

From the Close of the General Conference of 1808, to the Commencement of the General Conference of 1812

by Nathan Bangs

The General Conference of 1808 was a time of growth and expansion for the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the work of God gradually increasing and spreading among the people, and the bishops laboring with great diligence and reward.

Scripture: Psalm 85:6, Luke 15:10, Acts 2:37, Romans 12:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16

Topics: "Revival Meetings", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

Nathan Bangs preaches about the successful camp-meetings held in various parts of the country, emphasizing the seriousness, solemnity, and good order observed during the meetings. The accounts highlight the powerful effects of divine presence, with sinners being convicted, penitents finding justification, and believers experiencing deepened grace. The narratives also include remarkable instances of families and individuals being converted to God during these gatherings, showcasing the transformative impact of the camp-meetings. The descriptions provide a vivid picture of the spiritual fervor, fervent prayers, and joyful praises that characterized these events, leading to numerous professions of faith and additions to the Church.

Transcript

There were no additional conferences created this year, the whole of the work in the United States and Territories, as well as in Upper and Lower Canada, being comprehended in the seven already existing.

It appears that both preachers and people were generally satisfied with what had been done by the last General Conference, and the experience of thirty years has abundantly tested the wisdom of the plan of securing an equal representation from the sever annual conferences, acting, when together, under the limitations which that conference saw fit to impose. The preachers, therefore, went to their several stations with hearts burning with love to their fellowmen, and a determination to devote themselves entirely to their peculiar work. And though but few new circuits were added this year, yet the work of God gradually increased and spread among the people, both in the old and new countries.

Bishop Asbury felt himself greatly relieved from the burden of responsibility resting upon him as the sole superintendent, by the active and diligent manner in which the newly elected and consecrated bishop entered upon the labors of his office: -- "The burden," he remarks, "is now borne by two pair of shoulders instead of one -- the care is cast upon two hearts and heads." He, however, by no means remitted any of his labors, but with the same characteristic ardor and diligence, we find him moving through the general work, giving tone to the spirit of reformation which was now pervading different portions of the country, particularly through the agency of camp-meetings. Hence we find him this year, in company with Bishop McKendree, after passing through some of the older settlements of Pennsylvania, crossing the mountains and descending into the valley of the Mississippi and notwithstanding the growing infirmities of body under which he often groaned, he visited several of their camp-meetings, and preached to the people, exhorting them to steadfastness in the faith.

While here he had an opportunity of manifesting the tender sensibilities of his soul over the grave of one of his departed friends. Passing by the grave, he says: --

"It was as much as I could do to forbear weeping I mused over her speaking grave. How sweetly eloquent! Ah! the world knows little of my sorrows -- little knows how dear to me are my many friends, and how deeply I feel their loss. But they all die in the Lord, and this shall comfort me."

His colleague, Bishop McKendree, also entered upon his work with equal diligence, making the entire circuit of the continent from year to year. One reason assigned by Bishop Asbury why it became him to visit, as nearly as practicable, every part of the work was, that the preachers and people ought to know their bishop, and that he ought to know them, so as to be able to sympathize with them in their wants and sufferings, to understand their true state, as well as to set an example to all which they might safely and profitably imitate. Hence, while in the western country, he says, "I feel for the people of this territory; but we must suffer with them if we expect to feel for them as we ought; and here are the disadvantages of a local episcopacy, because it cannot be interested for its charge as it should be, because it sees not, suffers not with, and therefore feels not for the people." And therefore for the first year of Bishop McKendree's episcopal labors, his father in the gospel led him around from one part of the work to another, introduced him to the conferences, and made him acquainted, as far as possible, with the people of his charge. And what a charge! To travel from Georgia to Maine, from thence through Vermont and along the lakes unto the western states, following the waters of the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers, ascending the hills and crossing the intervening valleys, lodging sometimes in log huts, and not infrequently in the woods, attending the conferences, preaching almost every day, receiving visitors, writing letters, and hearing the grievances of discontented individuals! This was labor! and labor, too, actually performed by those who were at that time honored with presiding over the Methodist Episcopal Church. And does the reader wish to hear how such travels and labors were performed? Let Bishop Asbury answer. Speaking of his departure from a camp-meeting which he and Bishop McKendree had attended in Tennessee, he says: --

"The right way to improve a short day is to stop only to feed the horses; and let the riders, meanwhile, take a bite of what they may have been provident enough to put into their pockets."

As they thus moved around from one annual conference to another, Bishop Asbury could direct the attention of his colleague to the fields which had been sown by those who had already cultivated the ground.

Take another extract from his journal for this year, as an instance of the mode in which they traveled, and of the feelings which were inspired under these things, and the prospects before them. They were now in the state of Georgia, having crossed the mountains from Tennessee and arrived among the older settlements. While here he says: --

"My flesh sinks under labor. We are riding in a poor thirty dollar chaise, in partnership, two bishops of us, but it must be confessed that it tallies well with the weight of our purses. What bishops! Well -- but we have great news, and we have great times, and each western, southern, and the Virginia conference will have one thousand souls truly converted to God. Is not this an equivalent for a light purse? And are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!"

This, indeed, was the reward for which he looked, for it may surprise some readers to know that the salary of these bishops amounted to the enormous sum of eighty dollars a year, besides their traveling expenses. Yet this is the fact, and from this pittance they had to supply themselves with clothes and traveling apparatus. Hence he refers in the above extract, to the "weight of their purses."

While, however, they were, in some places, called upon to suffer these privations, yet, in other places, they knew "How to abound, having all things" needful for temporal comfort, surrounded by the kindest friends, and comforted by their unaffected greetings of friendship. Under these circumstances, they poured out their hearts in grateful acknowledgments to God for his goodness in raising them up friends to comfort them and administer to their wants, at the same time expressing a fear lest those abundant marks of favor should make them forget their dependence on God, or neglect him as the "Giver of every good and perfect gift." But whether in want or abounding in plenty, they went on their way, rejoicing in all the good things which the Lord was doing for the people, and contributing by their preaching and example to invite all their brethren to diligence and perseverance in their respective spheres of labor. This was an efficient general superintendence, worthy of the name, and answering the end of its institution.

