

# An Account of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church

by Nathan Bangs

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*The sermon recounts the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, highlighting the key events and arguments in its defense.*

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:3, 2 Timothy 4:2, Titus 2:1, 1 Peter 3:15, 2 Peter 3:17, Jude 1:3

**Topics:** "Church History", "Methodist Doctrine"

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## Description

Nathan Bangs preaches about the historical significance of Methodism in the country, detailing the transition of Methodist societies into an independent church. John Wesley's initial resistance to the establishment of a separate church was overcome by the changing political landscape in America, leading to the ordination of preachers and the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity, adherence to discipline, and the necessity of practical preaching to guard against Antinomianism.

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## Transcript

We have arrived at a very important period in the history of Methodism in this country. And as so much has been said respecting the constituting of the Methodist societies here into an independent church, I shall, in the first place, give a detail of the facts in the case, and, secondly, offer some arguments in defense of the measure.

I. Hitherto the Methodists, both in Europe and America, had been considered as a society within a church -- in Great Britain they considered themselves as members of the establishment -- in America as members of that denomination to which they might be attached. The preachers in both hemispheres, not having been consecrated to their work by the imposition of hands, were distinguished as "lay-preachers," and had not, except in the instance heretofore narrated, presumed to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. Under these circumstances much uneasiness had been manifested both in Europe and America, more especially here. But all solicitation, whether from the preachers or people, for the establishment of a separate church, had been strenuously resisted by Mr. Wesley, as being foreign to his primary design, and incompatible with the principles he had avowed from the beginning of his ministry. He commenced his ministerial, labor with the single intention of reviving evangelical religion in the Church, by preaching her doctrines and enforcing her discipline. This was the state of things at the time of which we

are now speaking.

As, however, the colonies had now become an independent government, no longer under the control of Great Britain, either in civil or ecclesiastical matters, Mr. Wesley began to relax from the sternness with which he had heretofore resisted the solicitations of the American Methodists, and to think seriously of granting their requests; and after consulting with his most intimate friends respecting the propriety of the measure -- for of its lawfulness he had no doubt -- he resolved to grant their request, and adopted means to carry the resolution into effect. "At the conference held in Leeds, in 1784, he declared his intention of sending Dr. Coke and some other preachers to America. Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey offered themselves as missionaries for that purpose, and were accepted. Before they sailed, Mr. Wesley abridged the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England, and wrote to Dr. Coke, then in London, desiring him to meet him in Bristol, to receive fuller powers, and to bring the Rev. Mr. Creighton with him. The doctor and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol when, with their assistance, he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey presbyters for America; and being peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England, he afterward ordained Dr. Coke a superintendent, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal, and at the same time the following letter, to be printed and circulated in America:"<sup>1</sup>

"Bristol, Sept. 10th, 1784

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

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

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 traveling 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. But the case is widely different between England and North America.

Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, and but few parish ministers: so 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 laborers into the harvest. I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury, to be joint superintendents<sup>2</sup> over our brethren in North America.

As also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and ministering the Lord's supper. If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken. It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, I desired the bishop of London to ordain one only; but could not prevail: If

they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay: If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them.

And how grievously would this entangle us! 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." The following is the letter of ordination which Mr. Wesley gave to Dr. Coke: "To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyterian of the Church of England, sendeth greeting:

"Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the same Church, and where as there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers:

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

"John Wesley."

Being thus furnished with the proper credentials, in the month of September Dr. Coke, in company with Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey, set sail for America, and landed in the city of New York on the 3d of November, 1784. From thence they proceeded through Philadelphia to the state of Delaware, where, on the 15th day of the same month, he met Mr. Asbury at Barratt's chapel. Mr. Asbury gives the following account of this meeting: --

"Sunday 15. I came to Barratt's chapel. Here, to my great joy, I met those dear men of God, Dr. Coke and Richard Whatcoat. We were greatly comforted together. The doctor preached on Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Having had no opportunity of conversing with them before public worship, I was greatly surprised to see brother Whatcoat assist by taking the cup in the administration of the sacrament. I was shocked when first informed of the intention of these my brethren in coming to this country: it may be of God. My answer then was, If the preachers unanimously choose me, I shall not act in the capacity I have hitherto done by Mr. Wesley's appointment. The design of organizing the Methodists into an independent Episcopal Church was opened to the preachers present, and it was agreed to call a general conference, to meet at Baltimore the ensuing Christmas; as also that brother Garrettson go off to Virginia to give notice thereof to the brethren in the south."

