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FRANK L. REED,

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H. T. HUDSON, D. D., Cor. Editor

ORGANIZATION OF THE M. E. CHURCH. ORDINATION OF THE FIRST METHODIST BISHOPS.

For the ADVOCATE.
Apropos to the query of Brother Betts in the *Advocate* this week, I submit the following extract from the "Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church," published in 1813, with an introduction by Francis Asbury and William McKendree.

SECTION I. Of the Origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

"The preachers and members of our Society in general, being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the Church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the Christian sacraments, as several of the clergy had forsaken their Churches, requested the late Rev. John Wesley to take such measures, in his wisdom and prudence, as would afford them suitable relief in their distress.

"In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who under God, had been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth, by means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America; and for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three regularly ordained clergy, but preferring the Episcopal mode of Church government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands, and prayer, one of them, viz: Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus-College, in the University of Oxford, and a Presbyterian of the Church of England, for the Episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of Episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart Francis Asbury, then general assistant of the Methodist Society in America, for the same Episcopal office, he, the said Francis Asbury, being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which the said Francis Asbury was solemnly set apart for the said Episcopal office, by prayer, and the imposition of the hands of the said Thomas Coke, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the General Conference held at Baltimore did unanimously receive the said Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as their Bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their Episcopal ordination."

Bishop Wightman, in his article on "Wesley and Coke" in the "Wesley Memorial Volume," speaking of Coke and the two elders who accompanied him to America, says: "Upon their arrival in America, a special Conference was convened and on December 27th, sixty traveling preachers assembled in the city of Baltimore. Dr. Coke took the chair and presented a letter from Wesley, written eight days after the ordinations, setting forth the grounds of what he had done and advised. After the consideration of this letter it was, with no dissenting voice, regularly and formally agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal Church, making the Episcopal office elective and the superintendent or bishop to the body of ministers and preachers. Asbury refused the high office to which Wesley had appointed him unless it was ratified by the Conference and, in accordance with the act of organization, both he and Coke were formally and unanimously chosen as "Superintendents." On the second day of the session Asbury was ordained deacon, elder on the third, and superintendent on the fourth."

In his journal for the year 1784, Asbury writes: "Saturday, December 18th, spent the day at Perry Hall partly in preparing for Conference. Continued at Perry Hall until Friday the 24th. We then rode to Baltimore where we met a few preachers; it was agreed to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church and to have superintendents, elders and deacons. When the Conference was seated Dr. Coke and myself were unanimously elected to the Superintendency of the Church and my ordination followed, after being previously ordained deacon and elder."

It is true that as early as the Conference which met in Baltimore April 25th, 1780, some of the Methodists in Virginia had ordained a few preachers to administer the ordinances, but at this conference they were prohibited from ordaining any man and those ordained commanded not to "administer the ordinances where there was a decent Episcopal minister."

It is clear that the M. E. Church was not organized until 1784 in Baltimore and that Coke and Asbury were then elected superintendents.

Now for the date of the opening of this Conference. Bishop Wightman says it was Dec. 27th, Gossie Dec. 25th, and Dr. Cunningham Dec. 24th. Let us see. In the credentials which Coke gave to Asbury he says that he "did on the 25th of December set apart Francis Asbury for the office of a deacon," etc. Bishop Wightman, as quoted before, says this was done on the second day of the session; if that be so, then it follows that the Conference which organized the Church and elected the bishops convened in the city of Baltimore on the 24th of December 1784. As Asbury "continued at Perry Hall" until that day, it is probable that he reached Baltimore on the day of the opening of the session.

I think it probable that there is something yet more definite in Coke's Journal, but my copy of that valuable work is not at hand.

M. H. MOORE.
NASHVILLE, N. C., 20th Oct., 1882.

THE CONVERSATIONAL STYLE OF PREACHING.

BY REV. E. C. FERGUSON.

