

MINUTES

OF THE

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church, South,

FOR THE YEAR

1885.

*Methodist Episcopal church, South,
Conference.*

NASHVILLE, TENN.:

SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1886.

Ques. 14. What local preachers are elected elders? None.

Ques. 15. What local preachers are ordained elders? None.

Ques. 16. Who are located? None.

Ques. 17. Who are supernumerary? E. F. Gates. 1.

Ques. 18. Who are superannuated? A. Johnson, D. W. Core, W. M. Watts, S. Gardner, W. G. Booth. 5.

Ques. 19. What preachers have died during the past year? William Davies, Robert Martin, William Williams. 3.

WILLIAM DAVIES was born in Milledgeville, Ga., in the year 1829; and died at his home in Sumter county, Florida, in the month of April, 1885. The Spirit of the Lord found him devoted to pleasure and stained with the sinful indulgences common to young men. His repentance was intensely painful and prolonged; his conversion was joyful and bright. From the moment the light of God shone in his heart the word of the Lord became the law of his life, and his service the delight of his soul. Not long after he was converted the divine call to preach came to him. Willing and obedient, as soon as he felt the anointing oil poured on him he gave himself up to the work of the ministry. He was admitted into the Georgia Conference in 1854, and the following year transferred to the Florida Conference. He did faithful service for the Church as a member of that body thirty-one years. Under the most favorable circumstances an itinerant preacher's life is not one of effeminacy and self-indulgence. We all have need of courage, resolution, patience, and fortitude; but some of us have harder work and rougher fare than others. It fell to our brother's lot to endure hardness. With a wife in delicate health and often ill, and a large family of children, he served weak, large, and laborious circuits and missions, and that kind only. Oppressed with poverty, harassed with anxiety, and obliged to labor with his own hands and divide his time and thoughts between care for his family and for the interests of the Church committed to his charge, it required all his strong faith and supreme devotion to the cause of Christ to suffer patiently and serve faithfully. Brother Davies was a man of one work—he was an itinerant preacher doing the work of the Lord; and he preferred to suffer affliction in that work rather than enjoy wealth and ease in any other calling. If he toiled with plow and hoe till his hands were horny it was that he might plow the Master's field and sow the seed of the kingdom. Our brother was a man of strong convictions, profoundly conscientious, and utterly fearless. He did not hesitate to reprove sharply, but he was always ready to give counsel, advice, and comfort. He was an earnest preacher of practical truths, and his sermons were convincing, instructive, and edifying. He spent much time in prayer, and walked humbly before God, resting on his promises and living in the light. A brother of our Conference a few

days before his death said to him, "Brother Davies, do you know me?" With a smile he answered, "Yes; I want you to pray for me." "Shall I pray for your restoration?" asked the brother. "No," said the dying saint; "pray that God's will may be done." The brother inquired if it was all well with him. With tremulous voice he answered, "Yes; all is well." A short time afterward the faithful preacher realized amid the raptures of heaven that it was well with him.

ROBERT MARTIN was born in Lawrence county, Alabama, October 2, 1848; and died in Key West, Florida, November 11, 1885, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. He joined the Methodist Church and gave his heart to God at the age of about sixteen years. When satisfied that the Holy Ghost had separated him to the work of the ministry, he determined at once to devote himself to the sacred calling. In 1873 he was employed on Liberty Circuit as a supply, and, after serving that work one year, was admitted on trial into the Florida Conference in January, 1874, and was sent to Crawfordville Circuit, where he remained two years. The following years he was on the Fort Myers Circuit. He was then returned to Crawfordville Circuit, where he labored two years. His next appointment was Gadsden Circuit. After finishing a three years' term on that work, he was appointed to First Charge, in Key West, and after laboring there with great faithfulness and signal success for nearly three years, he ceased at once to work and to live. Brother Martin did efficient service in all the fields of labor to which he was assigned, and every charge he served would have been glad to hear he was their preacher again. But the best work of his ministerial life was done at Key West. There he found a field that demanded and developed all the power lodged in his sound judgment, resolute will, and untiring energy. The church was in a bad condition; the low stone walls supported a temporary roof of boards that admitted the rain freely, rendering the building unfit for use during bad weather and unhealthy at all times. That state of things had lasted so long that the members of the Church were depressed almost to hopelessness; while the community outside blamed and ridiculed, instead of sympathizing and helping. Nothing daunted, Brother Martin determined to make the building comfortable and to finish it, by the help of God. He went to work at once, and worked with a will. The people, stimulated by his cheerful confidence, took heart again. He planned wisely, and carried his judicious plans into execution with much prayer, vigorous effort, and ceaseless perseverance. He procured subscriptions, collected the money, employed workmen, superintended them, and helped them with his own hands. After having brought the building as near completion as the money he had raised permitted, he devised a scheme for finishing it during the year. Death disappointed his cherished expectation; but that strong, massive, capacious building stands an enduring monument