According to this arrangement, Mr. Garrettson set off immediately on his southern journey, sending letters to those he could not see; and Dr. Coke spent the intermediate time in visiting various parts of the country and preaching to the people. On Friday the 26th, Mr. Asbury says, "I observed this day as a day of fasting

and prayer, that I might know the will of God in the matter; that is to come before the conference. The preachers and people seem to be much pleased with the projected plan; I myself am led to think it is of the Lord. I am not tickled with the honor to be gained. I see danger in the way. My soul waits upon God. O that he may lead us in the way we should go!"

In conformity with the above arrangement, December 25th, sixty out of the eighty-three preachers then in the traveling connection, assembled in the city of Baltimore for the conference, in which Dr. Coke presided, assisted by Mr. Asbury; and the first act of the conference was, by a unanimous vote, to elect Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury as general superintendents; for although Mr. Asbury had been appointed to that high office by Mr. Wesley, yet he declined acting in that capacity independently of the suffrages of his brethren over whom he must preside. After his election, being first ordained a deacon, then an elder, Mr. Asbury was consecrated by Dr. Coke, assisted by several elders, to the office of a superintendent, in the manner set forth in the following certificate: --

"Know all men by these presents, That I, Thomas Coke, Doctor of civil law, late of Jesus College, in the university of Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, and superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America; under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory; by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by two ordained elders,) did on the twenty-fifth day of this month, December, set apart Francis Asbury for the office of a deacon in the aforesaid Methodist Episcopal Church. And also on the twenty-sixth day of the said month, did, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by the said elders,) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of elder in the said Methodist Episcopal Church. And on this twenty-seventh day of the said month, being the day of the date hereof, have, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by the said elders,) set apart the said Francis Asbury for the office of a superintendent in the said Methodist Episcopal Church, a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 27th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1784.

"Thomas Coke."

One of the elders who assisted at the consecration of Mr. Asbury, was the Rev. Mr. Otterbine, a minister of the German Church. Having enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with this pious and evangelical minister of Jesus Christ, and having full fellowship with him as a laborious and useful servant of God, Mr. Asbury requested that he might be associated with Dr. Coke and the other elders in the performance of this solemn ceremony.

The following persons were elected, twelve of whom were consecrated elders: Freeborn Garrettson, William Gill, Le Roy Cole, John Hagerty, James O. Cromwell, John Tunnel, Nelson Reed, Jeremiah Lambert, Reuben Ellis, James O'Kelly, Richard Ivey, Beverly Allen,<sup>3</sup> and Henry Willis. Mr. Garrettson and Mr. Cromwell were set apart especially for Nova Scotia, to which place they soon after went; and their labors and success will be noticed in the proper place. Mr. Lambert was ordained for the Island of Antigua, in the West Indies.

John Dickins, Caleb Boyer, and Ignatus Pigman, were elected deacons.

II. Having thus given an account of these transactions, we proceed to offer a few arguments in their defense. Let it be recollected,

1. That there was, a loud call for these things. Most of the clergy of the English Church, during the revolution, had fled from their flocks; and those who remained, with very few exceptions, were fit for any thing rather than ministers of the gospel. From the hands of such men the Methodists felt unwilling to receive the ordinances. As to the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, they would neither baptize the children unless at least one of the parents professed faith in their doctrines, nor admit them to the communion table unless they became members of their church. The Baptists were more rigid still, as they could fellowship none unless they had been baptized by immersion. To neither of these conditions could the Methodists submit. Besides, by these denominations, the Methodists were treated as heretics, on account of their opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees, and the final perseverance of the saints. Hence a necessity, originating from the state of things in this country, compelled the Methodists either to remain without the ordinances, to administer them by unconsecrated hands, or to provide for them in the manner they did. Those who disclaim all dependence upon the argument derived from the necessity of the case, would do well to inquire whether any man can be justified in doing an unnecessary work -- a work that might be scripturally dispensed with. It appears to the writer, that if there be no weight in this argument, then it follows that Mr. Wesley, and those who acted with him in this solemn affair were guilty of a work of supererogation, and therefore cannot be justified on any principle whatever, either of Scripture, reason, or conscience.

