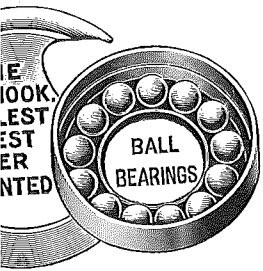


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OFFICIAL JOURNAL

MINUTES
OF THE
NEW YORK EAST CONFERENCE
OF THE
Methodist Episcopal Church

HELD AT
JANES METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Borough of Brooklyn, New York
MARCH 30 TO APRIL 6, 1898

FIFTIETH SESSION

CALVIN B. FORD

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1898

The funeral services were conducted at his late residence in Brooklyn, N. Y., by his pastor, the Rev. Herbert Welch. The Rev. George Taylor, a personal friend of the deceased for more than fifty years, delivered the farewell address. Among others present were members of a committee representing the New York Preachers' Meeting, of which Brother Tibbals had been a member. Subsequently a sketch concerning his lifework was read and adopted by said association. His remains were conveyed to Greenwood Cemetery for interment there to await the radiant light of the resurrection morning.

Though, alas, we shall see his familiar face no more, we "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

"What is death
To him who meets it with an upright heart?
A quiet haven, where his shattered bark
Harbor secures, till the rough storm is past.
Perhaps a passage overhung with clouds
But at its entrance; a few leagues beyond
Opening to kinder skies and milder suns,
And seas pacific as the soul that seeks them."

Brother, comrade, friend, hail and farewell.



Rev. William Alexander Dickson.

BY F. WATSON HANNAN.

The Rev. William Alexander Dickson was born at Gola Scolstown, County Monaghan, Ireland, on September 15, 1857.

He was the second son of William and Isabella Dickson, who besides him had four other children, three sons and one daughter.

He came of that peasant stock that has ever given to the world its best men and

women. His heart. His brooks sang little of her!

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women. His parents were farmers ; so our brother began his life near to nature's heart. His cradle was the green field, his canopy the blue sky, and the birds and brooks sang his lullabies. He was ever passionately fond of nature, and very little of her varied life and beauty escaped his keen appreciative notice.

Having younger brothers and a sister, he very early learned that unselfish love and consideration for the rights and feelings of others, especially of those who were in any way committed to his care, which characterized him all through his life. He was marked by a large-hearted brotherliness that belongs to few men.

He was, as he himself puts it, "converted to God" on April 10, 1874. He joined the Irish Conference in 1881, and was ordained in Dublin by the Rev. Richard Roberts in 1886. On February 2, 1888, he was married to Miss Mary Catherine Coghlan in the Methodist Episcopal chapel in Schull, County Cork, by the Rev. William Clark. On the 26th of the same month he with his bride sailed from Queenstown and landed in New York on March 5, 1888.

He preached several years in the Irish Conference. Long enough, indeed, to win for himself the highest place in the love and admiration of his brethren, and he came to us bringing with him testimonials of his ability and Christian character from the most distinguished men of Irish Methodism. He preached his first sermon in the New World in Andrew's Church, Brooklyn, on Sunday, March 11, 1888. He was admitted into the New York East Conference at its session in the following April and appointed to Second Street Methodist Episcopal Church, New York city.

His pastoral record is as follows: Irish Methodist Episcopal Conference, 1881-87; Second Street, New York, 1888; Oyster Bay, Long Island, 1889-91; Bay-shore, Long Island, 1892, 1893; Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, 1894-96; Jamaica, Long Island, the early part of 1897. Then, after a few months of patient sickness, during which that large, unselfish nature was chastened to a still higher purity and trust, God took him and appointed him to the Church of the Firstborn, which is without fault before the throne of God. There is no time limit there, and when we are transferred by promotion to the eternal kingdom we shall find him still in that Church exercising the tireless energies of the transfigured life under the full splendor of eternal day.

To give even a brief characterization of so noble and true a life is no easy task, for the multitude of details, all of which seem so important, that were crowded into that short busy life makes it difficult to lift out of them the great principles which were ever so clearly defined to himself; and besides, standing as near to him as we do, we cannot see that large outline of his life which passes out of sight in all directions, so that we need to stand off a little in time to correctly see his true proportions, the great principles for which he stood, and be able to give him his proper place among the brethren in Christ. But no one could be long in his company without feeling the touch of a large soul and a tender heart. So genuinely manly was he that he could tolerate nothing unmanly in others.

From the day he entered our Conference till his death he steadily grew in the esteem and love of his brethren. Those who only saw him at a distance admired him, but those who knew him best loved and trusted him most. It did not require distance to lend enchantment to him.

