11-4-1919

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The Camp Meeting
In South Carolina Methodism


By W. A. MASSEBEAU

Published by the Order of the Societies
In 1798 Rev. John McGee settled at Dixon Springs, Ky., in what was then the bounds of the old Cumberland Circuit. In that same section, there was a younger brother who was a Presbyterian preacher. The McGee brothers were born in Guilford County, N. C., of Presbyterian parents. John McGee became a local preacher in the Methodist Church, while his younger brother, converted under his ministry, took orders in the Presbyterian Church.

Having settled in the lower part of Kentucky, they went out in 1799 on a preaching tour and attended a sacramental service in Mr. McGready’s congregation on Red River. They preached, the Holy Spirit fell upon the congregation. Rev. John McGee in his account of it says: “This was the beginning of that glorious revival of religion in this country, which was so great a blessing to thousands; and from this meeting camp meetings took their rise. One man for want of horses for all his family to ride and attend the meetings fixed up his wagon in which he took them and his provisions and lived on the ground throughout the meeting. He had left his worldly cares behind him and had nothing to do but attend on Divine Service.”

The name of this one man has not been recorded on the pages of Methodist history; but in his example and devotion to spiritual things we have the origin of the camp meeting; for John McGee in the very next sentence of his account, says: “The next meeting was a camp meeting.”

For the sake of its clearness, let me quote from Meacham’s Rise and Progress of Methodism: “The revival among the Presbyterians and Methodists,” says that author, “commenced in the year of 1799 and in 1800 in
the lower part of Kentucky under two preachers, brothers, one of each denomination, who held their meetings together in Logan and Christian counties on the waters of Gasper River and perhaps other places. Having thus united in their work, they found themselves straitened in their houses on account of the increase of their congregations. In the summer they took to the woods. The people in order to accommodate themselves carried provisions for their families and beasts in their wagons; erected tents and continued some days in the exercises of singing, prayer, and preaching. Thus commenced what has since received the appellation of camp meetings, a revival of the Feasts of Tabernacles."

This same author, an eye witness, gives a most vivid description of what he considered the greatest of all these camp meetings. He says, "But the great meeting at Cane­ridge exceeded all. The number that fell at this meeting was reckoned at about three thousand, among whom were several Presbyterian ministers, who according to their own confession, had hitherto possessed only a speculative knowledge of religion. Here the formal professor, the deist, and the intemperate met one common lot, and confessed with equal candour that they were destitute of the true knowledge of God, and strangers to the religion of Jesus Christ. One of the most zealous and active Presbyterian ministers estimated the number collected on the ground at twenty thousand souls. At this meeting, as well as at all others, wherever the work broke out, the Methodists appeared to be more active and more in their element than any other people. Indeed, when it first appeared in most of the congregations, other ministers were so alarmed, not knowing what to do with it, that they would have deserted it and their meetings too, had they not been encouraged by the Methodists. But they soon joined, and moved forward cordially in the work. Having been thus inured and prepared, this great meeting brought on a general engagement. It was necessary that such a concourse should be scattered over a consid­
erable extent of ground; of course there were several congregations formed in different parts of the encampment for preaching and other religious exercises. In consequence of so great a collection of people, it frequently happened that several preachers would be speaking at once to congregations as before described, generally embracing some of each denomination. Nor were they at a loss for pulpits, stumps, logs, or tops of trees served as temporary stands from which to dispense the word of life. At night the whole scene was awfully sublime. The ranges of tents, the fires reflecting light amidst the branches of the towering trees, the candles and lamps illuminating the encampment, hundreds moving to and fro with lights or torches like Gideon's army; the preaching, praying, singing, and shouting, all heard at once, rushing from different parts of the ground, like the sound of many waters, was enough to swallow up all the powers of contemplation. Sinners falling, and shrieks and cries for mercy, awakened in the mind a lively apprehension of that scene when the awful sound will be heard, 'Arise ye dead and come to judgment.'"

Possibly, it is well to note that while preachers of other denominations, principally Presbyterians, took part in these first camp meetings, hence called general camp meetings, yet the camp meeting soon became a source of friction in the Presbyterian Church, and was finally abandoned. But it seemed to be peculiarly adapted to the genius of Methodism. The presiding elder naturally became the leader and the source of authority. It is difficult now to estimate to what extent the success and permanency of the camp meeting, as a Methodist institution, were due to the sane and consecrated leadership of William McKendree, the presiding elder of the hosts of Methodism in that section; for these early camp meetings were not free from fanaticism and religious extravagances.

By the close of 1802, the camp meeting soon to be a peculiar Methodist possession and borne on this great revival wave, had crossed the Alleghanies and was des-
tined in a few years to become a tremendous factor in the progress of Methodism in the conferences along the coast.

The origin of the camp meeting, as unfolded above, has back of it the authority of McTyire's History of Methodism and Meacham's Rise and Progress of Methodism as well as the testimony of John McGee himself. But Dr. Shipp, in his History of South Carolina Methodism, gives quite a different account. He says: "The first Methodist Church in North Carolina west of the Catawba River was built in Lincoln County in 1799 in the neighborhood in which Daniel Asbury settled when he located, and was called Rehoboth. Before the erection of this church the congregation was accustomed to worship in the grove in the midst of which it was built, and these meetings in the forests resulted in great good, and were often continued throughout the day and night."

