



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

JOHN EASTER – THAT MIGHTY MAN OF GOD

INTRODUCTION

This compilation was created mostly from the writings of John Lednum and Robert Paine. However, I have also taken from other writers in our HDM Library. Though I have freely added some of my own wording here and there, I do not profess to be the author of this work – only the compiler and editor. John Easter was used of God “like a flame of fire” to bring great revivals to early Methodism. This compilation, therefore, is well worth the reading. -- DVM

John Easter appears to have been a native of Mecklenburg County, Virginia. He was converted under the preaching of Robert Williams, and carried on the true succession of Williams’ evangelism in a wonderful way.

Both John and Thomas Easter became Methodist traveling preachers. I did not find the date of birth for either, but did find the dates on which Jesse Lee says that they were admitted into the itinerancy: John was admitted in 1782, and Thomas in 1790. In 1784, the former was present at the “Christmas Conference” when the M. E. Church was organized.

John Easter became one of the most zealous, powerful, and successful preachers the Methodists ever had. By various ones, he is called: “that devoted servant of God,” “that man of God,” “that mighty man of God,” and “that mighty evangelist.”

Bishops McKendree and George were both awakened under him, and thousands of others. He was the “Benjamin Abbott of the South,” an uncommonly faithful and holy man; and when crowns are bestowed, his will have uncommon luster, on account of its many brilliant gems. Wherever John Easter labored, and he labored in earnest, the Lord gave him success; and in some places the work was wonderful – surpassing anything that had been previously witnessed.

Following are some instances that reflect the holy power of John Easter’s ministry:

“He he passed through Roanoke Circuit, where that man of God, John Easter, was laboring ... In this circuit he attended meetings at Whitaker’s, Young’s, Low’s, Clayton’s, Jean’s, Doal’s, Lock’s, and Jones’ Chapel. Some of these meetings were very powerful, many people crying out aloud; the last meeting which he attended in this circuit was a quarterly meeting. The Lord’s power was manifested at this meeting, and many souls were blessed.

Mr. Asbury in the South ... In passing through Tar River Circuit he had large and lively meetings. The people of this region felt the influence of that mighty man of God, John Easter, who had been among them. During this year the Methodists had their greatest success in North Carolina, where the increase was a thousand or more; nearly all the increase in the connection this year, was in this state. In most of the other states, there was a small decrease.

It seems that Mrs. Tignal Jones of Mecklenburg, was some of the fruit of Easter’s ministry, about the year 1786. She went to hear him, though under the ban of her husband’s ire, who threatened to shoot her in the event of her going. Her courage in the way of religious duty, resulted in the subjugation of her husband’s wrathful spirit to the reign of Christ, who cheerfully united with his pious wife in entertaining the messengers of salvation, and in serving the Lord. Mrs. Jones was one of the most

distinguished Christians of the South; not only on account of the fiery trials through which she passed, but so, for her good sense, her superior gifts, and her courage in taking up, and her constancy in sustaining, the cross of Christ.

John Easter was instrumental in one of the greatest revivals of religion that ever was seen in Virginia. This great work commenced in 1787; and on Brunswick Circuit, where he was laboring, there was from fifteen hundred to two thousand converted to God; and on the adjoining circuit almost as many. This was the beginning of the second great revival that took place among the Methodists in America; the first was at the planting of Methodism in various places. The work in 1787 and in 1788, was both north and south of James river.

In this revival, William McKendree was awakened and converted under John Easter's preaching. About the same time, as this son of thunder was moving on, fulfilling his high commission, and the astonished multitudes trembled, and hundreds were falling down and crying "What must we do to be saved?" Enoch George was awakened and brought to Christ, under this awful messenger of truth.