It was a rainy Sunday, and but few were present in the little country church. As the preacher came in, some of the sisters gathered about him, and said: "Don't preach to us to-day, Brother ——. Just talk to us." How many long suffering congregations, with systems wearied and nerves rasped under the loud, shrill, high-pitched, declamatory tone of the preacher, if they could only find a voice during the sermon, would cry out to the pulpit, "For mercy's sake, don't preach to us any longer; do just talk to us!"

Hooker, in his "Ecclesiastical Polity," tells of the complaint of the people about the preaching in his day: "Some take but one word for their text and afterward run into the mountains that we cannot follow them, not knowing how they went up or how they will come down again." So some preachers no sooner name their text than they mount up into a high-sounding tone as far removed from the ordinary way in which a man talks as the east is from the west; and, having once mounted, they never come down again until the end of the sermon. Etymologically, the sermon or homily is a talk, and not a speech; a conversation, and not an oration. The best rule, then, for the ordinary preacher is to make the conversational style the basis of his delivery. Not that he is never to rise from this, but let this be the point from which he starts out as his fervor leads him, and to which he returns after a short excursion. The following advantages will result. The preacher will not be so much in danger of wearying himself. One may talk for hours in conversation without fatigue. It is the unnatural declamatory tones that make the throat sore. Again, he will not be so much in danger of wearying the people.— One may listen to a conversation for hours without feeling tired, but one cannot listen to one declaiming in a uniform pitch for half an hour without aching. In conversation one varies his tone to suit the thought, while one who declaims is in danger of keeping one pitch for all kinds of thought. To be sure, there are some in every congregation who will think the preacher tame who only talks. "How do you like your new preacher?" said one neighbor to another. "Oh, he is improving wonderfully; he preaches louder and louder!" But those who have this test, in any congregation, are comparatively few.

Further, a preacher who talks will not be so much in danger of affectation and cant. "De new preacher is mo' larnt dan Mistah Boles; but, Lor' bless you, sah! he ain't got de doleful sound like Mistah Boles had. No, indeed!" If man assumes a preaching and doleful tone the moment he enters the pulpit, he cannot but be guilty of affectation: his tone cannot be a true index of his feelings. There are some good souls, indeed, upon whom the doleful tone seems to act as a kind of charm. They will close their eyes and float to heaven under the influence of the preacher's tone, without any regard to what he is saying. But, it is safe to say, that while one in a congregation, under a

preaching tone, will close his eyes and soar to heaven, ten will close their eyes and sink to sleep.

If one speaks in the tone of conversation, he will use the short, simple words of conversation. Nothing is more manifest than that the pulpit should use, not the artificial language of books, but the simple, common words of life. Great, swelling tones necessarily draw after them great, swelling words. All great revivalists are colloquial and conversational in their preaching. "Nothing is more calculated," says Mr. Finney, "to make a sinner feel that religion is some mysterious thing that he cannot understand, than this mouthing, formal, lofty style of speaking so generally employed in the pulpit."

The conclusion, then, is, let the orators, whoever they may be, preach as orators, but let common preachers aspire to nothing higher than to talk to the people.—*Southern Pulpit.*

DUTIES OF FATHERS.

Many a father by his life and conduct undoes much that the mother does. Every father is the high-priest of his household, according to God's established law; and if he neglects the morning and evening sacrifice, he has no right to expect God's blessing on his household. God has said that he will pour out his fury on the families that call not on his name. You may prosper, so far as this world is concerned, for a time, but as sure, as God is true, your infidelity to him and your family will meet its reward. The example and influence of that class of fathers who profess religion and neglect its duties in their families, is likely to retard God's work in the church and the world than to advance it. We give the following fact as one of thousands that might be given.

