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THE CHURCH IN AMERICA

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THE CHURCH IN AMERICA, PARTICULARLY
IN N. CAROLINA, IN ITS EARLY HISTORY.

It is a remarkable fact, which at once strikes the attention of the ecclesiastical inquirer, that all through these American States which were Colonies of Great Britain before 1776, whether among the Independents or Puritans in Massachusetts and Connecticut on the North, or among the Church of England Establishments in Maryland and Virginia, at the South, or among the more central Provinces, there never lived a Bishop of the English Church to ordain and perpetuate her ministry, to confirm her baptized, and perform other essential duties appertaining to the office of Bishop. This anomalous condition of things continued, till American Independence released this country from subjection to England, and left the Church here free to take measures for securing the Episcopate, of which she had been deprived for nearly 200 years. It is to the Church only, in contradistinction to the State, of England, that the Protestant Episcopal Church in these States, owns herself to be indebted under God, for her first foundation and a long continuance of nursing care and protection. To the English State she owes no gratitude; for that State only kept her in the trammels of State Bondage, and subjected her to the ever veering policy of Statesmen and Dissenters, both at home and abroad, whose interest it was, that the Church, though the Tree of the Lord, should not bear fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself, for the propagation of itself. For as the Church receives the Primitive Constitution of her ministry as it exists in the Word of God, and in the Apostolic Ages, so no propagation by her ministry could be made except from that seed which Jesus Christ Himself first planted, when He chose His Apostles and said unto them: "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." "Lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Yet, for nearly 200 years, the

Church in this country was left without a Bishop upon its own ground. By customary usage, which seems to have taken its rise from his connection with the "Virginia Council" of which he was a member, the Bishop of London, from the year 1606, exercised spiritual jurisdiction over the American Plantations, which it was never expected that he should visit. In 1701, in the reign of William and Mary, the Charter of the "Venerable Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," was obtained, and by this society missionaries from England were furnished to all the Colonies, except Maryland and Virginia which had their own establishments, up to the period of the American Revolution. But as all the clergymen who had come over prior to 1701 had been licensed by the Bishop of London, the practice was continued by the society, of placing its missionaries under the charge of the same Bishop. So that, in some sense, the Bishop of that See all along from 1606 up to the American Revolution, was the Bishop or Diocesan of all the English Colonies in America. This whole country formed, as it were, one enormous undivided Diocese under the nominal jurisdiction, so far as the Church of England was concerned, of a Bishop who was first brought into connection with it through one of the Virginia Companies, and lived 3000 miles off. Any actual oversight of such a Diocese was, of course, impracticable. The Churches in Maryland and Virginia, however, had deputies of the Bishop of London, under the name of commissaries, which none other of the English Provinces had. The duty of an ecclesiastical commissary, under the English Law, we are told, is "to supply the office and jurisdiction of the Bishop, in the outplaces of the Diocese." Of course, the rites of ordination and confirmation were not within his powers, since he was only a Presbyterian. For certain purposes only of visitation through the Diocese, such as inspecting the state of the churches, delivering charges, and, in some instances, administering discipline though not to the extent of deposition, was he in the Bishop's room, and the Bishop's vicegerent. In 1689 the first commissary was duly commissioned by the Bishop of London for the Colony of Virginia. This officer was, as we have said, deputed to none other of the Provinces but Virginia and Maryland; and it appears from the history of those times, bad as they were, that even this

had
missionary
action

imperfect substitute for episcopal supervision, was of signal service to the Church in these parts, though the office fell into disuse before 1760.

As far back as 1672, in the reign of King Charles II., it had been resolved by the King in Council, to send a Bishop to Virginia, and Dr. Alexander Murray, who had been the companion of the King in his travels, was the person nominated to be Bishop of Virginia, with a general charge over the other Provinces. His Letters Patent, but not signed by the King's name, it is stated by Gibson, Bishop of London fifty years afterwards, were extant among the records of that See; but the design of consecrating him fell through, it is asserted, *because the endowment was made payable out of the customs.* It was the era of "the Cabal Ministry," who thought little and cared less for the Church, either at home or abroad, and had no mind, at any rate, that it should be a tax on the revenues.