2. Let it be recollected also, that those who consecrated Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, namely, Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke, and Mr. Creighton, were all regular presbyters in the Church of England; and that those who laid hands on Dr. Coke, and set him apart as a superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal church in America, were also presbyters regularly ordained to that office.

3. It appears manifest from several passages of Scripture, particularly Acts xiii, 1, 2, and I Tim. iv, 14, and the testimonies of the primitive fathers of the church, that presbyters and bishops were of the same order, and that they originally possessed the power of ordination.

4. The doctrine of uninterrupted succession from the apostles, in a third order, by a triple consecration, as distinct from and superior to presbyters, has been discarded by many of the most eminent ecclesiastical writers, as resting upon no solid foundation, not being susceptible of proof from any authentic source.

5. Mr. Wesley possessed a right over the Methodists which no man else did or could possess, because they were his spiritual children, raised up under his preaching and superintendence, and hence they justly looked to him for a supply of the ordinances of Jesus Christ.

6. Therefore in exercising the power with which the divine Head of the Church had invested him, he invaded no other man's right, nor yet assumed that which did not belong to him.

7. Hence he did not, as the objection which this argument is designed to refute supposes, ordain either presbyters or a bishop for the English Church, nor for any other church then existing, but simply and solely for the Methodist societies in America. And therefore in doing this necessary work, he neither acted inconsistently with himself as a presbyter of the Church of England, nor incompatible with his frequent avowals to remain in that Church, and not to separate from it.

8. For in fact, in organizing the Methodist Episcopal Church he did not separate either from the English or Protestant Episcopal Church; for that Church had no jurisdiction here, and the Methodist was organized some time before the Protestant Episcopal Church had an existence. Hence he acted perfectly consistent with himself, with all his avowals of attachment to the Church of England, while he proceeded to organize

a church here; for while he did this, and thereby established a separate and independent church in America, where the English Church had no jurisdiction, he and his people in England still remained members of the Establishment.

9. While the Scriptures are silent in respect to the particular form of church government which should be established, they certainly allow of an Episcopal form, because it is not incompatible with any known precept or usage of primitive Christianity.

10. This is farther manifest from the fact, that the apostles and evangelists did exercise a jurisdiction over the entire church, presbyters, deacons, and people, though at the same time there is no proof that as to order, created such by a third consecration, they were higher than the presbyters.

11. Distinguishing, therefore, between the power of ordination and the power of jurisdiction, we may see how an Episcopal government may be created by a presbyterial ordination, and hence justify the act of Mr. Wesley and his associates in setting apart Dr. Coke to the office of a general superintendent.

These arguments are merely stated here as the grounds on which the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church is justified, referring the reader who may wish to see them in detail, with the proofs on which they rest for support, to the book recently published, called "An Original Church of Christ." In that performance he will see all objections met, and I trust fully answered, and the proceedings of Mr. Wesley and his co-workers amply vindicated.

12. Another ground of defense is in the character of those who were employed in this transaction. As to the Rev. John Wesley, it is almost needless now to say any thing in his commendation. In him were concentrated all the elements of a great man and by a conscientious improvement of his gifts, having been made a partaker of "like precious faith," he was as much distinguished by his goodness as by his greatness; but all his other endowments were propelled on by his inextinguishable thirst for the salvation of his fellow-men, and fully employed, as an evangelist, in the grand cause of Jesus Christ. And such were the effects of these labors, that at the time of which we are now speaking there were no less than sixty-four thousand one hundred and fifty-five members of society, and one hundred and ninety-five preachers in Europe; and fourteen thousand nine hundred and eighty-eight members, and eighty-three preachers in America; making in all seventy-nine thousand one hundred and forty-three members, and two hundred and seventy-eight preachers. These had been raised up through his instrumentality in the short space of forty-five years, as seals to his ministry, and as evidences of his call to the work in which he was engaged. Of his call, therefore, and qualification for the work of an evangelist, there can be no doubt, any more than there should be of his right, as the spiritual father of this numerous family, to provide them with all the means of grace.

