

fathers. And in retracing that path, our best guide is the example set by men of the quality and caliber of the early circuit riders of Methodism. These were, as I have said, plain men, but in their minds were the wisdom of the ages and in their souls, the virtues of civilized men. They believed in truth, and pursued it with resolution and zeal, often at a personal sacrifice they were happy to make. They devoted their lives to spiritual ideals, turning their eyes away from all that was vain, cheap and artificial in life. They were pious men, with an abiding reverence in their hearts for their families, their church and their country. They loved their neighbor in the manner they were taught by the Savior whose doctrines they proclaimed and whose teachings they followed. And finally, they did what the Scriptures say the Lord requires of men: "To do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with thy God."

I hope that no one here has concluded that I have a reactionary mind that resents the present and has no faith in the future. I know that we have made great strides of progress, in thought and learning as well as in material advancement, in the years which have intervened since the early Methodists were laying the foundation of our church.

Incidentally, the Christmas conference at which sixty preachers met in the meeting house in Lovely Lane, Baltimore, to create a separate Methodist Church in America, occurred just three years before our statesmen forefathers—Washington, Hamilton, Madison, Franklin, Morris, Randolph, Mason and the others—gathered in Philadelphia to frame the Constitution of the United States of America. In breadth of vision and boldness of purpose, there was a similarity between the men in attendance at the two conventions.

But back to the point—and as I was about to say—in progress there is always the danger of losing sight of fundamentals. This I am afraid we have done. And this is the reason I say that we can best dispel the cares of the present and the anxieties of the future if we turn to the precept and example of men like the early Methodist circuit riders.