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FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION

HELD IN

**Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church**

**LAUREL, DELAWARE**

**March 24-29, 1915.**

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## MEMOIRS

Rev. George W. Burke.

Rev. George W. Burke, an honored veteran, was born near Seaford, Del., March 17th, 1836, and "fell on sleep" at his home in Smyrna, Del., April 30th, 1914, after spending 42 years in the active ranks. Eight years ago, because of a nervous breakdown, he retired from the exacting duties of the pastorate and moved to Smyrna to spend the eventide of life.

His parents, William Burke and Mary Reynolds, were devout Methodists, and the boy was born in a home pervaded with a spiritual atmosphere. At an early age he sought the Lord and rejoiced in a conscious salvation. His scholastic training was confined to the public schools and private instruction; yet by close application and self improvement he laid the foundations of a good education and became an excellent English scholar, especially excelling in mathematics.

For 10 years he taught in the public schools of Delaware and Maryland, but in the spring of 1865, while principal of the high school at St. Michaels, Md., he yielded to the call to enter the ranks of the itinerancy, and applied to the Philadelphia Conference for admission on trial. Among his classmates was Bishop Thomas B. Neely. He was ordained Deacon by Bishop Levi Scott in 1867, and Elder by Bishop Matthew Simpson at the first session of the Wilmington Conference in 1869.

As a man, Brother Burke was gentle, sensitive and sympathetic, swift to carry messages of comfort to sorrowing hearts. He was "God's good man" and nourished his spiritual life by prayerfully reading the Word. He read the New Testament through one hundred and three times and the Old Testament, about fifty times. With Job he could say, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." As a preacher he was careful in preparation; his sermons were scriptural, clear and convincing, and at times he preached with compelling eloquence. But he was so modest and unassuming that he did not reveal his true worth to but a small inner circle. His ministry was fruitful and many of the charges he served were blest with revivals. He left in his pastorates a memory of faithful service; not less than twelve young men, some of whom have become prominent ministers, are his sons in the Gospel.

The writer of this memoir was licensed to exhort by him and wishes to make grateful acknowledgment for the help and encouragement received in that formative period. He was ever seeking to inspire young people to noble endeavor and to help them discover themselves; thus his influence will be projected through the coming years.

His pastoral record is as follows: Georgetown, 1865; Frankford, 1866-

7; Milton, 68; Lewes, 69-70; Beckwith, 71-2; Berlin, 73-4; Delmar, 75; Christiana, 76-7; Kent Island, 78-9; Marydel, 80-1; Hillsboro, 82-3; Harrington, 84-5; Federalsburg, 86-7; Onancock, 89-91; Lincoln, 92; Millington, 93-5; St. Michaels, 96-8; Chester-Bethel, 99-01; Marshallton, 02-4; Hockessin, 05-6.

Brother Burke did not serve the easy charges; most of his ministry was on circuits where his salary was small and the work hard, but this faithful minister accepted his appointments as of the Lord, and went cheerfully to the work assigned him.

He was twice married; his first wife was Miss Nellie Patterson See of Hillsboro, Md., a devout and cultured lady, who, the few years she lived, made him a true help-meet. Eight children were born of this union, but only three survive: Rev. Edward W. Burke, an honored member of the Philadelphia Conference, Mrs. Nellie Lambert of Easton, Md., and George W. Burke of South Bend, Indiana.

In 1876 he was wedded to Miss Laura Wood of Salisbury, Md., an elect lady, who for 38 years walked by his side, sharing with him the trials and triumphs of the itinerancy, and is now sorely smitten by the blow which has fallen upon her. Three children were born of this union, but only one survives, Mary Manse Burke, who recently was wedded to Rev. J. Wallace Green, a Baptist Minister.

Our ascended friend has one brother in the Wilmington Conference, Rev. Asbury Burke, who keenly feels the loss sustained, but is comforted in the thought of reunion beyond the river. Bro. Burke was confined to his bed only three weeks when the messenger summoned him to his heavenly home. During the years of retirement and physical weakness he was abundantly sustained by divine grace. He fought a good fight, he kept the faith and has gone to receive his crown.

The funeral services were conducted in Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, Smyrna, by the Pastor, Rev. C. W. Prettyman, assisted by the District Superintendent, Dr. Robert Watt, Revs. R. H. Adams, W. L. S. Murray, C. T. Wyatt, J. F. Anderson, and George R. Neese. The tenement of clay was then taken to Barratt's Chapel for interment, where his kindred sleep, to await the resurrection of the just.

We invoke the blessing of God upon the widow, children and brother, as they sit in the shadows of bereavement.

CLINTON T. WYATT.

Rev. Richard Hughlett Adams.

What wondrous possibilities are wrapped in the birth of a child! When some giant ship glides down the ways to her first baptism the bands play and the cheering thousands bid her "God speed." No ship ever launched, however, has the latent potentialities for great success or gigantic failure that inhere in the mysterious launching of a new human soul