And as Dr. Thomas Coke took an active and conspicuous part in the organization and establishment of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it seems proper that a short account should be given of him in this place. He received his education at the university of Oxford, and though in his early days he was infected with infidel principles, yet by reading the works of Bishop Sherlock, he was convinced of the truth of Christianity, and was ordained first a deacon and then a presbyter in the Church of England. But like most of the clergy in that day, he was a stranger to experimental godliness. Hearing, however, of Mr. Wesley, he sought and obtained an interview with that apostolic man, and by him was instructed more perfectly in the ways of the Lord. Not long after he fully joined himself with Mr. Wesley, was made a partaker of justification by faith in Jesus Christ and became an active and zealous assistant to the founder of Methodism. For about six

years previous to his sailing to America, he had given full proof of his zealous attachment to the cause of Christ, of his love to Methodist doctrine and discipline, and of his entire devotedness to the best interests of mankind. This was the man on whom Mr. Wesley fixed to carry the designs toward his American brethren into execution. And though it may be said that the doctor was somewhat precipitate in some of his movements, yet it is certain that he gave evidence of the most ardent piety; of a chastened zeal in the cause of God, and of deep devotion to the interests of the Redeemer.

Of the Rev. Mr. Creighton it is enough to say, that he was a regularly ordained presbyter of the Church of England, a man of a sound mind and of unquestionable piety. He had for several years devoted himself to the cause of God in connection with Mr. Wesley.

These were the men who consecrated first Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey to the office of presbyters, and then these latter assisted in the ordination of Dr. Coke to the office of a superintendent over the American Methodists.

Let us now look for a moment at the character of Mr. Asbury, and see if he was not fully qualified for the high and holy trust confided to him. We have already seen in the preceding chapters the circumstances under which he was moved to come to this country as a missionary of the cross, the motives by which he was actuated, as well as the manner in which he discharged his duties up to the time in which he took upon himself the office of a superintendent. By these things it will be seen, I think, that he was "not a novice" in the things of God, in intellectual endowments, in moral courage, nor yet in that expansive benevolence which should characterize a primitive evangelist or bishop. He had, indeed, given such "full proof of his ministry," both as respects his spiritual and mental qualifications, and his indefatigable labors "in word and doctrine," as to insure his election to that high office by a unanimous vote of his brethren -- those very brethren too, among whom he had labored for about fifteen years. And his subsequent life afforded undeniable evidence that their choice had fallen upon the right man.

Now, let those who question the validity of our ordination, and the consequent right we have to administer the ordinances, put their finger upon any organization of a church since the apostolic days, by any number of men, and if they will find stronger marks of a divine call to do these things, or a more urgent necessity for them, arising out of the circumstances of the times, we will then review our ground, and hesitate to pronounce the Methodist Episcopal Church Scriptural and apostolical in her orders and ordinances. Its founders, under the protection of Almighty God, were all men of learning, of deep experience in the things of God, of unquestionable piety, regularly consecrated presbyters of the Church; and the leader in this whole, affair was the father of the entire family of spiritual children; and therefore possessed rights over them which no one else possibly could.

To all this it may be said "that the people were not consulted." But their wishes were already known. They had been expressed over and over again; and that their voice was in exact accordance with the proceedings of the conference, is demonstrable from numerous testimonies.

Mr. Lee says, "The Methodists were pretty generally pleased at our becoming a church, and heartily united together in the plan which the conference had adopted; and from that time religion greatly revived."

Mr. William Watters, the oldest American Methodist preacher, says, in his memoirs of himself, "We became, instead of a religious society, a separate Church. This gave great satisfaction through all the societies."

The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper, in his Memoir of Bishop Asbury, after stating the fact of our having become an independent Church, says, "This step met with general approbation both among the preachers and members. Perhaps we shall seldom find such unanimity of sentiment upon any question of such magnitude."

Nor has a murmur been heard, except from a few disaffected individuals, through all our borders, on account of the measures which were adopted at that conference, and the consequences which have resulted fully sustain the opinions above expressed. What is meant by these results is, not merely making proselytes to the system; for this of itself is no evidence either for or against any cause; but the real reformation in heart and life of thousands and tens of thousands of immortal souls. If, therefore, the turning of sinners "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," may be pleaded in favor of any system of operations, then may we say God has fixed the seal of his approbation upon the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church; for it has been instrumental of doing this in the most effectual and extensive manner in these United States.<sup>4</sup>

It has been already stated that Mr. Wesley made an abridgment of the Book of Common Prayer, as used in the Church of England, and recommended that it should be used by the preachers and people in this country. This accordingly was done in some of the larger towns and cities; but this practice, as well as that of wearing gowns, which the superintendents and some of the elders did for a season, was soon laid aside, on account of the opposition which was generally manifested against it, with the exception of the ordinations and sacramental services, which are retained and used at the present time. The following articles of religion were adopted at this conference, and published: --

#### I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness: the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

#### II. Of the Word, Or Son of God, who was made very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt but also for actual sins of men.

