

# MINUTES

OF THE

SEVENTIETH SESSION

OF THE

Louisville Annual Conference

Methodist Episcopal Church, South

HELD AT

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## MEMOIRS.

## REV. JOSEPH F. REFFORD.

Death has shot heavily into the ranks of the Louisville Conference this past year. The evangelical Davenport, the great-hearted Lyon, the brilliant Alexander have fallen. And with them has gone the name which for the past few years stood at the head of our roll—Joseph F. Redford. Yet we cannot mourn for him as we do the others. Full of years, with a record of sixty-six years in the Methodist ministry, he has fallen on sleep. Four score and eight years had been rounded out for him when the Death Angel came and released his pure soul from his feeble weary frame.

He was born in Shelbyville, Ky., February 26, 1827. His parents, Woodson and Elizabeth Bent Redford, were both Virginians and he inherited a cordial, kindly manner so characteristic of that State. His brother, the eminent Dr. A. H. Redford, the historian of Kentucky Methodism, was notable for his courtliness of manner as well as for other remarkable gifts. Joseph Redford was educated by private teachers, and at Shelby College in Shelbyville. In September, 1849, he was licensed to preach and that same month was received on trial in the Louisville Conference. His first appointment was to Princeton and Empire Iron Works. The next was to the Wayne Circuit. In 1853 he was transferred to the Kentucky Conference and appointed to the Pikeville Circuit in Pike county, but at the close of this year was transferred back to the Louisville Conference and appointed to Mt. Washington and Shepherdsville charge. From this time until his superannuation, he was one of the most earnest, indefatigable, devoted workers the Louisville Conference has ever known. The writer of this memoir was given the privilege of going through his library after his death, and he found it equipped not only with some of the classics of general literature, but especially strong in Methodist doctrine, history and biography. His love for Methodism amounted to a passion. He believed Methodism to be the best form of Christianity, and he gave his long life untiringly to the upbuilding of the Methodist Church. Even when old age came upon him and the response to the passing world was growing weak and feeble, any word relating to Methodism would arouse him, and any reflection upon her doctrine or polity would act as a bugle-call to arms.

In 1868 Brother Redford was appointed agent of the Board of Education and held this position until 1874. During these six years he raised some thirty odd thousand dollars for the purpose of educational endowment in the Louisville Conference, and in addition some ten or twelve thousand dollars to purchase grounds and building for Warren College, located at Bowling Green. When it is remembered that most of the endowment with which the Louisville Conference has been working during the past forty-five years, was raised by this devoted minister, and that the income from said endowment has amounted to more than \$40,000.00, we can form some estimate of the valuable service rendered in those six years. In 1874, against the wish of the Board of Education, he returned to the pastorate and served as pastor and presiding elder until his superannuation.

Brother Redford was not a great preacher. He was not fluent of speech like his brilliant brother, but he was an earnest Gospel preacher, a devoted pastor and led many souls to Christ. His appointments ranged over the whole territory of the Conference. Few men have ever known our territory so well, and few names have been better known as household words in our Conference than the name of "Joe Redford." After the year 1880 we find his appointments almost entirely in Southern Kentucky, and somewhere in the vicinity of Bowling

Green. In 1855 he had married Miss Hettie J. Briggs, daughter of Col. James T. Briggs, of Warren county. She was a member of a prominent family of wide connection, and it was but natural that they should love the beautiful country of which Bowling Green is the county seat. In addition he had spent six years as agent of the Board of Education, which was laboring to establish a Methodist college there. So that in the early eighties we find him purchasing a modest home on State street, Bowling Green. Later this was remodeled to the commodious residence where he spent the last thirty years of his life. He and his wife not having been blessed with children, they reared a niece and nephew. This niece, Mrs. John Turpin, became more than a daughter to them, and they became in the fullest and truest sense father and mother to her and her children. There have been few more beautiful households in this world. It was an inspiring sight to behold the deep and tender affection in which Brother Redford was held, not only by those loved ones, but by the Methodists of Bowling Green and other friends. His beauty of spirit, his holy life shed a rare fragrance over the entire community. It is not too much to say that these years in Bowling Green were the most fruitful of his entire ministry. Even those who did not know him personally realized that one of God's saints was dwelling in their midst. When he died a prominent citizen summed up the general feeling by remarking, "If Heaven is too crowded when Brother Redford gets there somebody will have to go out and let that good man in."