Among other places, the new settlements in some portions of the state of Ohio were this year visited with outpourings of the Divine Spirit. We have already noticed the influence which the camp-meetings exerted on the inhabitants of that country, and that their continuance, freed from the wild irregularities which had rendered them suspicious in some places, was a means of diffusing the spirit of reformation and of sound piety through the settlements. Along the banks of Paint Greek and the Great Miami, the work flourished greatly during this and several subsequent years, so that, as before stated, in the month of September, 1807, an annual conference was held in Chillicothe, and another in 1809.

This year was distinguished by a very considerable revival of religion in the Mad river country. Among others who were made partakers of divine grace, was a Mr. Kenton, who was one of the first adventurers into the wilderness of Kentucky and Ohio, and had been a companion of the celebrated Boone, the hardy pioneer into Kentucky. Kenton, after living for some time near Maysville in Kentucky, finally settled on the banks of Mad river. He had often displayed the most intrepid courage in contending with the savages of the wilderness, in conquering and slaying the wild beasts of the forest, and enduring all those hardships which are incident to the life of a rover through the western woods and prairies. And though once or twice taken a prisoner by the savages, yet such was his vigilance and fearlessness, that he escaped from their grasp, and survived all the perils of a hunter's life. Yet this haughty lord of the forest fell before the "sword of the spirit which is the word of God." He who had fled from the face of civilization, and more than once moved his residence to avoid coming in contact with his white neighbors who were settling around him, was at length caught in the Gospel net, and brought a willing captive to the Lord Jesus Christ.

About this time, a camp-meeting was held in his immediate neighborhood. Attracted by the fame of their character, and wishing to gratify a laudable curiosity, Kenton mingled with the crowd who attended the meeting, and listened with attention to the ambassadors of Christ. Light broke in upon his understanding, and conviction penetrated his conscience. He who had boldly grappled with the wild beasts of the forest, and fearlessly contended with ferocious Indians, was now seen to tremble and weep under the power of Gospel truth. After laboring some time in silence under the pressure of that guilt which he now felt preying upon his spirits, he asked and obtained an interview with the preacher, the Rev. Mr. Sale, to whom he unbosomed himself in the following strain: --

"Sir, I wish to open my mind to you freely, but must enjoin the most profound secrecy. I have been a wretched sinner; but the Lord has spared my life. I have been in so many battles, encountered so many dangers, so many times taken prisoner by the Indians -- have run the gauntlet -- have been taken into the woods by the Indians, stripped, and tied fast on the back of a wild colt, stretched and lashed fast with my hands under its flanks, my heels under its breast, and then let loose to the mercy of the wild animal, till some of my limbs were broken; and I at last miraculously escaped. I have been wounded so often, and encountered various other difficulties; but after all have been firm to my purpose and unshaken in my resolutions and determinations. And now, sir, by the help of God, I am determined to get religion and serve the Lord. Do you think sir, I will ever give it up?"

After an interchange of some thoughts in reference to this momentous subject, and enjoining secrecy upon Mr. Sale, they returned to the encampment. That night the general -- for such was his title -- was in great agony of mind, and was earnestly engaged in seeking for redemption in the blood of Christ. The next morning he was heard proclaiming aloud himself, what he had the night before so solemnly requested to be kept a profound secret. He was declaring what God had done for his soul, and many praised God on his account.

Such a change, on such a man, could not but have a most powerful and salutary influence on the minds of others, especially as his subsequent life gave irrefutable evidence of the reality of the work. This is given as one specimen among hundreds which might be selected, in proof of the good effects of these meetings.

In the southwestern part of the country a new circuit was formed along the banks of the Tombigbee river, by the labors of Matthew P. Sturdevant. This being a new and thinly settled country, the preacher was subjected to those difficulties and hardships which were inseparable from the mode of life adopted by the Methodist itinerants of those days. He succeeded, however, in forming a circuit, so that in 1810 to we find, on the minutes of conference for Tombigbee, eighty six members -- seventy-one whites, and fifteen colored.

In New England the work of God had slowly progressed in several places, and this year Smithfield and Palmyra circuits were added to those heretofore formed. The latter was in the Kennebeck district, much of which embraced the newly settled countries in the province of Maine. Through the labors of such men as the Rev. Messrs. Elijah Hedding, Joshua Soule, Thomas Branch, John Broadhead, Elijah R. Sabin, and Oliver Beale, who were this year the presiding elders in the New England conference, Methodism was gradually, and in some places powerfully, advancing, both in the older and in some of the new settlements in the New England states. While Thomas Branch was leading forward the young men under his care in the regions of Vermont, where Methodism now numbered about one thousand six hundred members, Elijah Hedding (now bishop) was equally indefatigable in exploring the settlements and villages among the

hills and valleys of New Hampshire; and the province of Maine was blessed with the labors of Joshua Soule (now bishop) and Oliver Beale, whose example in the work committed to their care, stimulated the preachers on their respective districts to activity and diligence in their respective spheres of labor.

But among those whose early labors that were devoted to the salvation of the people in New England, we must not forget to mention the name of Rev. George Pickering. As early as 1795 we find him stationed in Hartford, Connecticut; and, after filling the stations of New London, Lynn, and Boston, he was appointed a presiding elder in 1797, which office he filled for several terms, with the needful intervening years in stations, until age and infirmities obliged him to intermit his more extensive labors for those better suited to his declining years.

When Mr. Pickering entered this field, in 1793, there was but one district, which was then in charge of Jesse Lee, including eighteen circuits, twenty-six preachers, and two thousand two hundred and sixty members. At the time of which we are now speaking, there were six districts, fifty-four circuits, seventy-five preachers, and eight thousand eight hundred and twenty-five church members. Mr. Pickering, therefore, may be said, in some sense, to have grown up with the Methodist Episcopal Church in New England, as he very soon followed Mr. Lee, and has ever since shared in its weal or woe, during all the vicissitudes through which it has passed in that part of our work; and he still lives to labor and rejoice with his brethren. And though the above number may appear small in comparison with most of the other conferences, yet it must be remembered that Methodism in that country had to contend with an opposition of a peculiar character, arising from the modes of thinking and habits of the people on religious subjects, and also that other churches were, in many instances, as much benefited by the labors of the Methodist ministry as were the Methodists themselves. Here, as well as in some other places, many who were awakened and converted to God by our ministry, were received into other communions, and a spirit of reformation, by this means, was diffused among the various evangelical denominations. These things are mentioned not by way of complaint against others, but merely as matters of fact, for we rejoice in all that the Lord our God has done, or may do, by whatever instrumentality he may see fit to work.