#### III. Of the Resurrection of Christ

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith, he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

#### IV. Of the Holy Ghost

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

#### V. Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

#### Of the Names of the Canonical Books

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less:

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

#### VI. Of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

#### VII. Of Original or Birth-Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

#### VIII. Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.

#### IX. Of the Justification of Man

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings: -- Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

#### X. Of Good Works

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruit.

## XI. Of Works of Supererogation

Voluntary works, besides over and above God's commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

## XII. Of Sin after Justification

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification: after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend, our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

## XIII Of the Church

The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

## XIV. Of Purgatory

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the word of God.

## XV. Of speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understand

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

## XVI. Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of grace and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

These are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel; that is to say, baptism and the supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of baptism and the Lord's supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation:

but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

#### XVII. Of Baptism

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.

#### XVIII. Of the Lord's Supper

The supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten, in the supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper, is faith.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

#### XIX. Of Both Kinds

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people: for both the parts of the Lord's supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christians alike.

#### XX. Of the one Oblation of Christ, finished upon the Cross

The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore, the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.

#### XXI. Of the Marriage of Ministers

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

#### XXII. Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike: for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought

to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

#### XXIII. Of the Rulers of the United States of America

The congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the general act of confederation, and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

#### XXIV. Of Christian Men's Goods

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

#### XXV. Of a Christian Man's Oath

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

That the reader may have an entire view of the doings of this conference, I think it expedient to give him the rules as they were then adopted, noticing, as we proceed in our history, such alterations or new rules as have been incorporated into the Discipline from time to time. After giving a short account of the rise of Methodism in Europe and America in Section I., they proceeded, in Section II., to state

The Method of holding a Conference, and the Business to be done therein.

It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God. That every person speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Question 1. How may we best improve our time at the conference?

Answer

While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us.

In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises.

Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on our labor.

Question 2. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in a conference?

Answer We inquire --

What preachers are admitted?

Who remain on trial?

Who are admitted on trial?

Who desist from traveling?

Are there any objections to any of the preachers? Who are named one by one.

How are the preachers stationed this year?

What numbers are in society?

What is collected for the contingent expenses?

How is this expended?

What is contributed toward the fund for the superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of the preachers?

What demands are there upon it?

Where and when shall our next conferences begin?

Question 3. Is there any other business to be done in the conference?

Answer The electing and ordaining of bishops, elders, and deacons.

After assigning some reasons for the organization which had just been accomplished, and the manner in which it had been done, the fourth section concludes thus on the manner of constituting a bishop, and of his duties and responsibilities: --

Question 2. How is a bishop to be constituted in future?

Answer By the election of a majority of the conference, and the laying on of the hands of a bishop.

Question 3. What is his duty?

Answer To preside as moderator in our conferences; to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits; and in the intervals of the conference, to change, receive, or suspend preachers, as necessity may require to travel through as many circuits as he can, and to direct in the spiritual business of the societies; as also to ordain bishops, elders, and deacons.

N.[athan B]angs]. The bishop has obtained liberty, by the suffrage of the conference, to ordain local preachers to the office of deacons, provided they obtain a testimonial from the society to which they belong, and from the stewards of the circuit, signed by three traveling preachers, three deacons, and three elders, (one of them being a presiding elder;) the names of those nominated being read in the conference previous to their ordination.

Question 4. To whom is the bishop amenable for his conduct?

Answer To the conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

Question 5. If the bishop ceases from traveling at large among the people, shall he still exercise his office among us in any degree?

Answer If he ceases from traveling without the consent of the conference, he shall not hereafter exercise any ministerial function whatsoever in our church.

## SECTION V.

On the constituting of Elders, and their Duty

Question 1. How is an elder constituted?

Answer By the election of a majority of the conference, and by the laying on of the hands of a bishop, and of the elders that are present.

Question 2. What is his duty?

Answer

To travel through his appointed district.

To administer baptism and the Lord's supper; and to perform all parts of divine service.

In the absence of a bishop, to take charge of all the deacons, traveling and local preachers, and exhorters.

To change, receive, or suspend preachers.