As we have before said, the Venerable Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts had been founded in 1701, the last year of William and Mary's reign—an important era in the history of the Colonial Church of America, because it was this society which became the chief source of support to the Church Ministers in the Colonies, except those of Maryland and Virginia. Its missionaries, at times to the number of 100, were at work at almost every important town on the Atlantic coast. Three distinct and urgent applications for an American Episcopate are recorded in the reigns of Queen Anne and George I., under the auspices of this society; but just when they were on the point of obtaining all they desired, some untoward event, occasioned either by death or by political troubles, would frustrate their plans. The society had even gone so far as to purchase at Burlington, N. J., in the year 1710, at an expense of £600, a convenient Mansion House, which was also put in thorough repair, together with 15 acres of land and 12 acres of meadow, for the use of the future Bishop, whose charge, as designated, extended "from the East side of Delaware River, to the utmost bounds Eastward of the British Dominions, including New Foundland;" while another Bishop was designed to be settled at Williamsburg, Va., to whom was allotted the district extending "from the West side of the

Delaware River, to the utmost bounds Westward." But this, as well as another plan in 1726 for consecrating a Suffragan in Maryland to the Bishop of London, came to nought.

But as the century waned on after 1750, the chances of obtaining a Bishop for America, became more and more hopeless, though vigorous efforts were still made for that purpose. Difficulties and misunderstandings with the Mother Country began to thicken; and the odium which raged against the political measures of England, especially the stamp duty of 1764 was zealously turned by the enemies of the Church, against the Church herself. The hostile denominations, both in this country and in England, concentrated their forces against the Church, in a committee in London which carried on constant correspondence with a kindred committee in this country, forming together a sort of anti-episcopal "League and Covenant." The English Ministry sought to disarm their opposition by frowning down the revived scheme of the Bishop of London for sending over Bishops to America, and by giving assurance to the agitators that no Bishop should be consecrated for America without *their* consent.

It was about this period, 1765, that a controversy broke out between a Church Clergyman of Cambridge, Mass., and a Dr. Mayhew, a Congregational Minister of Boston, concerning the course that had been pursued by the "Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," which, the congregationalist charged, instead of sending the Gospel and the ministry to the destitute parts of the continent, had sought out the better settled and more comfortable portions of the country and there stationed its missionaries as intruders upon the descendants of the first settlers. He also inveighed against the plan of appointing Bishops for America.

This controversy is remarkable chiefly as having been participated in by Secker, then Archbishop of Canterbury and ex-officio President of "the Venerable Society, etc." In his tract, he had occasion to assign the reasons for desiring the appointment of Bishops, which furnish a graphic picture of the grievances under which the Church in America labored. The principal reasons assigned by him for desiring a Bishop, are, the want of confirmation of the baptized, the need for superintendence of the clergy, and especially the saving candidates for Holy Orders the trouble,

cost, and risk of a voyage to and from England. While all denominations had the means within themselves of perpetuating their ministry, the members of the Church of England alone, he says, were excluded from a right whose exercise was, in their view, essential to their existence, as a Church. Would they think themselves tolerated, were they obliged to send all their candidates for the ministry to Geneva or Scotland? The expense of the voyage to and from England he sets down at not less than £100; nearly one fifth of those who had taken that voyage had lost their lives either by shipwreck or by sickness, and in consequence of these discouragements, one-half of the Churches in many of the Provinces were destitute of Clergymen. The Archbishop went on to state, that the proposed Bishops were never designed to have any concern with persons who do not profess themselves to be of the Church of England, but to ordain ministers for the members of that Church, to confirm their children when brought to them at a fit age, and take oversight of the Episcopal Clergy. But it was not desired in the least that they should be vested with any temporal authority, exercised either by provincial Governors or subordinate Magistrates, or infringe upon or diminish any privileges or liberties enjoyed by any of the laity even of our own Communion.

