



# DISCOVERY

Edited by  
ROBERT DREW SIMPSON

## Introductory Note to the Lost Asbury Letters for 1811 and 1813

As Asbury's years in leadership began to wane and he bore the problems of his health, these two letters reflect some personal feelings respecting, for instance, his attitude toward music in worship and in general. He deplored the African use of music in the meeting place in Charleston. He also, in order to show no favoritism, also criticized the Garrettsons for their use of music in their home. There is an interesting note respecting the need for patience on the part of Garrettsen and himself, when the younger preachers in their desire for leadership were inclined to push away the older preacher's feet. As he said, "I feel unspeakable pleasure to take away my feet from the chair of Presidency in all our Conferences."

The 1813 letter carries a reference to his poor health and his need for crutches as well as his need to be carried from his chair to his bed. He also reflected on the General Conference of 1813 remarking about the political electioneering that went on. Unkind speeches and haranguing from house to house clearly express his opinions about what was occurring at the Conference as he relinquished leadership.

North Carolina Wilmington  
Jan. 24, 1811

My dearest and affectionate Brother

May great grace support you when immense wealth will not; for near 40 years you have known and felt not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God. It is with greater ease we hold Earth at a remote distance, out of possession than in the full and ample anticipation of it. Bishop Coke says, "God is his home" but he

has to treat his wife a good coach. As you said in substance to me many years ago that you wished not to reduce Sister Garrettson below the level of her birth and education. This has brought you to a partial Location.

As to the musick I am alone in my nicety. When Br. xx transported himself and family to Charleston, among the Africans, with musick in our preacher[s] house, nothing but sin of a serious dye could have affected me more. I have declined visiting the houses of Methodists because my time is short, but I fear I should injure their feelings or me. When I see our preachers and families, we have, you and me, influenced their support; their children [frittering?] on — we feel. I disapproved musick at your house to show I spare none. I did not mean to grieve you or Sister Garrettson bringing you disrespect in the sight of persons present. Your not coming to Charleston may be considered doubtful, whether a calamity, or benefit would have been attended with great difficulty by sea and land expense; but it might have been a blessing to souls and your own. I hope your light affliction I call it so; according to our — St. Paul, yet it may be serious and very harmful. I had myself pain in my Jaw my good teeth fail Lord give me patience in my bowelles! I may say: but Lord thou wilt have my heart. Western Conference stationed 32 increase of numbers 4552 — increase of numbers 2543 — preachers in the Conference.

Hitherto great peace, serious and pleasing prosperity in the Body prevails. [In] Charleston we have the offer of both Mr. Hammet's churches, and two of our own—one 80 and 40 feet the other 60 and 40. And are anticipate building a new Brick [one] 84—64 and to fill the whole every Sabbath Day. My Brother there can be no doubt but you have found the excellent way, if not the most excellent. We must exercise patience, when our younger Brethren want to push away our feet. I feel unspeakable pleasure to take away my feet from the Chair of Presidency in all our Conferences. I rejoice to see it better filled, and with more honor. We must learn to rise, shine, decline, and set with Dignity. It has been the weakness of some great good men in church and state, not always to know when to step down a Little, and stoop, [stop]. As to what is written in the History of Methodism I am very Little moved thereby. I am happy that a man that has [learned] my life so closely can not charge me with open sins nor covetousness, and seeking places of Honor and profit among men. The Publication of my Journal with one note on Mr. Thomas White was taken away; will give a general Statement of the whole If my Friends say do it, it is done already in the hands of Bishop Mc [Kendree]. I gave him in writing the whole matter. With you and me, the writer knew but in part; but we knew the whole of all those matters—

If your complaint is Gravel it is serious, Parsley is good water Milk — seed Tea. I thank you for both your Letters.—in one to all the Family and all Friends. One good thing is our Town — as they have receive the Gospel. We have Ten Town Stations in the South Conference. — for Building houses, and attending Campmeetings, Deist and the most diabolical feel the power of Truth. Let us hold on a Little longer and we shall see the world and the continent all aflame. The British above all people, for the Bible Society and sending out Missionaries. It is said Bishop Coke collected for the Missionary work himself 5000 pounds. Last year we do little or not anything.

