conference." (Note from the *New York Advocate*.)

[98] Doubtless a reference to conference boundary lines, for at this conference the boundaries of the conferences were defined.

[99] "Burden" instead of "load" in Wofford College copy.

[100] "Great" instead of "greatly" in Wofford College copy.

[101] "Almost" was placed before "constantly" in the Wofford College copy.

[102] The Wofford College copy had "that" instead of "who."

[103] The editors of the *Discipline*, William Phoebus, Nathan Bangs, and Daniel Hitt, with the Book Agents were instructed to omit this word from the *Discipline*, substituting for it in every place "church," "community," or "itinerancy" as the grammatical construction might require. (Note from the *New York Advocate*.)

[104] The Thomas L. Douglass note is only on the New York copy. On the original manuscript in Wofford College there are two notes as follows:

1. This document was found with the papers of the late Rev. Daniel Asbury and carefully preserved by his son, the Rev. Henry Asbury.

J.B. Anthony

2. This document is now sent to be deposited in the archives of Historical Society of the So. Ca. Conference.

Jacob B. Anthony

Nov. 20, 1860

[105] The original letter is in the Methodist Book Room, London, *Letters of Methodist Preachers*, Vol. V, Folio 3. Francis Asbury signed the letter, though it is written in the hand of Thomas Mason. This is indicated on the letter. The letter was printed in Paine's *Life of William McKendree* and in Duren's *Francis Asbury*. Mason's copy of the letter is in the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Georgia. (L.E.S. Gutteridge has transcribed the original.)

[106] Asbury was older than Benson. (See note to letter of April 22, 1813.)

- [107] Benson was not actually "President" of Kingswood School (there was no such office) but classical master. (Frank Baker.)
- [108] Mason at first wrote "supplier," then altered it to "supply" and added the "to" above the line. (Frank Baker.)
- [109] Dates are confused. (See British *Minutes*.)
- [110] Asbury was stationed by the conference as follows: 1767, Bedfordshire Circuit; 1768, in charge of Colchester or Essex Circuit; 1769, Bedfordshire Circuit; 1770, South Wiltshire or Salisbury Circuit. (Frank Baker.)
- [111] John Wesley.
- [112] This engagement, entered into at the Christmas Conference of 1784 and published in the first *Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was rejected at the Baltimore Conference of 1787 when Coke tried to enforce its provisions. It is interesting to note that, although control from England was thus overthrown, the promise to cooperate continued in force and was honored. (Frank Baker.)
- [113] The Rev. John William Fletcher (1729-85), vicar of Madeley, whose biography was prepared and published by Wesley and later by Benson himself. In 1775 Wesley had abridged Samuel Johnson's famous pamphlet "Taxation no Tyranny" and had republished it as *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*. The attacks on this pamphlet turned Fletcher's attention for a time from theological controversy to what he called in a letter to Benson "Christian politics, a branch of divinity too much neglected by some and too much attended by others." He followed his *Vindication of Wesley's 'Calm Address to our American Colonies'* (1775)



by *American Patriotism* in 1776, extracts from which he reprinted in the *Bible and the Sword* issued the same year. When the government tried to reward him for these political writings, Fletcher replied: "I want nothing, but more grace." (See Tyerman, *Wesley's Designated Successor*, 347-53.) (Frank Baker.)

[114] Evidently Thomas Rankin, the preacher who Asbury felt had poisoned Wesley's mind. Rankin was very close to Wesley.

[115] An Irish Methodist preacher who went to the West Indies and later to the United States.

[116] Manchester Conference, 1787.

[117] Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, the English preachers who were the first official Methodist missionaries to come to America. They returned to England in 1774 when the fires of the Revolution began. Pilmoor later returned to America and became an Episcopal clergyman in Philadelphia.

[118] Thomas Coke and Henry Moore had written a life of Wesley.

[119] John Whitehead, M.D.

[120] Whitehead had many scathing things to say about Wesley's ordinations. He maintained that Wesley's principles and his practices were at variance and that Coke's machinations were really responsible for the tragic error. He concluded that the ordinations were "spurious and of no validity" and that Wesley would never have "adopted so mis-shapen a brat [as this scheme of ordination so full of confusion and absurdity] had not his clear perception of things been rendered feeble and dim by

flattery, persuasion, and age." (John Whitehead, M.D., *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, II, 418-38.) (Frank Baker.)

[121] See mite subscription included with Asbury's letter dated January 1, 1816.

[122] (See letter of April 18, 1815.) Asbury visited Canada in 1811. He hoped to go again.

[123] Richard Williams had been sent to Montreal by the British Conference at the request of William Bennett, general superintendent of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick District, but without the knowledge or approbation of Henry Ryan, the presiding elder. There was a breach in Montreal and some bitterness; and British American co-operation in Canada, already insecure, threatened to turn into open warfare. (Frank Baker.) Barclay and Playter have discussions of the Canadian difficulties for this period. (See Barclay, *Early American Methodism*, I, 188 ff., and Playter, *History of Methodism in Canada*, I, 143 ff.)

[124] Thomas Blanshard, Book Steward.

[125] George Marsden, secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

[126] Coke.

[127] George Shadford.

[128] This letter was evidently written in early 1816. It refers to the subscription which was being circulated then and at the time of Asbury's death.

[129] Presiding elder, Muskingum District.

[130] Asbury was still concerned to have a history of early Methodism.