"Father, I am lost, and you are to blame for it." Thus spoke B. W.—, a youth of twenty years, a few hours before his death. When he was ten years old, he was a boy of more than ordinary promise. His father was then one of the leading professors of religion, and the best informed man in the church to which he belonged, prayed in his family and led the social meeting in the church, and was looked upon as a model Christian and his family as a model family. But he loved a dram, and soon became a drunkard. The last time that he partook of the Lord's supper he was intoxicated; soon after he was expelled from the church, and all his pretensions to religion were abandoned. He started a distillery, and encouraged his four sons to drink; next he became sceptical, or pretended to be; became an open Universalist, and persuaded his sons to believe a lie. His wife was a pious woman, and by a blessing on her influence saved her daughters, who all became members of the church. The three living sons are now old men, all drunkards, in poverty and wretchedness. The father took cold from lying out drunk all night in a storm, and died from its effects soon after, in utter despair.

They lived near me, and I was a daily attendant at the dying bed of B. W.—. Although thirty years have passed away, the scenes of the night he died are as fresh as they were the day after. I went there to help take care of him that night. It took four men to hold him; for some time his groans and blasphemies were horrible beyond description. He begged us to "drive away the fiends that were tormenting him. So awful was the sight, for the last half hour of his life, that every soul fled from the room except his mother. He was some time dead before anybody would enter the room. I trembled from head to foot, and so did all present. It seemed as if hell was all around us. On my way home, the moving of a leaf would startle every nerve in my body.

Backsliding parent, this is no tale of fiction, but it is sober reality. This man was once the wealthiest and most esteemed man in the community where he lived, and his children the most promising. But he broke the covenant with God, neglected his duty to his family, set them a godless example and taught them damnable heresy. He became a drunken sot, and died without hope at three-score and ten years old; he had to listen to one son who, in his dying hours, charged his damnation on him; and left three drunken, blaspheming sons behind him. If this meets the eye

of any one who has made the first step towards apostasy or open sin, we pray you stop. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Young man, beware. At ten years old, B. W.— was a model boy; at fifteen a profane swearer; at eighteen a drunkard; at twenty on his dying bed, gnashing his teeth and cursing his Maker, and declaring he was in hell. Beware of following a bad example. Evil communications corrupt good manners. Make Christ your friend.

Not long since, a father took his little son to church with him on a communion Sabbath. As soon as they came out of church, the little boy said, "Why, father, when did you become a Christian?" "Oh," said the father, "I have been a member of the church seven years." The boy replied, "Why, father, I never knew that before." It was a barbed arrow, and the family altar was soon erected. How many children might say the same thing: "Why, father, I never knew you were a Christian." Do such men work for God? What will their reward be when they meet their children before the throne of God on the day of judgement? The writer can look back nearly half a century, and call up before him the fathers that lived around him in his boyhood, and can trace their children down to the present time; and he has no knowledge of one case in which children were trained up in the fear of God, and in the end did not come out well. The children of pious parents are now inhabiting the land; while the children of the wicked are in most cases in their graves, or become hewers of wood and drawers of water. And in proportion as the parents were godless, have their children become worthless and degraded. Owing to outside influence, there may be a few exceptions.

If you as a father sincerely desire the well-being of your children for time and eternity, I beseech you set before them an example of holy living. The best legacy you can give your sons is that of a Christian example. You can lay up for him in this way a fund that will outlive and out-ride all the financial storms of earth; you may lead him to the life-boat that will land him safe on the shores of immortality. Example lives in memory, and warns the soul when those who gave it are dead and gone. And then your own happiness depends on your fidelity to duty. I do not believe it possible for any man who has taken the vows of God upon him, to live in the neglect of duty and be happy. I heard the celebrated Judge B— once say, in the time of a great revival of religion, "This is the first time I ever had religion to make me happy. I have been a church-member twenty years, and have had religion enough to make me miserable, because I did not know whether I was dead or alive." Oh, how many might say the same thing? How can any man be happy while a daily covenant-breaker with God, on whose soul rests the solemn obligation to set a godly example before his family? Do not charge the irreligion of your children on your pastor, if you neglect your duty; his work will be prosperous in proportion to the manner in which you do your part. Why is it that a large portion of those that embrace religion in early life are the children of eminently pious parents? Because God is honored in the family with daily adoration. They eat and sleep in a religious atmosphere. The power of habit and all their surroundings lead them heavenward; while all the surroundings of children raised where God is not worshipped, lead them hellward. If this little book falls into the hands of any prayerless father, I pray you, as you value your own happiness in time and eternity, and the eternal well-being of your children, erect the family altar without another day's delay.—*Gospel Workers.*

SHORT SERMONS.

