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JOURNAL

of the

**Eighty-Fifth Session
California Annual Conference**

and

**SIXTH SESSION
of the
LAY CONFERENCE**



COLLEGE OF THE PACIFIC
Stockton, California
June 8, 1937

and looked for in others. He was "a good minister" and a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. His doctrine and life conformed.

In Pacific Grove his useful ministry has not been confined to his own church. The interim in ministerial calls and vacancies for other reasons have found him ready and useful in Supply work for shorter or longer periods with Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, Christians, and Presbyterians, giving an acceptable service in every case. For a considerable period he preached at the Seaside Church, usually walking most of the way to and from the church.

His Conference record in appointments is in this order: Yuba City, 1885; Roseville, Fort Jones, Florin, Point Arena, New Almaden, Morgan Hill, Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda, Salinas, Fairfield, in all of which he labored faithfully and successfully, always leaving an abiding wholesome Christian influence.

William J. Peters was a good man in the high sense of that word; full of faith and devoted to every interest of the local church, the Conference and the Connection. His widow, Mrs. Fannie Peters, lives in their Superannuated Cottage, which her husband greatly improved by his own money and mostly with his own hands. In all of their Appointments she was ever his helpmeet, sharing with him all that the Appointment in service and sacrifice entailed. They worked very harmoniously together. Mrs. Peters being a competent musician was very helpful to her husband in the Charge. Her eventide is among many friends who love and honor her; and in the church she is loyal and useful in service.

JAMES H. N. WILLIAMS.

JOHN WESLEY ROBINSON

JOHN STEPHENS

John Stephens was born at St. Blazup, Cornwall, England on October 16, 1867. With his family he came to Nova Scotia in 1874. His formal education was received at Petersboro and Toronto University. For a few years he taught in the Ottawa Normal School and elsewhere. In 1890 he came to California and after a year of teaching, entered the California Annual Conference in 1891. In an active ministry of forty-four years he served one District and seven churches, to four of which he gave a total of thirty-four years of pastoral ministry.

If John Stephens knew that he was a steady power among his brethren, he gave no evidence of it. His unobtrusive humility united with a princely natural dignity that gave his talents free range and large influence. He never got in his own way. He was what he was and what he was he was all the time, without temperamental or emotional deviations from the straight path of steady advance toward his ultimate goal as a Christian minister. Others might lose perspective in the enthusiasms of new causes and promotion campaigns, he moved steadily on his way and when the dust had settled, he was in his place and doing his part.

The California Conference will miss John Stephens, not as a Conference debater but as a quiet and strong leader who was sure of himself because he was sure of the Master whom he served. Men guided their lives by his, often unconsciously. In an age when a hundred distractions called the pastor away from his great commission, John Stephens held steadily to the John Wesley schedule of forenoon study and afternoon calling with no side issues or distracting hobbies to dissipate his energies and devastate his churches. His influence was not that of a promoter but of a man to whom people went for counsel and upon whom they depended for wisdom in the crises of life. He was primarily a "compass man;" put him down anywhere and he would point north and other men took their direction from his unwavering course.

Less than two years of the retired relation to the Conference intervened between Doctor Stephens' last active pastorate at Palo Alto and his home-going. His memory will linger long in our hearts as a steadying and stabilizing force in a nervous and distracted age. His major contribution was that of a great soul, wholly dedicated to the ministry of the gospel of Christ. His preaching was of an unusually high order, but he never preached over his own head nor beyond his realized experience. His faithful pastoral visits left behind them something that made homes better and life more worth while. The flame of his personality was not a brush fire, it was an abiding glow that gave light and warmth to all in the house and the church.

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