

OFFICIAL MINUTES

OF THE

ONE HUNDREDTH SESSION

OF THE

NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE

OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

HELD IN

ASBURY FIRST CHURCH, SPRINGFIELD, APRIL 8-13, 1896.

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while at Enfield, in 1871, that he had a partial sunstroke when painting the outside of the parsonage, from which he never fully recovered.

Brother Hewes served the following charges: Fiskdale, Belchertown, Chester, Northampton, Cherry Valley, North Brookfield, Wales, Pelham, Enfield, So. Wilbraham, Blandford, and Southwick.

At Enfield, So. Wilbraham and No. Brookfield his labors were blessed with revivals. It was toward the close of his ministry at the latter place that Brother W. F. Holmes, who has been an esteemed member of the Maine Conference for several years was converted.

Brother Hewes was a man of nervous temperament, and not being physically strong, it was not easy for him to look at the bright side of life. When at his best he was a man of good social qualities. He was quick in forming his opinions, tenacious in holding them, and fearless in expressing them. He was a man of refined tastes, fond of music and flowers. He had an inquiring mind, which inclined him to carefully investigate all subjects that came to his notice. He was of studious habits, and disliked anything approaching pomp or display. This came doubtless from his early associations with the Quakers.

But it was as a preacher that he excelled. He was a clear thinker and logical reasoner, having also a poetic imagination. In his prayer meeting talks there was careful arrangement of thought and clear presentation of the subject in hand, so that many were greatly profited. Our brother is survived by his excellent and devoted wife, and a son and daughter. The last years of Brother Hewes' life were marked by gradually failing health. During the final months he suffered more from extreme weakness than acute pain, although at times there was much distress. Toward the end he grew very anxious to hear the summons: "Child, come home." It came on the morning of the twenty-third of May, 1895, and peacefully he passed away to join that great company above.

Charles Nicklin.

CHARLES A. MERRILL.

The Rev. Charles A. Merrill, began life April 20, 1826, in Woodstock, Vt., and finished his earthly course, January 9, 1896, in Springfield, Mass.

He was educated in the public schools, and in the Theological Institute at Concord, N. H., from which he was graduated in 1855. His eyes were opened to the larger life in Christ when about 17 years old, in Winthrop, Me., and from that time until the day he was taken from us, he was a faithful follower and lover of Jesus. He was twice married; the first wife tarrying with him for only three brief years, while the second lived to bless his home, and close his eyes in death, and she still abides with us to bless the church which her husband loved. Three sons and a daughter live to cherish their father's memory.

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Three things characterize his ministry. First, the number of new churches founded, which have since developed into strong and vigorous societies. The churches at Middletown, R. I., Fall River, and Grace, Springfield, were begun by him. The first was organized with only four members, one of whom was his wife. Second, financial difficulties through which he safely brought several societies. Third, the spiritual results achieved. His people were invariably led into a sturdy, manly Christianity, rather than into an effervescent, sentimental piety, while in many cases great revivals were the fruit of his labors. That little church of four members was soon in a revival blaze, in midsummer, farmers leaving the hay in the field, in order to attend to the interests of their souls.

His life perfected was a triumph of Christianity.

Four things characterized him individually. First, he was choice of speech, not in words of the rhetorician's art, but in that higher art of sweetest purity. One testifying of him said: "I have been with Charles A. Merrill, in private and in public, and under all sorts of provocations, and I never heard him utter a word that might not have been spoken in the courts of heaven." Second, he was choice of spirit. A tenderer hearted man seldom lived. He did not always show it; indeed, few knew it, even those who had the privilege of looking straight into his heart. The first time we saw this sweet and tender spirit was at the class meeting, but it was not the last, for during his final illness it was more and more apparent. Third, he was a true lover, not only of Christ, but also of Christ's church, which is now his body. His last message to the society in which he had been so helpful was, "Tell St. Luke's people that I love them. I love every one of them." He was heard murmuring in the night, and when asked if he wanted anything, replied, "O no! I was only thanking Him." Fourth, he attained to a strong faith which triumphed in the hour of death. When he opened his eyes for the last time, and saw by the anxious looks that something serious had occurred, he closely questioned his loved wife as to its nature, and if the children had been sent for, and when asked if he was afraid to go, his characteristic reply was, "No, I shall not go shouting, but I shall go trusting." And yet the brightened, far-a-way look, the kindled eye, the glowing countenance, would seem to indicate that he saw a vision of wondrous beauty, before his earthly eyes closed forever.

Personally, no one of such short acquaintance, has been so helpful in my ministry, has so won my esteem, or gotten so closely into my heart, as this honest, faithful servant of Christ.

W. G. Richardson.

MARY CAROLINE BENT.

Bishop Foster is said to have recently remarked that most Methodist preachers seem to meet with surprising success in the choice of their wives—these ladies quite invariably proving to be the very best of their