While these things were going forward in the more exterior parts of the field of labor, God was not unmindful of the people in the cities and villages in the other states. In the city of New York, the work of reformation continued with encouraging prosperity, and many were made partakers of the "grace of life." In the city of Philadelphia also, there was an outpouring of the Spirit upon the congregations, and quite a number was added to the church. Through the agency of camp-meetings many parts of the country were blessed, particularly on the eastern shore of Maryland, where hundreds of sinners were happily converted to God; and his people were made to rejoice abundantly in beholding these manifest displays of the mercy and love of God toward their fellow-men, as well as in their own enjoyment of the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit.

A remarkable work of God commenced this year in the penitentiary of Richmond, in Virginia, under the faithful labors of the Rev. Stith Mead, who undertook to carry the consolations of religion to those unhappy people. By preaching to them himself, and procuring the help of other ministers, and by circulating among them small religious books, their minds were led to consider their ways, a godly sorrow for sin was awakened in their hearts, and they were directed to look by faith to Jesus Christ for pardon and salvation. The result of this good work was, that in the course of a few months about thirty of these prisoners were formed into a society, furnishing satisfactory evidence that they had "passed from death unto life."

Twenty-nine preachers were located this year, seven were returned supernumerary, seven superannuated, one had been expelled, and two, John Richards¹ and Dyer Burg, had withdrawn. George Dougharty Bennet Kendrick, Henry Willis, and Richard Swaim had died.

The obituary notices of preachers now began to be considerably lengthened in the published minutes, and as all can have recourse to these for information respecting their character, labors, and deaths, I must, to make room for other matters more essentially connected with the history of the Church, continue to omit, or modify these, as the nature of the case may seem to require.

Of George Dougharty we have already spoken in the account of the work in Charleston, S. C. It is stated that his character stood exceedingly high in his conference, both as a preacher and a presiding elder, furnishing the most indubitable evidence of his readiness and qualification to fill with dignity and usefulness any department of the work to which he might be called. After filling the stations allotted him in the church with great fidelity, and discharging the duties of his office as long as he was able to move, he manifested his courage in the cause of God, by bringing forward a resolution in the last conference he attended, in 1807, declaring "that if any preacher should desert his station through fear, in time of sickness or danger, the conference should never employ that man again."

It is said that he sustained this resolution, however rigid it may appear, with such force and energy of argument, that he carried his cause, and thus, like a general who dies in the arms of victory, he triumphed in this last public act of his life over all opposition.

His last sufferings were indescribably severe; but he bore them with that meek submission to the divine will by which he had ever been distinguished during his active life; and on the 23d day of March, 1807, he took his departure from a world of labor and suffering, to a land of rest and joy, after having devoted the last nine years of his life to the services of the sanctuary.

His abilities as a preacher were of a high order, and they were guided in their exercise by that wisdom and prudence, and attended by that "unction from the holy One," which made them subservient to the advancement of the cause and interests of Jesus Christ. Whenever he spoke in the name of God, he most evidently spoke of what he knew and felt, and not merely from a speculative knowledge of the truths of God. And hence his word was in "power, and in much assurance, and in the Holy Ghost," the hearts of God's people vibrating to the truths he uttered, while sinners were made to feel that they stood in the presence of a man commissioned of "God to show unto them the way of salvation."

The life of such a man is an expressive comment upon the gospel he preaches, and his death a powerful attestation to its truth and excellence. He indeed, while struggling in the arms of death, and in full view of eternity, said with holy triumph, "The goodness and love of God to me are great and marvelous, as I go down the declivity of death." And so unclouded was his understanding and tranquil his spirit in the hour of his dissolution, that his true greatness was never before so fully appreciated by his friends.

Henry Willis was also a "burning and a shining light." He was naturally of a strong mind, and this he diligently improved by an assiduous application to reading and observation. After he became so debilitated that he was not able to devote himself exclusively to the traveling ministry, considering that his call to this work was from God, he did not dare desist from doing all he could, while he so applied himself to temporal business as not to be dependent on the church for a support. Systematic in all his movements, zealous in whatever he undertook to do, and uniform in his obedience to the commands of God, he accomplished much in a short time, and with comparatively slender means. In the various relations he sustained,

whether as a son, a husband, a father, or a minister of Jesus Christ, he exemplified the duties originating from them, thus giving evidence that real religion has its appropriate duties, and that all could be discharged without interfering one with another.

He commenced his ministry in 1779, and from that time forth filled some of the most important stations in the Church, in the states of South and North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and in the new countries west of the Allegheny mountains; and he continued his exertions in the cause of God until 1795, when, being worn down with labor, he received a supernumerary relation, and was stationed in the city of Baltimore. This relation he held from this time until the day of his death, laboring, as before said, with his own hands, that he "might be chargeable to none," for the support of himself and family. He was everywhere received as a messenger of God, and was long remembered by those who sat under his ministry, with most affectionate veneration, as having been an instrument of lasting benefit to their souls. The record of his death, which states that he died with a triumphant faith in Jesus Christ, calls him a "great man of God," an appellation which shows the high estimation in which he was held by those best capable of appreciating his worth.

He died early in the year 1808, in the full hope of "immortality and eternal life," leaving behind him, as the most valuable legacy which a father can bequeath to his children or a minister to the church, a "good name" -- the remembrance of which "is as precious ointment poured forth."

Of Bennet Kendrick excellent things are said, as well as of Richard Swaim. They were both faithful and successful in their ministry, and died the peaceful death of the righteous.

The following account of Captain Thomas Webb, which should have appeared under date of 1796, was inadvertently omitted until those pages were printed off.² But as he was one of the two first Methodist preachers who came to America, he deserves a respectful notice among the worthies of that chivalrous age of Methodism when the sword of the Lord and of Wesley was so successfully wielded in conquering souls to Jesus Christ.

It has indeed been affirmed by some, that Capt. Webb was the founder of Methodism in New York but this, I am confident, is a mistake, as I took much pains to ascertain the facts in relation to the society in this city, and received them from the lips of persons who had a personal knowledge and perfect recollection of all the circumstances as they are related in the second chapter of the first volume of this work.

Nevertheless, Capt. Webb contributed much by his prayers, preaching, and example, to build up the cause of God, to increase the number, and to strengthen the hearts and hands of the society in the city of New York.