The writer of these lines knew him intimately for twenty-five years. During the vacation when he was home from Vanderbilt University he travelled with Brother Redford, slept with him and preached for him. Thus began a friendship which ripened throughout the years. Though wide apart in years we were one in heart. We never visited Bowling Green without going to see him, and of late years we noted that he was richly ripening toward eternity. We saw him for the last time a few weeks before his death. The physical man was completely exhausted. He spent most of his days in deep sleep. Even the brain, the seat of consciousness, was slowly breaking down its lines of communication with the outer world. As I sat beside and watched him sleep it seemed as if the real man were gone: nothing left but the physical shell. But no, as I roused him, his first words were of Heaven. His faith was strong and triumphant over his dissolving frame. It was a sublime exhibition of the triumph of spiritual life over the disintegration of matter. And we could but recall the words of the Apostle: "For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

On Wednesday, April 14, 1915, he slipped from the body into the presence of the King Whom he had loved and served so long. The funeral services were held at State St. Church, and were conducted by the writer and Dr. Joseph H. Young. A large audience testified to the love and esteem in which the community held this man of God. We then laid the earthly casket of this immortal soul to rest beside the body of his wife in beautiful Fairview cemetery, "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Frank M. Thomas.

## REV. GROSS ALEXANDER, A. B., D.D., S. T. D.

All Methodism, the Louisville Conference in particular, is sorely bereaved at the departure of our esteemed, beloved and distinguished co-laborer, friend, brother, and, with his stricken family, feels the keen sense of a loss irreparable, save as God in his infinite wisdom and in his own good time shall fill the vacancy made visible and real to us by his sudden removal.

The Louisville Conference is honored in the fact that this noble, big-hearted, brotherly, earnest Christian scholar, preacher, writer and instructor, was born on our soil, began his ministry among us,

and, with the exception of two years in the Tennessee Conference, was a member of this Conference to the close of his eventful career, and his body now reposes in the beautiful Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville.

Never in the history of the Conference have we been called upon to chronicle the life-work of a worthier, purer or more distinguished son. Beginning life as a poor boy among the beautiful hills of Allen county, originating from old Kentucky and North Carolina stock, inheriting a robust constitution and strong mental capacity, brought up from childhood under the refining influence of a Christian home and educational culture, he, wisely, intelligently and from deep conviction of duty, selected and entered those open doors that lead to usefulness and helpfulness to others. Without cessation his growth and development continued to the end. There have been no periods of arrested mentality in his case, but a steady growth of mind and heart, an ever increasing fund of information that have easily won for him a place among the foremost scholars and thinkers on this continent. He wisely used his talents in a most unselfish way for the benefit of his fellow men. His life, knowledge, money, time were at the command of those who needed him.

His genius for literature and achievement as a writer and editor have been recognized by the great men of the Church on two continents. He has succeeded in placing "The Review" in the list of the world's greatest religious periodicals and has enriched our Christian literature with many contributions to current periodicals and books; among them his contributions to the "Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia" and his books, "The Son of Man," "History of Methodism," commentaries on "Ephesians" and "Colossians," "The Life of Steve P. Holcombe," and others. He was also one of the most competent and efficient of the able committee selected to revise the King James Edition of the Bible as issued in the Ter-centenary Edition, in 1911.

Zion's Herald of Boston very properly says of him: "He was progressive in the best sense of the word, but likewise conservative in his hold upon things fundamental. As editor of 'The Methodist Review' of the M. E. Church, South, he had won international reputation by the breadth of his interests and the marked ability with which he selected his contributors. He kept in touch with the great movement in intellectual and ecclesiastical affairs; and in consequence, his Quarterly was constantly throbbing with life, eclectic in the best sense of the term, and illuminating in the variety and ability of the articles it contained, not the least of those in value were the editorials that came from his able and virile pen."

He was a most charming companion—brilliant in conversation—always a welcome guest in the many homes he visited. If he had a fault, it was the result of an impulse to correct what he genuinely believed to be wrong in others. His motives were always pure—his heart right with God—he lived a life of prayer. Having known him intimately for 38 years, as his most confidential friend, I have come to regard him as one of the purest and most transparent men in my knowledge. We have often communed and prayed together over the problems that confronted us. I have often heard him pray with child-like simplicity as if he believed the Great Father was bending low to catch his very words and anxious to answer his prayer.

Like his Master, he had a great compassionate love for people and for the souls of men. Often have I known him to seek an opportunity to talk to people about their souls, to the servants in the home, to the cab-driver, the clerks and waiters at the hotel, employes and officials of the railroads, all classes and conditions of men and women received his attention and godly admonition, and their lives were enriched by touching his.

