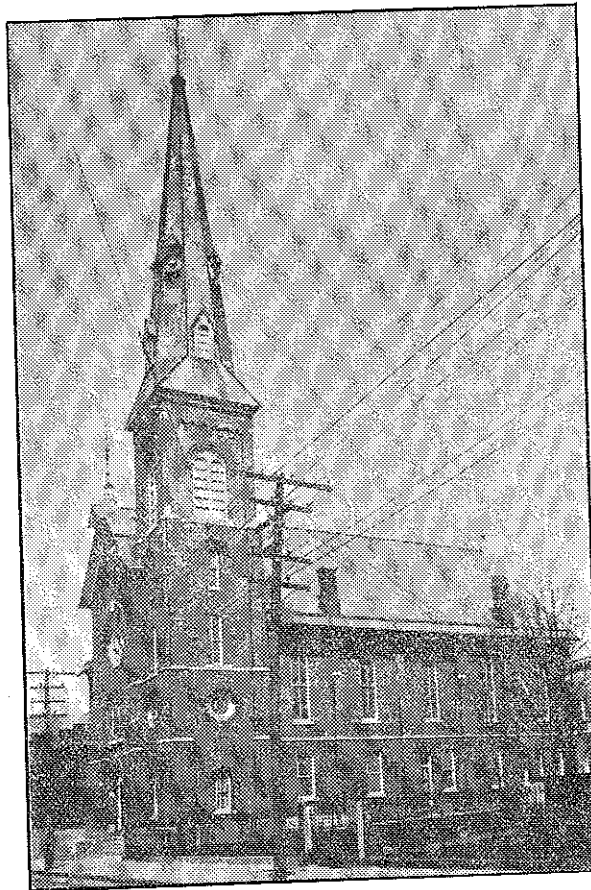


MINUTES
 OF THE
 ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH SESSION
 OF THE
Baltimore Annual Conference
 OF THE
Methodist Episcopal Church



Centre Street Church
 Cumberland, Md., April 1 to 7, 1914.

BISHOP JOSEPH F. BERRY,
FRANK G. PORTER,
JOSEPH DAWSON,

----- **PRESIDENT**
 ----- **SECRETARY**
 ----- **CONFERENCE HOST**

BALTIMORE:
 THE METHODIST
 227-229 HOLLIDAY STREET

Page.

and Prohibition. 90

League..... 91

Church..... 92

Religion..... 93

Board..... 93

e..... 95

Committees—Financial

Special:

Report..... 96

1.....104

Aid Society.....111

Fund of Preach-

.....112

Education Fund.114

Baltimore Con-

.....116

and Incorporation..117

History.....120

Relations and Church

.....121

College and Carnegie

.....122

Chairs..... 73

Conference..... 8

Dead..... 2

ference..... 25

Election of..... 30

son, Congratula-

..... 48

1, Protest.....48-50

ointments..... 59

mittees..... 23

port..... 74

meral.....125

ty Preachers..... 122

.....61-62

Report..... 76

actory..... 18

.....53-73

BISHOP THOMAS BOWMAN.

In the wide range of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it may be questioned if any name found therein called forth more of love, reverence and sincere appreciation than that of Thomas Bowman.

"None knew him but to love him,
None named him but to praise."

And this high estimate of his character and service became the more widespread and pronounced, as the snows of advancing years whitened his brow, bespoke the purity of his life, and illustrated his fellowship with God.

He was born near Berwick, Columbia County, Pennsylvania, July 15, 1817, and deceased at the home of his daughter, Mrs. B. D. Caldwell, East Orange, New Jersey, March 3, 1914, in the ninety-seventh year of his age. His parents were John and Sarah Bowman; devout, deserving Methodists of the earlier times, and his grandfather, Thomas Bowman, whose name he bore, was one of the earliest pioneer preachers sent out by Francis Asbury. Bishop Bowman was of German stock. His great grandfather, Christopher Bauman, as the name was originally spelled, emigrated to America about the year 1754, and settled in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. There were several branches of that family in this county, and it is an interesting fact that from these different families there sprang three Bishops by the same name, in three different denominations, and all holding that high position about the same time, namely, Samuel Bowman, Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania; Thomas Bowman, Bishop of the Evangelical Church, resident of Pennsylvania, and "our own" Thomas Bowman, Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was prepared for college at Wilbraham Academy, Mass., and Cazenovia Seminary, New York, which latter place on January 1, 1833, "his heart was strangely warmed," and he testified through the Spirit to the pardon of sin, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In 1835 he entered, and in 1837 graduated from Dickinson College, with the honors of his class, receiving the degree of A. B., and, in 1840, also from his alma mater, that of A. M. Devoting himself to the study of the law for a year, God called him to preach the Gospel of His Divine Son, and at the session of the Baltimore Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held at Caroline Street Church, East Baltimore Station, March, 1838, Bishop Thomas A. Morris presiding, and in association with Stephen Samuel and Stephen Asbury Roszel, Thomas Sewell, John Lanahan, Matthew A. Turner and others, seventeen in all, he was received on trial in the traveling connection, and appointed to Beaver Meadow Circuit. From 1840 to 1843 he taught in the preparatory school of Dickinson College, and for the five years following, on account of impaired health, took the superannuated relation. The forty-eight years of service following the resumption of his active work divides into nearly two equal periods of twenty-four years each, the first of which, from 1848 to 1872, was spent in the educational work of the church, and the second, as a General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Ten years of the earlier period were given to Williamsport Dickinson Seminary, and fourteen to the Indiana Asbury University, now known as DePauw University, at Greencastle, Indiana. Whilst thus engaged he was chosen chaplain of the United States Senate, and served as such in the years 1864 and 1865. He became the friend of President Lincoln and warned him of the plots against his life. In the year 1864 also he was sent as fraternal mes-

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senger to the British Wesleyan Conference in company with Bishop E. S. Janes. His work at the DePauw University was foundational and comprehensive. The East College Building, containing Meharry Hall, erected during his presidency, and dedicated after his election to the Episcopacy, is a monument to his administration, and the adoption of coeducation as an organic feature of the university work, which he urged, he frequently alluded to, with pleasure and pride.