[131] The letter is undated. It is clear it is in 1816 and after Asbury's letter to Joseph Benson of January 15. Paine says that this letter is "perhaps the last he ever wrote" and that it was sent by John Wesley Bond with his letter to McKendree of March 4, 1816. (See *Life and Times of Bishop McKendree*, 179-81.)

[132] Bishop McKendree.

[133] Joseph Frye was presiding on the Potomac District and Christopher Frye on the Monongahela District.

[134] The references here are to the German editions of the *Hymn Book* and *Discipline*. The *Journal* of Bishop Christian Newcomer throws much light on Asbury's relationships to the United Brethren. Newcomer first visited a Methodist conference at Pipe Creek, Maryland, 1801. He attended the General Conference in Baltimore in 1804. He relates what happened at the Harrisonburg Virginia Conference in 1809. He names those who preached—Asbury, Roberts, Pitts, and George in English, and Boehm, Gruber, and himself in German. A committee was appointed to talk with him about union between the two churches. Newcomer took with him a resolution to be presented to the United Brethren Conference. It dealt with union and the exchange of tickets for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The United Brethren decided that they would recognize each other's tickets for the Lord's Supper, but on other matters "we must have time to think." As long as Asbury lived, there were frequent visits of the United Brethren preachers to the Methodist Conferences. Union was often discussed among the preachers. See Christian Newcomer's *Journal* for repeated references to Asbury and

the Methodists. (Samuel S. Hough, *Christian Newcomer, His Life, Journal and Achievements*, 1941.)

[135] Henry Boehm was presiding elder on the Chesapeake District, and Robert R. Roberts was presiding elder on the Philadelphia District.

[136] John Wesley Bond was with Asbury.

[137] Address to the General Conference of 1816.

[138] Asbury's last letter was written in Virginia, the state which had seen more of his travels than any other state. Tipple and others indicate that he visited the state 84 times. However, the investigations that have been made in reference to his visits to Old Virginia (including the present West Virginia) show that he visited this area more than 120 times. Asbury traveled on from Myrick's in Brunswick County, Virginia, to Richmond. About the middle of March he reached Manchester (now South Richmond) and stayed with his old preacher friend John Potts (retired). Father Courtney came to see him there, and they made plans for the local preachers. After remaining a few days in Manchester, he crossed the James River to Richmond and lodged with Archibald Foster. Here he remained for a week. He interviewed Bishop Moore of the Episcopal Church here. They talked of the work of the two churches. Then on Sunday, March 24, he preached his last sermon, having to be lifted into the pulpit. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday he traveled from Richmond to Mr. George Arnold's in Spotsylvania County, Virginia. On Sunday about eleven o'clock he called on John Wesley Bond, his traveling companion, to sing, pray, and expound the twenty-first chapter of Revelation.

"When he could no longer swallow or speak, seeing the distress of his friends, he looked joyfully at Brother Bond and raised his hand. When asked if he then felt the victory complete, exerting all his remaining strength, he raised both his hands, and in a few minutes died without a struggle or groan, as a weary child sinks to sleep upon its mother's breast. He died on March 31, 1816." (See Paine, *Life and Times of Bishop McKendree*, 183, and Bennett, *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*, 606-15.)

See map of Asbury's journeys in Virginia facing page 238.

## **ADDENDA**

## ADDENDA

This volume was in page proof when the items in this addenda came to light. It was too late to annotate these. Miss Sara C. Stevenson of Delaware, Ohio, a great-great-niece of Daniel Hitt, had heard of the effort to collect the letters, and advised us of a collection of letters in an old ledger which her family had put in the library of Ohio Wesleyan University. One of her relatives had made copies of a large number of letters written to Daniel Hitt by early Methodist preachers. There are 334 letters altogether. Among these copies of letters there are sixteen Asbury letters to Daniel Hitt. Nine of the Asbury letters had been printed somewhere before, and we had already included them in this volume. "The letters are the property of the son and daughters of Richard T. Stevenson, Ph.D., D.D., Head of the Department of History at Ohio Wesleyan University, 1893-1919. He was the grand nephew of the Rev. Daniel Hitt. The letters are on loan to the Library of Ohio Wesleyan University."

Some of the correspondence in the ledger is that of members of the Hitt family, Samuel, Benjamin, and Martin. Letters are also included from Thomas Coke, John Dickins, Philip Bruce, Thornton Fleming, James Quinn, Enoch George, and others. The volume is a valuable find.

The other things included in the addenda speak for themselves. The O'Kelly items shed further light on the schism to which Francis Asbury refers so often.

We hope that as a result of this study many more letters may come to light. It is a great source of disappointment to us that after five years of research many more letters have not been found. However, it will be seen that the materials included in this addenda tie in well with the other letters. Little new information has been added.

### John Kobler's Account of the General Conference of 1792

Thursday, November 1 at eight o'clock in the morning the ministers met 114 in number, at our new Chapel. Bishop Coke (who had just come from Europe) was our President in Conference.

It was first agreed upon "that our morning meeting was to begin precisely at 9 o'clock, and adjourn at one in the afternoon.

2nly The afternoon meeting is to begin at half after 2 and adjourn at five.

Secondly, A moderator was chosen.

It was his business first.

1. To keep order in the Conference.
2. That no person should speak above fifteen minutes without the consent of the Conference.



3. To call the speaker to his subject when he wanders from it.
4. If two rises together, one of whom has spoke before, the latter shall be preferred.

Thirdly, It was agreed upon that no old rule should be altered without a majority, and no new one established without the consent of two-thirds.