It thus appears, from the foregoing declarations, that an English Archbishop of Canterbury, taught by the situation of affairs over in this country, had worked his way out from the hampering bonds of a Legal Establishment, to the pure conception of an Episcopate exercising only spiritual functions of office, and especially disclaiming any connection at all with the functions of the State. Such was Archbishop Seeker's idea of the proposed American Episcopate. Such was the primitive idea before the time of Constantine. Such is the true American idea. The time was not yet come, in the order of Divine providence, for realizing it in fact. But there was something, at least, gained in the Church having been educated up to that point of a scriptural and primitive Episcopate, friend and foe thus becoming familiarized with the conception. In due time, a watchful providence would take care to prepare the way and the time for its full realization. But the storm of an eight years' war was destined first to sweep

over the land and reduce all things to chaos, ere the States, and with them the Church, could emerge free and independent, to begin together their new career. Of course, the whole subject of the Episcopate remained in abeyance during the Revolutionary War. Of the Clergy of the Church of England some took sides with the American Patriots; others chose to transfer their services to Colonies of the British Crown, the West Indies, the Bermudas, particularly Nova Scotia, which became in 1787 the first Colonial See of the English Church, on this Continent. Others of the Clergy closed their Churches, remained at home and opened schools, but with limited success—for the war of the revolution left the youth of the day but little opportunity for education. The mass of the Church of England Laity, among them such men as General Washington, Patrick Henry, Richard Henry Lee the mover of the Declaration of Independence, Francis Lee one of the signers, the Carringtons and Graysons and Mercers, with hundreds of other names well-known to fame, took sides against England; for the quarrel of all these great men was with *the State* of England, not with *the Church* of England, in which they had been baptized and to which they remained faithful, through the conflict of arms, to draw their last breath in the peace of her Holy Communion. Peace was proclaimed in America on the 19th April, 1783; but it dawned upon a land, especially through the rural districts, with roofless and forsaken churches, with broken altars and a scattered and diminished Clergy!

But to everything under the sun, the wisdom of Solomon tells us, belongs a time or crisis, which, if embraced, stamps human efforts with success, but is followed by ruin, if it be past or lost. To the Church that survived the wreck of war, the blessing of God was given to improve its crisis, in a signal manner, for all time to come.

The first General Convention of this Church, after two preliminary meetings of Clergy and Laity from different States, assembled in Christ Church, Philadelphia, in the month of September, 1785. The two most important subjects which came before this body were, (1) the preparation of a general Ecclesiastical Constitution, and (2) the adaptation of the Liturgy of the Church of England to the altered situation of the American Church—both of which objects were at length happily accomplished.

The General Convention met again the following year (Oct. 1786), among other purposes, to consider the answer that had been received by the Church Committee appointed to correspond with the English Bishops concerning the consecration of Bishops for the Church in the United States. That answer being favorable to their consecration, Drs. White, of Philadelphia, and Provoost, of New York, were invested with the office of Bishop, 4th Feb., 1787, in Lambeth Chapel, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of Bath and Wells, and of Peterborough. To these two, Dr. Madison, of Virginia was afterwards added, having been consecrated in Lambeth Chapel, 19th September, 1790. And thus was "the Protestant Episcopal Church" in this country, the old Church of England, after nearly two centuries of waiting, and longing, and pleading, furnished with *three Bishops*, thus becoming qualified, according to the oldest Canons in existence, to propagate its own line of Apostolic succession, "even unto the end of the world."

