

MINUTES

OF THE

ANNUAL CONFERENCES

OF THE

Methodist Episcopal Church, South,

FOR THE YEAR

1896.

Methodist Episcopal Church, South.
_____ Conferences.

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of Ireland, a sturdy Reformed Presbyterian, who, with his young wife, a Virginia Episcopalian, settled in the Cedar Springs neighborhood, in the Abbeville District. Sprung from this pious pair, our brother, Samuel Leard, first saw the light on the 12th of February, 1815; and, from that day to the 9th of March, 1896, his last day in the flesh, he felt the precious influence of the early training he received from them. His parents, though devoted to their Church, were not too bigoted to entertain the Methodist traveling preachers, through whom, no doubt, they heard of the Mt. Ariel Academy, in the eastern part of the district. If Erskine College had been in existence then, it is very probable that Samuel's education would have been conducted there, and that, instead of spending his life as a Methodist preacher, he might have been a minister in his father's Church. Who shall estimate the debt the Churches owe to their educational institutions? At Cokesbury he heard the preaching of such men as Glenn, Travis, Huggins, and Wightman; and his daily contact with the rector, Joseph Travis, soon induced him to accept the peculiar views of the Methodists, toward which, however, he had somewhat leaned before. After his conversion, in 1833, he joined the Methodist Church under the ministry of William H. Wightman and Theophilus Huggins, the Cokesbury Circuit preachers. Very soon after this he was licensed to preach; and at the Columbia session, in 1835, on his twentieth birthday, he was admitted on trial into the South Carolina Conference. From his first appointment as junior preacher under Joel W. Townsend, on the Winnsboro Circuit, to the close of his second pastorate on Manning Station, when he retired from active work, whether he labored on circuit, station, district, or mission to the blacks, he evinced the same earnest devotion to duty and absorbing interest in the great cause to which he felt himself committed. In all these varied fields he labored with conspicuous ability and success, his territory reaching from Charleston to the Blue Ridge, and from the Savannah to Fayetteville, his active ministry extending through an uninterrupted period of fifty-three years. Nor did his labors cease entirely with his active relation to the Conference, but during his nine years of superannuation his pen and his tongue continued to render such service as his failing powers allowed. Perhaps no part of his ministerial life, however, was more pleasant to him or more profitable to the cause of our Redeemer than the years he devoted to the special service of the children. His pure, tender spirit yearned for the welfare of the rising race; and the light of eternity alone will reveal how much his consecrated labors did to pro-

duce our wonderful progress in the Sunday-school cause since then. As a preacher he was plain, clear, logical, earnest, and convincing. His aspect, bland, persuasive, and commanding, prepossessed his congregation in his favor; and his modest and transparent sincerity convinced all his hearers that he had personal experience of the great truths he offered for their acceptance. A very striking and delightful characteristic was his simple power in prayer. His language, his tones, his fervid humility, his directness of approach through our Lord Jesus Christ, all clearly showed his consciousness of his being in the divine presence, and drove away all thought of profane ostentation. In all his praying he never delivered eloquent lectures to his congregation nor took the name of the Lord his God in vain. As a writer he was attractive, instructive, and forcible. His published delineations of the lives and characters of the older preachers were very valuable contributions to the history of the Church; and it is to be deeply regretted that much such matter from his facile pen lies still unpublished. As a man he was a model Christian gentleman. He seemed to understand the meaning of the phrase, "in honor preferring one another." He kept his own merits in the background, and loved to dwell upon the good qualities of his brethren. His friendships were strong, his affections profound and all-embracing. In his family he challenged the reverent esteem of every member by his pure, sweet, gentle, Christian bearing toward all. His surviving family, the devoted widow and the sons and daughters, all rise up to call him blessed, while with one accord they do honor to his memory by following in his footsteps. At the house of a worthy son in Raleigh, where he was making his home for the time, in the beautiful springtide, after a very few days of total weakness, he heard the summons to his heavenly home; and he promptly made the gentle transfer from a life of peace on earth to the life of bliss on high.

