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MINUTES

—OF THE—

NINETY-NINTH SESSION

—OF THE—

Baltimore Annual Conference,

—OF THE—

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

—HELD AT—

WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA.

MARCH 7-12, 1883.

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1883.

**Question XVI. What Local Deacons have been elected Elders?**

None.

**Question XVII. What Local Deacons have been ordained Elders?**

None.

**Question XVIII. Who are the Supernumerary Preachers?**

L. F. Morgan, S. A. Wilson, C. A. Reid, J. H. Brown, C. H. Mytinger, E. E. Shipley, G. G. Markham, L. D. Herron, S. H. Cummings, Geo. W. Feelemyer, Thos. Myers, J. D. Moore, B. N. Wooden, J. W. Hedges—14.

**Question XIX. Who are the Superannuated Preachers?**

R. M. Lipscomb, M. Goheen, C. H. Savidge, B. H. Smith, W. C. Mullin, W. H. Pitcher, C. B. Young, Jas. Brads, Jas. Gamble, G. W. Israel, M. A. Turner, S. L. M. Conser, O. P. Wirgman, M. L. Hawley, A. J. Bender, J. W. Start, J. W. Cullum—17.

**Question XX. Was the character of each preacher examined?**

This was strictly attended to by calling over the names before the Conference.

**Question XXI. Have any died?**

Edward S. Fort, Thomas Guard—2.

**MEMOIRS.****REV. THOMAS GUARD.**

Rev. Thomas Guard was born in County Galway, Ireland, June 2d, 1831. He entered the ministry about the 21st year of his age. His appointments in Ireland, so far as known, were Newry Circuit, Londonderry, Dublin, Limerick, Belfast. In 1862 he went to his work, which was chiefly in Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and in 1871 came to America without expectation of remaining. Such, however, were his impressions of this country that on being invited to the pastorate of the Mt. Vernon Place Church, Baltimore, he decided to remain and make it the land of his adoption. In 1872 he took charge of that congregation, remaining until 1875, when he was transferred to the California Conference, and was appointed to the Howard Street M. E. Church, in San Francisco. During the years 1878 and '79, he filled the pulpit of the First M. E. Church, Oakland, California, when he was again, in 1880, solicited to resume his former relation as pastor of the Mt. Vernon-Place congregation, Baltimore, where he remained until his death, which occurred unexpectedly, on Sunday, October 15th, 1882, in the 52d year of his age. Good men, sorrowing that they should see his face no more, bore him to his resting-place in Greenmount Cemetery, where his brethren design to erect a monument to his memory. It is simple truth to say that two continents mourn his untimely death.

He was the eldest son of Rev. William Guard, a Methodist preacher. It is a notable fact that Mr. Guard's father was indebted for his conversion to God, to the agency of Lorenzo Dow, an eccentric American Methodist preacher, who was at that time laboring as an evangelist in Ireland.

His mother was a Miss Browning, the daughter of a clergyman of the Established Church, a lady of unusual gifts and graces, to whom the subject of this memoir was always pleased to attribute by inheritance, motherly countenance and training, whatever of intellectual bent and endowment he possessed.

What may have been his educational advantages, apart from that which he received at home, the writer has not been able to ascertain; presumably they were good.

On completing his school-days he engaged in business in the town of Cavan, but unlike many of his early associates, he did not consider his education to be complete; he ceased not to cultivate his mind by utilizing all his opportunities in constant and careful study, and after his conversion such was his Christian character and devotion to the work of the Church that the thought of his mind became clearly evident to his brethren—such talents could not be hidden. He was licensed to preach and was employed as a supply on the Newry Circuit.

From the inception of his ministry, Thomas Guard's distinguishing passion was a hunger for knowledge, and such was its intensity that his days and much of his nights, when not engaged in communicating, were spent in ceaseless endeavor to allay the all-devouring desire to secure that ability by which he might be enabled rightly to set forth the claims of the great teacher upon the minds and hearts of men.

During his ministerial probation he drilled himself in standard English divinity, and made himself thoroughly acquainted with Methodist theology, so that therein he is said to have had no superior. By this method he laid the foundation for the development of those splendid powers which so distinguished him in after years, and which even at this early period in his life began to appear.

Nor did theology alone suffice to satisfy his yearning for a comprehension of the great mysteries of mind, of nature, and of God. He explored, with painstaking tenacity of purpose, all realms of literature, and such was the character of his perceptions that the facility with which he assimilated the facts of his reading was amazing.

His memory was wonderful in its tenacity so that he seemed never to forget or lose sight of anything which he had once made his own. Not less marvellous was his power to summon the creatures of his memory to stand forth marshalled in the order in which he desired to use them.

His analytic powers were of that order before which all metaphysical difficulties seemed to melt away as the snow before the mid-day sun and the breath of spring, bringing order out of confusion, and making darkness light; as fire among stubble, so did they consume away the overgrowths of sophism and rhetorical paint by which is so often obscured and hidden away, the truths which are the free gifts of God.

But what pen can describe the splendor of his imagination—golden-winged, it seemed to soar to heights almost immeasurable—or the matchless eloquence by which the listening thousands were enchained as they sat enraptured at his feet, and by which the unseen was made to appear that which was most real and eternal. It were vain to attempt the description of those magnificent powers by which high and low, small and great, were made to bow in admiration of this splendid genius.

Thomas Guard was one of those great men with whom Ireland has so munificently endowed America, and in him she has bestowed upon her an illustrious instance of her incomparable oratorical handiwork.