He was a soldier of the British army, and was with Gen. Wolfe at the conquest of Quebec in 1758, and during the engagement on the plains of Abraham, under the walls of the city, he received a wound in his arm and lost his right eye, on account of which he ever after wore a bandage over that part of his head, as may be seen by an inspection of the likeness which accompanies this volume [not included with this electronic edition -- DVM]. At this time, the fear of God was not before his eyes; but on his return to England, in the year 1764, he was brought to see himself a sinner through the preaching of Mr. Wesley in the city of Bristol. He then became acquainted with an evangelical minister of the establishment, and through him with the Methodists, with whom he soon after united himself, and found the "pearl of great price."

Having his heart fired with love to God and his fellow-men, he began to entreat them to "flee the wrath to come," and to believe in Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls. In his first appearance in public as a preacher, which was in the city of Bath, in England, he dwelt chiefly on his own experience of divine things; but the people who heard him were edified and refreshed under his public exercises, which greatly encouraged him to persevere in this labor of love.

Not long after this, in the year 1765 or 1766, he was appointed barrack-master of Albany, in the colony of New York. Here he set up family prayer in his own house, which some of his neighbors frequently attended, to whom he gave a word of exhortation and advice. The blessing of God attending these incipient efforts to do good, he was induced to extend his labors, and He began holding meetings among his fellow-soldiers and others who wished to attend.

After the arrival of Mr. Embury and his associates in New York, Capt. Webb, hearing of their having begun to hold meetings, paid them a visit. His first appearance among them was in the public assembly, and as he wore the uniform of a British captain, the little society were fearful at first, that he had come to "spy out their liberties in Christ " but, as already related in the account given of the rise of this society, when they saw him kneel in prayer and devoutly participate with them in their acts of devotion, their fears were exchanged for joy, and they hailed "him as a brother beloved." He was therefore soon invited to preach, which he did with great energy and acceptance. His appearance in the pulpit in the costume of a military officer, with his sword either lying by his side or swinging in its scabbard, was a novelty that attracted much attention and excited no little surprise among the citizens who attended the meetings. His preaching, however, was in demonstration and power, and he generally related his own experience as an evidence of the truth of his doctrine respecting experimental religion. But his experience being very deep, as he had a severe struggle while passing from death to life, and also obtained an unclouded witness of his acceptance in the Beloved, it is stated by those who heard him in those days, that he always took care to guard weak believers against "casting away their confidence," because they could not realize the same bright testimony of their justification by faith in Christ with which he had been so highly favored.

He did not, however, confine his labors to New York and Albany. The records of those days represent him as visiting Philadelphia and Long island, where he preached with success, the Lord setting his seal to the words of his servant. He was, indeed, mighty in the Scriptures, and very pointed in his appeals to the consciences of unconverted sinners; and the result proved that the Spirit of God accompanied his energetic labors, to the awakening and conversion of souls.

How long he remained in America I cannot tell; but in 1772 we find from a letter of Mr. Wesley, that he was in Dublin in Ireland, and Mr. Wesley says of him, "he is a man of fire, and the power of God constantly accompanies his word." In 1773 Mr. Wesley speaks of his preaching at the Foundry in London, and says, "I admire the wisdom of God in still raising up various preachers, according to the various tastes of men. The captain is all life and fire; therefore, although he is not deep or regular, yet many, who would not hear a better preacher, flock together to hear him. And many are convinced under his preaching; some justified; a few built up in love." Ten years after this he speaks of Capt. Webb, having "lately kindled a flame here," (in the neighborhood of Bath,) "and it is not yet gone out. Several persons were still rejoicing in God. I found his preaching in the street of Winchester had been blessed greatly. Many were more or less convinced of sin, and several had found peace with God. I never saw the house before so crowded with serious and attentive hearers." In 1785 he bears a similar testimony to his usefulness, in kindling up the fire of devotion among the people.

From these testimonies it appears that Capt. Webb retained his piety and zeal in the cause of God, although Charles Wesley, whose charity was sometimes a little cramped by his high notions of Church order, said, in a letter to Joseph Benson, that the captain was "an inexperienced, honest, zealous, loving enthusiast." His enthusiasm was that of a warm-hearted, "zealous, honest, and loving" servant of God, whose powers were devoted to the highest interests of mankind, -- although we may allow that he lacked that extensive knowledge which is acquired only by a laborious application to study.

His death is said to have been sudden. Having a presentiment of his approaching dissolution, a few days before his death he expressed his wishes to a friend respecting the place and manner of his internment, adding, -- "I should prefer a triumphant death but I may be taken away suddenly. However, I know I am happy in the Lord, and shall be with him, and that is sufficient." A little after 10 o'clock, on the 20th of December, 1796, after taking his supper and praying with his family, he went to his bed in apparent good health; but shortly his breathing became difficult; he arose and sat at the foot of the bed; but while Mrs. Webb was standing by him, he fell back on the bed, and before any other person could be called, he sunk into the arms of death without any apparent pain, aged 72 years.

It is matter of gratitude to God that Capt. Webb, as well as Mr. Embury, "held fast his confidence steadfast unto the end," and therefore "received the full reward" of his labors. Mr. Embury, after laboring successfully in the cause of Christ in New York, removed to Ashgrove, where he ended his days in the service of his God, and where he lies entombed, mingling his ashes with his relatives who have followed him to the grave, waiting for the "final doom," when the trump of God shall awaken him to life and immortality. Capt. Webb, after "sowing the good seed of the kingdom" in various places in this country, returned to Europe, and spent the remainder of his days in "kindling the fire" of divine love in the hearts of God's people, in warning sinners of their impending danger, and pointing penitent mourners to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." While therefore the one shall arise at the voice of the Son of God from his "dusty bed" in America, and receive the plaudits of those of her sons and daughters who were brought to God by his ministry, the other shall come forth in obedience to the same mandate from his resting-place in England, and hail each other blessed amid the shouts of the redeemed, while all, whether white or black, whether from the eastern or western continent, shall unitedly, and with one voice, ascribe the GLORY OF THEIR SALVATION TO GOD AND HIS LAMB FOR EVER.