To direct in the transaction of the spiritual business of his circuit.

To take care that every part of our discipline be enforced.

To aid in the public collections.

To attend his bishop when present, and give him when absent all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his district.

N.[athan] B[angs]. No elder that ceases to travel, without the consent of the conference, certified under the hand of a bishop, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office among us.

## SECTION VI.

On the constituting of Deacons, and their Duty

Question 1. How is a deacon constituted?

Answer By the election of a majority of the conference, and the laying on of the hand, of a bishop.

Question 2. What is the duty of a deacon?

Answer

To baptize, and perform the office of matrimony in the absence of the elder.

To assist the elder in administering the Lord's supper.

To see that the other preachers in this circuit behave well, and want nothing.

To renew the tickets quarterly, and regulate the bands.

To appoint all the stewards and leaders, and change them when he sees it necessary.

To hold watch-nights and love-feasts.

To hold quarterly meetings, and therein diligently to inquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each society.

To take care that every society be duly supplied with books: particularly with the SAINTS' REST, INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHILDREN, and the PRIMITIVE PHYSIC; which ought to be in every house.

To take an exact account of the number in Society, and to bring it to the conference.

To send an account of his circuit every quarter to his elder.

To meet the men and women apart in the large societies, once a quarter.

To overlook the accounts of all the stewards.

To appoint a person to receive the quarterly collection in the classes, and to be present at the time of receiving it.

To see that public collections be made quarterly, if need be.

To move a yearly subscription through those circuits that can bear it, for building churches.

To choose a committee of lay-members, to make a just application of the money, where it is most wanted.

Question 3. What other directions shall we give the deacons?

Answer Several

To take a regular catalogue of the societies in towns and cities, as they live in streets.

Leave your successor a particular account of the state of the circuit.

See that every band-leader have the rules of the bands.

Vigorously, but calmly, enforce the rules concerning needless ornaments and drams.

As soon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a band.

Suffer no love-feast to last above an hour and a half.

Warn all from time to time, that none are to remove from one circuit to another, without a note of recommendation from the elder or deacon, in these words: A. B., the bearer, has been an acceptable member of our society in C., and inform them, that without such a certificate, they will not be received into other societies.

Everywhere recommend decency and cleanliness.

Read the rules of the society, with the aid of the preachers, once a year, in every congregation, and once a quarter in every society.

On any dispute between two or more of the members of our society, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the deacon shall inquire into the circumstances of the case, and having consulted the stewards and leaders, shall, if agreeable to their advice, recommend to the contending parties a reference consisting of one arbiter, chosen by the plaintiff, and another by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen, shall nominate a third (the three arbiters being members of our society) and the decision of any two of them shall be final. But if either of the parties refuse to abide by such a decision, he shall be immediately expelled.

N. B. If any member of our society enter into a lawsuit with another member before those measures are taken, he shall be expelled.

No deacon that ceases to travel without the consent of the conference, certified under the hand of a bishop, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office.

## SECTION VII.

On the Method of receiving Preachers, and their Duty.

Question 1. How is a preacher to be received?

Answer

By the conference.

In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or an elder, until the sitting of the conference.

When his name is not printed in the minutes, he must receive a written license from his elder or bishop.

Question 2. What is the duty of a preacher?

Answer

To preach.

To meet the societies or classes and bands.

To visit the sick.

To meet the leaders.

To preach in the morning, where he can get hearers.

N. B. We are fully determined never to drop morning preaching; and to preach at five o'clock in the summer, and at six in the winter, wherever it is practicable.

Question 3. Are the preachers to read our liturgy?

Answer All that have received a written direction for that purpose, under the hand of a bishop or elder, may read the liturgy as often as they think it expedient.

Question 4. What are the directions given to a preacher?

Answer

Be diligent. Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

Be serious. Let your motto be, holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

Converse sparingly and cautiously with women, 1 Timothy v, 2.

Take no step toward marriage without first consulting with your brethren.

Believe evil of no one; unless ye see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

Speak evil of no one: else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

Tell every one under your care what you think wrong in his conduct and temper, and that plainly as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

Do not affect the gentleman. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

Be ashamed of nothing but sin.

Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but conscience' sake; not for fear of punishment, but for conscience' sake.

You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always not only to those that want, but to those that want you most.

Observe. it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society only: but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline! Therefore you will need to exercise all the sense and grace you have.

Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which we direct: in preaching and visiting from house to house: in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.

Question 5. What method do we use in receiving a preacher at the conference?

Answer After solemn fasting and prayer, every person proposed shall then be asked, before the conference, the following directions, (with any others which may be thought necessary,) viz. Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are

you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work? Do you know the rules of the society? Of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you constantly attend the sacrament? Have you read the form of discipline? Are you willing to conform to it? Have you considered the rules of a preacher; especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you endeavor not to speak too long or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example? Are you in debt?

We may then, if he gives satisfaction, receive him as a probationer, by giving him the form of discipline, inscribed thus: To A. B. "You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer." Let him, then, carefully read and weigh what is contained therein; that if he has any doubt, it may be removed. Observe! Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a preacher. One on trial, may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong; otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every deacon and elder explain this to those who are on trial, as well as to those who are in future to be proposed for trial.

After two years' probation, being recommended by the elders and deacons present, and examined by the bishop, he may be received into full connection, by giving him the form of discipline, inscribed thus: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavor to walk by these, rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow laborer."

N. B. Let none who are local, preach or exhort in any of our societies without a note of permission from, the deacon: let every local preacher or exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly: and let every elder insist upon it.

## SECTION VIII.

Of the Collections that are to be made, and how the Money is to be expended

Question 1. How many collections are to be made in a year?

Answer

A quarterly collection from the members of the Society to supply the preachers; and when that is deficient, a public quarterly collection. If there be any overplus, let one-third of it be reserved for future deficiencies; one-third be given to the poor in general; and one-third applied to the building or improving of our churches. If there is money left in the hands of the stewards at the close of the year, let it be sent to the conference.

A yearly collection from all our members that are of ability, for the building of convenient churches.

A collection at love-feasts, and on sacramental occasions, for the poor of our own society.

An annual collection or subscription for the college.

An annual public collection for the contingencies of the conference; which shall be applied,

To discharge the deficiencies of those preachers who shall not have received their full salary in their circuits; and,

To defray the expenses of our missions to distant parts of the continent.

Question 2. What is the regular annual salary of the bishops, elders, deacons, and preachers?

Answer Twenty-four pounds Pennsylvania currency, and their traveling expenses.

Question 3. What shall be annually allowed the wives of the married preachers?

Answer Twenty-four pounds Pennsylvania currency, if they are in want of it.

N. B. That no ministers or preachers, traveling or local, shall receive any support either in money or other provision for their services, without the knowledge of the stewards of the circuits, and its being properly entered quarterly on the books.

## SECTION IX.

### On Class-Meeting

Question 1. How may the leaders of classes be rendered more useful?

Answer

Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done with all possible exactness, at least once a quarter. In order to this, take sufficient time.

Let each leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers: not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

Let the leaders converse with the elder and deacon frequently and freely.

Question 2. Can any thing more be done in order to make the class-meetings lively and profitable?

Answer

Change improper leaders.

Let the leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

Let us observe which leaders are the most useful: and let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

See that all the leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

Question 3. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the society?

Answer

Give tickets to none until they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met at least six months on trial.

Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or until they have met three or four times in a class.

Read the rules to them the first time they meet.

Question 4. How shall we be more strict in receiving and excluding members?

Answer In large societies we may read the names of those that are received and excluded once a quarter.

Question 5. What shall we do with those members of society who willfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?

Answer

Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz. exclusion.

If they do not amend, let the deacon exclude them in the society; showing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of discipline; and not for immoral conduct.

## SECTION X.

On the Duty of Preachers to God, themselves, and one another

Question 1. How shall a preacher be qualified for his charge?

Answer By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart: and by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular.

Question 2. Do we sufficiently watch over each other?

Answer We do not. Should we not frequently ask each other, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement, viz. five o'clock? Do you spend the day in the manner which the conference advises? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? To be more particular: Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons? They are either instituted or prudential.

I. The instituted are,

Prayer; private, family, public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these? Do you forecast daily wherever you are, to secure time for private devotion? Do you practice it everywhere? Do you ask everywhere, Have you family prayer? Do you ask individuals; Do you use private prayer every morning and evening in particular?

Searching the Scriptures, by

Reading; constantly, some part of every day, regularly, all the Bible in order: carefully, with Mr. Wesley's notes: seriously, with prayer before and after: fruitfully, immediately practicing what you learn there?