But now we turn back a little to another interesting chapter in American Church History. Nearly three years before the consecration of Bishops White and Provoost in England, that is, in 1784, another line of Episcopacy, through the Scottish line of succession, had been introduced into New England, under these circumstances. In 1782 a plan designed as a temporary substitute for Episcopacy had been published by Dr. White, a sort of superintendency or moderatorship in the person of a Presbyter, that was supposed by him to be justified by the necessity of the case. The plan was professedly to give way or be superseded whenever lawful Bishops could be obtained. Had this scheme been adopted, as was recommended by the high authority of Dr. White, it would probably have ended, like all other schemes of the kind in the history of the Church, professedly at first temporary and designed to meet exigency, in becoming a permanent sectarian organization with its blind following of the multitude. The proposed plan gave great alarm to the Church in Connecticut, which, having been trained by continual combat with the Puritans, in Church principles, was determined to stand or fall by the Church of Holy Scripture and Primitive Antiquity. Accordingly, the moment that peace was declared in 1783, they elected Dr. Samuel Seabury

for their Bishop, furnished him with testimonials and sent him to England for consecration. But the English Bishops could not consecrate a Foreigner without a special Act of Parliament, which was refused to them. After waiting in England more than a year, with no prospect of success, the Clergy of Connecticut directed their Bishop-elect to proceed to Scotland where he was consecrated at Aberdeen, 14th Nov., 1784, or nearly three years earlier than Drs. White and Provoost. Bishop Seabury, on returning to his Diocese, went vigorously to work, but for several years took no part in the proceedings outside of his own Diocese. We are indebted to this staunch old Bishop, it may be mentioned in passing, for the insertion in the Prayer of Consecration in the Communion office, of the Invocation of the Holy Ghost "to bless and sanctify the Creatures of Bread and Wine," after the Use of the Scottish Communion office, which is not found in the English office.

As yet there was no union among the Episcopal Churches in the United States; only, a large nucleus for a general union existed among the States southward of New England, comprising New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina. But there was a sincere desire felt for general union of the whole Church, which was sure to work its way, in due time, to the desired end. By the time of the adjourned meeting of the General Convention of 1789, the New England Churches had all acceded to the General Constitution, adopted during the previous session of that Convention.

It is an interesting fact that the Convention of 1789, which witnessed the Union of the Church under a Constitution, witnessed also in the same year the Union of the States under the Constitution of the United States. That Convention also presented an Address to Washington which they opened with saying "that with the highest veneration and the most animating national considerations we express our cordial joy on your election to the Chief Magistracy of the United States." President Washington, after heartily thanking them for their affectionate congratulations, closed his reply with this memorable benediction, "May you and the people whom you represent be the happy subjects of Divine benediction, both here and hereafter!" May the bene-

diction thus invoked by the Father of his Country be abundantly fulfilled through the ages!

At this point, looking back, we pause to note the remarkable synchronisms between the dates and great epochs of our civil and ecclesiastical history. This Church and the American States had their Colonial training together up to 1775. After that year, they passed through the trying ordeal of the eight years' struggle, each reduced to the lowest extremity and almost laid in ruins. With 1783, on the return of peace, began their common era of uprising and resuscitation. The year 1789 marks the era of time when the National Constitution and the Constitution of this Church, as a National Church, both went into operation; and we ourselves know, from the events of our own day, how the fortunes alike of Church and State have again synchronized in division and in re-union. History, as the order of ages rolls onward, in its divinely purposed manifestation of results will evolve more and more luminously the plan of Divine wisdom that lies hidden in such wonderful coincidences of times and events—“*series juncturaque rerum.*”

Before closing the review of our early Church History, it may be interesting to notice, as a matter of history, what was the professed relation of the Methodists in those times, to the Church of England in America; for it was as far back as 1735 that John and Charles Wesley, *both of them Presbyters of that Church*, came over to America, where, during a stay of about three years, they gathered the rudiments of a Methodist society. From that time onward, and all through the war of the Revolution, the Methodists professed to consider themselves as belonging to the Church of England, claiming for their preachers to be only lay-preachers and resisting every attempt to set up for themselves, as a Church, for the administration of the Sacraments. Their separation from the Church of their baptism did not take place till 1784, after the war was over, when Mr. Wesley appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint *Superintendents* over the Methodists in this country, and also two others to act as elders among them, in baptising and administering the Lord's supper, *for the first time*. Wesley, in England, laid hands upon Coke, who was already a Presbyter of the Church of England, like himself.

