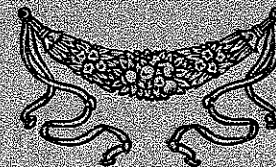


Commission On Archives And History
The United Methodist Church

Western North Carolina Annual Conference



Journal of Seventeenth Session
1906

The Seventeenth Session was held in Mount Airy,
North Carolina, November 14th to 19th,
Methodist Episcopal Church,
South

He was a man of peace and a peace-maker among the people. He had neither tongue nor ear for gossip. If he found disturbance in a charge when he went to it, his peace-loving spirit soon quieted it—however fierce the storm might be it soon became a calm. Men were ashamed to exhibit petty jealousies in his presence. This excellency was well marked in his character. He was a builder, and many churches and parsonages stand in the track of his life as monuments to his wisdom and zeal.

His tact in moving people to do church work and making them feel that they were doing it, not by constraint, but of their own accord, was superior.

Brother Stephenson had the good fortune to be born in a home of faith and religion. The father and mother believed in God, and the ethics of the Christian religion were the law of the home. He inherited a strong faith and never swerved from it nor faltered in it. He had a definite belief of the doctrines of Christianity because they are taught in God's Word, and their consistency appealed to his reason and experience and were confirmed.

Intellect and talent got the response of highest admiration. His whole nature bowed reverently before holy and sacred things. The Methodist Church never had a truer or more loyal son. In his faith he dealt with God. He believed that divine providence gave him his appointment, and for forty-seven years he was always to be found where, as he conceived, the great Head of the Church had placed him. He had aspirations that were disappointed, but he never complained.

A few years ago the perceptible fading of intellect and the waning of bodily strength showed that his life on earth was drawing gently toward its close. The end came. There was no parting word, intended as such, none was needed. He walked out into the yard at his home in Polkton, N. C., May the 5th, 1906. The Saviour called him, he went immediately. The body was left to be buried to wait for the Saviour's call in the resurrection. But his spirit has gone to enjoy the presence of Christ in company with the faithful saints in heaven. May we all meet him there.

REV. JOSEPH CARSON THOMAS.

BY G. H. DETWILER.

Rev. Joseph Carson Thomas was born June 26, 1828. He was a native of North Carolina and spent his entire life within the borders of the State. He enjoyed the blessings of a Christian home in his childhood and in due time yielded himself to the saving grace of God and consecrated himself to his service. We have no knowledge of the particular circumstances connected with his call to the ministry, but judging from his long and successful career in the Methodist itinerancy it is safe to conclude that he was led to take such a step only after serious meditation and under the compulsion of a profound conviction of duty. He joined the North Carolina Conference at Wilmington in 1855. Following this decisive event there stretches an unbroken service in the itinerancy

extending through more than thirty-five years. The history of this service if recorded would reveal the familiar but ever interesting events and experiences of a faithful Methodist preacher's life. It can only be said here that his various fields of labor extended from the mountains to the sea and that wherever he labored his influence lingers as a sweet and wholesome savor in the memory of the people he served. In the year 1891, on account of failing health he was granted a superannuated relation and retired from the active ministry. During the remaining years of his life he retained a lively interest in all the work and progress of the church he loved so well and manifested a sweet and loving spirit toward all his brethren.

While his early educational advantages were meagre Brother Thomas was in no sense an uneducated man. He acquired through self-discipline the habit of study, and from every source within his reach gathered to himself useful information. His books were well selected, exhaustively studied, and covered a wide range of knowledge. He was a preacher of more than ordinary ability, and his sermons were delivered with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. To all the churches which he served he could have written the words of Paul, "Our gospel came to you not in word only but in power, and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance."

He was not a great revivalist though his ministry was often blessed with gracious seasons of revival power. But he was especially gifted in the art of winning men for his Master by personal effort in his pastoral work. He won many stars for his crown and greatly enriched his ministry by personally leading men to Christ in the sick room, by the fireside, and on the public highway.

His religious experience was clear and steadfast; his character pure and strong; his influence wholesome and kindly; and his reputation throughout his long ministry unblemished.

He suffered much during the closing years of his life, but he bore his afflictions with heroic fortitude and quiet submission.

It was the privilege of the writer of these lines to be with him often during his last days and from those hours of loving fellowship he brings to you the assurance that to this faithful servant of our Lord there came the abundant fulfillment of that precious promise, "In the evening-time it shall be light." His end came suddenly and peacefully in the midst of loving friends June 19, 1906. His body was carried to its last resting place in Green Hill Cemetery, Greensboro, by his brethren in the ministry, where it awaits the resurrection call that shall at last bring all of us who are faithful to the complete and final inheritance of the saints in light.

REV. BENJAMIN FRANKLIN CARPENTER.

BY JOHN F. KIRK.

Rev. Benjamin Franklin Carpenter was born in Cleveland County, N. C., Sept. 7, 1869, and died at Winston-Salem, N. C., June 10, 1906. He was converted when a child and joined the Methodist church at St. Paul's, Belwood circuit. He was but thirteen years old when his father died, and, young as he was, he at once took