MCKENDREE'S CONVERSION

(A sample of Easter's Ministry)

William McKendree was converted at about 30 years of age. Describing his conversion he wrote:

"Some time after the Methodist preachers came into the neighborhood, a revival of religion took place, my father, mother, and several others became professors of religion, and many joined the Church. I was then deeply convinced of sin and resolved to set out and serve the Lord. For some time I was very serious, but after a while my religious concern gradually abated, and I insensibly glided into the spirit of the world and drank deeper into the practice thereof than I had ever done before. In great compassion the Lord still extended his mercy to me and checked my thoughtless career by a severe attack of bilious fever. I was brought to view death as at the door, all human help seemed to fail. I now viewed myself as within a step of eternity, and alas, I was without God! I had no hope of future happiness! I was convinced that, dying as I was, I should be eternally miserable, and, to complete my astonishment and wretchedness, I could not indulge a hope of obtaining mercy in that situation. I considered myself as one who had preferred the service of the devil to the enjoyment of religion to the very last, and now to ask God to pardon my sins and take me to himself when I could serve myself no longer appeared to be the most unreasonable thing in the world.

"I therefore utterly despaired of mercy unless God should be graciously pleased to raise me up from my bed of affliction and thus grant me an opportunity to seek his face. For this I earnestly prayed. While sore belabored with pain, the world appeared insignificant and of trivial consequence; indeed, could I have purchased peace by giving the whole world, the price then seemed to me inconsiderable. But even while it seemed to myself that I was so willing to embrace mercy upon any terms, I well remember a thought that threw me into confusion by showing me my error. The following idea was suggested: 'If the Lord would raise you up and convert your soul, would you be willing to go and preach the gospel?' At this nature shrunk, will refused, and I trembled when I found myself indisposed to prompt obedience.

"Yet I continued to plead, and the Lord raised me from the jaws of death, covering the bones with young flesh." But alas, how weak are resolutions springing from fear! As my strength returned, I lost sight of my danger, and the resolution, which I thought was so firm, weakened in proportion. At last I lost the desire and returned to my old companions and the business of the world.

"In this situation I continued until the great revival of religion took place in Brunswick Circuit, under Mr. John Easter, in 1787. On a certain Sabbath I visited a gentleman who lived in the neighborhood; he

and his lady were going to church to hear a Mr. Gibson, a local Methodist preacher. It was, of course, during the Revolutionary War, when the church was open to any occupant, the clergy having abandoned their flocks and the country and fled home to England. Upon my going to the house of my friend, he declined going to church, sent a servant with his wife, and we spent the time in reading a comedy and drinking wine.

“Mrs. _____ stayed late at church, but at last, when we were impatient for dinner, she returned and brought strange things to our ears. With astonishment flushing in her countenance, she began to tell whom she left ‘in a flood of tears,’ who were ‘down on the floor,’ who were ‘converted,’ what an ‘uproar’ was going on among the people, cries for mercy and shouts for joy, etc. She also informed us that Mr. John Easter was to preach at that place on the following Tuesday. My heart was touched at her representation. I resolved to seek religion, and began in good earnest to pray for it that evening.

“Tuesday I went to church, fasting and praying. Mr. Easter preached from John 3:19-22: ‘And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world,’ etc. The word reached my heart. From this time I had no peace of mind; I was completely miserable. My heart was broken up, and I saw that it was evil above all things and ‘desperately wicked.’ A view of God’s forbearance and of the debasing sin of ingratitude, of which I had been guilty in grieving the Spirit of God, overwhelmed me with confusion.

“Now my conscience roared like a lion. ‘The pains of hell got hold of me.’ I concluded that I had committed the ‘unpardonable sin’ and had thoughts of giving up all for lost. For three days I might have said: ‘My bed shall comfort me, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions, so that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.’ (Job 7:7-15.) But in the evening of the third day deliverance came. While Mr. Easter was preaching, I was praying as well as I could, for I was almost ready to despair of mercy. Suddenly doubts and fears fled, hope sprang up in my soul, and the burden was removed. I knew that God was love, that there was mercy even for me, and I rejoiced in silence.

