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Rev. W. L. Spearman

Many a man, by virtue of his skill as a writer, could excell me in writing this life-sketch of the late Rev. W. L. Spearman. But if I have been invited to write this memoir because of my knowledge of the man, because of my sincere appreciation of his character, because of my high regard for him as a Gospel minister, or because of the large estimate I place upon the results of his labors in our Lord's vineyard, then I lay humble claim to some right to pen these words.

I want, first of all, to state some of the salient biographical facts of his life. He was born June 15th, 1880, at Westover, Shelby County, Alabama, the son of J. M. and Eliza Sullivan Spearman. At the age of twenty years he joined the Methodist Protestant Church, and, four years later (1904), he was licensed to preach in this communion.

That same year marked another important date in Brother Spearman's life, for on April 24th, 1904, he married Miss Ada Sewell. Subsequent events have proved that neither he nor she erred in judgment in the choice of life's helpmeet. For thirty-eight years, lacking less than a month, they walked life's marital way together, bound by the tender yet strong ties of love and loyalty. More times than I can now recall I have heard him speak of the faithful and efficient service that Mrs. Spearman gave to him in his ministry.

Their union was blessed—and I use the word "blessed" advisedly and deliberately—with eight children, who, with Mrs. Spearman, survive him. They are: Mrs. Claude Hart, of Birmingham; Mrs. M. R. Boucher, of Altoona; Mrs. Fred Royal, of Fairfax; Mrs. D. B. Jordan, of Ashland; Mrs. Annelle Spearman, of Dadeville; C. E. Spearman, of Ashland; S. R. Spearman, of Centre, and W. L. Spearman, Jr., of Birmingham.

For a number of years Brother Spearman taught school, which doubtless accounts, at least in large measure, for the accuracy and precision, and for the attention given to important details, that so characterized his Christian ministry.

In 1918, at the session of the annual conference held at Bessemer, Alabama, he transferred his membership from the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church to the North Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and thenceforth he gave himself with unquestioned loyalty to Episcopal Methodism. He served, and served well, the following appointments: Pettusville-Boyd's Chapel, 1918-1919; Austinville, 1919-1921; Rogersville, 1921-22; Florence, North Wood Avenue, 1922-1924; Bethlehem, Jefferson County, 1924-1925; Tuscaloosa, Brandon Memorial, 1925-1927; Lannett, 1927-1929; Cherokee, 1929-1931; Ashland, 1931-1933; Camp Hill, 1933-1934; Huffman, 1934-1935; Moulton, 1935-1936; Decatur, Ninth Street, 1936-1940; Jones Memorial, 1940-1941; Gordo, 1941 until his death in 1942.

During his Decatur pastorate he suffered a very serious illness, during which his family and friends almost despaired of his life. But, to their surprise and delight, he did rally, and in a few weeks he resumed his work. And for W. L. Spearman, "resuming his work" meant putting everything he had in it. It was his nature. He might have been with us today had he not thrown himself so whole-heartedly into his work. But he disliked half-heartedness in others too much to let it find a place in his own life and ministry.

*On the 29th of March, 1942, while serving his first year at Gordo, Alabama, he laid down life's tools, and joined the redeemed in that world about which he had preached to others, and for which he had made diligent preparation himself to go.

For twenty years, since the conference of 1922, I have known Brother Spearman, but for much of these two decades it was just a "conference acquaintance." Even so, his personality impressed me no little. I found him to be unvaryingly courteous, brotherly, genial, and withal manly, and my estimate of him constantly increased.

Finally, in November, 1936, our lines fell together, and for me, they fell together in pleasant places. For four years we lived and labored together in