"In 1794 the leading male members of the church consulted together and agreed to hold a camp meeting in this forest for a number of days and nights. The meeting accordingly was appointed, and was conducted by Daniel Asbury, William McKendree, afterwards bishop, Nicholas Watters, and William Fulwood, who were efficiently aided by Dr. James Hall, a celebrated pioneer preacher among the Presbyterians in Iredell County."

"The success of this first camp meeting, at which it was estimated that three hundred souls were converted, led to the appointment of another the following year (1795) at Bethel, about a mile from the famous Rock Spring, and yet another by Daniel Asbury and Dr. Hall, which was known as the Great Union Camp Meeting at Shepherd's Cross Roads, in Iredell County. The manifest blessing of God upon these meetings, resulting in the conversion of hundreds of souls, gave them great favor with both the Presbyterians and Methodists, and caused them to be kept up continuously in the South Carolina Conference."

Dr. Shipp further says, "John McGee, whose name is associated with the origin of camp meetings in the West,
was born on the Yadkin River below Salisbury, in North Carolina, and in the upper part of the Little Pee Dee and Anson Circuits in the South Carolina Conference, and entered the traveling connection in 1788. He was associated with Daniel Asbury in the work in 1789, placed in charge of the Lincoln Circuit in 1792, and located in 1793, and remained in a section of country where camp meetings had become well known and popular until 1798, when he removed and settled in Sumner County, in Tennessee.

"It was a great service rendered in the church at large when he transferred these meetings from the Catawba River to the banks of the Red River in Kentucky and the Cumberland River in Tennessee, and five years after their origin made known practically to the Western country an instrumentality by which under the blessings of God thousands were brought to the knowledge of salvation."

With the light now before him the present writer is unable to harmonize these divergent accounts; but whether the camp meeting originated in North Carolina in 1794 or in Kentucky in 1799, it is evident that in a few years after 1800 they were established on this side of the mountains from New England to Mississippi.

In the month of June, in the year 1802, the first camp meeting in South Carolina was held at Hanging Rock.

In his History of Early Methodism in the Carolinas Dr. Chrietzberg quotes from the memoirs of James Jenkins, evidently a part of a letter written to Bishop Asbury: "The Methodists had a general meeting a few days past at the Hanging Rock. There were fifteen ministers, Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian, with about three thousand people present." Dr. Crietzberg then follows the quotation with this statement: "This is enough and settles the question as to the first camp meeting held in South Carolina. For many years past they have been kept up at this old Hanging Rock, where they first began, and all over the South the good resulting will not be fully known until the general judgment."

In that far-off time when denominational antagonisms
were stronger than they are today, we wonder how these union camp meetings could be conducted with perfect harmony. The records show that they were not always so conducted. At one of the early camp meetings held not later than 1807 some distance below the town of Anderson, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians were encamped on the ground, and all three denominations were represented in the pulpit. On the Sabbath Messrs. Bennett and Dougherty were appointed to follow each other without intermission. Mr. Bennett, a Presbyterian minister, took for his text Romans 8: 29, 30, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified them he also glorified,” and very naturally emphasized the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism. Rev. George Dougherty, a Methodist minister, who was remarkably skillful as an impromptu preacher, took the same text, exposed the false interpretation of the Presbyterian preacher, advanced in thunder tones the doctrine of a free and full atonement, and urged immediate compliance with the terms of salvation. The Holy Spirit accompanied the message, and a great cry for mercy arose from the vast congregation. So pungent was the power of conviction that scores fell prostrate on the ground; others attempting to run were smitten down as if by the hand of death. In the midst of the cries of stricken penitents and the shouts of new born souls Mr. Dougherty closed his sermon; and, turning to his Presbyterian brother, with outstretched hands and streaming eyes begged him always to preach a full and free salvation by grace through faith.

The following list of camp grounds where the hosts of Methodism annually gathered is far from complete; for many camp grounds sprang up here and there, were used for a few years, and then abandoned. But it does contain, possibly with a few exceptions, the principal
camp grounds of Methodism in the State. In Pickens County, there were two, Twelve Mile and Porter's Chapel; in Greenville County, one, Bethel about ten miles below the court house; in Spartanburg County, two, Cannon's and Sharon's; in Anderson County, two, Sandy Springs, near Pendleton, and Providence; in Laurens County, two, Hopewell, near Goldville, and Mt. Bethel, near Princeton; in Union County, two, Goshen Hill and Bell Mont; in Abbeville County, two, Cokesbury and Smyrna, near Lowndesville; in Greenwood County, one, Asbury, now Verdery; in Newberry County, three, Ebenezer, near Newberry, Rutherford's and Wicker's; in Edgefield, two, Mt. Vernon and Bethlehem, near Johnston; in Chester County, two, Mt. Prospect, near Richburg, and Armenia or Bonnet Rock; in Lancaster County, one, Salem, near Heath Springs; in Chesterfield, three, Union, near McBee, Zoar and Knights' Camp Meeting on Fork Creek, where Bishop Capers was converted; in Kershaw County, one, Logues; in Richland County, two, Mt. Pleasant and McLeod's; in Marlboro, two, Pine Grove, near McColl, and Beauty Spot, near Tatum; in Marion County, two, Centenary and Miller's; in Darlington County one, The Gully, near Lydia; in Sumter County, one, Remberts; in Orangeburg County, four, Cattle Creek, near Rowesville, Limestone, Boiling Springs, near Neeses, and Providence, near Holly Hill; in Barnwell County, two, Lebanon, near Barnwell, and Binnaker's, near Denmark; in Lee County, one, Shiloh, near Lynchburg; in Dorchester County, two, Cypress, near Ridgeville, and Indian Fields, near St. George; in Colleton, two, Mt. Carmel, near Walterboro, and Green Pond; near Smoaks; in Berkeley, two, Union and Rehoboth, near Rehoboth; in Hampton County, one, Black Swamp; in Jasper County, one, Peniel; in Charleston County, one, Mt. Pleasant, then Haddell's Point.