Coke thereupon came over to America and laid hands upon Asbury, one of the lay-preachers of the Society. Such was the beginning and origin of "Methodist Episcopacy" or rather "Methodist Superintendency." For Mr. Wesley, the father of Methodism, never designed either Dr. Coke or Mr. Asbury to bear the title of "Bishop," whatever else was his purpose in laying hands upon Dr. Coke. The proof of this fact is taken from Lee's History of Methodism, wherein he affirms that in the year 1787 (or three years after the assembling of the first General Conference in Baltimore under Superintendent Coke), Mr. Asbury reprinted the General Minutes of that Conference in a different form and under a different title from what they were before, styling them "A form of discipline for the ministers, preachers and members of the *Methodist Episcopal Church* in America, etc." In this reprint of the Discipline, he altered the title of "Superintendent" into that of "Bishop." "*This was the first time,*" says Lee, "*our Superintendents ever gave themselves the title of Bishops in the Minutes. They changed the title themselves, without the consent of the Conference.*" This alteration of title, contrary to Mr. Wesley's intention, was energetically resented by him, in a letter written to Mr. Asbury, under date of September, 1788, from which we take the following extract: "How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called *Bishop*. I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men may call me a knave, or a fool, or a rascal, or a scoundrel, and I am content, but they shall never, by my consent, call me *Bishop*. For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to this!"

And Superintendent Coke himself, in a letter addressed to Bishop White, dated April 24, 1791, and published in White's Memoirs, confesses—"I am not sure but that I went farther in the separation of our Church in America, than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, *as far as he had a right so to do*, with Episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place. This I am certain of, that he is now sorry for the separation."

But had Mr. Wesley waited a little longer on God's time, which is always man's best opportunity, he would have been

saved from that rash act done by him at Bristol, the ultimate consequences of which to the cause of Christianity in this country no human vision can foresee. For, as we have seen, about this very time (1784), Dr. Seabury, Bishop-elect of Connecticut, was on the point of leaving England for Scotland, for the purpose of receiving consecration at the hands of the Scottish Bishops. And in point of fact, he had received consecration 14th November, 1784—more than five weeks before Superintendent Coke had met the Conference at Baltimore, on returning to America.

Mr. Wesley could hardly have been ignorant of these facts concerning Dr. Seabury, as they were the talk of the time; and they were well known to his brother Charles, who expressed his mind concerning them in a letter to Dr. Chandler, of New Jersey, from which we extract at some length :

I can scarcely believe that in his eighty-second year, my brother, my old intimate friend and companion, should have assumed the Episcopal character, ordained Elders, consecrated a Bishop, and set him to ordain lay-preachers in America. I was then at his elbow in Bristol, yet he never gave me the least hint of his intention. What will become of those poor sheep in the wilderness—the American Methodists? How have they been betrayed into a separation from the Church of England which their preachers and they, no more intended, than the Methodists here? Had they had patience a little longer they would have seen a *real* primitive Bishop in America, duly consecrated by the Scotch Bishops who have their consecration from the English Bishops and are acknowledged by them as the same with themselves. There is not, therefore, the least difference betwixt the members of Bishop Seabury's Church and the members of the Church of England. You know that I had the happiness to converse with that truly Apostolic man, who is esteemed by all who know him as much as by you and me. He told me he looked upon the Methodists in America as sound members of the Church, and was ready to ordain their preachers whom he should find duly qualified. *His ordination would indeed be genuine, valid and Episcopal.* But what are your poor Methodists now? Only a new sect of Presbyterians.

Such was the judgment of Charles Wesley, the sweet singer of Methodism, concerning his brother John's act in laying hands upon Coke. But as late as 1789, five years after that act, John Wesley himself made this declaration.

I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England, and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it.