Fourthly, That any of the members of our church might have the privilege of siting in the house during the Conference to hear the debates.

Fifthly, Bishop Asbury made application for a committee which consisted of five members. This was granted. Their business was to consult with the Bishop in points that was critical, and give their judgment in matters that was dark.

First proposition.

"Shall there then be a delegated conference or not. Brother P. and Bro. As. spake with great propriety & cast much light upon the subject.

3 votes (I think) was for it, & 95 against.

Secondly, who shall appoint the station of the preachers. It was readily granted the Bishop.

Thirdly, "If any preacher think himself injured shall he have an appeal to district conference."

This motion seem to ly heavy on the minds of many. A great many arguments was advanced in favour if it, and many objections raised against it. I was struck with fear that some of the brethren was rather too warm, & by the delivering their arguments, was giving way to a false zeal. Yet prayer was made without ceasing for union and harmony among us. After two days strong debate the matter was determined viz. They shall have no appeal. My fears were again alarmed at the looks of some.

The next morning when the Conference met there came in a letter, subscribed by Bro. O'Kelly which was his farwell to the Conference. Said he, "I am now giving way to the overflowings of a ful heart that he was always afraid our superintendents was on a stretch for power, and what had took place the night before had established him in his opinion. This breach gave a sudden shock to the whole body and every member I believe bore its part, tears flowed from every face. About three of the young preachers that was wedded to Bro. O'K. absented themselves and no more appeared in Conference. In three or four day they all left town, and what they have in view no one knows but themselves. [John Robinson, John Allen, William McKendree, and Rice Haggard left.]

After this the conference proceeded regular to business. Revised the government and rules of our church, repeald

some small parts, & made a few additions where they were deficient. I believe that Love & unanimity subsisted largely in the souls of the brethren near the conclusion. I heard several thanking God for the satisfaction which they felt, respecting matters that had just passed & taken place.

Nov. 15, Conference concluded: and we commended each other to the grace of God by prayer intercession & giving of thanks.

*John Kobler's Journal, Methodist Historical Society of the  
Baltimore Conference (Lovely Lane Museum)*

Excerpt from letter of Stith Mead to John Kobler

HANOVER AND WILLIAMSBURG CIRCUITS

My Loving & Dear Brother:

Our present antagonist OK[elly] has lately ranged through these borders, but has met with no success, rather lost two members who have returned. His Babel I believe is tottering. I praise God for the success my feeble labours have met with since I have written the last.

Stith Mead

Near the Sea, 30th April 1796

*Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Conference  
(Lovely Lane Museum)*

PHILADELPHIA

May 3, 1805

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

Dearly beloved son:

Brother Harriman is come like a man from the clouds & waves. I judge it best to give him an appointment in Harford, James Reed to Baltimore. Harriman has no horse, perhaps he may need some help. We have progressed 3 days in great peace & good order, not the least paroxysm of anger: may we close in peace. We had answered the third question; one whole precious day spent in the appeal of a Local Preacher, has the half a dozen such, we should have full work. I am called off. Peace be with thee; Farewell.

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.

Jan. 11, 1806

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

My Faithful Brother:

I was pleased to hear that you are in your ———, & the prosperity that opens to your view: Our South Carolina Conference, was Love & unity itself. We had six faithful days setting. And Committees at work till mid-night. Preaching at 5 o Clock. 12 o Clock, & in the evening. We hope to hear of consequent fruit. I had to gather up my loose papers & ride 135 miles before I could put pen to paper to write to you, & my other Brethren in the North; we had added by admitting & readmitting 15 at the South Carolina Conference; but we have

Located & passed by those not in membership, that have stopt 15: but a part is more than the whole, as they are all, we hope effective men. We are resolved to have no Local Travelling Preachers; Judgement is began at the house of God, we have swept the docket compleatly. We number about 45, we could employ about 50, as we have not many back lands.

I am very seriously sensible of the importance of the Western part of our empire or I never should made such sacrifices to visit that Conference; I shall gladly concur in sending sermons from the Baltimore Conference or any other; but I am afraid old Virginia Conference will be near low water mark. Doctor Chandler's calculation for the Delaware District, in Letter: to me, & another to B. Whatcoat, is 1600 professing converting grace from July to October 18th, & above 100 sanctified. Brother Thacher's account of the Camp-meeting in the York District, above 200, & many sanctified. The Epistolory Letters meet the minds of the Conferences; I think pure extracts from these might be published in our annual Letter Book. I wish the Brethren to be as pure & correct, as they can, as we are preparing for another publication. Ways & means are with the Lord, & that may be one. The South Conference have concurred with the West in the method of the yearly minutes. Many wish to organize the General Conference, least it should come to be made up of 500 Brethren at once. I thought of one way, to restrict the members to 8 years of age. 2nly. To take the lowest number of members from any of the Seven: and let the General Conference Elect out of the surplus an equal number. The interest of each conference, is in my opinion equally

concerned in an equal number, & none but party men & simple ones could object: There might be anticipations of nearly what number they would send from each Conference in the Epistolatory Letter the year before.