As a general rule we believe that every word is lost and is an injury, when the morning sermon exceeds forty minutes or the evening sermon thirty. If the preacher cannot reach the subject and preach it in the time named, it is because he is an empty vessel. Even if it shall be continued beyond this time by some man who is still furnishing good thoughts, the minds of the audience are full and fatigued, and the continuation is ruining the good effect already produced. To preach or to hear one sermon a day is better than three. We knew a good man who was ambitious to

show an annual record of a large number of sermons preached. One Sunday, after having preached four times, he went home with an old minister whose wife had not heard the last sermon, so he proposed preaching to the good woman. Being a little indisposed and tired, in five minutes she was asleep. The preacher stopped short and called on the old minister to close the meeting. "Amen," said the old man. On being asked by the brother if he intended that as the closing services, he promptly answered, "Yes." And this reminds us of a long-winded brother, who on finishing seventhly, exclaimed, "And what shall I say next?" "Say amen," exclaimed a little girl, who was one of the few left awake.

A celebrated New England divine said to young ministers: "Be short in all religious exercises. Better leave the people longing than loathing. No conversions after the first half hour." This is true as a rule. A good preacher presents his best and most striking thoughts in the first fifteen minutes. Many men cannot say the simplest thing on the conference floor without throwing it into speech shape. Study to preach as soon as you begin speaking—be ready to close as soon as you are through the subject. Old brother Bronston, a magistrate of Madison county, administered the best oath to witnesses that we ever heard. It was: "You do swear to tell the truth and then stop." On being asked why he used such words, he said: "It is more difficult for a witness to tell just what he knows and no more, than it is to add hearsay and impressions that he does not know." This may be applied to many sermons. It is easy to close with a good, warm exhortation after a short, pithy sermon full of suggestive thought and appropriate scripture, but to arouse an audience already asleep under an address that filled an hour in delivery, and which touched all questions and points in theology, is as near an impossibility as any undertaking in life. It ends as a perfunctory performance.—*Central Methodist.*

THE NEWSPAPER IN A FARMHOUSE.

People who live near the great thoroughfares, where they have access to two or three dailies and a half dozen weeklies, do not fully appreciate the value of a newspaper. They come, indeed, to look upon them as necessities, and they would as cheerfully do without their morning meal as their morning mail. But one must be far off in the country, remote from "the maddening crowd," to realize the full luxury of a newspaper. The farmer who receives but one paper a week does not glance over its columns hurriedly, with an air of impatience, as does your merchant or lawyer. He begins with the beginning and reads to the close, not permitting a news item or an advertisement to escape his eye. Then it has to be thumbed by every member of the family, each one looking for things in which he or she is most interested. The grown up daughter looks for the marriage notices, and is delighted if the editor has treated them to a love story. The son who is just about to engage in farming, with an enthusiasm that will carry him far in advance of his father, reads all the crop reports and has a keen eye for hints about improved modes of culture. The younger members of the family come in for the amusing anecdotes and scraps of fun. All look forward to the day that shall bring the paper with the liveliest interest, and if by some unlucky chance it fails to come it is a bitter disappointment. One can hardly estimate the amount of information which a paper that is not only read but studied can carry into a family. They have, week by week, spread before their mental vision a panorama of the busy world, its fluctuations and its concerns. It is the poor man's library, and furnishes as much mental food as he has time to consume and digest. No one, who has observed how much those who are far away from the places where men most congregate, value their weekly paper can fail to join in invoking a blessing on the inventor of this means of intellectual enjoyment.—*Fx.*

What God calls a man to do he will carry him through. I would undertake to govern half a dozen worlds if God called me to do it; but if he did not call me to do it, I would not undertake to govern half a dozen sheep.—[Payson.]