The chronological events of his life may be summed up as follows: Gross Alexander was born in Allen county, Ky., June 1, 1852, and fell asleep in Jesus September 6, 1915. He did not die—simply laid

himself down for a few minutes rest and did not awake. "He walked with God, and was not, for God took him."

He was the son of Dr. Charles H. Alexander and his mother was a Miss Drain, and was one of five children, all of whom, with the exception of a sister, Mrs. Lola Alexander Moore, having preceded him to the grave.

His ancestors came to Kentucky from North Carolina, being descendants of the family of Alexanders who signed the "Mecklenberg" Declaration of Independence, in 1775.

In his native county, I have heard, from his early associates, many interesting stories of his childhood. He was the center of a large circle of jolly, fun-loving young people, who made up the social element of his community, and as resolute in the execution of mischievous pranks in his youth as he was enthusiastic in the performance of the great problems of his life in mature years.

His father gave him the benefit of the best educational advantages that were available. If the town school failed to meet the desired standard of efficiency, Gross was sent to a private boarding school in an adjoining county. At the age of fifteen his father moved to Louisville to practice medicine and place his children in the city schools. Here Gross entered the Boys' High School, from which he graduated with distinction, taking the A. B. Degree in 1871, in the class with Mr. Samuel R. Chambers, Lieutenant Governor McDermott and other prominent men of the State. In 1873, he was elected to a professorship in Warren College, which position he filled with credit until he resigned to enter Drew Seminary in 1875, from which he graduated with the degree of B. D. in 1877. At the session of the Louisville Conference held at Henderson, Ky., in September, 1877, he was found in a class of nine young men, asking for admission into the ranks of the "Traveling Preachers." The members of that class were Gross Alexander, J. J. Tigert, John H. Walton, S. A. Link, James M. Dempsey, James W. Bigham, William F. Cashman, James T. Rushing and Robert W. Browder, all departed but the last three.

His first appointment was at Portland, three years, 1877-80, where he found Steve P. Holcombe and led him to Christ and into the ministry; then three years at Middletown and Anchorage, 1880-83. It was during these six years in Louisville and vicinity that he won the intimate friendship and assistance of that great Baptist divine, Dr. John A. Broadus, with whom he had the privilege and pleasure to review his New Testament Greek and extend his researches into many profitable lines. His third appointment was Russellville, Ky., one year, 1883-84.

It was about this time that he came within the horizon of Bishop H. N. McTyeire, that great leader and organizer of men, who readily recognized the genuine merit of the vigorous and growing young preacher and student, and transferred him to the West End Church in Nashville, to become the pastor of the Vanderbilt University and of the Bishop's family, where he served two years, 1884-86, until he was elected to the chair of New Testament Exegesis in the Vanderbilt, which position he filled with distinguished ability from 1886 to 1902.

After sixteen years of efficient work in the class room with young preachers, we find him longing for a wider public service. He tendered his resignation to the Vanderbilt Board of Trust, which was reluctantly accepted. In the fall of 1902 he was assigned to the Louisville District in his home Conference, which he served efficiently four years. At the General Conference held in Birmingham, in 1906, he was chosen by a large vote as editor of the Review and Book Editor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to succeed Dr. John J. Tigert, who had just been elected to the episcopacy. Dr. Alexander held this position to the close of his eventful life. He was secretary of his Conference for sixteen years, and was elected a delegate to the General Conference for six consecutive terms.

The Board of Education of the Louisville Conference never had a

more competent, willing and efficient member than Dr. Alexander. He was largely instrumental in projecting and founding Vanderbilt Training School and the Lindsay-Wilson Training School, and has for a number of years been chairman of the Board of Managers of the latter.

He gave freely of his time and money for the development of both of these institutions. He was especially interested in the school at Columbia, where are gathered annually great numbers of boys and girls from the mountain sections. He would find time or take it from his busy pursuits, to spend several days at a time preaching and lecturing to them. They will not soon forget him or the last great sermon he preached from the text, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Dr. Alexander has been twice married. His first wife was Miss Helen Watts of Louisville. To them were born three children, one of them died in infancy. His daughter, Miss Edith, and son, Clay, of Louisville, survive him. His present wife was Miss Arabel Wilbur of Chicago, who with their daughter, Miss Ruth, of Los Angeles, California, and their son, Rev. Gross Alexander, Jr., of Redlands, California, survive him. They also had a child who died in infancy.