“Mr. Easter confidently asserted that God had converted my soul; but I did not believe it, for I had formed to myself an idea of conversion, how it would come, and what must follow; and what I then felt did not answer to my idea. Therefore I did not believe that I was converted, but I knew there was mercy for me, and I greatly rejoiced in that. However, I soon found myself in an uncomfortable condition, for I immediately began to seek and expect a burden of sin, answerable to my idea, in order to get converted. But the burden was gone, and I could not recover it. At times I had flashes of joy, yea, felt the life and power of living faith; but as soon as I would advert to my conversion, faith would fail, hope languish, and comfort die, because I doubted my conversion. With desire I sought rest, but I thought that greater distress than I had felt must precede that blessing, and therefore refused to be comforted. And thus, sir, for several weeks I experienced all the anguish of grasping at an object of the greatest importance, and missing my aim, of laying hold of life and salvation, then falling back into the vortex of disappointment and distress, until I may say I was as a lone ‘sparrow on the housetop;’ ‘my teeth chattered like a swallow, my bones were pierced in me in the night season, and my sinews took no rest.’ (Job 30:17.)

“But deliverance was at hand. Mr. Easter came round, and his Master came with him, and in the time of meeting the Lord, who is merciful and kind, blessed me with the witness of the Spirit; and then, sir, I could rejoice indeed, yes, with joy unspeakable and full of glory!

“Within twenty-four hours after this I was twice tempted to think my conversion was delusive and not genuine, because I did not receive the witness of the Spirit at the same time.

“But I instantly applied to the throne of grace and, in the duty of prayer, the Lord delivered me from the enemy, and from that day to this I have never doubted my conversion. I have pitied, and do still pity, those who, under the influence of certain doctrines, are led to give the preference to a doubting

experience, and therefore can only say, 'If I ever was converted,' 'I hope I am converted,' 'I fear I never was converted,' etc., but can never say: 'We know that we have passed from death unto life.' In this respect, 'darkness, in part, has happened to Zion,' but I hope the time is not far distant when truth and religion shall triumph over error and form.

EASTER WAS A HOLINESS PREACHER

That John Easter preached two works of grace can be seen from the continuation of McKendree's testimony

"Not long after I had confidence in my acceptance with God, Mr. Gibson preached us a sermon on sanctification, and I felt its weight. When Mr. Easter came, he enforced the same doctrines. This led me more minutely to examine the emotions of my heart. I found remaining corruption, embraced the doctrine of sanctification, and diligently sought the blessing it holds forth. The more I sought the blessing of sanctification, the more I felt the need of it and the more important did that blessing appear. In its pursuit, my soul grew in grace and in the faith that overcomes the world. But there was an aching void which made me cry:

'Tis worse than death my God to love,
And not my God alone.'

"One morning I walked into the field, and while I was musing such an overwhelming power of the Divine Being overshadowed me as I had never experienced before. Unable to stand, I sunk to the ground, more than filled with transport. My cup ran over, and I shouted aloud."

MCKENDREE'S CALL – EASTER'S PRAYER

"On a certain day, as I sat at a table, my father stepped in and addressed me thus: 'William, has not the Lord called you to preach the gospel?' I answered: 'I cannot tell; I do not know what a call to preach the gospel implies.' He added: 'I believe he has, and I charge you not to quench the Spirit.' For a moment I was as one thunderstruck. We both shed tears. I asked him why he thought the Lord had called me to preach the gospel. He answered: 'While you lay sick of the fever' -- alluding to my illness already mentioned -- 'when the doctor and all your friends had given you up for lost, I was greatly afflicted at the thought of your dying in your sins. I applied myself to the throne of grace and prayed incessantly. While I was on my knees, the Lord manifested himself to me in an uncommon manner, and gave me an assurance that you should live to preach the gospel, and I have never lost my confidence, although you have been too careless.' He then repeated his caution not to quench the Spirit.

"In this undetermined condition of mind I continued until it pleased the Lord to lay me upon a bed of affliction. Mr. Easter visited me. On the next day, when they were about starting to meeting, he prayed for me, not as men generally pray, but in a manner and with a zeal peculiar to himself. Under his prayer I was blessed; my soul was filled with joy. He proceeded to tell the Lord that 'the harvest was great, but the laborers were few,' that I had been urged by the Spirit, but had refused to obey. He prayed the Lord to raise me up, and thrust me into his vineyard. I recovered; and from that time I spoke more frequently and freely in public, and the Lord condescended to encourage me by blessing both my hearers and myself."