We made our way through awful roads in the wilderness; our new horse fell upon a Limestone rock, the other happily stood, or the carriage had gone, or horse killed: We passed Tennessee; North Carolina, Georgia & Charleston; I was in the five Districts before Conference. I formed a plan & consulted the presiding Elders, & they completely concurred, I had mistaken a surplus preacher, this made way for one to the Columbia Circuit. Our next Conference is to be in Sparta, Georgia. Bro. Watson supernumerary, in ill health, is coming to the North; Daniel Asbury takes the District. We should do all we can to promote a spirit of Family, Social, Congregational & private prayer. The Presiding Elders, should look well to good order in Quarterly Meetings, let judgment begin at those houses of God. You should be very strict in the examination of candidates, at quarterly meetings, that come forward to the Conference: we are always in danger from this quarter. We must keep the altar pure. Consider what I say, & the Lord give thee understanding in all things. We are aiming at Wilmington, Newburn, Washington, Williams Town, Murphysburg, Edenton, & so to Norfolk. Brother Mead as is his manner, is going on upon the Richmond District, and indeed all three promises well. Saml. Coate is Learning French to preach in Lower Canada: the French College expelled him; but he keeps along. Let us pray

mightily for our Continent, that we may be kept out of the wars of the old wicked world! I am as ever yours

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

BURLINGTON, N.J.

*Apr. 28, 1806*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

My Very Dear Brother:

Great, great, grace attend thee. I have written to our dearly beloved Jn. Pitts, knowing the friendship there is between you. N. Sneathen has slipt thro' my hands, because I was tardy in treating & stipulating, this business, I mean to quite, it only puts one into difficulties; but if it will work, & you could give him the Point Station; and send L. Cassell post haste, by land or water to Boston, and perhaps make a Lyell of him. You ask, what is to be done there? Oh! wonders-surpassing, there are building a brick house 84 by 64, up to Baltimore already; all is to be strait, but the lower part is to contain 100 pens, calf pens, goat pens. I must say nothing, it is begun without my knowledge, or consent. 8,000 dollars, the spot of ground for the Chapel & dwelling house. If you can, send Br. Cassell, to supply, while the stationed preacher goeth to the Conference.

I was happy enough to ride near 600 miles, and visit all the Circuits on the Easternshore, on my way to the Philadelphia Conference. Great harmony, strict Conference Discipline; one or two a little displeased, that had been in the habit on indulgence in Towns, and stipulations. Before I establish two

orders, one for the Cities, and the other for the Country, may the General Conference strip my authority of Superintendency over my head, & off my head. If when they are sent to Circuits, they locate, or leave the connection, be it so.

We had a gracious season at the Philadelphia Conference, I trust there was not less good done than at the Baltimore. I shall travel near 1000 miles, in 200 from Baltimore to New-York, and 6 or 700 by a blessing to the New-England Conference. You may write if any thing special, by Cassell if he comes. I shall possibly be in Boston about the first of June, or soon after. I purpose to visit Genessee in my return, & to reach Frederick-Town July 26. There I shall be pleased to hear from or see you. Brother Whatcoat, we have left at Dover sick, yet hope he is not dead.

The Philadelphia Conference have written ameliorating letter to Doctor Coke; but not contradict yours; they condemn the thought of dividing the Conferences; and tell him they would not wish him to crucify his wife's feelings. They approve the recommendation to the three conferences to fill their seats at the next General Conference. I think an election will take place in the three Conferences, permitting any to come that please, that have a right to come: it will be particular election and general liberty; better so than worse; we are sure matters of a most serious nature will call the attention of the next General Conference, possibly dissolving the union with Doctor Coke, electing superintendents & organising, the General Conference.



We have added in five Conferences 8278 members, one third, or fourth of our labours. 58 Preachers added, we have swept the Docket of 40 by Location: great union in Philadelphia, the causes of division are nearly gone. In all the circuits prospects good, and all the Districts. I do not think I owe that partiality of a double visit to the cities; I should only hear their murmurings, it is more than I can bear; I have need to go like the scape goat into the wilderness with the murmurs of the people, after a surge of seven Conferences seven days and nights. O Bro. let us preach holiness with all our might, enforce Discipline with all our wisdom. Hold Campmeetings: quarterly meetings in the woods. Doctor Chandler talks of 100 days & nights in the woods this year. Let us keep up a spirit of prayer. The deficiencies above 2,000 dollars, collection and Funds made up near two thousand; but some of the Genessee Preachers had nearly demanded the whole of their double pay. Five pensioners; alas! the more we get the more we want. I am still thine.

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

NEW YORK  
May 18, 1806

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

My Very Dear Brother:

Grace, grace, great grace be with Thee: thine came to hand; what is may be aright, Br. Snethen is Located. I embrace an interval from the house of God to write. I had resolved to go to the Genessee, and partially promise the Philadelphia

Conference to visit that district; but providence changes, & I change. I find Br. Crawford is not very willing to take another trip round the Continent; I fear the stability of his health; and not only so, the call for laborers is great in this Conference. I mean to give him a station here, after we shall go about 100 miles east. I intend to sell the waggon, and purchase a neat single carriage in York, and come on to Baltimore as soon as possible; I judge two wheels will go better and cheaper than four. I have thoughts of taking two horses, Thomas Budd or any other that will volunteer for a year, they may drive the carriage in times and places of danger, I can ride upon horseback. The pomp of a waggon is too great for me, and the danger; perhaps not one in five hundred could drive to please me, this would make me more dependant than I would wish to be; the jollies of age and sallies of youth do not always fit. Bro. Crawford, is one of the best young men in the world; but his life was greatly exposed, and health in going with me. If you should go to the Western Conference, I will depend upon you till Br. Budd can attend me, as he has volunteered himself, I am inclined to try him; you may write to Br. Ward if you please. I have asked the estimate for a low neat strong single Carriage. We have had a great Campmeeting, 2 or 300 Souls blest. We have opened our Conference, progressed for two days in great peace & some power. Possibly, if I can, I will be in Baltimore by the middle of July, nothing will stop me, but debility, or sickness.