It is well for us to remember that the camp meeting, as this generation knows it, with its comfortable wooden tents, its bountiful and elegant meals, its orderly arrange-
ments, and formalism in worship, is far different from the camp meetings of one hundred years ago. Fortunately for us, William Capers, when a boy about sixteen years of age, attended a camp meeting at Rembert's and left on record a vivid description of it:

"The number of people occupying tents was much greater than it had been at two previous meetings of the same kind in 1802 and 1803, in that neighborhood, both of which I had attended with my uncle's family, and at which wagons and awnings made of coverlets and blankets were mostly relied on in place of tents. The tents, too (of this meeting in 1806), though much smaller and less commodious than in later years, were larger and better than at the former meetings. But still, at the tents as well as at the wagons of the camp, there was very little cooking done, but every one fed on cold provisions, or at least cold meats. Compared to those first two camp meetings, this one differed also in the more important respects of management and the phases of the work of God. At the first one (1802) particularly (which was held on McGirt's Branch, below the point where the Statesburg and Darlington road crosses it), I recollected little that looked like management. There were two stands for preaching at a distance of about two hundred yards apart; and sometimes there was preaching at one, sometimes at the other, some times at both simultaneously. This was evidently a bad arrangement, for I remember seeing the people running hastily from one place to the other as some sudden gush of feeling venting itself aloud, and perhaps with strange bodily exercises, called their attention off. As to the times of preaching, I think there were not any stated hours, but it was left to circumstances; some times oftener, some times more seldom. The whole camp was called up by blowing a horn at the break of day; before sunrise it was blown again, and I doubt if after that there were any regular hours for the services of the meeting. But what was most remarkable both at this camp meeting and the following one, a year
afterward (1803), as distinguishing them from the present meeting of 1806, and much more from later camp meetings, was the strange and unaccountable bodily exercises which prevailed there. In some instances, persons who were not before known to be at all religious, or under any particular concern about it, would suddenly fall to the ground and become strangely convulsed with what was called the jerks; the head and neck, and sometimes the body also, moving backward and forward with spasmodic violence, and so rapidly that the plaited hair of a woman's head might be heard to crack. This exercise was not peculiar to feeble persons, nor to either sex; but, on the contrary, was most frequent to the strong and athletic, whether man or woman. I never knew it among children, nor very old persons. In other cases, persons falling down would appear senseless and almost lifeless for hours together; lying motionless at full length on the ground, and almost as pale as corpses. And then there was the jumping exercise, which sometimes approximated dancing, in which several persons might be seen, standing perfectly erect, and springing upward without seeming to bend a joint of their bodies. Such exercises were scarcely if at all present among the same people at the camp meeting of 1806. And yet this camp meeting was not less remarkable than the former ones, and very much more so than any I have attended in later years, for the suddenness with which sinners of every description were awakened, and the overwhelming force of their convictions, bearing them instantly down to their knees, if not to the ground, crying for mercy.”

While in his recollections of the Rembert's camp meeting Bishop Capers mentions the jerking and the dancing exercise, he does not refer to the marrying exercise. It is probable it never occurred in the camp meetings of this State; but out West it was prevalent in the early period of this great revival. During these seasons of intense religious excitement a person would go to some one of the opposite sex and say, “I have a special revela-
tion from the Lord that we are to be married." As a result, scores of couples were married, some of them before leaving the camp grounds. One writer in commenting upon this phase of the revival is ungracious enough to remark that in this way a number of old maids were able to secure husbands who otherwise would have been forced to remain in a state of single blessedness.

Of these mysterious manifestations, which have disturbed the student of mental and spiritual phenomena, the last to disappear from the camp meetings of this State was that of suspended animation. About 1855 at Rehoboth camp meeting, in Berkeley County, a Miss Emma Hucksford was stricken down apparently lifeless; and a ten-year-old boy, now an old man, wondered why her friends gathered about her and sang instead of weeping over her dead body. At Indian Fields in 1871 a young man, kneeling at the altar, fell over and was stretched out on the straw. As he regained consciousness, he spoke the name of an idolized wife, who had recently died; and his friends believed that he had seen her.