MCKENDREE DESCRIBES JOHN EASTER

"But before I enter upon the ensuing part of my own history, suffer me to make some observations on what I have witnessed respecting my much loved friend and father in the gospel, John Easter.

“When Mr. Easter came to Brunswick Circuit, there was very little appearance of religion in our neighborhood. Upon his coming, a revival took place, and in the course of the year about two hundred and fifty joined the Church within ten miles of where we resided, and about eighteen hundred were added in the circuit. Mr. Easter possessed an uncommon degree of faith. It was objected to him that ‘instead of praying, he commanded God, as if the Lord was to obey man.’

“The following is a specimen of what I was an eyewitness. While preaching to a large concourse of people in the open air, at a time of considerable drought, it began to thunder, a cloud approached, and drops of rain fell. He stopped preaching and besought the Lord to withhold the rain until evening, to pour out his Spirit, convert the people, and then water the earth. He then resumed his subject. The appearance of rain increased, the people began to get uneasy, some moved to take off their saddles; when, in his peculiar manner, he told the Lord that there were ‘sinners there that must be converted or be damned,’ and prayed that he would ‘stop the bottles of heaven until the evening.’ He closed his prayer and assured us in the most confident manner that we might keep our seats, that it would not rain to wet us; that ‘souls are to be converted here today, my God assures me of it, and you may believe it.’ The congregation became composed, and we did not get wet; for the clouds parted, and although there was a fine rain on both sides of us, there was none where we were until night. The Lord’s Spirit was poured out in an uncommon degree, many were convicted, and a considerable number professed to be converted that day.

“Mr. Easter excited great attention. Hundreds, and sometimes thousands, attended his appointments. Frequently while he was preaching the foundations of the place would seem to be shaken and the people to be moved like the trees of the forest when shaken by a mighty tempest. Many were ‘the slain of the Lord,’ and many were made spiritually alive. If my memory serves me, four hundred were converted at a four days’ meeting. But Satan’s kingdom did not suffer this loss without a struggle. Powerful, and sometimes fierce, was the opposition Mr. Easter had to contend with; but the Lord gave him grace according to his day. In the midst of a congregation, a man stepped to Mr. Easter, caught him by the bosom, and raised a horsewhip over his head. In that position, a few words passed between them. Mr. Easter began to pray, but when his prayer was ended his antagonist was gone. Mr. Easter proceeded with his meeting without further interruption.

“On another occasion he reprovved a man who was at a few yards’ distance on an elevated seat in the congregation. The man, as afterwards appeared, had covenanted to abuse the preacher, and for this purpose had armed himself with a club, which he shook at the preacher. Another and a sharper reproof followed. The enraged man approached Mr. Easter, brandishing his weapon, with vengeance flashing in his countenance. The preacher calmly said, ‘I regard the spilling of my blood for the sake of Christ no more than the bite of a fly,’ but warned the furious man of the most awful consequences on his own part. The man was near enough to strike him, but Mr. Easter dared him to strike, telling him what God would do if he laid the weight of his hand upon him. The man’s countenance changed, he presently turned round and walked off. ‘I told you the devil is a coward,’ said Mr. Easter, as the crestfallen man withdrew. These, sir, may serve as specimens of the displays of divine power which attended the ministry of that dear friend of ours.”

In the course of the year 1787, about twelve hundred members were added to the Church through John Easter’s ministry.