For some years past, it has been necessary, on account of the ill health of their son Gross, that Mrs. Alexander should take him to a different climate, while Dr. Alexander remained in charge of his connectional work at Nashville. This worked a great hardship on him and his family, but they bore the sacrifice with becoming fortitude, when advised by consulting physicians that it was the only means of permanent cure for the son. It was while on a visit to his wife and children in California that he was suddenly called away. He had recently accepted a call to the chair of Church History in the new Southern Methodist University at Dallas, which position he was to hold in connection with the Editorship of *The Review*, and at the time of this visit was planning to take his family to Dallas, where his son would enter the School of Theology, and was happy in the prospect of a home where the climate would be suitable for all. But before these plans could be arranged God translated him to the eternal home beyond the skies.

"Servant of God well done!  
Thy glorious warfare's past;  
The battle's fought, the race is won,  
And thou art crowned at last."

Robert W. Browder.

#### REV. WILLIAM THOMPSON DAVENPORT.

Rev. William Thompson Davenport, son of Benjamin Anderson and Nancy Ann Davenport, was born near Lebanon, Marion County, Kentucky, April 17, 1840. When William was 13 years old his parents moved to Larue County, Ky., near Hodgenville, and in that county he grew to manhood.

Bro. Davenport obeyed the voice of the Great Teacher, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and when a youth of fourteen summers he was powerfully and happily converted to God and joined the Methodist Church.

He was married to Miss Izabella Brownfield, of Mitchell, Indiana, in 1868. Sister Davenport died in Louisville, Ky., August 10, 1893, and was buried in that city. To this happy union were born three sons, Ruel E., Clarence M., and William A., all living. He was married the second time to Nervivia Hoskinson, whose maiden name was Hill, of Breckinridge County, Kentucky, in 1898. This wife died December 25, 1911, and was buried at Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

He was licensed to preach in 1861, James H. Owen, P. E., ordained a deacon in 1864 by Bishop H. H. Kavanaugh, and an elder in 1879 by Bishop Robert Paine.

Brother Davenport, after living longer than the time allotted man, was called from labor to rest, January 8, 1915, and his body rests be-

side that of his last wife in the beautiful cemetery overlooking the queenly little city of Elizabethtown.

The data to hand are so meager I have not been able to learn the year he was admitted on trial in the Conference, but in the minutes of the Conference of 1873, his name appears on the roll of members, and in the list his number is sixty-nine, and from the number of names in the roll of membership below his he must have been admitted in the sixties.

Brother Davenport served charges, the record of which I was unable to find, but from the records accessible I find that he served the following circuits: Buffalo, Munfordsville, Bradfordsville, Mannsville, Calhoun, Livermore, Sacramento, Wallonia, Long Grove, Big Spring, Shepherdsville.

At the Conference held at Elkton, in 1893 he was given a superannuation relation. At the Conference held at Owensboro, in 1894, he became effective and served the following charges: Asbury, Constantine, Long Grove, Elizabethtown circuit, Custer.

In 1906, at the Conference held at Central City, he was given a superannuation relation which he held until he was called home to his reward.

After his superannuation he located in Elizabethtown, and remained there until after the death of his wife. After her death he lived with his son in Louisville, and with his other children.

When Bro. Davenport was in full strength of his manhood he was tall, erect, broad shouldered, a splendid specimen of physical manhood.

All his charges were circuits, and he was a typical old-fashioned circuit rider. He was a plain, practical, sound gospel preacher. His messages were strong, and good spiritual food for the people who heard him.

Brother Davenport was not only a good, helpful preacher of the Word, but a splendid Christian gentleman. He lived the gospel which he preached. He served his day and generation well. He has gone on to his reward but has left with us a good name which we prize as a rich legacy. Yes, he will continue to live in the lives of his brethren. He rests from his labors and his works follow him.

One by one our fellow companions and workers in the gospel are joining that innumerable host on high. Our translated brother is promoted to higher and greater service.

"Our brother the haven hath gained,  
Outflying the tempest and wind;  
His rest he hath sooner obtained,  
And left his companions behind;  
Still tossed on a sea of distress,  
Hard toiling to make the blest shore,  
Where all is assurance and peace,  
And sorrow and sin no more.

There all the ship's company meet,  
Who sailed with the Savior beneath,  
With shouting each other they greet,  
And triumph o'er sorrow and death:  
The voyage of life's at an end;  
The mortal affliction is past;  
The age that in heaven they spend;  
Forever and ever shall last."

Glasgow, Kentucky.

S. G. Shelley.

#### REV. GRANVILLE W. LYON.

In the little New England town of Campello, Massachusetts, on the seventh day of October, 1848, Granville Ward Lyon was born. His parents, Vinal and Damaris Lyon, were devout members of the Congregational Church, and accordingly had their pastor, the Reverend Wood, to baptize their son in infancy.