Your letter to the Doctor has been censured for its severity; but not its plainness & sincerity; it is asserted as an opinion that the Doctor will be at the next General Conference. What

if the terms are unmade? how will that fit. I am seriously earnestly disposed to urge this, and all the Conferences to nominate a contingent General Conference to guard against my death, debility, apostacy, Location, or desertion: why not? I am not more than man, my mental powers may fail, I may marry 30,000 pounds & a coach & 4 horses, I may run off to some other land, as to the west, & sit down, or go to Canada, and write to you, that I will not come unless you will give me such a part of the work, or make me an Arch-Bishop. I mean in short, at my death or debility or otherwise, there should be men that should come as a convention and appoint some General Superintendency that the order be not broken immediately upon my failures. I am the man to move this, I consider the safety of the Connection, of more consequence ten thousand times over than my little honor, or place, & dignity: the case of the Doctor and myself is like Solomon's mother: enough my brother, keep it safe, Honorable I hope. I am.

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

DAVENPORT'S, VA.

*Aug. 2, 1806*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

Dearly Beloved Daniel:

Mayest thou be a man highly favored of God. Divine providence has suddenly locked my wheels of motion; I have been for 9 days a most afflicted man. I have in my midnight hours, viewed our temporal & spiritual state of things. Oh! for

an American General Superintendency, if I am their servant. Sure I am, if the Americans are not old enough to govern themselves now, they never will, then they must for life be in leading strings. All the prospects of this world are dead to me, I feel not a wish for creatures or things. The glory of the Kingdom of Christ, the organization of a primitive Church of God, these are all my objects; was it possible to set a glass to my heart, you should see them engraven there by the word & spirit of the living God.

Simpson's view of the Church of England is all the abomination of desolation: Simpson renounced the twin sister to the whore of Babylon, but God took him to himself; good man, his son has printed his last Book and recantation. Br. George has seen it, and can furnish you the reading. I wish Neal would print it; it would give the Episcopalians a sour face.

You will conclude, I am very weak, by my worse than bad writing. I have only prefaced what I have to write. By my authority I wish to write to all the Presiding Elders of the Baltimore Conference, not in imperious commands, but by Socratic questions; & it is not proper the Preachers of the Baltimore Conference, ought not to draw their supplies from the people they labor among, and if the people are not willing and alas now, when will they be? After 30 years more are gone? State a case for ——— between Baltimore and the New-England Conference: Say Baltimore has 80 Preachers, and 26,000 members, many very wealthy, (no other church demands, or poor to support.) Adding dollar to dollar, and

field to field: say the living of the Preachers is 25 or 30 per cent superior to New-England. Say New-England 78 preachers, 20 married men, poor wives, many poor children, having little or nothing, neither houses nor homes, waggoning their families from place to place, having only clothing poor in quality, more so in quantity. Say the New-England Conference have 10,000 members to support them; members poor, houses of children laboring like slaves in Virginia, night & day, taxed by the spurious race of the first genuine Puritans, the present holding only the form & superstition of Religion: Oh! in the great grand children, how are the mighty fallen? taxed to build houses to grace the Town, where all the best of the parish may meet as grand as in Solomon's Temple; after this taxed to pay a hypocritical Priest, the devils agent, the peoples tool & fool; and opposes of all living religion and every Methodist Preacher that comes in the parish, If he had nothing to do before, he will move then. Now if it is right that the Baltimore Conference should be pampered into the perfection of the ministry, and Christian perfection, and the New-England Conference to be starved into it, Judge thou.

It was moved by the Superintendency and Conference, that the Committee's list of claims should be brought in, it was done, and then it was moved again that ways of supplies should not be gone into till every man had given in flax, wool, Rye, anything, or everything he had received from the people, this was done without a murmur; then all they had received was charged as quarterage, they could not go to ripping of bellies, finally making no provision for Children, deficiency 3000 dollars. Tis my opinion that the Baltimore Conference

members of the Society will support their preachers, if the Conference would let them know they do not; by letter from Conference, finally, after my letter of shorthand, I wish the Baltimore Conference to hold their right, to draw their dividend, & put it into the hands of the Book Stewards and donate the money, giving each Annual Conference with the Superintendency, liberty to appropriate their bounty, and draw on the Stewards. I am thine.

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

HARRISONBURG [VA.]

*Aug. 11, 1806*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

My Very Dear Daniel:

We have a grand house built here, and the best seat I know for Conference in 1808. Those that have served the connection 18 or 20 years, & mean to serve for life, should not be inattentive to all the interests of so great a body; if from among that description these cannot be called forth — be like a campground night after night. It is begun in York, the City, — & immorality. Oh! how has truth been imprisoned. Oh! how we have been [?] in our houses, at Quarterly meetings, when thousands were perishing for the word, & could not hear it. Blindness in part has happened to our Israel. I saw a letter that Doctor Coke wrote to a brother Myres; that he would do anything to support this blessed form of things in America. How far he, that has many things to learn, of our plan of things, will excell those who have had

constant practice, during his 20 years absence from the Continent; I am not able to say. Learning Dignity & money are great in the eyes of some, as well as an extensive acquaintance with men and things. For my part, an age of 62 years, and 57 may teach us to moderate our zeal for commanding. If 40 years is not time enough, or 35 for American gradation, we may as well quit, and pronounce that they shall be under Tutors & governors from Europe till the end of time. I should be pleased, you would have a fire place in the Conference chamber, at the expense of the society or Conference; if we have those wretched stoves, we shall have our men of business sick, if you have not written, write me fully to Newbern, North-Carolina, by the 2nd of Feb. 1807. Let me hear if you have any thing certain or special from any part of the work. I am still your faithful Brother and Friend.

