

Senior S 4

Wesley over his followers was extremely strict but he never considered it a church discipline, simply as a discipline of a group who were joined together for the enrichment of the spiritual life. His idea of church government, as you see, was Presbyterian. He supported the established system of the Church of England but when the system was no longer existent here he felt the right as a presbyter to appoint other presbyters and he appointed them for the purpose of performing the sacraments. He, as leader of this movement, of this spiritual movement, appointed Coke and Asbury as superintendents of the work in America and he never thought of making them heads of the church, but superintendents of a movement such as he had. Well, Coke came over to America. They appointed Asbury but Coke was more interested in the work of England and Coke crossed the Atlantic eighteen times and when you think that in those days it took weeks on a boat to cross you can see his heart was in England and after Wesley's death a very few years later he became the leader of English methodism and labored incessantly in the cause of foreign missions. They retained his name on the minutes in the United States till 1814, when he died, but Asbury was the real leader, and Asbury in this country took exactly the same authority that Wesley had had in England. As long as Asbury lived he ruled the church here with absolute control. He was absolute monarch at the church here. It was only after his death that the various ministers received any share of voice in the conduct of the church, but Asbury was a man like Wesley, a man who used power because he thought he knew what was for the good of the church, not because he wanted power. He would not allow his men to stay in one place more than two or three days. They had to keep on the go preaching the gospel everywhere and he set them example himself. He traveled on horseback many thousands of miles, from Maine to Georgia, from the Atlantic coast to the frontier settlements in Kentucky and Tennessee, constantly preaching, constantly working with people and insisting that every minister under him should do the same sort of a work. It was entirely a circuit work. None of his men were allowed to settle down and stay in one place. I think personally that in the organization of the Methodist church in those days, I think there were