In searching the files of The Southern Christian Advocate from 1837-41, the writer discovered that there was bitter opposition to the camp meeting in certain quarters. About that time it seems that two clergymen of the Episcopal Church wrote and published a pamphlet attacking the camp meeting. This occasioned two vigorous editorials in The Advocate in defense of the camp meeting. The editor admits that the camp meeting in that day did not accomplish as much as in former days; but he contends that it was not the time to attack religious excitement in the church; for in his judgment the great danger to the church was not undue religious excitement but the chill frost of formalism.

It is a fact worthy of note that the camp meeting played a very important part in the great missionary Centenary Campaign in South Carolina Methodism in the year 1839; for in nearly all the camp meetings of that year large
amounts were raised for missions as a centenary thanks offering.

Rev. W. M. Wightman, at that time presiding elder of the Cokesbury District, in the issue of The Advocate of August 6, 1839, writes that the centenary offerings at the Newberry camp meeting amounted to $1,000, and of Centenary Day at the Cokesbury camp meeting he has this to say: "In fine at the close of a most refreshing and spirit rousing occasion, we found a sum on our books, which augmented by a subscription here and there up to the close of the meeting amounted to upwards of $3,600.”

A few weeks later, W. L. Brunson, in reporting the Santee Circuit, said that at the Rembert’s camp meeting there were sixty conversions, thirty-eight accessions to the Church and a centenary offering of $1,729.50.

K. Murchison, in a short note from the Chesterfield Circuit, announces that at the camp meeting near Chesterfield the taking of the centenary collection was followed by a great revival of religion.

In writing from the Greenville Circuit, D. W. Seale informs us that on Saturday of the camp meeting at Bethel Church, the centenary offering amounted to $600.

But one among the most interesting of all the letters, reporting the success of the centenary at the camp meetings, is from the pen of T. Huggins, pastor of the Rockingham Circuit. At Beauty Spot camp meeting, after a stirring address on the Rise and Progress of Methodism by Rev. Bond English, presiding elder of the District, "immediately a very venerable looking old brother approached holding in his trembling hand his subscription which was found to be $200, equally proportioned to himself, wife, and children, both living and dead,” and so the subscriptions followed rapidly until the total was $1,300.50.

Of the $60,000 raised that year as a centenary offering for missions, a considerable portion of it was subscribed at the camp meetings. At that time within the
bounds of our State, there were less than 25,000 white members of the Methodist Church. If they could lay upon God's altar a centenary offering of $60,000 for missions, what ought South Carolina Methodism, now a hundred thousand strong, to give in this centenary year of 1919? At least, we may believe that we are worthy sons of noble sires.

Before passing on, the writer cannot refrain from saying that a study of the files of The Advocate in those far off years reveals that it was an intensely missionary paper, its columns probably carrying more articles, reports, and information on missions than on any other subject. No human mind can estimate to what extent The Advocate's faithful sowing of the seed then is responsible for the magnificent fruitage of today.

Sometimes two camp meetings were held on the same ground in the same year, one usually in the spring or early summer, and the other in the fall; but Beauty Spot, to which reference has already been made, in this respect leads all the rest; for in the year 1838 two camp meetings were held on this famous ground within a week of each other. Here is the account as given by the pastor of the Rockingham Circuit, Rev. Charles S. Walker: "On last Monday we closed one of the most glorious meetings ever known in this community. It was commenced at Beauty Spot camp ground on the 24th of August as our third quarterly meeting. But few tents were then occupied, the appointment coming on a very busy season. Everything assumed a gloomy aspect. The weather was disagreeable, and discouragement rested upon the minds of preachers and people. On the Sabbath the prospect brightened; the shouts of the redeemed were then heard, and the church rejoiced in the evidence of God's power and love. On Wednesday we determined to leave the tented grove and move (in mighty phalanx joined) to make an attack upon the enemy at this village. We continued here until the Sabbath when it was thought best to resume our efforts at the camp ground. On that day
I was called to my appointments some distance off, but the Brethren Williams and Postell attended. We continued until Wednesday, preaching morning and night, when several tents being occupied, the regular services of another camp meeting were commenced. The two following days the people flocked from every direction with their wagons and families, and everything seemed to encourage hope and strengthen faith. The altar was crowded with mourners, weeping, struggling mourners. Several of them rejoiced in God on Friday; but the glory of God was not fully revealed until the next day, which was perfected on the Sabbath, the most renowned that ever shined upon that favored spot. A large congregation crowded the seats to hear the word of life; deep solemnity rested upon every mind. It was a solemn time; for God was there. In the evening there were most gracious displays of saving mercy. In and around the altar, in the tents, and in the grove in every direction was heard the transporting sound of glory, glory as it proceeded from the lips of redeemed souls."

"In conclusion, we would say that on Monday morning, when we counted the baskets of fragments, which we had gathered, the result was as follows: Members received on probation, whites, 99; colored, 96; in all, 195."

"We had to our help at different times Brothers Betts, Kennedy, J. C. Postell, Jehu Postell, Picket, Scarborough, Haltom, and many of our esteemed local brethren, all of whom labored like men of God."

Nor did these camp meetings always close at the appointed time on Monday morning. For example, in the year 1840, Bell Mont camp meeting in Union County, was continued for two weeks during which time 100 adults were baptized and 194 persons received into the church on probation.