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library*

AUGUSTA (G.)

*Nov. 18, 1806*

[*To Daniel Hitt*]

My Very Dear Daniel:

Great peace attend thee in life & death. After I had written; thine came to hand, giving an account of the success of the Long-Calm (Camp-Meeting) but I think there was a gust of Divine power. I rejoice to hear that Delaware, & the East of Maryland fire, spreads on the Western-shore.

Your observations on the probable nonsuit of a delegated General Conference to organize a superintendency, has waked up some serious thoughts in my mind. You will, as a man of mind, think how I feel, under an insupportable burden; weakening under the weight of age, now entering my 62, and entered my 45 in Local, and traveling Ministry.

I have drove John-like through life, running out of breath, then stopping to recover my wind; and off again. I must fret at nothing, nor murmur, or complain: But be assured not a day, an hour or a moment should be delayed to fix the Superintendency, the most perfect plan is in operation. If I have sought the stilts of power, or have been flying on wings of ambition, (as my enemies have said) let me not be suspected in this matter; Life shortens with me; but a charge of two millions, that are nearly, or remotely connected with us; If my breath is strange to my Brethren I intercede for the children, that cannot go alone, the infants that suck the breast.

Many of our once faithful men, are gone to their Farms, merchants[?] — and we have but few, that know what Israel ought to do, — Israel. A few men of little — that expect to work round a circle like a horse in a mill, may talk [to little purpose] and to great success, Conference. Never a better time or method of doing than the present, to call out immediately two or three of the most aged, willing & faithful men to go from the Mississippi to Kennebeck annually to superintend the work but if the plan is only divulged, to any but in full conference; they will be to oppose they know not what. I suppose there will be puss enough in three great, very



great Conferences, Virginia, Baltimore, & Philadelphia, but they ought to pass it implicitly; (but catch them at that.) If men, Poor men; men that cannot be spared a moment from the work; [two words marked out] that have to take time, money, & labor: 1600 miles, going and returning; their Brethren, in the centre ought to submit, unless they wish to rule the connection & Superintendency. And I presume, if there is not an accommodation in this (& a successive General Conference) Brethren in the extremities will not, come at all, they cannot, will not dare not leave the work; like our Brethren, (on the Missions to the West, they would not one come to Conference.) In a delegation, the Superintendent in Conference, know what preachers are to be absent, and can make Provision to fill their places, by local or travelling preachers, if any Presiding Elder; to order the Elders to supply their place at Quarterly Meetings. Men of minds, cry out, we ought to have a delegation at the yearly Conferences, and leave as many on the Circuits as we can at Conference times, the work is so great! As to General Conference, I am sure the distant Conferences had better not come; if they would send it 21 [?], what are these be to one hundred. I think you would be in your duty, to write to the Elders to keep the probationers on the Circuit at Conference next.

F. Asbury

*Letters to Daniel Hitt, Ohio Wesleyan University Library.*

*Thursday 9th [1811]*

[*To James Mitchell*]

I have tried with all my might to release you from Quebeck. I cannot; perhaps you cannot, may be you had better take up the † and see if you can stand it one year more.

F. Asbury

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Church, Philadelphia.*

*Baltimore 19, March 1811*

[*To James Mitchell*]

My dear Jimmy:

Great grace rest upon you, in your soul and services for God, and souls. I am pleased exceedingly to hear of your being well and doing well. It is not possible to know the Importance of regular attention in a station like Quebeck. I most sincerely wish you to continue in the station till you hear from us, from the York Conference. I cannot multiply words but your own mind will suggest the great propriety there is for you and Br. Scull to keep your stations. Many peculiarities will attend changes. We wish to come as near to you as possible to have the fullest information of persons and things. You will be sure your Brethren view you as placed in an important station, so remote from them, except their prayers and their confidence. We have no fear of you betraying your trust. I am most confidentially and affectionately yours

F. Asbury

Oh [?] I think the probability is that your Br. William will come to see you if you stay patiently a little longer in Canada.

F. Ay.

On envelope

The Revd. James Mitchell

Quebeck

Lower Canada

*The Historical Society of the Philadelphia Conference and  
Old St. George's Church, Philadelphia*

Address of the General Conference of 1812, to the  
Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United  
States of America

Dearly Beloved Brethren,

When we retrospect the Divine goodness toward us as a people, our hearts are animated with sentiments of praise and thanksgiving. We have been favoured with repeated manifestations of the power and grace of God. The Redeemer has planted his standard in the midst of us; He has given astonishing success to our labours, and annually made accessions of thousands to our number. From the cold provinces of Canada to the sultry regions of Georgia; from the shores of the Atlantic to the waters of the Mississippi; in populous cities, improved countries, and dreary deserts, God has extended the triumphs of his grace. Infidelity trembles in the presence of the Cross; superstition yields to the mild influence of the Gospel, and ignorance vanishes before the auspicious beams of Truth. In the revolution of a few years,

our number has amounted to nearly 200,000, exclusive of the many happy souls who have departed in the faith, and gone to their reward in Heaven. We have mutually participated in the prosperity of Zion; frequently in our solemn assemblies we have witnessed the effusions of grace, and experienced the overwhelming showers of Redeeming love. The blessings we have received from God should humble us at his feet, while a recollection of his mercies inspire us with gratitude and love. All the Divine benedictions conferred upon us, have been unmerited and free. Undeserved blessings have been strewn in our paths, and distinguishing goodness attends us in all our ways. While myriads of our fellow creatures grope in Pagan darkness, and Mahometan delusion, we enjoy the light and truth of the gospel of Christ. In the midst of civil and ecclesiastical convulsions, the Lord has favoured us with tranquility and repose; we are therefore under peculiar obligations to Grace. "By Grace are we saved, through Faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." To God therefore let us ascribe the glory and praise of our past and present mercies.