In the meanwhile, were the happy spirits of these individuals, so obscure in their life time, and by some considered as merely "honest and loving enthusiasts," permitted to look down on this American continent, and behold the thousands which have been "taken out of the horrible pit and miry clay," and had "their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb," since they commenced their humble efforts in the city of New York, would not their souls exult in praises to God and the Lamb for having redeemed them from the earth, and placed them among the princes of his people!

Captain Webb was no doubt somewhat eccentric in his movements, limited in his knowledge, and of moderate talents as a preacher of the gospel; but, from the testimony of Mr. Wesley and others who knew him well, his soul was fired with an ardent zeal for God, and was drawn out with an unquenchable thirst for the salvation of his fellow-men, and the building up of the Redeemer's kingdom. As such, God honored him with his blessing -- and as such we honor his memory, and record this feeble tribute of respect to him, as one of the first Wesleyan preachers who published the gospel on these American shores.

Numbers in the Church: Whites This Year: 121,687; Last Year: 114,727; Increase: 6,890 -- Colored This Year: 30,308; Last Year: 29,863; Increase: 445 -- Total This Year: 151,995; Last Year: 144,590 --

Increase: 7,405 -- Preachers This Year: 540; Last Year: 516; Increase: 24.

1809

The same number of conferences was held this year as last, and they were attended by the two bishops in the usual manner.

Several new circuits were added within the bounds of the Western conference, by which the work in that country was considerably enlarged. And, in addition to the sketches which have already been given of the commencement and progress of Methodism in Ohio, may be added the following, taken chiefly from the narrative of the Rev. Henry Smith, who was among the first who carried the gospel into some portions of the country bordering upon the Ohio, and lying between the Big and Little Miami rivers, and the Sciota river.

It seems that as early as 1799 Mr. Smith visited the settlements along the banks of the Miami river, including the Miami and Sciota counties, and being assisted by Mr. Hunt, formed a six weeks' circuit, which they traveled with no small difficulty. He found the country thinly inhabited, but among those who had settled there, were a number who had been Methodists in the countries whence they came, some retaining their piety, and others in a backslidden state. On the Scioto Bush creek, and at the mouth of the Scioto river, he found several Methodist families, among the latter of whom was a local preacher by the name of William Jackson. Here he formed a class.

Over this country, along the banks of the Miamis and their tributary streams, he traveled, often exposed to hardships and privations which few could well endure, but was abundantly compensated by a consciousness of the divine approbation, and by witnessing the blessing of God on his labors. Many sinners were brought to the knowledge of the truth by his agency, who afterward brought forth the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God.

From this time, as we have already seen, the work continued to spread in various directions, until the time of which we now speak, when Miami was the district of a presiding elder, with six circuits, employing thirteen preachers, including the presiding elder; and in 1810 there were four thousand seven hundred and eighty-four members in the Church.

Though we had no Missionary Society at that time, nor consequently any funds for the support of those who went into the new settlements, yet Bishop Asbury was in the habit, as he passed through the more wealthy portions of the work, of soliciting donations from benevolent individuals for the purpose of sustaining those who might volunteer their services to "break up new ground," as it was then not unaptly called. And this year we find Robert Cloud attached as a missionary to the Muskingum district, James H. Mellard to the Seleuda district, to labor between the Ashley and Savannah rivers, and James E. Glenn to the Camden district, to occupy the country between Santee and Cooper rivers. By this means, the gospel was sent to these destitute settlements, "without money and without price." William Case was also sent as a missionary to Detroit in the Michigan territory; and an attempt was made to introduce the gospel at the Three rivers in Lower Canada, a place about midway between Montreal and Quebec.

A new circuit was formed this year in the bounds of the western conference, called Cold Water, Upper Louisiana, in the fork of the Mississippi, by the labors of John Crane, a young man of precocious genius, and remarkable for the early exhibitions of talent and piety, and those powers of pulpit oratory which attract the attention of the multitude. In this new country he had a full opportunity for the exercise of all his

energies in contending with hardship; in combating the errors and prejudices of the people, and in striving to establish societies in the pure doctrines of Christ. He succeeded so far as to return the next year seventy-five members of the Church as the fruits of his ministry. He was reappointed in 1810 to the same field of labor, with the Missouri circuit added to Cold Water, which made his rides long, and the more difficult, for want of roads and bridges, as he was frequently obliged to swim his horse over the Missouri river in passing from one appointment to another -- a practice by no means uncommon in those days, when the forests were falling beneath the strokes of the woodsman's axe, and the traveler was wending his way by Indian tracks, or merely guided by marked trees.

In addition to this enlargement of the field of labor in the exterior settlements, prosperity attended the efforts of God's servants in various portions of the work, in the older countries, and in several of the principal cities.

The brethren in Boston had suffered much inconvenience on account of the smallness of their house of worship. To remedy this inconvenience, they had commenced a larger house in Bloomfield lane, some two or three years before; but as the members of the society were comparatively poor, they found themselves embarrassed with a heavy debt, which they were unable to pay. To relieve them from this pressure, the General Conference of 1808 had authorized a general subscription to be taken among the more wealthy societies, by which they were enabled to pay off a portion of their debt, and thus to accommodate the people who wished to attend the Methodist ministry. This gave a new impulse to the cause in that city, and it has steadily progressed from that time with more encouraging success than heretofore.

The camp-meetings continued to be held more generally than ever, and were owned of God to the awakening and conversion of sinners, and tended much to quicken the people of God in their own souls, and to stimulate them to more vigorous exertions for the salvation of others. And as this history may be read by some who have never attended these meetings, it may not be out of place to give a description of the manner in which they are attended.

We have already seen that they were introduced casually, or it may be more proper to say, providentially, in the western country, at a sacramental occasion, when such a number of people attended that no house could be found large enough to accommodate them. The good effects resulting from these meetings soon led to a regular method of holding them in different parts of the country by previous appointment and preparation. For this purpose, a grove is generally selected, in the neighborhood of good water, and, if possible, in such a place that the people may go by water, in sloops or steam-boats. The under brush is cleared away, seats of boards or plank and a stand for the preachers are prepared in convenient order. On the ground thus prepared tents are erected, from twenty to two hundred in number, of different sizes and material, some of cloth and some of boards, but more generally of the former. These temporary shelters are of various sizes, some for single families, and some sufficiently large to hold from twenty to fifty, and perhaps a hundred individuals, and others, for the accommodation of such as choose it, are for boarding-tents.

