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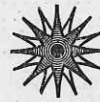
FIFTIETH SESSION

OF THE

Wilmington Annual Conference

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church



WESLEY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

DOVER, DEL.

MARCH 20-25, 1918

BISHOP FRANK M. BRISTOL	President
DISSTON W. JACOBS	Secretary
WALTER E. GUNBY	Conference Host

J. W. Stowell Printing Company
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bright and attractive children. He made a noble fight, just like the splendid man that he was in all his work for God, but on June 17, 1917, the Master came and said unto him "Thou has been faithful, come." Harry Westerfield stepped into the chariot and went home. Funeral services were in charge of his pastor, Brother F. X. Moore, assisted by a goodly number of the brethren of the ministry and friends from every charge he had served. His body was laid to rest in the beautiful cemetery at Hopewell, among the hills of Cecil County, Maryland, to await the final call.

"Servant of God well done!
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle's fought, the race is run,
Enter thy Master's joy."

ASBURY BURKE.

Asbury Burke came into this world Feb. 3rd, 1851, at Magnolia, Del. and went out of it Sept. 4th, 1917, 8.45 p. m., at Newport, Del. He stayed here 66 years 6 months and 1 day. I should if I could number the hours and the minutes for it is upon these rather than upon the months and years that the emphasis belongs in any life that has or would succeed. We live by the swing of the pendulum rather than by the swing of the sun.

Into the period covered by the life of Bro. Burke he put much of energy, sunshine, hope, heaven. The burdens of men are not so heavy, the clouds so dark, nor the tears so hot. The path over which barefooted people travel is not so thorny, nor the bruises of little feet so feverish, since Bro. Burke lived and wrought. He scattered light and cheer wherever he went. His handshake had the heating of an electric shock. His face radiated the springtime with its birds and flowers. His voice was attuned to the dominant chord of every heart in need and his presence was a call to look to the sunrise.

Jesus, the Master Spirit, said, "because I live ye shall live also." It may be truly said of Bro. Burke that because he lived multitudes heard the resurrection voice and all who were associated with him lived a broader, fuller life. His worth to the world cannot be measured by the coin of the Caesars, but by the joy of the angels who always behold the face of the Lamb.

The secret of every radiant, inspirational life, is a matter of moment to us all whose faces are turned to the East. It is our purpose to try to find and to plot, at least, some springs of this abounding life.

It is true of all of us that what we have and what we are began with our inheritance. Our first debt is to those before and above us. What we are is the result of the use or the abuse of what came to us in our inheritance.

Bro. Burke had a goodly heritage in his birth—he was indeed well born. William Burke, his father, and Mary Reynolds Burke, his mother, were royal people. They were not rich in this world's treasure but they

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were rich in the coin of the Kingdom. They were "Israelites indeed." They believed in God and the Bible as His revelation, and they lived the letter of the Decalogue and the Spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. Added to that they were genuine Methodists, believing in the doctrine and polity of the Methodist Church as it was in their day. Father Burke was a class leader for many years and by his sweet spirit and gracious air he greatly endeared himself to his class.

Asbury was the youngest of eleven children—the child of the strong and mellow years of the parents lives, and to a striking degree bodied forth the beautiful characteristics of both father and mother. To be born of such parents and to grow to maturity in a home where the Bible has its proper place, where the voice of prayer and praise ascends morning and evening from the family altar and in a rural community where the allurements to vice are at a minimum, is a rare heritage indeed.

After he reached manhood Bro. Burke went to Wilmington and engaged in business, where his fidelity, energy and pleasing manner quickly started him on the road to a successful business career. The day that he was 21 years of age he was married by the Rev. J. E. Bryan to Miss Margaret Ackerman of Ithaca, New York. This was another step in which he was guided by the hand of the All-Father, who had larger spheres to open before him. Mrs. Burke, who survives her lamented husband, was an helpmeet indeed and in the final adjustment she will share with him the glory that is to come to the Soul winner. The wife often determines whether or not the husband shall respond to the Call of God and having accepted the call and entered upon the work, she can say whether he shall succeed or fail. Sister Burke's counsel and influence were always upon the right side and his association with her and her devotion to the work of her husband is another secret of the great success that attended Bro. Burke's ministry. When Bro. Burke in his young manhood moved to Wilmington he associated himself with the old mother church—Asbury, and this was another deciding and inspiring factor in his life and ministry. In those days old Asbury was a perennial blaze of glory, where all the churches of this region lighted their revival torches. To be associated with Asbury Church was to live in an atmosphere surcharged with spiritual light and power. Bro. Burke yielded to these gracious influences and was blessedly converted under the ministry of the sainted Enoch Stubbs. Here we come upon the main source of that river of life and healing which Bro. Burke's life became from that time. He was recreated, born again, not merely reformed, or renewed, but made a "new creature in Christ Jesus." That is the fundamental secret of all real success in the ministry. It is the beginning of the ministry. Education, culture, association, experience, can help but can't substitute this. Preachers are not made but born of both first and second birth. The ministry is not a profession but a possession. Not of the natural but of the supernatural man. An experience, a call, a commission is the divine order for the making of a minister of the gospel.

After his conversion Bro. Burke entered upon Christian work with great zeal and to those in charge it soon became apparent that his gifts, grace and usefulness demanded a wider range and he was licensed to preach by the Asbury Quarterly Conference, Jan. 30th, 1886, the Rev.

Charles Hill, Presiding Elder, and the Rev. J. E. Bryan, Pastor. At the following session of the Annual Conference Bro. Burke was admitted into the Conference on probation and assigned to Elk Neck Circuit. He was ordained Deacon and Elder in due time. The roll of his appointments is as follows: Elk Neck, Bethel and Glasgow, Crapo, East New Market, Brandywine, Onancock, St. Peter's, Frankford, Wesley, Perryville, Cape Charles, Nassau, Bethel and Summit, North East and Newport.

In his preaching Bro. Burke was orthodox and earnest. He didn't preach theories, doubts and uncertainties, but the great verities—sin, repentance, regeneration, witness of spirit, prayer, works, heaven, hell. These were the master themes that set him on fire and with which he burned his way into the hearts and transformed the lives of men. He was intensely evangelistic in his preaching, and great revivals came to all his charges. His fine native qualities, purified, enlarged and polished by divine grace gave him a winning personality and made him exceedingly popular everywhere.

Bro. Burke was assigned to Newport in the spring of 1916 and was on the second year of a most happy and successful pastorate. On the 4th of last July he began to suffer a pain in the back of his neck and in a few days a most malignant carbuncle had developed. All that could be done was done but the poison permeated his whole system and whilst he lingered for two months it was a constant drift toward the breakers upon which his normally strong body broke Sept. 4th and released its great animating spirit. Bro. Burke found that the Christ whom he preached to others in times of stress and storm was his all sufficient portion in sickness and death. He assured all who were privileged to be at his bedside that all was well.

A beautiful Sunday morning a few days before he went away, he was looking out upon nature and said to his devoted wife, who was ever at his bedside, "this would be a beautiful day to go to heaven. I love you all and should like to stay with you but I am weary and want to go to heaven." His mind seemed perfectly clear to the end and three or four minutes before he fell asleep he said to the loved ones about him, "Good bye I am going home." Thus in his death was verified the assurance of a peaceful end for the perfect and upright man. The ministry, the church, the world, are poorer for his going but we shall have him again.

"Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet.
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul."

In the presence of a vast throng the funeral services were held on the evening of Sept. 7th in Newport Church and the next day the body was laid to rest in the historic Barratt Chapel Cemetery.

W. F. CORKRAN.