Again, in 1855, the second year of the Mt. Bethel camp meeting, Dr. Thomas Raysor, then being pastor of the Laurens Circuit, in whose bounds was the camp ground,
the camp meeting appeared to close on Monday morning. All of the tent holders were busy packing to return to their homes. Some had already loaded their wagons and were leaving when one of the tent holders returned to his tent, now deserted, for a season of private prayer. And God met him and blessed him there. He came out of his tent shouting aloud the praises of God. The news spread like a prairie fire. Tentholders unloaded their wagons, reoccupied their tents, and the meeting went on for nearly two weeks, resulting in the most sweeping revival of religion that ever visited Laurens County. Hundreds were converted, and whole households, father, mother, and children, were added to the church.

It was at this same meeting that Dr. Lucius Bellinger preached a marvelous sermon in which he told one of his dreams. He dreampt that he had entered Heaven, met his mother who had died when he was a little boy, and she kissed him on his left cheek. Pausing for a moment, "the strange preacher" said, "Isn't it a wonder I didn't wake up."

It was at this same meeting also that Rev. H. H. Durant preached a sermon that created a profound impression. His text was Exodus 12:13, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood I will pass over you." As he described Pharaoh's lost soul, chained down in a pit of burning limestone and unceasingly pelted with great hail stones, a shudder of horror ran over the vast congregation.

At this same camp ground several years later were Durant, Dr. Wightman, and Dr. Joseph Cross. After a masterly sermon preached by Bro. Durant, a prominent Methodist layman, who still lives to bless his community and church, happened to be in the preacher's tent and heard the following conversation: "Bro. Durant," said Dr. Cross, "why don't you preach this way for us in Spartanburg?" Bro. Durant's home was in Spartanburg. "Well," replied Bro. Durant, "when I preach in
Spartanburg among the literati I feel embarrassed. I feel like a little feist dog running through high weeds; you can only see the weeds shake when he wags his tail."

But no history of camp meetings in South Carolina Methodism would be complete without some reference to the troubles which the authorities of all these camp grounds had in maintaining order; for camp meetings seem always to have been centers of attraction for the frivolous, the lawless, and the Godless.

In 1805 a camp meeting in the Darlington District was greatly disturbed by a company of rowdies who on Sunday were roaming about in a pine forest surrounding the camp ground. Under the preaching of James Jenkins a woman under the stand began to shout. "From every point of the compass they came thundering into camp with the tramp of a herd of buffaloes, thus producing a scene of the utmost tumult and confusion." The good woman in the meantime having ceased her shouting, Rev. George Dougherty arose and without any preliminaries announced his text, "And the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea and were choked." The divisions of his sermon were as follows: 1. The herd into which the devils enter. 2. The drivers employed. 3. The market to which they are going. "Never, perhaps," writes Dr. Shipp, "was effort made under similar circumstances that equaled this. It was pertinent, awful, loving, scathing, and unique. It was the attack of a master mind in a last resort and was entirely successful. He swept along his pathway like a blazing comet, drawing such life like pictures of vice and diabolical intrigue that the miserable creatures seemed spell bound; though they were all standing scarcely a man among them broke ranks. When he reached his imaginary market with them, the end of an abandoned life, of a dark and soul-destroying course of wickedness, the picture took on such an appalling hue that an involuntary shudder came manifestly over the vast audience; they seemed actually to see them, in suc-
cessive columns, disappearing from mortal view and sinking into the everlasting abyss. The most stout hearted sinners present seemed overwhelmed with amazement, and when the preacher closed they left in wild confusion and were soon en route for home."

It was at the Old Gully camp ground, in this same District, in the 50's, that Dr. Lucius Bellinger was greatly disturbed by the worldly crowd that persisted in promenading on Sunday afternoon between the preaching services. Bro. Bellinger tried in vain to attract them by singing the songs of Zion; but the wit, beauty, and wealth of Sumter and Darlington preferred the promenade. So at the 3 o'clock sermon, when they were under the stand, the strange preacher drew a picture of their condition and peril that aroused and saved many of them.

Years afterwards, the trustees of this same camp ground prepared for disturbers of the peace by reading from the stand at the beginning of the camp meeting a set of rules and the penalties for their violation. A young Jehu, who attempted to drive furiously through the camp ground, seeing an officer coming to meet him turned to the right and tried to escape by following a road that led back of the tents; but he smashed one of the wheels of his buggy against a stump. When the officer overtook him, he said: "It is against the rules to drive recklessly here on the camp ground; the fine is five dollars, which you will have to pay me." The young man intimated, with a few oaths interspersed, that he would drive as fast as he pleased. "Well," replied the officer, "you owe me ten dollars now, for there is a fine of five dollars for swearing on the grounds." About that time another officer walked up; and, discovering a bottle of whiskey in the back of the buggy, announced to the astonished young man that there was a fine of five dollars for bringing liquor on the grounds, and that the total amount of his fines was now fifteen dollars. After a good deal of bluster, the young man paid rather than be arraigned before the courts for
the violation of the ordinances of an incorporated camp ground.