On the day appointed, the people are seen assembling from various directions, some in carriages or wagons from the country, and a multitude of others from the cities and villages along the water course; in sloops or steamboats, with their bedding, cooking utensils and provisions; for the meeting generally continues four or five days, and in some instances eight or nine days. These all repair to their places, and, if not already done for them, erect their tents, and prepare for the solemn exercises of the meeting.

The tents are generally arranged in a circular form in front of the stand, and in those held in the neighborhood of the city of New York, with which I am best acquainted, the rows of tents are from three to six deep, and arranged on several streets, numbered and labeled, so that they may be distinguished one from another, and passed between. The fires for cooking are in general behind the tents, so that the people may not be discommoded with the smoke, &c.

Lamps are prepared, and suspended on the trunks of the trees, and on the preachers' stand, in sufficient number to illuminate the entire encampment, and each tent must have a light burning in it through the night, and the utmost pains are taken to see that no disorderly conduct be allowed on the ground by either night or day. The rules and orders of the meeting are generally as follows, varying so as to suit different circumstances: --

The times of preaching are at 10 o'clock, A. M., and 3 and 7 o'clock, P. M., notice of which is given by the sound of a trumpet or horn at the preachers' stand. The intermediate time between preaching is occupied in prayer meetings, singing, and exhortation. In time of worship persons are prohibited from walking to and fro, talking, smoking, or otherwise disturbing the solemnities of the meeting. All are required, except on the last night of the meeting; to be in their tents at 10 o'clock, P.

M., and to arise at 5, A. M. At 6 o'clock, A. M., they are required to take their breakfast, before which family prayer is attended in each tent occupied by a family. In time of preaching all are required to attend, except one to take care of the tent. That these rules may be observed, they are published from the stand, and a committee appointed to enforce them. A watch is generally appointed to superintend the encampment at night, to keep order, to see that no strangers are on the ground, and to detect any disorderly conduct.

In some places there are large tents provided, at the expense of the society to which they belong, for the purpose of holding prayer meetings, more particularly in the evening, or in rainy weather. In the city of New York the entire arrangement and preparation of the meeting, providing tents, putting them up and taking them down, is under the superintendence of a committee appointed for that purpose by the presiding elder of the district, who also procure the steamboat to take the people to and from the meeting; and each person who chooses to go pays a certain amount, commonly about one dollar, for passage, use of tent, fuel, straw, &c.

This is a general description of a camp-meeting. The number attending varies from five hundred to ten thousand -- and, as we have before seen, when they were first introduced in the west, to twenty thousand in proportion to the paucity or density of the population. That good has resulted from these meetings must be evident to every impartial person who has either attended them or witnessed their effects -- although it must be admitted that some accidental evils have flowed from them.

But these have originated chiefly from the attendance of persons who have gone for other purposes than to worship God. Though most of the state legislatures have passed laws to protect the free exercise of religious meetings, and some to protect camp-meetings in particular, yet there are those in the community who, actuated by mercenary motives, will go and set up hucksters' shops, sell strong liquors and other things, and then invite the thoughtless rabble to convene for convivial purposes, to the annoyance of the peaceable worshipers of God.

These have often created disturbance; and they always, when arranged along the road leading to the encampment, present a spectacle to the sober mind of a disgusting character. But they who provide those things and partake of them, are alone responsible for the evils which they create. Neither camp-meetings

nor those who attend them for religious purposes are accountable for the disorderly conduct of those who, in defiance of law, of religion, and decency, violate the order of the meeting, and bring on themselves the disgrace of being disturbers of the peace.

For such conduct the friends of camp-meetings are no more responsible than the builders of churches and those who peaceably worship God in them, are accountable for any disturbance which a wicked rabble may make within, or for the conduct of a riotous mob without these sacred temples.

Were all who come within the encampment, or who go to the meeting, to observe the order prescribed, there need be no more disorder than there should be in a house of worship.

It has been objected that professors of religion themselves often violate the rules of religious order by unseemly gesticulations and boisterous exclamations. It may, indeed, be so -- and we no more justify these things than we do the same exceptionable conduct in other places -- but there is nothing in the time, the place, or the object of coming together, which need excite these censurable manifestations, more than in any other place of worship. "Let all things be done decently and in order" at camp-meetings, and they shall still be rendered a blessing, as they have heretofore been, to the souls of the people. There is greater danger at present arising from their degenerating into seasons of idle recreation, than of their being abused by ranting fanaticism. In the neighborhood of large cities, where the meetings are easy of access by steamboats, which ply constantly to and from the encampment, there is an alluring temptation for the idle and the gay, as well as for the luke-warm professors of religion, to go to the meetings as mere matters of amusement, and thus to make the nominal service of God a pretext to gratify a roving and inquisitive disposition. Whenever these and similar evils shall threaten to counterbalance the good, the friends of pure religion will either apply the corrective or abandon camp-meetings as a nuisance or as a means susceptible of an incurable abuse. But while they are kept under the control of a sober judgment, and attended from a pure desire to advance the cause of Christ, they will be patronized by the pious as one of the prudential means of effecting the salvation of men.

I know not that I can furnish the reader with a juster idea of a well conducted camp-meeting, than by inserting the following account of one held at Cowharbor, Long Island, in the state of New York, August 11, 1818. It was written indeed under the impulse of those vivid sensations which were produced by a participation in the solemn exercises of the occasion, and by a glow of fervent feeling which may have betrayed the writer into a warmth of expression which none but those similarly situated know how to interpret and appreciate. If this, however, be a fault, it should be considered a pardonable one, as it arises principally from a strong and lively feeling of devotion which the writer felt at the time; and yet, I humbly trust, it was written under the dictates of a cool and reflecting judgment, chastened and hallowed by a grateful recollection of the goodness of God. The following is the account alluded to: --

"An unusual number of people were assembled on Tuesday, when the exercises began under the most favorable auspices. The word of the Lord which was delivered, was received by the people with apparent eagerness and delight. Great peace and harmony prevailed; and the prayers of God's people were fervent and incessant. In the evening there were some conversions.

There were between forty and fifty sloops in the harbor; and it was judged that there were from six to eight thousand people on the encampment; and, what was most desirable, great order and solemnity prevailed.