Meditating: at set times? By rule?

Hearing: every opportunity? with prayer before, and after? Have you a Bible always about you?

The Lord's supper: Do you use this at every opportunity? With solemn prayer before? With earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

Fasting: Do you use as much abstinence and fasting every week, as your health, strength, and labor will permit?

Christian conference: Are you convinced how important and how difficult it is to order your conversation aright? Is it always in grace, seasoned with salt; meet to minister grace to the hearers? Do you not converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view, and to pray before and after it?

II. Prudential means we may use, either as Christians, as Methodists, as preachers, or as ministers.

As Christians: What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living?

As Methodists: Do you never miss your class or band?

As preachers: Do you meet every society? also, the leaders and bands?

As ministers: Have you thoroughly considered your duty? And do you make a conscience of executing every part of it?

These means may be used without fruit. But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.

Do you steadily watch against the world? yourself? your besetting sin?

Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense? imagination? honor? Are you temperate in all things? instance in food.

Do you use only that kind, and that degree which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this?

Do you eat no flesh suppers?

Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner?

Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul?

Do you choose and use water for your common drink? and only take wine medicinally or sacramentally?

Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labor to profit thereby?

Do you endeavor to set God always before you? to see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means but a blessing will ensue; and the more you use them, the more will you grow in grace.

## SECTION XI.

On the Necessity of Union among ourselves

Let us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? if we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

Question 1. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

Answer

Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

Pray earnestly for, and speak freely to each other.

When we meet, let us never part without prayer.

Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.

Never speak lightly of each other.

Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.

Labor in honor each to prefer the other before himself.

## SECTION XII.

Of the Trial of those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to Preach

Question 1. How shall we try those who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

Answer

Let them be asked the following questions, viz. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the holy Ghost.

## SECTION XIII.

Of the Spirit and Truth of Singing

Question 1. How shall we guard against formality in singing?

Answer

By choosing such hymns as are proper for the congregation.

By not singing too much at once; seldom more than five or six verses.

By suiting the time to the words.

By often stopping short, and asking the people, "Now!, do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?"

Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by those who have either very strong or very weak voices.

In every large society let them learn to sing; and let them always learn our tunes first.

Let the women constantly sing their parts alone. Let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes and sings the bass as it is composed in the tunebook.

Introduce no new tune till they are perfect in the old.

Recommend our tune-book; and if you cannot sing yourself, choose a person or two at each place to pitch the tune for you.

Exhort every person in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only.

Sing no hymns of your own composing.

If a preacher be present, let him alone give out the words.

When the singers would teach a tune to the congregation, they must sing only the tenor.

#### SECTION XIV.

Rules by which we should Continue Or Desist from Preaching at any Place

Question 1. Is it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any societies?

Answer By no means: we have made the trial in various places; and that for a considerable time. But all the seed has fallen by the way-side. There is scarce any fruit remaining.

Question 2. Where should we endeavor to preach most?

Answer

Where there are the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers.

Where there is the most fruit.

Question 3. Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

Answer We ought; and at that time to send more laborers than usual into that part of the harvest.

#### SECTION XV.

On the Matter and Manner of Preaching, and other public exercises.

Question 1. What is the best general method of preaching?

Answer

To convince:

To offer Christ:

To invite:

To build up: and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

Question 2. Are there any smaller advices relative to preaching which might be of use to us?

Answer Perhaps these:

Be sure never to disappoint a congregation.

Begin precisely at the time appointed.

Let your whole deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn.

Always suit your subject to your audience.

Choose the plainest text you can.

Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.

Take care of any thing awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.

Print nothing without the approbation of the conference, and one of the bishops.

Do not usually pray extempore above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission

Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of Scripture; and let young preachers often exhort without taking a text.

Always avail yourself of the great festivals by preaching on the occasion.

Question 3. Have not some of us been led off from practical preaching, by what is called preaching Christ?

Answer The most effectual way of preaching Christ, is to preach him in all his offices; and to declare his law, as well as his gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches.

## SECTION XVI.

Against Antinomianism

Question 1. What can be done to guard against Antinomianism?

Answer

Let all the preachers carefully read over Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Fletcher's tracts.

Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, but not in a controversial way. And let them take care to do it in love and gentleness: not in bitterness, returning railing for railing.

Answer all the object

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/nathan-bangs/an-account-of-the-organization-of-the-methodist-episcopal-church/>

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