In 1853 Ohio Wesleyan University conferred upon him the degree of D. D., and in 1872, that of LL. D.

In 1872, at the General Conference held at Brooklyn, New York, he was elected a General Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the first ballot, receiving two hundred and ninety-three votes out of four hundred and eight cast, and leading all others then elected to the General Superintendency in a class composed of, in the order named, William L. Harris, Randolph S. Foster, Isaac W. Wiley, Stephen M. Merrill, Edward G. Andrews, Gilbert Haven and Jesse T. Peck. The first of his colleagues chosen to this high office, he is the last to follow them to the presence of the King, eternal, immortal, invisible.

A volume would be required to narrate his episcopal service. He lived in the days of the "General Superintendency," and during his active service in the episcopal office held all the Conferences in the United States, then in existence; visiting also in the administration of his office, Europe, India, China, Japan and Mexico.

During his tenure of the episcopal office he dedicated over one thousand churches. Affable, endearing, wise, godly, his path was as "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

His life dates from the days of Asbury and McKendree, and his service was largely standardized by the principles and customs of the fathers. He lived to see a church, which had been as a grain of mustard seed, become a tree in whose branches the nations of the world found rest and security, and which was called to face problems and conditions ne'er dreamed of in the philosophy of the founders of Methodism. But in all the intricate and perplexing questions which arose, he was ever the same—serene, loving, broad, confident, a statesman of large magnitude and a prophet and prince in Israel.

At the General Conference of 1896, upon the retirement of Bishop Foster and himself from the effective relation, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: "That we record our gratitude to God for the extraordinary services rendered by these venerated and beloved servants of the church, in the various capacities which they filled prior to their election to the Episcopacy, and particularly for the distinguished ability with which they have filled the office of General Superintendent for nearly a quarter of a century; for the purity of their characters and lives, the sweetness of their spirit, and the fidelity to the interests of the church which has uniformly characterized their official lives and administration."

At the session of the Baltimore Annual Conference of 1906 a copy of the following telegram, addressed to Bishop Fowler, who had been appointed to preside over the Conference, but was unable to be present (Bishop Wilson taking his place), was received: "Sorry I can't be with you. Best love to you and the Conference.—Thomas Bowman." The secretary was requested to make a suitable reply, and on motion of W. M. Ferguson, the name of Thomas Bowman was placed upon the roll of the Conference as an honorary member.

As this action was approved, we believe by Bishop Bowman, and the General Conference of 1912 decided "that election to the Episcopal

office does not terminate membership in an Annual Conference," may we not assume that he was at his decease a member of the Conference to which he was admitted on trial in 1838, and, like Elijah—who ere his ascension, returned to the place where his work began—passed from membership in the Conference, where his ministry began, to the General Assembly and Church of the First Born, which are written in heaven?

Bishop Bowman was married in 1842 to Matilda Hartman, of York, Pennsylvania. Eleven children blessed the union, of whom seven—Mrs. B. D. Caldwell, Mrs. George P. Smith, Theodore G., Charles, Thomas M., F. R., and C. B. Bowman survive. A wonderful teacher, alert, clear and comprehensive; a model disciplinarian, firm but kind and brotherly; a presiding officer, whether in Annual or General Conference, that commanded the respect of all, both by his knowledge of parliamentary law and his genial and affable manners; a lover of the spirit rather than of the letter; a great preacher, in the inspiration which filled him and the fervor that sent home the word; a winning voice, a tender love, a pathos drawn from the heart of the Master; he was great in his simplicity and simple in his greatness.

In the "Christian Advocate" of March 12, 1914, we read:

"Only a few days before he closed his eyes upon this world he turned to his nurse and asked, 'Have you given your heart to Christ?' When she assured him that she had, he inquired, 'And has He received you?' Obtaining an affirmative response, he continued, 'Are you sure? This is a very important matter.' Thus to the very end Thomas Bowman made full proof of his ministry.

"The little children in the city where he spent his last days are weeping for loss of him—the fine old gentleman with the beautiful face and the white hair, who always carried candies in his pocket for his numerous little friends, and whose playfulness exercised a charm over their hearts. So he lived as well as preached his Master's gospel of love, and has entered into the reward promised by our Lord: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'"

Services in commemoration of "his departure to be with Christ" were held at Meharry Hall, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, March 6, 1914, in charge of Rev. George R. Grose, D. D., president of DePauw University. Bishop John H. Vincent, at the request of Bishop Bowman, delivered the address of the occasion, and Bishops W. F. Anderson, Theodore S. Henderson and David H. Moore participated in the services. Interment in Forest Hill Cemetery, where rest the remains of his beloved wife and their deceased children.

Business in Greencastle was closed during the funeral services, and Meharry Hall was filled to overflowing by the relatives and many friends of the departed, joining in the last tribute to the loved and honored one.

"I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

C. HERBERT RICHARDSON

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