CLAUDIUS HORNBY PRITCHARD, son of Joseph Price and Claudia Hornby Pritchard, was born in Charleston, South Carolina, October 14, 1821. When he was about a year old his parents moved to Cheraw. They were Episcopalian, but his mother carried her children to the Methodist church whenever her own was not open. He was converted at a meeting in the Methodist Church, and joined it at the age of sixteen. He professed sanctification a short time after, and was called to preach, joining the South Carolina Conference at Camden, in February, 1841, when a little over nineteen years of age. On the 31st of October, 1844, he

married Miss Mary Blount Reynolds, of Camden; she died in Abbeville, July 8, 1855. And in the same old town of Abbeville his spirit returned to God on the evening of March 5, 1896. Such is but a framework of facts, names, and dates. The real life history of this veritable hero of the cross will never be told on earth, but his record is rich on high. We all knew him, revered him, loved him. No man ever more fully merited the respect and trust of his fellow-men than did Claudius H. Pritchard. Unostentatious, his innate nobility was nevertheless conspicuous in his daily walk. The very atmosphere seemed purified by his presence. His Christianity was an ever-present part of his life; nay, more—it was his life. His loyalty to Methodism is attested by the labors in which he wore out his body. After serving successfully on circuits, stations, and districts forty-two years, he was forced by ill health to ask a superannuated relation at the Conference in Greenville in December, 1882. He recovered during the following year, and preached as opportunity offered, and at the Conference in 1883 he was restored to the effective list. At the Conference in December, 1884, he was again superannuated, but he took charge of Abbeville Circuit (five appointments) the following April, and continued to work on circuits until January 13, 1895, when an injury sustained by being thrown from his buggy—while on his way to his appointment, in Kinard Circuit—forced him to give up his loved employment. After passing nearly four weeks in the hospital at Columbia, he spent five months with his son, T. W. Pritchard, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Moving from there to Abbeville, South Carolina, last summer, with the assistance of friends, he bought a house. He did not, as he hoped, recover his health, and finally it failed entirely. Talented and faithful, brother Pritchard rendered efficient and acceptable service in all of his appointments and duties. Endowed with a splendid intellect, his sermons were always clear and strong, his fervent delivery adding force to his earnest, eloquent presentation of the great gospel truths. As an administrator of Church discipline he was able, fair, and fearless. For all mankind, saints and sinners, his pure heart was full of love and compassion. Brother Pritchard was a modest Christian gentleman; he was not what has come to be known as a "pushing" man, else probably he had fared better and lived longer. His character and capabilities fitted him for the highest honors in the Church, yet he was most often found rendering cheerful service on hard and poorly paid appointments. The ranks of "the old guard" are breaking more and more, and Conference reunions will seem less like old

times now that this veteran has been called above to hear the "well done, thou good and faithful servant." The last days of this saintly man were as his previous years—peaceful, trustful, joyful. He said God had been very good in taking care of him and giving him a comfortable home, and he would like to stay and preach to the people around; but that, if he wanted to take him unto himself, he was ready to go. He was confined to bed only three days; he was unable to turn himself—suffering little pain, except when an attempt was made to move his swollen limbs. A short time before he died he clasped his hands (interlacing the fingers), as he often did when going to sleep, resting them upon his breast, breathed quietly awhile, then the lips parted a little, the chest heaved slightly, and all his troubles were over! Many other sadly happy tokens of his lovely character are to be cherished in the memories of his deathbed, but they are too sacred for publication. With but a slight interval of superannuation on account of feebleness, brother Pritchard was emphatically "effective" for almost fifty-five years. Blessed, indeed, is this dear old saint, for truly he was "pure in heart."

JOHN A. MOOD passed to his eternal reward on April 18, 1896. For a number of years he had not been strong, and, in view of infirmity attendant upon declining years, had at the Conference of 1892 asked and received a superannuated relation. For a time thereafter he resided in Oxford, Georgia, but in 1894 returned to this state and lived at Spartanburg. Not long after his return he was attacked with serious illness from which he never fully recovered. Amid these trying circumstances there appeared, in accordance with his previous character, a strong confidence in God, and a resignation to the divine will. This was the fulfillment of the prophecy of his previous life. It was his privilege to enter upon a rich parental inheritance: rich in that greatest of all possessions, nobility of character, highness of purpose, indissolubly bound with devotion to Christ and his Church. His father was the Rev. John Mood, once a member of this body. His mother was Catherine McFarland. "Their children arise and call them blessed." Four of their sons became members of the South Carolina Conference. Trained in this atmosphere, he was early converted and joined Bethel Church in Charleston, the city of his birth. Here he had the best spiritual opportunities of his day. These developed him, and when the Spirit of God said, "Who will go for us?" he answered, "Here am I, send me." In 1847 he was admitted into the traveling connection. He was an excellent preacher;