This revival, which began under Mr. Easter and of which young McKendree and thousands of others became the happy subjects, was a novelty to many. Most of the clergy of the Established Church opposed it publicly and ridiculed it in private. The great body of the Church stood aghast at it. It was “wildfire,” “self-delusion,” or “hypocrisy.” No doubt hundreds of honest and conscientious persons thought they were doing God service in striving to repress what they regarded as a “religious frenzy.” In their estimation, Mr. Easter and all those who, like him, strove to arouse the torpid consciences of

sinner and proclaimed a present pardon and an internal evidence of that pardon were disturbers of the peace of society as well as heretics. To the Churchman both the preacher and his matter were offensive, the first wanting the order of succession, the latter, at the same time, condemning his profession, his experience, and his practice. To the honest and devout Calvinist, having in his mind Calvin's "horrible decree," the earnest offer of Christ's death and mediation, as means available by faith for the salvation of all men, without distinction and without reservation, seemed presumptuous, if not profane; so that, in whatever else they disagreed, Churchmen, Calvinists, and Quakers united in condemning those who seemed to be "turning the world upside down."

Still the people flocked by hundreds and thousands to hear them, and multitudes became the subjects of this strange work. Their plain, earnest, and scriptural appeals to conscience; their solemn and devout manners; their disinterestedness and the extraordinary faith and dauntless moral courage which Easter and his associates exhibited, and, above all, the wonderful power which attended their ministry, were well calculated to excite attention. And they did excite attention. The private houses, old-field schoolhouses, and the few meetinghouses where circuit preaching had been ordinarily heard were soon found insufficient to contain the immense throngs of eager listeners. The barns were resorted to, but were soon found to be too small. To the groves, Nature's own temples, the crowds repaired. The villages were emptied of population; the mechanic laid aside his tools; the farmer stopped his plows and mounted his family upon the horses, sometimes two and three upon a horse; servants and those who could find no other means of conveyance started on foot. The roads were crowded. The vicinity of the place of worship was covered with horses and vehicles, and thousands gathered around the temporary pulpit and held their breath to catch every syllable of the man of God.

Mr. Easter was a man of great purity of life, of a sound mind and deep religious feelings, and what he clearly apprehended and strongly felt he spoke with the confidence of one who knows he delivers a message from God. He never indulged in metaphysical discussions and rarely in doctrinal expositions. His themes were repentance, salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, and the witness of the Spirit. His preaching was of the experimental and practical kind, his manner hortative. Those who knew him revered and loved him. When, upon such an occasion as adverted to above, he arose in the immense congregation his appearance and manner inspired awe. His piercing black eyes, his awful earnestness, and his almost miraculous faith arrested every hearer and transfixed the most careless. His sentences, in the beginning of his addresses, were short and his language solemn and pointed. There was no mannerism nor circumlocution. He was full of his subject and intent only upon the rescue of sinners from impending wrath. At once he went to work invoking the presence and power of God, admonishing Christians to pray, and when his faith was "mighty," assuring them that souls would be converted there that day.

Then he would begin his appeal to sinners. Their depraved and guilty condition, their duty, the necessity for decision, and the consequences involved, together with the means and evidences of pardon and regeneration, were concisely and overwhelmingly exhibited. His voice was of wondrous pathos and power, now soft as an aeolian harp while persuading the hesitating or soothing the penitent, anon ringing out like the denunciations from Mount Ebal when successive peals of curses reverberated against the incorrigibly impenitent; and then again, "in language sweet as angels use," whispering to the believing penitent blessings richer and more abundant than ever died away in soft and melodious echoes from Mount Gerizim over the beautiful Valley of Shechem; and yet his whole manner was natural and unstudied. He would have despised himself if he had felt conscious that he was aping the orator or seeking aught but the salvation of his hearers. His communion with God was too intimate to allow any less serious or worthy motive, for he who walks closely with God will be fearfully earnest while pleading with man.

The power of the Almighty attended his efforts. The pious portion of his audience sustained him by

their prayers and rose with him in faith and zeal as he increased in fervor and force, until the immense concourse, agitated by the conflicting emotions of consternation, grief, and joy, at last could restrain themselves no longer and gave vent to the long-pent but now resistless feelings of their hearts. Some fled with alarm, others felt as if impaled, while many fell to the ground as if stricken with a sudden bolt from heaven. Many were happily converted while he was speaking, until at last some fresh accession to the number of penitents, or converts, would so swell the wave of emotion that his voice would be drowned; and then mingled shouts, prayers, and songs would rise like the paeans of victory and the wail of the wounded over a battle field.