Dear Brethren, We are bound to you by ties which death itself cannot dissolve: With you, we again renew our covenant, to live and die your servants in Jesus Christ. You will therefore, we hope, receive from us the word of exhortation.

The spirit of internal religion, in all its branches, we most ardently recommend and insist on. Bible religion does not consist barely in rites and ceremonies; in subscribing creeds

and becoming violent partizans; in the reveries of a heated imagination, nor the paroxisms of agitated passions; but in the mind which was in Christ Jesus, in a victory over sin, and a conformity to the will of God; in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance; in all the amiable virtues which centre in the moral character of Christ. Without holiness of heart we can never enter into the kingdom of glory. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," saith the Almighty God. And no unclean thing shall enter in the kingdom, saith the Lord Jesus. We therefore exhort you to go on to perfection, to pursue after holiness with all the ardour of faith and hope. Never give sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids, until you awake with the lovely likeness of Christ.

While we insist on internal, we do not forget external religion. You are commanded to "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven;" to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, and to be careful to maintain good works. The duties which God hath enjoined on us should be discharged with all possible fidelity. His eyes are upon us, and all our ways; the enemies of religion mark our steps, and our consciences will accuse or excuse us: God will render to every man according as his work shall be. Therefore be holy in manner of conversation and godliness.

"Search the Scriptures," said the adorable Saviour, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." God has not left us to learn his attributes and

will merely from his works and providence; he has revealed himself in his holy word, with all the perspicuity necessary to make us wise unto salvation. This holy revelation should be studied with serious attention, candor, and prayer. We beseech you to read it in your closets and in your families. A proper knowledge of, and conformity to the Holy Scripture will render you happy to all the calamities of life, support you in the pangs of death, and prepare you for an endless enjoyment in heaven.

A strict attention to the Christian Ordinances we deem indispensably necessary. Christ himself instituted the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and his followers should never neglect them. "Go, (saith he) teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" and in reference to the Holy Supper he said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

The Sabbath of the Lord deserves your serious consideration and attention. It should be consecrated wholly to his service. All labour, vain conversation, worldly employments and visits should be carefully avoided. Prayer, praise, searching the scriptures, and the worship of God should be the only employment of that day. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, is the language of the Holy One of Israel.

It is with regret that we have seen the too frequent use of ardent spirits, dram-drinking, &c. among the professors of religion. We have endeavoured to suppress the practice by our

example; it is necessary that we add precept to example. We do sincerely think it not consistent with the christian character to be immersed in the practice of distilling, selling, and drinking an article so destructive to the morals of society. And we most earnestly recommend and exhort our people to join with us in making a firm and constant stand against an evil which has impoverished, disgraced, and ruined thousands, both in body and soul.

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds," said the apostle. Let us unanimously oppose the vain fashions and evil maxims of this ungodly world: We are creatures of a moment, hastening to the grave, and soon shall stand before God in judgment; therefore let us not copy the fashions of the gay and thoughtless, especially in putting on gold and costly apparel; but dress with simplicity and modesty, with gravity and neatness.

The important duty of Fasting has been too much neglected. This we fear has been, and will be productive of melancholy effects. We have abundant cause for deep humiliation before God and one another. Our country is in jeopardy, calamities stare us in the face, iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold! O let us be more diligent in every good word and work, particularly in Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer.

The propriety and importance of religiously educating your children, we wish seriously to impress on your minds. To

instruct them in the arts and sciences may be useful in this life, but the knowledge of God, and their own heart, is absolutely necessary for the life to come. It is religion only which can make them truly happy in life, and triumphant in death. The unhappy effects of indifference to the education of children, must be seen and lamented by every friend to religion. Children whose religious education is neglected by their parents, generally grow up in iniquity, become obdurate in sin, and are prepared for almost every species of vice, and frequently terminate their unhappy career in ruin, covered with disgrace; therefore, instruct your children in the doctrines and practice of the Christian religion. While young, take them by the hand, and lead them into the salutary paths of wisdom, virtue, and piety. Your labour shall not be in vain; for saith Solomon, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Finally, brethren, be sound in the faith, uniform in practice, obedient to all the precepts of the gospel. Consider the various relations and obligations of life, as men and as christians; and walk worthy of your high calling and holy profession, so shall you be the children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that



worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end—AMEN.

Signed in behalf of the Conference.

Francis Asbury,  
William McKendree,

Daniel Hitt, Sec'ry,  
New-York, May 23, 1812.