But one of the impressive and inspiring features of the early camp meetings was the congregational singing. On many a hard fought field the saints have sung their way to victory over the forces of evil. There were no organs or pianos upon which the congregation could depend for music. And when the great camp meeting throngs joined heartily in the grand old hymns of Methodism, such as

“Come humble sinner in whose breast
or
“Come ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore,”
or
“Come thou fount of every blessing,”
with the chorus
“I will arise and go to Jesus,
He will embrace me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior
Oh there are ten thousand Charms,”
then, under the spell of the Gospel, in song, the hardest hearts oftentimes softened and surrendered to their Lord and Savior.

When the assurance of a blessed immortality, welling up in the hearts of the saints, challenged death and the grave in "I’m going home to die no more, to die no more, to die no more," when hundreds gave expression to the joy of forgiveness in

“How happy every child of grace,
Who knows his sins forgiven;
This earth, he cries, is not my place,
I seek my place in heaven,”
is it any wonder that Heaven came down to earth?

Even yet the mere reading of those quaint camp meeting melodies, touches a responsive chord in our hearts. We can almost hear J. C. Postell, after that impressive
sermon that he preached at Old Cattle Creek, as he moves about among the penitents and walks up and down the aisles singing,

"Trouble's over; trouble's over;  
A few more rounds of circuits here,  
Then all our troubles will be over."

Our hearts are strangely stirred as we think of that scene at Black Swamp camp meeting, where Bro. McPhail, a war worn veteran of the Cross, sings in trembling voice,

"I feel the work reviving,  
I feel the work reviving,  
Reviving in my soul;  
Oh brothers will you meet me in  
Canaan's happy land,"

while the Lawtons, Martins, Allens, Roberts, and hundreds of others answer in the chorus,

"Yes, by the grace of God we'll meet you,  
By the grace of God we'll meet you,  
In Canaan's happy land."

This antiphonal singing, so common in the early camp meetings, had this advantage: that it required no books with words and notes; everybody could and did join in the responses. Some saint with a good clear voice would begin,

"Where now is the good old Elijah?"
The congregation would answer,

"Safe in the promised land."

"Where now are the Hebrew Children?"

And the response,

"Safe in the promised land."

"Where now are our good old fathers?"

"Safe in the promised land."

"Where now are our faithful pastors?"

"Away over in the promised land."

"Ah," some critic cries out, "the spirit of other worldi-
ness." Yes, but few Christians are of such heroic mould as to live at their best without some thought of the joy set before them. "Nothing but the stirring of the emotions." Yes, but love, the highest exponent of the Christian religion is an emotion.

This paper now closes with brief memoranda of some of the oldest and most famous of our camp grounds.

Sandy Springs, with its more than three hundred tents, was probably the largest of all the camp grounds in the State. During the Civil War, it was used as a cantonment, Orr's Regiment having been trained there.

One among the last signal displays of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit on this famous old ground occurred in the year 1871. The presiding elder being sick, Rev. J. B. Traywick, the pastor, was in charge and had only three preachers to remain with him throughout the meeting, William Bowman, W. A. Hodges, and C. V. Barnes. On Monday after the 3 o'clock sermon, a young lady under deep conviction requested one of her friends to go to the woods with her for a season of prayer. She was gloriously saved; and others, hearing the shouts, went to the place, were convicted and fell down in soul agony. The crowd increased, the work went on until dark when they returned to the stand shouting, singing, the new converts, led by the spirit, exhorting. The whole congregation was aroused, and without any preaching penitents crowded the altar, and the work went on until midnight. The meeting closed with over one hundred conversions.

Centenary, in Marion County, one of the noted camp grounds of the Pee Dee section, witnessed a great Pentecost about the year 1845. Very little interest had been manifested, and the camp meeting was closing. At the last service on Sunday night the presiding elder appointed a plain, local preacher to close after the sermon. He began his exhortation with the statement that many families in that section were going to Alabama, then a new country, to find better homes. Then turning to his
aged wife, who was in the audience, he said, "And wife, we too are looking for a home in a better land." The old soul shouted glory, glory, and it was followed by a chorus of shouts. Without being called, penitents began to come to the altar. The meeting was continued for many days with such power as to sweep the country for miles around.

Again, in 1871, the camp-meeting at Centenary had moved on day after day without any special interest being manifested. At the close of the 3 o'clock service on Sunday, John W. Kelly, the presiding elder, urged the Christians to form into bands, go out into the woods and pray until time for the night service. At the evening hour Rev. J. C. Stoll was in the pulpit and had commenced the service when one of these bands led by Dr. Dozier came out of the woods shouting. Groups from other directions returned praising God. The preacher had to discontinue, and a call was made for penitents. The work with the mourners went on hour after hour accompanied by singing, shouting, and praying. Finally, the presiding elder and his preachers retired to their tent, but the work continued. After sending a messenger to the stand solicitously urging the people to go to their tents and get some sleep, which they refused to do, Bro. Kelly said: "If the people will continue the service, some one ought to preach to them. Bro. Stoll, will you?" It was then near midnight and the preachers, one after the other, refused. Turning to a Presbyterian minister, Rev. James C. Dunlap, the presiding elder, said: "Bro. Dunlap, will you not preach for us?" "I think," said Mr. Dunlap, "your preachers are wise in declining to preach at this hour; but if you insist I will." So they returned to the stand. Bro. Dunlap preached a stirring sermon on religious enthusiasm from the text, "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." The meeting continued until morning. While many of the mourners at the altar found peace, one old man, Major R. C., lingered there all night and went away the next morning far from satisfied.
The Presbyterian minister's mother-in-law, whose home was not far away, had an old negro house servant who was allowed a good many liberties about the home. The next morning he said to his mistress: "Have you heard about Marse James?" She said "No." "Well," said the old man, "Marse James got religion last night at the Methodist camp meeting."