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MARTIN was born in Lawrence, October 2, 1848; and died in Florida, November 11, 1885, in the ear of his age. He joined the church and gave his heart to God at sixteen years. When satisfied his host had separated him to the ministry, he determined at once to go to the sacred calling. In 1873 he went on Liberty Circuit as a supervising that work one year, was then sent into the Florida Conference, and was sent to Crawfordville, where he remained two years. The following year he was on the Fort Myers Circuit, and returned to Crawfordville Circuit, where he remained two years. His next appointment was on that work, he was appointed in Key West, and after a year of great faithfulness and signal service, three years, he ceased at once. Brother Martin did efficient work in all the fields of labor to which he was called, and every charge he served he was glad to hear he was there. But the best work of his ministry was done at Key West. There he was demanded and developed all his sound judgment, resolute energy. The church was in a low state; the walls supported by boards that admitted the sun, and the building unfit for use, and unhealthy at all times. The members had lasted so long that the church were depressed almost while the community outside sympathized, instead of sympathizing. Brother Martin, daunted, Brother Martin made the building comfortable, by the help of God. He worked once, and worked with a will. He was aided by his cheerful confidence again. He planned wisely, and put his judicious plans into execution; vigorous effort, and ceaseless he procured subscriptions, collected employed workmen, superintended helped them with his own hands, and brought the building as he had raised the money he had raised. He used a scheme for finishing it. Death disappointed his church; but that strong, massive, stands an enduring monument

of his faith, zeal, and energy. While Brother Martin worked with unwearied industry on the church, he attended with equal fidelity to all the interests of his charge. He was especially attentive to the sick and afflicted, carrying with him the comfort and consolation contained in the precious promises. Brother Martin's character was composed of noble qualities. Nature dealt out to him with affluent hand many of her charming gifts, and the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit brought them out in all the fullness of their power, loveliness, and beauty. His disposition was buoyant, genial, and generous; his temper mild and amiable. He was candid and courteous, strong and tender, self-reliant and unassuming. He professed sanctification several years before his death; and his abounding joy, burning zeal, and holy life recommended the grace and enforced the duty of its attainment. He delighted to present that condition of purity, peace, and power as the privilege of every child of God, and to persuade them to claim it by simple faith. He was honest when he laid his all on the altar. The consecration was complete, final, and forever. The will of the Lord was his will; the work of the Lord was his work, and he rejoiced in nothing save in that the sentiment of his life was:

The solemn shadow of His cross
Is better than the sun.

Death came unexpectedly to our dear brother. He used so often to say he believed there were thirty years of good service for the Lord between him and the grave; but when the fatal sickness with its gush of red blood came, it found him ready and sweetly submissive. When he believed he was dying he calmly committed his wife and children to the Lord; then, taking the hand of a young lady who was standing at his bedside, he besought her to promise him to give her heart to God. Looking at the writer earnestly, he said: "When you go up to Conference tell the brethren, for me, to preach Jesus, and him only." He waited at the river the two following weeks, trustful and tranquil; then his pure spirit crossed over and joined the saints in white garments.

WILLIAM WILLIAMS was born in Madison county, Florida, about fifty years ago, of religious parents of the Methodist type, and was converted to God at a very tender age. He entered the itinerant ministry at the age of nineteen, and with the exception of two years remained continuously in the active work until his death. Our departed brother was deeply spiritual, and was always ready to give a reason for the faith that was in him. The beams of the Sun of righteousness nestled in his heart, and he rejoiced in a present salvation from sin. He knew nothing of the philosophy of the schools, but understood full well the sublime philosophy of the cross, and could say with St. Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." He made no profession of extraordinary spiritual

attainments, but those with whom he came in contact knew that his life was hid with Christ in God. The atmosphere around him seemed surcharged with the influences of a supernatural power. He had no great intellectual riches to bestow, but he gave to the world the sweet and abiding savor of a godly life. His deep spirituality was largely the result of suffering. For many years God kept him in the school of sorrow; in truth, he seemed wedded to calamity; but he recognized the authority and wisdom of his Divine Teacher, and studied his lesson out in agony and in love. Having lived well, his death was triumphant. On account of ill health he was forced to relinquish his work shortly after the adjournment of our last Conference, and gradually declined until his death, which occurred a few weeks ago. Conscious to the last, his only prayer was, "Thy will be done;" and, conquering death, he went forth a redeemed soul into the glorious presence of his Lord.

BISHOP LINUS PARKER.—The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, mourns the death of another of her beloved chief pastors. Bishop Linus Parker was born in Vienna, Oneida county, N. Y., on the 23d of April, 1829; and died on the 5th of March, 1885, at his unpretentious home in the city of New Orleans. He received his first religious impressions when only six or seven years of age, and in his eleventh year entered into the glorious realm of conscious freedom from the guilt and condemnation of sin. His religion was infinitely more than a creed: it was a life, grand, glorious, and sublime. Christ was enthroned in his heart, and he could say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." If, like Timothy, he was religious from infancy, he was also like John—a disciple of love. He was possessed of indomitable energy and perseverance, and by his own unaided efforts attained unto creditable scholarship. A happy combination of intellectual and spiritual powers made him a prince in our Israel. Though a logician, yet he essayed not the role of the controversialist. His only controversy was with sin. His life was both a demonstration and a defense of the truth. His mental conformation was such that he readily embraced the distinctive doctrines of Methodism, but the majestic sweep of his love was all-comprehensive. Bishop Parker was an able expounder of the gospel, and a master of assemblies. His rare qualities of mind and heart, resulting from his pupilage in the school of Christ, made him successful in winning souls wherever he went, and through his instrumentality many will shine as the stars forever and ever. As a writer he was known far beyond our Connectional bounds. While editing the *New Orleans Christian Advocate* he achieved a reputation for purity of style and catholicity of spirit which will serve as his monument, and which is worthy of unstinted praise. At the General Conference of 1882 he was elevated to the episcopal office, and from that time until his death he was conservative in administration