Such were the scenes often witnessed in those days; and let others call it confusion, fanaticism, or whatever they may please, I believe it to have been the work of God and pray that such scenes may never cease in the Methodist Church. And let all who revere his memory recollect that Bishop McKendree was a subject of this glorious work. Surely his life and his death might be regarded as a vindication of such revivals.

THE CONVERSION OF ENOCH GEORGE

Enoch George, who became Bishop George, was born in 1767 or 1768, in Lancaster County, Va. He was trained in the English Church of the province, but was addicted to the prevalent irreligion and dissipation of his neighborhood. Moving into Dinwiddie and Brunswick counties, he came under the ministry of Jarratt, who, he says, “would thunder at sinners of any and every description, many of whom would fly from his warning voice as from a house in flames; and even in their flight he would ‘cry aloud and spare not.’ He was made the instrument of turning many to righteousness, who experienced the humility, faith, hope, and charity of the Gospel, witnessing a good confession in life and death. He united ‘them that believed,’ and were of one heart, into classes, as our Wesley had done in England, and met them regularly; and such as he could not attend to, he gave up to the Methodist preachers, that they might be guided by their counsel, and afterward received into glory. He looked upon the world as his parish; and though his appointed sphere of labor was the parish of Bath, Dinwiddie County, yet duty prompted him to labor in the adjoining parishes, in ‘the highway and hedges, calling sinners to repentance.’ Under the ministry of this ‘servant of the most high God,’ I received my first religious impressions. Until this time, I and many of his parishioners were as ignorant of the plan of salvation, by faith in Jesus Christ, as though we had never heard the gospel.” Removing to another locality, he says: “We had no religious services, either in my father’s family, or in any that I visited. Our time was whiled away in fiddling and dancing. But, independently of any convictions received in the church or elsewhere, I remember the visits of the Spirit of God, enlightening, inciting, and alarming me. I continued in this situation for many months and only wanted suitable direction and encouragement. With these I should soon have found the pearl of great price. None of my acquaintance appeared to have any serious impressions, or if they had they were concealed, as my own were. At this time we heard that a certain Methodist preacher was traveling through a part of our parish and county, under whose labors hundreds were ‘falling down,’ and crying, ‘Sir, what must we do to be saved ‘ They ‘repented, believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and were converted.’ By these reports my ‘foolish heart’ was hardened and ‘darkened.’ It was my delight to invent satirical epithets for these men, by which I and my companions were amused. In this way I continued to resist God, having founded my opinion on common report, until my father and stepmother were among the hearers of that venerable, holy, and useful minister, known to thousands in the south of Virginia, John Easter.”

Easter was one of the “sons of thunder” in the early itinerancy. A contemporary preacher says: “John Easter, traveling Brunswick circuit, held a meeting at Mabey’s Chapel, near a village called Hicksford, at which there was a great concourse of people, and while he was preaching several hundred persons fell flat upon the ground, struck down by the mighty power of God, and many of them were powerfully

converted. The effects of that revival were exceedingly great, so much so, that the wretched sellers of alcohol lost nearly all their customers in the village.

John Easter was an extraordinary man with regard to his faith and power in preaching the gospel of salvation. Like Jacob, he had power with God, and with men. When he preached or exhorted, great power fell upon the people, and many sinners were slain by the sword of the Spirit.” Such was the man whom George met.

“When Mr. Easter spoke,” he continues, “his word was clothed with power, and the astonished multitude trembled, and many fell down and cried aloud. Some fell near me, and one almost on me; and when I attempted to fly, I found myself unable. When my consternation subsided, I collected all my strength and resolution, and left my friends and the family, determining never to be seen at a Methodist meeting again. In this I was defeated. My father and his family, with many of my friends, remained in the assembly, while I ‘fled from the presence of the Lord;’ and they determined to seek and taste the heavenly gift, and be made partakers of the ‘Holy Ghost.’