As a lecturer and platform speaker he was almost unequalled. But it was in the pulpit, with the Bible open before him, as the minister of Jesus Christ, that he shone pre-eminently,

the prince of pulpit orators. Here he was without a peer: see him as reverentially, he bows before the Infinite; listen as his voice ascends to God for help; behold his awe-stricken countenance as he seems to catch the sight of Him whom he serves, and you have the secret of his strength. Thomas Guard is praying; he is not saying prayer; he is not delivering an address to the Almighty; he needs something; as the child to the father, so comes he to God; he believes in Him as near, ready to help, true to His promise; and then, as he announces his theme, behold his kindling eye, watch his radiant countenance all aglow with the white heat of the divine thought that is burning within; hark, while the lips move as touched by the coal from off the altar of God, and his imagination kindles into flame over such themes as the blessed and only Potentate, the divine government, atonement, love of Christ, heaven and hell, and having heard, you have gone away humbled or exalted, with loftier aspirations and clearer conceptions of the relations between God and man, oppressed with penitential pain, or exultant through the victory which overcometh the world.

No Methodist preacher of modern times has wielded a greater influence over Christian people of other denominations or drawn more educated non-church-goers to listen to the truths of the Gospel on the Sabbath day; nor can we ever measure the effects of his preaching until the secrets of all hearts are made known. It may well be doubted if we who are here shall ever be permitted to listen to such presentation of Gospel truth again; like some great luminary of the skies, he has flashed before our mental vision for a little while, and, too bright for earth, has passed on in his eternal orbit to accomplish the mighty mission of Him who made him what he was and is, "A chosen vessel to bear His name."

As a man, Mr. Guard endeavored to illustrate by his life among men what he taught in the pulpit—Christ, the way, the truth, the life. He was in the highest sense a gentleman, thoroughly honest toward God, himself, and his fellow-men; perfectly sincere, guileless, tender, gentle, sympathetic, generous, approachable by all. None loved his church or brethren more. Especially was he ready to show his utter unselfishness in aid of those who needed him, however humble or how much the sacrifice, and nothing was better calculated to kindle his indignation than unkindness toward them. He abhorred all cant, mere sentiment and patent phraseology, and held the study of the Word, thoughtfulness and prayer to God to be the antidote to all abnormal developments of Christian life.

A prince and a great man has fallen; the power of the Unseen has removed him from the associations and the work he loved so well. We do not number him among the dead; his chaste eloquence still lingers on our ears; the creations of his wondrous fancy still paint themselves before our vision; yea, does not the painter himself still linger among us, and by the influence of his life incite us to nobler deeds? While memory lasts we shall not forget him. He was our brother; he still is: for is not our Father his Father? The son of the King, has only gone to his inheritance. The chaplets which men wove for his brow while on earth have given place to the fadeless laurels of the skies.

Time, space, and a better limner will be needed to trace and paint a character which for true nobility and Christian manliness has had no superior presented to our observation. He has fought the good fight; he has won the throne, and the angels and the redeemed have sung their hallelujahs as the blessed and only Potentate placed the coronal of glory on his brow.

## EDWARD SEWELL FORT.

Edward Sewell Fort was born at Ellicott City, Howard Co., Md., April 26th, 1840 and died suddenly, October 10th, 1882, on Forestville Circuit, in his native State. His early life was spent at Ellicott City, where he was reared under Methodist auspices, and the foundation of his character laid in a Methodist Sunday School. At the age of nineteen he was converted under the ministry of Rev. Charles A. Reid. With his conversion came the call of God to preach the Gospel, but, like many others, he delayed obedience to it 'till later in life.

He was twice married, and as the fruit of his first marriage, one daughter remains. His name first appears on the Minutes of the Conference of 1873, at which Conference he was assigned to West Falls Circuit, where he remained three years. During his third year on that Circuit he was married to Miss Rachel C. Bell, April 20th, 1875, by his Presiding Elder, Rev. Wilford Downs. The record of his ministerial service was confined to a single decade, but in that brief period how much of suffering, self sacrifice and toil were compressed, God and himself only knew.

He believed firmly in the doctrines and discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church. When he kneeled at her altar and consecrated himself to God and his work, he kept back no part of the price, "but first gave *himself* unto the Lord and unto us by the will of God." He was, therefore, ready for whatever work his Church and his Master had for him to do. This, to him, meant preaching the Gospel, "in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses—as unknown and yet well known; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

Through all his ministry his work was difficult and unremunerative, yet he went cheerfully and uncomplainingly, thinking, perhaps, least of all of his support, his highest joy being the will of his Father on high. He was humble in spirit, modest and unpretentious in bearing, and in his poorest fields of toil never for one moment imagined himself unappreciated by the Church. The qualities which adorned his character were such as might well be coveted by the most gifted of his brethren. He was strong in faith, joyful in hope, patient in tribulation and suffering, uncomplaining in pinching poverty and persevering in toil.

An event taken from his life's history will best illustrate the features which marked his character. While on Pendleton Circuit, he had made an engagement to meet one of his brethren beyond the North Fork Mountain, miles away. Meanwhile a blinding snow storm set in, and continued until the snow was deep and drifted heavily. His wife and friends endeavored to dissuade him from undertaking so perilous a journey, but such was his sense of honor, and his unconquerable perseverance that despite the remonstrances of friends he set out on his hazardous ride. The account of his experience and terrible suffering during this journey sound more like romance than a story from real life. He reached his objective point beyond the mountain at last, nearly frozen and almost lifeless, but he laid the foundation of disease from which he never recovered.

When he went to the field of labor on which he died, he did so with the firm conviction that it would be his last appointment on earth. For, strangely enough, he seemed to have been impressed with the fact that the end was not far away, and would come suddenly. The