careful in preparation, systematic in arrangement, drawing from his resourceful mind and fields of research. His sermons were as beaten oil. Moreover, there was always that cultured pleasantness of manner, that spirit of sincere friendliness about him which made him friends wherever he went. He was the friend of every man. He was a modest man and humble, and never thought of himself as highly as he ought; but his brethren esteemed him, and the Master knew his worth. The minutes show that he spent eleven years on stations, twenty-three on circuits, ten on missions, one as supernumerary, and three as a superannuate. His marriage, November 23, 1853, to Miss Mary C. Basterling, resulted most happily. His life was hers, and hers was his. His home life was loving and bright. His son, the Rev. R. E. Mood, of this Conference, and two daughters, with his loved wife, survive him. He sleeps in Oakland Cemetery, Spartanburg, but the Saviour's promise spreads over that grave the light of immortal hope; "for the hour cometh when they that are in their graves shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life."

WELLBORN DAVIES KIRKLAND was born in the old Cypress Circuit, Charleston District, South Carolina, August 17, 1849. His father was the Rev. William C. Kirkland. The older members of this Conference still hold in loving regard this saintly man of God, who, during the twenty-seven years of his ministry, by his sweet-spirited and devoted life, intrenched himself in the hearts of his brethren. He was taken suddenly ill while making a round on his last circuit (the Greenville), and died at the home of Dr. William H. Austin, March 31, 1864. The mother of our departed brother, Mrs. Virginia L. Kirkland, was the daughter of the Rev. Joseph Galluchat, who was for many years a preacher in our Church, a man of eminent piety, and noted for his intellectual attainments and pulpit power. It is but natural that the child of such ancestry should become the subject of early religious impressions, and so it was. Davies Kirkland, as from early childhood he was called by those nearest to him, was converted when fourteen years of age, while a student in the Cokesbury Conference School, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The clear-cut, well-defined religious experience of the boy gradually ripened throughout all the testing experiences of school and college life until it crystallized into the stalwart faith and joyful hope which characterized his Christian manhood. After leaving Cokesbury he entered Wofford College, from which he graduated in 1870. It was here that he first felt a call to the ministry, and we

may add that it was here that he began to display those rare gifts which marked him as a young man of more than ordinary promise and power. In the classroom and in the literary societies he took high rank, and was more than once honored by his fellow-students. Leaving college, in December following he was admitted on trial into the South Carolina Conference, which met in Charleston. His first charge was Colleton Circuit, to which he was appointed as junior preacher, with the Rev. Charles Wilson as his senior. The following year he was sent to Marion Street, Columbia, where he remained four years. During his pastorate here he was married to Mrs. Marion M. Porcher, *née* Palmer, November 27, 1872. In 1876 he was placed in charge of Greenville Station. Here, early in the year, his health failed and he was forced to take needed rest. Having been elected during the year to a professorship in Columbia Female College, he entered upon his duties there in September. Finding that the work of the recitation room was injurious to his health, he resigned during the ensuing Conference, and asked for regular work. He was then appointed to Mars Bluff Station, where he remained four years. In 1881 and 1882 he served Providence Circuit. In 1883 he was appointed by Bishop McTyeire presiding elder of Cokesbury District. Here he remained three years. At the Conference of 1885 he was elected editor of the *Southern Christian Advocate*. He was re-elected in 1889, and again in 1893. In 1894 the General Conference elected him to the office of Sunday-school Editor, which he held to the day of his death, May 31, 1896. By way of *résumé* we note that he served the Church in circuit, station, and district work fifteen years, and as editor more than ten years. In all these fields he labored not only with great acceptability, but with eminent success and usefulness. He was chosen by his Conference as delegate to the General Conferences of 1886, 1890, and 1894, being chairman of the delegation to the last named. Emory College conferred on him the degree of doctor of divinity. He brought into his life work a good religious experience. His confidence was always strong, his faith unshaken. He was never very demonstrative as a Christian, nor did he at any time obtrude his religious experience upon others; yet he was always ready at the proper time and place to bear testimony to the saving power of the gospel of Christ. As a pastor he was most conscientious, painstaking, and laborious. He was a methodical worker, and so systematized his time as to reach the highest efficiency in the various functions of his office. He had organizing and executive abilities of a high order, and the charges he served furnished evi-