According to the order of the meeting, the people this night retired to rest at ten o'clock. The next morning opened a delightful prospect to a contemplative mind. The rising sun in the east, darting his lucid beams

through the grove, which was now rendered vocal by the voice of morning prayer in the several tents, announced the superintending care, and proclaimed the majesty of him who maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good. The gentle zephyrs softly whispering through the foliage of the beautiful grove, now consecrated to God, was an expressive emblem of that divine Spirit which so sweetly filled the soul and tranquilized all the passions of the human heart. Not a turbulent passion was permitted to interrupt the sacred peace and divine harmony which the heavenly Dove had imparted to God's beloved people. The exercises of this day were solemn, impressive, and divinely animating. The falling tear from many eyes witnessed the inward anguish which was produced in the hearts of sinners by the word of eternal truth. Whose trembling sinners, groaning under the weight of their sins, were encircled by God's people, and lifted to his throne in the arms of faith and prayer. Some were disburdened of their load; and their shouts of praise testified that Jesus had become their Friend.

"The departure of the sun under the western horizon indicated the time to have arrived for the intelligent creation to lose themselves once more in

'Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.'

But, while some obeyed the impulse of nature, and suffered the soft slumbers of the evening shades to lock up their external senses, others, animated by the love of God, and attracted by the sympathetic groans of wounded sinners whose piercing cries ascended to heaven, committing themselves to the protection of God, assembled in groups, and united their petitions and intercessions to almighty God in behalf of themselves and their mourning fellow-creatures. Neither did they labor in vain; for some of these mourning penitents entered into the liberties of the gospel. About midnight I was attracted by the shouts of an intimate friend, who had been sometime overwhelmed upon the stand with the power of God. In company with some of the young disciples of Christ, I drew near, while he proclaimed the wonders of redeeming love. I at first looked on with the criticizing eye of cool philosophy, determined not to be carried away with passionate exclamations. Bracing myself as much as possible, I was resolved my passions should not get the ascendancy over my judgment. But, in spite of all my philosophy, my prejudice, and my resistance, my heart suddenly melted like wax before the fire, and my nerves seemed in a moment relaxed. These devout exercises were finally interrupted by a shower of rain; but the showers of grace descended so plentifully that sleep could not be persuaded to visit many of our eyes. So we sang

'With thee all night I mean to stay, And wrestle till the break of day.'

The next day was remarkable on account of the presence of "Him who dwelt in the bush." The sermons were pointed, lively, and solemn. The prayers were ardent, faithful, and persevering. The singing melodious, and calculated to elevate the mind to the third heaven. The shouts of redeeming love were solemnly delightful; and the cries of penitent sinners deep and piercing. Notwithstanding the almost incessant labors of the last twenty-four hours, when night came on many seemed determined not to intermit their religious exercises. Their souls being knit together by divine love, they persevered in their prayers and exhortations; some heavy-laden sinners, delivered from their sins, were enabled to praise God for his pardoning mercy.

Friday was the day appointed to close our meeting. It had been unusually solemn, and profitable to many, very many souls; and the hour of separation was anticipated with reluctance. The exercises of this day were attended with an uncommon manifestation of the power and presence of God. The mournful cries of penitent sinners were many and strong; and the professors of religion were ardently engaged in praying

for them; and not a few were groaning for full redemption in the blood of the Lamb. While engaged in this exercise, some of the preachers were baptized afresh with the holy Ghost and fire; and their cup ran over with love to God and to the souls of men.

"After the meeting was closed, circumstances rendered it expedient for the people from New York, and some others, to remain on the ground another night. This news was received by most of the people with delightful sensations. Indeed, the place had become a sanctified Bethel to our souls.

"At 6 o'clock, P. M., the people were summoned to the stand for preaching. The preacher who was to address them, after singing and prayer, read the following text: -- 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.' Not being able to proceed, a preacher standing near one of the tents, perceiving his situation, went on the stand, took the text which had been read, and made some observations upon it, which were attended with divine authority, and with the unction of the Holy One. Many fell to the ground under the mighty power of God, while the shouts of the redeemed seemed to rend the heavens, and to be carried on the waves of the undulating air to the distant hills, and in their rolling melody proclaimed the praises of Him who sits upon the throne and of the Lamb.

This was one of the most awfully solemn scenes my eyes ever beheld. Such a sense of the ineffable Majesty rested upon my soul, that I was lost in astonishment, wonder, and profound adoration. Human language cannot express the solemn, the delighted, the deep and joyful sensation which pervaded my soul. Nor me alone. It was a general shower of divine love. It seemed as if the windows of heaven were opened, and such a blessing poured out that there was scarcely room to contain it. The glory of the God-man shone with divine luster all around, and filled every believing heart. Singing, prayer, and exhortation were continued more or less until 3 o'clock next morning, the hour appointed to prepare to leave the consecrated ground. Many were the subjects of converting grace; and great was the joy of the happy Christians.

About 8 o'clock, A. M., Saturday, those of us from the city embarked in the steamboat "Connecticut," [commanded by] Captain Bunker, whose polite attention deserves our warmest thanks. It seemed like leaving the place of the divine Shekinah, and going into the world again -- but still the presence of our God rested upon us.

"I trust the fruits of this camp-meeting will be extensively witnessed. Not only sinners were awakened and converted, but very many believers were quickened, and the work of grace was deepened in their heart's; and some who had been languid in their spiritual enjoyments formed resolutions to be entirely devoted to God. May they never violate their solemn vow, nor suffer their serious impressions to be effaced. Let no vain amusement, no trifling company, nor any worldly concern divert your attention, ye young professors of religion, or ever efface from your minds those solemn impressions of God, and of his goodness, which you have received.

"The writer of this imperfect sketch feels as if he should praise God in eternity for this camp-meeting. What a sacred fire has been kindled at this holy altar. May many waters never extinguish it. It is not a transient blaze or a sudden ecstasy. No; my soul bows with submission to my God, and thankfully acknowledges the continuance of his loving kindness. The bare recollection of that solemn pause -- when Jesus spoke -- with a voice more melodious than all the harps of the muses -- fills my soul with solemn delight.

"Sometimes when I have indulged in the cool speculations which worldly prudence would suggest, so many objections have been raised in my mind against camp meetings, that I have been ready to proclaim war against them; but these objections have uniformly been obviated. By witnessing the beneficial effects of the meetings while attending them. My theories have all been torn in pieces while testing them by actual experiment -- but never more effectually than by the last. This is more convincing than all the arguments in the world. What I experience I know; and hundreds of others, equally competent to decide, would, were they called upon, bear a similar testimony. O ye happy souls that were bathed in the love of God at this meeting! May you ever evince to the world by the uniformity of your Christian conduct, that such meetings are highly useful.