As an intellectual and literary man he was of no mean ability; and if we might not call him a great scholar in the technical sense, we can truly say that his range of information was marvelously wide. He had a prodigious capacity for work, a remarkable memory, and an unusual power and aptness of applying the truths gathered from his vast range of reading to practical life. His library was not uncommonly large, but it was uncommonly well selected and marked. He bought no books for the binding and kept none for ornament. He was personally acquainted with all his books, and if you mentioned any subject to him that

you would like to look up, immediately he would lay before you a half dozen or more books open at the chapter and page you desired.

Words flowed from his facile pen with the same grace and beauty with which they fell from his lips. He wrote not a little on theological and literary subjects for various Methodist papers and periodicals, and I believe no article that he ever sent to an editor was declined. He contributed for six years to our *Sunday School Journal* and Lesson Helps illustrations which were very highly appreciated and valued by both teachers and pupils.

When he died he was bringing toward completion a very important work, the history of American Methodism from 1844 down to the present. His style as a writer was clear, concise, suggestive, and he wrote with the ease and confidence of one who had a thorough grasp of the subject which he treated.

As a preacher he would not be called oratorical in the popular sense of oratory. His style, as in writing, was simple, clear, direct. He was never grandiloquent, and he rigidly excluded both from his sermons and the conduct of his meetings anything that savored of the sensational. If true oratory means the power to go straight to the hearts of his hearers, to awaken their consciences, and to leave indelible impressions on their minds, he was an orator; for we have few among us who as preachers are more persuasive and helpful than he. While he kept abreast with the recent literature of biblical criticism he never disturbed the minds of his congregation with doubts which they might probably never know except they heard them from the pulpit. His ordinary themes were the great fundamentals of the Gospel upon which there is comparatively little disagreement. He ever believed that it was wiser and better to give to his people great living truths that would help tried and tempted men, sorrow-stricken and discouraged women, build the saints up in the most holy faith, and lead sinners to Jesus Christ, than to trouble his people about the disputes and wordy wars that opposing critics had with one another on mooted questions. He was a conservative in theology, Methodist polity, and biblical criticism, but not an ultra conservative. He welcomed every new truth, but it had to furnish credentials that it was a truth before he accepted it and incorporated it into his creed. He loved our Church, its institutions, polity, and doctrines, and he attested that love by an undying loyalty to them. He feared only God and hated only sin; and the way this Boanerges delivered God's pronouncements on sin and the judgment to come, the way he exalted righteousness and set forth the love of God, left no doubt in the minds of his hearers, whether they agreed with him or not, that a prophet had been among them.

As a pastor he approximated more nearly the ideal than most men do. He carried the weight of his people's sorrows upon his own heart. His people would open to him their hearts in spite of themselves. He shepherded his flock, fed, folded, guided, and protected them. There was no enterprise or interest of his church that did not feel the pressure of his guiding hand and the warmth of his anxious, loving heart. He was a benediction in the homes of sorrow, a wise counselor to those in perplexity, and a wellspring of mirth in the homes of joy. He was a consummate organizer and prolific in devices that would bring things to pass. He ever kept his church in the eye of the people, but always by the most legitimate and commendable means. No man could well give a fuller proof of his ministry than did our brother through the few busy years that God could spare him from heaven.

This memoir would not be complete without a brief word about his domestic life. If in a life so well rounded and proportioned any one part seemed more charming than another certainly this was the one. He was never more at his best than in his home. He loved his children with the devotion of a mother, and the tender and thoughtful consideration for all about him made his home a delight to all who had the good fortune to share its hospitality. His manner was charming,

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and while his conversation scintillated with the wit and humor characteristic of his nationality, it was ever chaste; and while his nature was as rollicking and playful as a child's, yet withal it preserved the dignity and grace of an old country gentleman. He was a great lover of people, and was ever ready to go out of his way to do them a deed of kindness or to make them happy. He was himself very susceptible to any show of kindness, and his capacity for gratitude was remarkable. He loved his friends with a passionate tenderness, and in the transparency of his manly life there was no suggestion of duplicity and no room for subtle deceit.

He might have lived longer if he had lived less. But to him life consisted in deeds, thoughts, words, rather than in years. Perhaps as God sees it he lived in consecrated effort man's full allotted time. We would have spared him for many years to serve the Church and see his family, to which he was so devoted, grow up, but it was otherwise ordered; and we submit in loving trust to the decrees of Him who doeth all things well. He died as beautifully as he lived, and could we have stood at his bedside when God took him we might gently fold his hands and say:

"As peaceful as the rose
That fades at eve, e'er autumn's chill had come
To blast its beauty rare: thus at the close
Of this bright day he died, no more to bloom
In earth's fair garden, but in sweet repose
He dwells in brighter realms, his wished-for home.

"Our cherished friend is dead;
And yet how far removed from death is he!
'Tis true, the spark of spirit life has fled—
Has burst its prison walls, but now is free
To roam the bright Elysian fields; instead
Of earth he shares God's vast eternity."