“On the next day there was to be another meeting in our vicinity, and as the people passed our house, one and another said to me, ‘Come, and let us go up to the house of the Lord,’ and hear this awful messenger of truth. I replied to their entreaties and inquiries by surly negatives; but my father interposed his authority, and commanded my attendance. I went, intending to steel my heart against conviction. However, it pleased God on this day ‘to open my eyes, and turn me from darkness to light,’ by the ministry of the word; and I was willing to become a Christian in ‘the way of the Lord.’ Day and night I cried for mercy. In this disconsolate state I wandered from meeting to meeting, and from valley to valley, ‘seeking rest, finding none,’ and almost ready to yield to despair, yet resolved never to renounce my hope of mercy, while it was written, ‘The Lord will provide,’ and ‘His mercy endureth forever.’

“On one Sabbath, while thus ‘tossed with tempests, and not comforted,’ after meeting I retired to the woods, ‘and there I received forgiveness of sins, by faith that is in Jesus Christ,’ and the witness of his Spirit with mine. Then I tasted that the Lord is gracious; felt grace in my heart – God in man – heaven upon earth. I was in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and all around me, each shrub, each flower, each leaf; spoke the praises of the Father, who ‘made them all.’ From that day until now I have never doubted my conversion to Christ, and adoption into his family.

“Shortly after my conversion I joined the Methodist society, ‘choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin,’ and resolved, through the grace of God, to be ‘faithful unto death.’”

The Rev. Thomas Ware gave us to understand that John Easter was present at that remarkable meeting, that he describes, pp. 165, 167 of his Life; and that Easter was the preacher that melted the hard, deistical heart of General Bryan, from these words:-- “Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

When he finished his discourse, General Bryan addressed the melted multitude, when a loud cry arose, that continued until the going down of the sun; and the religious concern that followed, suspended, for many weeks, almost all worldly business. In General Bryan’s family there were thirty – twelve white, and eighteen colored – that professed to have religion, as the fruit of this extraordinary quarterly meeting, which was held in 1790.

After ten years of great labor and success, this flaming herald of the cross located, in 1792; but continued the same holy, faithful Christian, serving the cause of Christ as a local preacher.

JESSE LEE'S VERSION OF TWO STORIES TOLD BY MCKENDREE

The last notice that we find of this blessed man, is in the Life of the Rev. Jesse Lee, for the year 1798:--
“At a meeting at Paups Chapel, Mr. Asbury preached. Brother Mead began to sing; there was a general weeping among the people. John Easter cried out, ‘I have not a doubt in my soul, but that my God will convert a soul here today.’ Several men and woman fell on their knees; and the cries of mourners became awful. Several found peace at this meeting.”

It is related, that at one time, when this man of God was about to address a large congregation assembled in the open air, the heavens were dark with clouds. The congregation became alarmed by the dismal elements hanging over them, and gave signs of flight, without staying to hear the word which was able to save their souls. At this time Mr. Easter fell on his knees, before the congregation, and besought the Lord to disperse the clouds, stay the rain, and give the people to hear his word once more. As in immediate answer to his servant's prayer, the cloud parted over the multitude, part drifting one way and part another, and the word was preached with great effect that day.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PROPERLY SAID OF JOHN EASTER

Ossian might have said of him -- “This herald of salvation was in his day like a pillar of fire, that beamed on sin-darkened souls; to weary, wandering pilgrims as the beams of heaven to point to God. He saw the tall sons of Anak fall before the bolts of Sinai, as the thistle's head before autumnal blasts. Clothed with the beauty of holiness, like a robe of beams, he stood firm on the field of foes; when Satan's hosts gathered around, his soul darkened not with fear; but through faith, he saw his enemies vanish like melting mist. Armed with celestial panoply, there was no cause to dread death's shadowy mace; and, although his grave may be unmarked by a flower or a stone, yet, the dwelling of his soul is calm above the clouds, and the fields of its rest are pleasant; and his body shall come from the deep sleep of the narrow tomb with songs and rejoicing.”

Compiled and Edited by Duane V. Maxey

[Return to the Enter His Rest website](#)