"An indescribable pleasure is even now felt from reviewing those moments of solemn delight, while our kindred spirits, attracted by the love of Jesus Christ, joyfully adored the God of our salvation. May such seasons of refreshing often return. O! the depth of redeeming love!

'Angel minds are lost to ponder Dying love's mysterious cause.'

"One thing which contributed greatly to the promotion of the cause of God at this meeting was the order and regularity which prevailed. There was little or no disturbance from spectators; and but little confusion in any of the religious exercises. Sometimes, indeed, the ardor of the mind, when powerfully operated upon by the Spirit of God, would lead it to break over the bounds of moderation; but in general the exercises were conducted with much decorum and regularity. Hymns were selected which were solemn and impressive; and the prayers and exhortations, as well as the preaching, all indicated that the mind was under the direction of grace.

"How many were brought to the experience of redeeming grace, cannot be correctly ascertained; but the number must have been very considerable. New York, as well as other places, will, trust, be greatly profited by means of this meeting. A general quickening is already witnessed, and some sinners have been awakened and converted since our return. May their numbers be continually multiplied."

That the reader may see that similar effects attended camp-meetings in other parts of the country, I give the following, which was written by the Rev. William Beauchamp -- since gone to his reward -- who was remarkable for the coolness and soundness of his judgment, and freedom from every thing bordering upon enthusiasm. This account is as follows: --

"A camp-meeting was lately held, about thirty-five miles from this place, in a southwesterly direction, under the superintendence of brother John Stewart, the traveling Methodist preacher having the charge of Mount Carmel circuit. It commenced on the afternoon of Friday, the 20th day of last month, and closed on the morning of the following Monday. The congregation was not large, usually about three hundred souls; on the Sabbath perhaps six hundred. This meeting was remarkable for seriousness, solemnity, and good order. Such a sense of the divine presence appeared to rest on the assembly, that those who might have been disposed to be rude were restrained, and awed into respectful deportment. It was obvious that the ministers who addressed the people were clothed, both in their sermons and exhortations, with power from on high; for their word fell upon the congregation in the demonstration of the Holy Ghost. Divine illumination seemed, at times, to flash like lightning upon the assembly, and produced the most powerful effects. The mild splendor of heavenly joy shone in the faces of the people of God; while the darkness of condemnation and the horrors of guilt hung, like the shadows of death, upon the countenances of the ungodly. The merciful power of God was manifested in a particular manner in the conviction of sinners and

the justification of mourning penitents while believers were not destitute of its divine influence, by which they drank deeper into the spirit of holiness.

"In the intervals of preaching, it was common to see a number of mourning souls prostrate near the stand, for whom supplications were offered unto a throne of grace. And they were not offered in vain. About twenty professed to be reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Christ. Several joined our Church.

On Monday morning, under the last sermon preached at this meeting, we seemed to be in the very suburbs of heaven. The subject was, 'The inheritance of the saints in light.' The preacher, apparently swallowed up in the subject, bore the congregation away with him into the celestial regions, in the contemplation of the glories of the world to come. It was a very precious time to the religious part of the assembly; and the irreligious part, I doubt not, received some very strong and deep impressions of the eternal world. I know not that there was one dry eye in the whole assembly.

"On the Friday following another camp-meeting commenced in the neighborhood of this place. In respect to numbers it was similar to the former one; nor was it less remarkable in regard to seriousness, solemnity, and good order. In this respect I can truly say, that, though I have been at many camp-meetings, I never saw such as these before. We had no guard; and at the last meeting no rules, for the regulations of it, were published. We needed none. God was our defense and salvation. He encamped with us in his gracious and glorious presence, to awe the wicked into respect for his worship, and to shed upon the children of faith the richest effusions of divine grace.

"The latter of these meetings was different, in some respects, from the former. The preaching did not appear to be attended with so much power, and such displays of divine illumination. But the prayer-meetings in the intervals were more abundantly distinguished by the communication of justifying grace, in answer to the supplications of the people of God. About forty-five professed to receive the forgiveness of sins, and twenty-three offered themselves to become members of our Church.

"One circumstance is worthy of particular notice, A Scotch family, remarkable for good breeding and propriety of deportment, attended this meeting. They were eight in number; the elderly gentleman, his lady, three daughters, two sons, and a nephew. The female head of this family was not destitute of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. This treasure she had obtained in her native country. But the rest were not in possession of this pearl of great price. However, in the course of a few hours, at this meeting, they were all power fully convicted, and, I have reason to believe, truly converted to God.

"This is a singular circumstance. Such a family as this was is rarely found; and the conversion of seven persons out of eight belonging to it, under such circumstances, within the compass of a few hours, is, perhaps, almost without a parallel. It will not escape the notice of the pious mind, accustomed to reflect on the workings of nature and the operations of grace, that the self-righteousness of such persons generally presents the strongest barrier against faith. But the power of divine grace broke down this barrier in them; then they sunk, in humble confidence, on the merits of the Redeemer.

"The presiding elder who attended this meeting, informed me that many camp-meetings had been held in his district, and that they had been generally blessed with great displays of divine power. Since then I have received information through another medium, that a camp-meeting held not far from Shawneetown in this state was favored with an abundant outpouring of the grace of God. More than thirty persons professed to obtain the remission of their sins.

"The writer of this communication has remarked for a number of years past, that a large proportion of those who are brought to the possession of the life and power of godliness, are found among the rising generation. This was particularly so at the meetings above mentioned. Does this not strongly portend that God is about to effect some great and glorious purpose in favor of his church, by the generation which is to succeed us? Thanks be unto his name for what he has done. But he has more in store for our world than we can readily conceive. May his goodness be manifested in such gracious displays of Almighty Power as will bear down all opposition. Amen.

"Mount Carmel, Illinois, Aug. 15, 1821."

These accounts, together with the preceding historical sketches and remarks, will enable the dispassionate reader to form an estimate of the character of camp-meetings, and of their effects upon the church and society generally.

No less than fifty-three preachers located this year;

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/nathan-bangs/from-the-close-of-the-general-conference-of-1808-to-the-commencement-of-the-gene/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net