Our limits forbid more than a condensed notice of the Early Church in North Carolina. Its history is best gleaned from the

abstracts of the Letters of the Missionaries supported here by the "venerable Society for the propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." These were required by the Society's rules, to send over their reports every six months. The impression left on our mind on reading years ago those abstracts, published in England during the colonial times in a sort of "Spirit of Missions" periodical, was, that the colonial clergy of North Carolina, though quite few in number, were a most faithful and hard-working band of men. Indeed, as a general thing, the Venerable Society's Missionaries, both in this and the other Provinces, were the choice ministers of that day on this Continent. Very few ministers of the Gospel, in these after times, will have it recorded of them, at the end of their labors, as is recorded of Rev. Mr. Hall, one of the Society's Missionaries in North Carolina, who died in 1759, that he had baptised 10,000 persons, including children and white and black adults, and had traveled 35,000 miles as travel was in those days, besides visiting the sick and distributing tracts.

A few statistics, drawn from the Society's correspondence and other sources, are here presented, with their respective dates:

In 1701, the year of the Society's charter, North Carolina contained 5,000 inhabitants, besides Negroes and Indians, who all lived without any form of public worship and without schools.

In 1705, or about two years after the establishment of the Church by law in North Carolina, the first church was erected in the Chowan District, nor is it known up to 1728, which marked the close of the Proprietary Government, that more than two churches had been erected in the Province of North Carolina.

In 1725, there were eleven Parishes or Precincts containing near 10,000 Christian souls, without one minister of the Gospel to officiate among them.

In 1732, after a previous exploration of the Province by the Rev. Mr. Blair, the first Itinerant Missionary, Mr. Boyd, was sent over by the Venerable Society. He found there not a single minister of the Gospel, besides himself.

In 1745, Mr. Hall writes, "No clergyman of the Church of England in North Carolina, that I can hear of, but myself and Mr. Moir."

In 1755, the population amounted to near 80,000, with but five

Episcopal ministers. Five years later still, there were but eight clergymen left in the Province to officiate in 29 counties or parishes. Meanwhile, the population was rapidly increasing, having trebled itself within the thirty years before the Revolution.

The Parishes or Precincts into which the Province of North Carolina was divided, were Counties of immense extent, lying northward and southward of Neuse River and bounded within Cape Fear River and the coast. Once or twice there were attempts made to establish Missions in the country westward of the Cape Fear among the Catawbans in Mecklenberg County, but we read of no results. To perform their ministrations in these Counties constant travelling was required on the part of the Missionaries. The Methodists afterward borrowed this Itinerant feature of the Society's Mission work and incorporated it, with great effect, into their system. Indeed, after we leave the towns, especially amid the sparse population of a new country, there is no other way of regularly reaching the people than by the Itinerant mode, and a few zealous ministers, by this means may be enabled to supply the indispensable demands of church people, as well as extend the Gospel, over an immense territory. But the Colonial Church of North Carolina had also her centres and strong points in the towns of Edenton, Wilmington, New Berne and Bath, where there were churches, schoolhouses, chapels and other parochial conveniences. Not, however, till 1763, was finished the first and probably the only Glebe House in the Province, and that was in St. Thomas' Parish, Bath.

To give some idea of the relative proportions of the members of the Church of England, especially in Eastern North Carolina, to the rest of the inhabitants, at different times before the Revolution, we quote from the Report of the Missionaries. In 1761, Mr. Reed, Missionary in Craven County, computes about 2,500 whites there, of whom about 1,800 were members of the Church of England, the rest Protestant Dissenters of various names, except about nine or ten Papists.

Rev. Mr. Stewart, of St. Thomas' Parish, Bath, computes 2,200 whites there, seven-eighths of whom belonged to the Church of England.

In 1765 Governor Tryon wrote to the Society :

That every sect abounded except the Romanists, but he reckons the Church of England to have the majority in the Province, and doubts not that the greatest part of every sect would come over, could a sufficient number of exemplary and orthodox clergy persuade themselves to settle in this country.