dence of this fact in their enlarged growth and influence. He had wisdom and tact that enabled him to touch men for good and inspire them to better living. As a wise general he discerned the strategic points and led the Lord's host to victory. He worked for results, and saw the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hands. Dr. Kirkland was an excellent preacher. The arrangement and dress of his thoughts were logical, simple, and graceful. His sermons, usually prepared with great care, were suggestive, instructive, and helpful to his hearers. He loved to preach. He came before his audience as with a message from God. He delivered his message with a serious, tearful earnestness that won attention, conquered prejudice, and carried conviction to the heart. Always edifying and impressive, there were times when the multitudes were overwhelmed by the power of his eloquence and tender pathos. "He not only swayed congregations, but God honored his message to the salvation of many souls and the upbuilding of believers in the faith." In the responsible place of presiding elder he was "wise in counsel, fertile in resources, and carefully considerate of all the interests of the Church." His fine judgment of men, his wide knowledge of the fields to be cultivated, and withal the breadth of the man that could see the needs of the work at large as well as the peculiar needs of his own district, enabled him to render the Church most excellent service in this office. Any notice of him, however, would be incomplete that failed to emphasize his editorial work. In early manhood he had shown great fondness for journalism, and during a busy pastorate his pen often furnished excellent matter to the press. His editorials were trenchant and timely, and always on live issues. His style was clear, vigorous, and highly entertaining. Whatever the subject discussed, there was to be seen the touch of a master's hand. He thought for himself; was bold and aggressive in spirit. Upon the arena of discussion he stood as a great intellectual athlete, prepared to hold his own against all comers. While naturally not fond of controversy, yet in defense of truth, as he held it, he did not hesitate to measure lance with the strongest opponent. Truth, indeed, was his guiding star. For it he stood prepared to sacrifice, if need be, that which would minister to his own popularity or preferment among his fellows. Mistaken he might be, but false to his convictions, never. His zeal for truth doubtless made him often appear unsympathetic even to his brethren who differed from him, yet in his feelings he always distinguished between the person and the cause. While his writings show a good deal of that which, in character, may be

styled controversial, much appears that reveals the tenderer side of his nature. He had words of comfort for God's people and words as tender as a mother's touch for the weak and sorrowing ones. As editor of the *Advocate* he developed that power as a thinker and writer which easily placed him among the leaders in the Church and won for him that recognition which resulted in his election to the more responsible position of Sunday-school Editor. He entered this new field with a just appreciation of the magnitude of the task before him. He trembled in view of the great responsibilities the Church had called him to bear, yet in the fear of God and with faith in the promise given he courageously began a work which daily grew dearer to his heart, and in the prosecution of which he never faltered till he heard the Master say, "It is enough; come up higher." To only a few men on earth will it ever be known—possibly to none but God himself—how he carried the interests of this great cause upon his mind and heart; how he planned and worked for its enlarged success; how he pleaded for wisdom, grace, and strength that he might measure up to its constantly increasing demands. To none will it ever be known how that in great weakness and bodily suffering he gave whatever of strength remained, that nothing be left undone that could in anywise minister to its good. And when his failing health admonished him that his work might be nearly done, his prayer, as often expressed to his friends and loved ones, was: "Lord, if I may work for thee, let me live and give me strength for service; if not, take me home and let me rest." Falling at a time when he had scarcely reached the prime of his useful life, when his work was seemingly so effective for good, and when the Church so much needed his valuable services, is to us a mysterious providence whose depths we cannot fathom. We can only say: "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." For twenty-six years he labored faithfully among us. We now miss his worthy presence, his wise counsel, his brotherly greeting. But instead of murmuring, we thank God for the grace that enabled his servant in his life work to accomplish so much, in the time allotted, for the Church and the world. We sorrow not as those who have no hope; we look for the meeting-time beyond the river.

THOMAS RAYSON was born in the Green Pond section of Colleton county, South Carolina, April 13, 1827. He graduated in medicine at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1848. He practiced his profession for one year, when, feeling called of God to preach, he gave up his expected life work and entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He was ad-