*The University of Chicago Library*

*February 27, 1833*

*[To the Bishops & Va. Ann. Confe. at Petersburg]*

Rev. Fathers and Brethren,

Peace be to thee, and grace be multiplied. I am now in the 66th year of my natural age, 43 in Religion and Methodism, 40 in the ministry, ten years of that period under a location from a broken constitution by the arduous toil and labour of Itinerant preaching, opening, clearing up and fitting for cultivation the worst of the ground in hopes of a copious and prosperous crop and increase of Wesleyan Methodism. My first efforts were in Bottetourt, Holstein & New River Circuits 40 years ago, presents a view of a people & country poor in circumstances, rough in surface & rough in manners. Soon after from the Mountain filth, flees & buggs to the extremity of the low lands—Williamsburg & Gloucester Circuits, to fan & fight the flies & mosquitos, and endure the shaking Agues & Fevers—and epidemic subject to man and beast in the lowlands, swamps and marsh's. Having in ten years rest from pulpit itinerant labours—tho older in years—strengthened in constitution—at the Ann. Confe. in 1827—where you are

now assembled. I offered to the Confe. a return of my location, and was readmitted into the travelling connexion—in a Superannuated relation to the M.E. Church. The same year I voluntarily formed a Mission from Lynchburg to the city of Richmond—on James River—the distance of 300 miles as the River meanders about the 60th year of my age—ordering my course of apts. when no regular class in a Cirt. was attended by the Cirt. preachers in this way. I had to rub thro various denominations free-meeting Houses, and lost part of the fruits of my labour, being four weeks in the round absent, yet I estimated 50 converts—10 of them in the Va. Penitentiary among the Prisoners. The Preachers from the Circts. on both sides of the river can judge of the utility of the James River Mission. Since that I have exercised in the camp-meeting, until I am exhausted—the present year out of 4 places to exercise in my feeble manner—I kept up one viz. Bro. Nathanael Terry's—4 miles distant, in the bent of James River, a member of my Class, and the Lord blessed my feeble endeavours in the awakening and conversion of several souls.

\* \* \* \* \*

Perhaps our contributions in a pecuniary way to aid the Gospel, together with the hopes sustained by persecution for Christ and Methodism was some means of our great privation, in actual cash. The items of the Guirey persecution in 1807 & 1808 &c. amounts to \$930 and deducting the contributions of Brethren and friends \$118 presents a clear loss of \$812 dollars. That it was for Methodism I suffered this loss appears

from his first book called *Priest Craft Detected* or a correct account of the proceedings between Stith Mead, Presiding Elder of the Methodist Church, and William Guirey, minister in the Christian Church, from Sunday the 17th until Thursday 21st May, 1807. Including an account of their trial in Lynchburg before 1. William Norvell, 2. John Lynch, Jun. 3. William Warwick, 4. Joseph Slaughter, 5. M. Lambeth, 6. Rhoderick Taliaferro, 7. William Morgan—By William Guirey. Taken from the title page after which he brought Suit in Caroline County Court as follows, William Guirey against Stith Mead—Slander \$5000 (verdict \$430) that the plaintiff is guilty of forgery. That the defendant a Presiding Elder in the Methodist Church, and an Itinerant Preacher, did to his congregation &c. In the 5th page of his Book he says little notice will be taken of any other Methodist Preacher in this publication but Stith Mead, about the same time he married into a rich family who supported him in persecuting the M.E. Church so he made Bishop Asbury the object of his Diabolical hatred—& published a Bound book of near 400 pages called the History of Episcopacy—representing the venerable Father of American Methodism, under the figure and character of the Baltimore Bull. In point of contributions—In the year 1796—when on the Williamsburg & Hanover Circs. joined in a six weeks Cirt. the City of Richmond included no Mt. H[ouse] & not 20 Methodists in the great Metropolis, I procured a subscription of 100.00 [pounds] which started the first Meth. Mt. House in Richmond. In the year 1800 when stationed to Augusta once the Metropolis of Georgia—where we had no Methodist Society, I started a Subscription—and contracted with Mr. P.

Crawford Mechanic—to build a Methodist Mt. H[ouse] on my own—individual responsibility which in its completion cost about \$4000 and had to go from 20 to 40 miles—to get suitable Trustees to deed and secure it to the M.E.C. after contributing hundreds more than the Dist. of Georgia. Was stationed to the Richmond Dist. in 1805, where I had started a Subscription in the town of Lynchburg in the great Revival in 1804—and finding opposition made to prevent it—the Trustees nominated discouraged I became by promise responsible for the money & started the Brick building for the first Methodist Mt. House in Lynchburg—where we had no organized Meth. Church before—which building cost about \$3000 as I had not fully wound up matters in Ga. the above house was badly executed—so I gave up much money—due me from the Trustees to make the house better builded on its present plan in Lynchburg and many other Meth. Mt. H. in the Richmond District so I appropriated what I made by commissions for Book printing and Book Selling about the year 1801 or 1802—on the sale of a tract of land in Va. I instructed my Agent to remit me \$500 which I gave to the Bishops and Ann. Confe. at Augusta. When Bro. L. Skidmore started with me on the WmsBg. Circuit in 1812, thence to Confe. I was boarding my family on my own expense at \$200 pr. Annum—as the prejudices in Va. was against married Preachers travelling—my wife preferred staying at one place. It is a record in Scripture—"Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." God has in mercy to us as a family provided Benevolent Brethren & friends in and about Lynchburg—by food and raiment, or I do not believe the aged

and infirm could have survived the present winter's cold. I am in arrears for last year's supply—at least \$200—it is our concern and mortification to be expensive & troublesome to our Brethren—Adieu.

Affectionately

Stith Mead

*Property of Edgar A. Potts*