But it was in vain for the Church of England to seek long to hold her own against such increasing odds when the Province was rapidly filling up from abroad with Germans, dissenting English, Irish and Scotch, and she herself was without any source of supply, for her clergy, short of the Mother Country. For her clergy's support, there was only an establishment by law, in name, without revenues. Their principal means of support was the £50 sterling, which the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, allowed to each of its Missionaries.

A letter of Parson Miller, who died in the adjoining County of Burke, some years ago, furnishes us with these interesting particulars. He states that he made his first essay as a lay-preacher with the Methodists, when they professed to be members of the Church of England. But in the year 1784 he accompanied Dr. Coke to a Conference in Franklin County, in this State. He says :

Our chief conversation, during the time I was with him, which was for some weeks, was on the subject of organizing what they call their Episcopal Church, on which we could not agree, as the idea was early and deeply fixed in my mind, and I may truly say, my conscience, that the Apostolical Succession must ever descend and continue unbroken with the Church of God. And however inconsistent with this assertion some of my subsequent conduct may appear to be, yet, at this moment, I am certain it is the truth.

The inconsistency he refers to, was his leaving the Methodists on that scruple, and afterward receiving ordination among the Lutherans in Rowan County of this State, who, however, in the letters of orders they gave him, expressly reserved his right to attach himself to the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church, should the Providence of God ever afford him an opportunity ; which opportunity he afterward enjoyed and embraced at the hands of Bishop Moore, of Virginia.

The first public effort of the Church in North Carolina after the Revolution, to recover herself, was made in the year 1790, November 12th, by a Convention appointed to meet at Tarboro'.

They elected deputies to represent them in the General Convention of 1792, also a Standing Committee. For the two subsequent years no Convention met; but during that interval Rev. Dr. Halling was ordained by Bishop Madison, of Virginia, which was the first ordination after the Revolution, held expressly for the Church in North Carolina. He became Rector of Christ Church, New Berne.

Another Convention was held at Tarboro', May, 1794, when Rev. Charles Pettigrew, one of the five clergy that are known to have remained steady at their posts in North Carolina during the Revolutionary War, was elected to be Bishop of the Diocese of North Carolina. Bishop White states in his Memoirs that Mr. Pettigrew set off to attend the General Convention for the purpose of being consecrated, but was unable to reach Philadelphia in time. Parson Miller, in the published letter before referred to,¹ states that he had it from Mr. Pettigrew himself, that he thought the election of a Bishop premature, and that he submitted to the election of himself only to prevent the acceptance of the office by some one else. A dreary night set in upon the Church in this State, and indeed over the United States. In 1811 there was not a single candidate for Holy Orders in the American Church, and Bishop White feared that it would again be compelled to have recourse to the Church of England for the renewal of its Bishops. A wide-spread spirit of infidelity, caught from France, had infected all grades and classes of society. In the front ranks of infidels were to be found those whose forefathers had been the children and zealous friends of the Church. But in 1819 the tide began to turn. Bishop Moore opens his notice of the visitation he paid to the Church in North Carolina in 1819, with these words: "The Church in that State is rising in all the vigor of youth."

The Rev. John Stark Ravenscroft was consecrated the first Bishop of North Carolina during the session of the General Convention at Philadelphia, May, 1823. It is not our purpose to follow the subsequent history and progress of the Church in this State, under her line of Bishops.

¹ CHURCH REVIEW, July, 1850.

We have seen from the present survey that this Church is the old Church of North Carolina, for a long time the Church of the majority of its population, notwithstanding the grievous disadvantages she labored under from the necessity of supplying her ministry from beyond the sea, for want of her own Bishop; and that historically and synchronically she has been associated with the life of the State, whether in prosperity or adversity.

What the American Church most pressingly wants now, what she ever has wanted and ought to pray for, never so earnestly as now, in prospect of plenteous returns, is, that her Lord would send forth more laborers into the harvest.

“They shall prosper that love Thee. Peace be within Thy walls and plenteousness within Thy palaces; for my brethren and companion’s sake, I will wish Thee prosperity.”

JARVIS BUXTON.