It was during this same camp meeting that a unique, and at times wonderfully impressive preacher, delivered one of his sermons about which we have all heard. He preached from the text, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." The speaker put considerable emphasis upon the phrase in no case—"case, a box," then followed a description of a rosewood box and many other kinds of boxes and the startling assertion that you could not hope to enter Heaven in any kind of a box at all unless your righteousness is of a higher type than that of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Asbury, now Verdery, where Bishop Wightman, then presiding elder of Cokesbury District, preached from Isaiah 12:6, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." Before he finished sinners were crying for mercy and saints were shouting. At last the great preacher, unable to continue his sermon, closed abruptly, shouting at the top of his voice, "Shout, I say, shout, for the Lord commanded you to shout."

Cattle Creek was established about one hundred years ago as a Presbyterian camp meeting and later was turned over to the Methodists. As described in Stray Leaves, the camp ground of small tents and big hearts. The camp ground where J. C. Postell drew a mighty bow and sent forth arrows of conviction, the last of which pierced the heart of a worldly minded young woman who fell from her seat as if dead.

Here at a camp meeting several years before the Civil
War, Rev. W. A. Gamewell made a prayer that is still remembered. The camp meeting occurred in a very dry time, and by Friday all the water in the wells on the camp ground had been exhausted, and it seemed that the people would be forced to return to their homes; but that morning Bro. Gamewell led the congregation in an earnest prayer that God would send rain; in the afternoon it fell in torrents, the wells soon filled, and the camp meeting was continued.

Near this same time Rev. John R. Picket attended a camp meeting here. The first night he kept all the preachers awake at the preacher's tent by his continuous, boisterous, nerve rattling snoring. The next day arrangements were quietly made to have a pallet put down for him in the church. That night about retiring time several tent holders from the side of the camp ground nearest the church were observed to come out of their tents, gather in a group about a fire stand whose fire they replenished. One of the preachers, suspecting what was the matter, drew near and found them discussing the strange, unearthly noises, whose origin they could not determine. He told them not to be alarmed, to return to their tents and go to sleep, that the mysterious sounds, which they heard, were not supernatural, coming neither from the depths beneath nor from the heights above, but emanated from the church where Bro. Picket was enjoying a night's repose.

The writer has not been able to connect this tradition with the one about Dr. Reddick Pierce, who was in attendance at a camp meeting. At night in the preachers' tent one of the brethren snored until the very air seemed to vibrate with the sound. After while Dr. Pierce, who was very deaf, arose, went to the door, looked out, and was heard to remark, *sotto voce*, "The stars are shining; but it's surely going to rain; for I have not heard it thunder before in twenty years."

About 1871 Dr. S. P. H. Elwell was preaching on Saturday night from the text, "Now there was a day when the
sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.” The preacher was developing the truth that, when the saints assemble, the devil comes along too. Suddenly the quiet of the evening service was shattered by the yells of a man behind the tents and the reports of a pistol fired in rapid succession. Uncle Paul Kistler, who was in the pulpit, arose and interrupting the speaker, said in his peculiar voice, “Yes, I hear him coming; he’s here now.”

Cypress.—The camp ground of the Ways, Cummings, Greens, Throwers, Knights, Brownings, Baxters, Muckenfusses. The meeting held at this old camp ground in 1837, just eighty-two years ago, was eminently a good one. Rev. N. Talley, at that time presiding elder of the Charleston District, relates this touching incident in reporting this camp meeting in The Southern Christian Advocate: “Of the number of those who came forward professing conversion, I was particularly struck with a group of sixteen young men. While mourners were being invited to approach the altar for prayer on Saturday evening at a time of uncommon refreshing to the people of God, I observed a venerable man, whom I at once recognized as a member of great respectability in another church, who appeared particularly happy and zealous to encourage them. He discovered his own son in the crowd at a little distance from him weeping, and instantly as an angel of mercy hastening to him and embracing him he helped him forward to the altar, and kneeling by him offered him with fervent supplications to the Lord. With the prayers of such a father, and surrounding circumstances so favorable, you are prepared for the result. During the Sabbath both the son and only daughter of our venerable friend found the pearl of great price, and a happier family I have scarcely ever seen.”

Charleston Camp Meeting.—Under the leadership of John Collingsworth, the presiding elder, the first camp meeting was held in 1814 at a spot selected for it on Goose Creek. It was afterwards moved to Mt. Pleasant,
then Haddell's Point. In his little book, Methodism in Charleston, the author, F. A. Mood, tells us that some of the services of this first camp meeting were marked by overwhelming displays of the Divine Presence. On Saturday night the Rev. Samuel Dunwoody preached from Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones. "From a silent wrapt attention, the throng was gradually melted to tears, and finally the speaker's voice was drowned amid the cries, and sobs, and shouts of the multitude. An invitation was extended for mourners to come to the altar, when a general rush was made in opposite directions, many hastening forward to obtain the prayers of the pious, and numbers endeavoring to make their escape from under the arbor. Many of these last, overwhelmed by their sense of guilt even in their flight, fell to the earth in every direction, as if smitten by the hand of death; and until the dawn of the Sabbath from under the arbor, the tents, and over the ground, the voice of weeping and intercession was heard."