I am as heretofore yours,

F. Asbury

Feb 1, 1813

New River near New Bern N.C.

Respected Brother,

Great Grace! Great Labours! Great patience attend us in our afflictions in church and state, and our own bodies and minds. I respect your care for my body, and mind, my spiritual and eternal welfare. Since our General Conference, we have had great union, order in all our Annual Conferences. I rejoice in the good account you give of the District. I had thought the Brethren in the York Conference excelled in respect [to] me. I blame not anything, I blamed not anything, but the Electioneering spirit, and the part taken at General Conference harranging the members from other Conferences from house to house and some unkind speeches upon young and unmarried men, which you know have always borne [the] burden and heat of the day, in the extremities. I point you — to one— a young man from the state of Maryland by the name of Freeborn Garrettson that helped us greatly in the Lord for many years here — I send. I rejoiced to hear him say with his pen. "I think but a small[thing] to leave the transitory things of Earth if for six or twelve months at a time [to] serve in the good cause."

Tis nobly wrote. I would recommend you to take a journey with our President and help him for a year by travelling 5000 miles; and meeting 10 Conferences. I have been lame near a month beneath the use of crutches; lifted from my chair to my bed, to the congregations, into the Ferry boat, in this state we have travelled 300 miles. I have applied 4 Blisters to my feet. All I write or speak on Episcopacy is not for myself nor a man, but the Constitution and well being of the missionary, Apostolic Church of God in America in about 45 years the Daughter hath overgrown the mother in Europe of 70 years of age. With all the D.D.s and commentators. It is the Lord's work Give him the glory. In the Ohio, Tennessee and South Carolina Conference total increase 18000 and so many men the most Capitol. Been absent at General Conference, we might have had thousands more. Camp meeting, oh campmeeting. There was no blame attached to us that Br. Bangs was out of place, could he have married in time he would have gone as well as Thomas Birch. We meant to accommodate Br. Bangs, his wife, his friends, and the Connection. "Weighty Council", yes of our own appointment, to advise, but not to govern the impartial Superintendents. Neither would we wish or force men to serve as *presiding Elders* that have voted against the right of appointment in the Episcopacy. As to church history I can depend upon none but the new testament; all the Churches upon Earth have corrupted their ways. Locality *Episcopal* and *Presbyterian* is all alike to me. We have taken the ground that was immediately deserted upon the Death of the Apostles. Most men we have lost hitherto in my opinion has strengthened the connection, and a part is more than the whole if such [men] would destroy, or weaken our Connection. Recollect, my Brother, there is six Constitutional Days for Conference and our President has a right to adjourn the Conference; and men that let themselves be *displeased* will be *displeased* and we cannot indulge an uneasy Conference in their raising difficulties.

My dear Garrettson hear with me I only wrote just to sound you a little. I am satisfied with your concessions. Your friend, you know, or ought to know, write not for his poor self, he is mortal, as well as you, in the 52 of his ministry, in the 42 of his mission, the 60 of his age, he has received from the Mother Conference a most anticipating Letter from Dr. Coke anticipating a warm salutation to visit

his native Land, this he may do should the seas grow calm. Nor did he feel so well, when some of his Elder Brethren in General Conference doubt his sincerity as all reported he was a chief agent in transferring forward the Memorial from Tennessee.

I am most heartily yours,

F. Asbury

**Change in Subscription Rates**  
**Effective January 1, 2000**

Within the United States

One year subscription	\$20.00
Two year subscription	\$30.00
Four year subscription	\$50.00
Student rate (one year)	\$10.00

Outside the United States

One year subscription	\$22.00 (U.S.)
Two year subscription	\$34.00 (U.S.)
Four year subscription	\$56.00 (U.S.)
Student rate (one year)	\$12.00 (U.S.)

*Students, please enclose a photocopy of your student i.d. or other appropriate identification.*