Bishop Capers frequently preached at these camp meetings, "Thou that dwellest between the Cherubim shine forth," being a favorite text of his.

At one of these camp meetings Bishop Wightman, then a boy sixteen years old, was powerfully converted under the preaching of J. O. Andrew, afterwards bishop.

Here in the late 20's, Stephen Olin did some of his greatest preaching, his sermon on the beheading of John the Baptist making such a profound impression that Dr. A. B. Leland, the pastor of the first Presbyterian Church in the city, re-preached it to his congregation.

Here in 1846, Dr. Bascom, afterwards bishop, preached his wonderful sermon on the resurrection. At its conclusion, a large congregation of negroes burst into a negro melody descriptive and declarative of the doctrine of the general resurrection. It was probably one of the greatest occasions of Bascom's ministry.

At one time there were twenty preachers in the active ranks of the South Carolina Conference who had been
converted in the camp meetings around Charleston. With the discontinuance of these camp meetings about 1850, there was a decided falling off in the number of young men entering the Methodist ministry from the Methodist Churches of the city.

Indian Fields.—Of the three camp grounds now in existence, Indian Fields is by far the largest, having over one hundred tents, nearly all of which are occupied every camp meeting. It was established years before the Civil War. During the war the tents were occupied by refugees from Charleston, a number of whom died from a scourge of smallpox.

Possibly, of the many camp meetings held on this beautiful old ground, none exceeded in interest and spiritual influence the camp meeting of 1871. Bishop Pierce attended that camp meeting and presided over the District Conference, which was held in conjunction with the camp meeting. The meeting increased in spiritual power, and reached high tide on Sunday, at that time usually a day of no special spiritual influence. But at 11 o’clock on Sunday morning, Bishop Pierce preached, taking for his text, “And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” The subject, of course, of the great bishop’s sermon was religion in the home as revealed in the holy lives of Zacharias and Elizabeth. In those days the seats under the large arbor were divided into two sections separated by a wide aisle running from the altar railing down through the center of the stand, the women sitting upon the left of the pulpit, the men upon the right. After having developed his theme at some length, turning to the women, the bishop spent fifteen minutes in a severe arraignment of the popular sins of the women of his day. In closing his remarks to them, he said: “You bedeck yourselves and expose yourselves in such a way as to invite a man to ruin you, and then want your brother to go and kill him.” With his hand raised and still turned to the women, the speaker said, “And may God have mercy upon a man,
who will forsake the wife of his youth and go lustling after another woman.” Then followed an equally terrific arraignment of the men. The Holy Spirit accompanied the plain searching truths to the minds and hearts of the hearers, and on every side heads were bowed with a sense of shame and guilt. Then the matchless orator began a soul-stirring picture of a Christian home. As one flight of eloquence followed another in swift succession, sobs and shouts became more frequent and audible. Taking up his handkerchief, which was lying on the book board in front of him, and waving it from right to left so as to take in its sweep the vast audience before him, the bishop closed with this sentence: “I would to God I could carry this entire congregation to Heaven with me,” and sat down.

Dr. Thomas Raysor, who was in the pulpit to close the service, arose and said: “I wish it were possible to describe the joy in my heart at this moment. Let penitents come,” and they came by scores.

Of the more than half hundred of camp grounds in this State where the hosts of Methodism once gathered to wage an aggressive warfare against the powers of evil, only three survive, Indian Fields, Cattle Creek and Cypress. Possibly the two last named will soon be abandoned. The camp meeting as a distinctive Methodist institution, like the class meeting, has passed away. But, born in a great revival, it still lives on in large and vigorous Methodist Churches about the sites of the old camp grounds. It will continue to live on in a tradition and history so rich in its incidents of prevailing prayer, in its courageous, consuming passion for the souls of men, in its marvelous displays of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as to quicken and inspire the heart of Methodism until her Divine mission upon these shores has been accomplished.

NOTE:—In the preparation of this address the writer has drawn freely from the following sources: Meacham’s Rise and Progress
of Methodism, McTyire's History of Methodism, Shipp's Methodism in South Carolina, Early Methodism in the Carolinas by Dr. Christberg, Stray Leaves by Dr. Lucius Bellinger, Methodism in Charleston by F. A. Mood, Christianity in Earnest by Mrs. M. Martin, Life of William McKendree by Hoss, and The Lights and Shadows of the Itinerant Life by Simon Peter Richardson. Wherever these authors have been directly quoted, proper acknowledgment has been made in the body of the paper. When the substance of these records is used it is not always so indicated. Again the writer is greatly indebted for valuable material to these four honored members of our Conferences: Revs. D. D. Dantzler, J. B. Traywick, S. A. Weber and John O. Willson, also to the following laymen for interesting memoranda of Mt. Bethel and Cattle Creek: J. B. Humbert of Princeton, and A. D. Fair of Orangeburg.