

## Memoirs.

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REV. W. S. RICHARDSON.

Rev. W. S. Richardson was born on Cape Fear River, Bladen Co., N. C., January 21, 1833, and finished his earthly pilgrimage at Key West, Florida, Sept. 14, 1899. In early life he was deeply impressed on the subject of religion, and, while yet in his boyhood, he was much given to private meditation and prayer. Of this period he writes:

"I was from childhood strongly impressed on the subject of religion. I have distinct remembrance of the conviction for sin, and earnest desire to be a Christian. I felt a mysterious tendency or drawing toward the Christian ministry."

When, in the presence of God, death invades our circle and removes a friend, our thoughts naturally turn back upon the life that is closed, and contemplating that life across the chasm of the grave, we are likely to see its characteristic in a clear and truth revealing light. This fact may have given currency to the poetic aphorism—"Blessings brighten as they fly." There are, however, some lives of such noble mould, and transparent purity as to compel recognition and elicit the commendation of all good men. Such a life was that of your late pastor, Rev. W. S. Richardson.

His supreme desire was to be and do good; and through riches of grace in Christ Jesus, this desire was fulfilled in large measure. He was distinctively referred to among his brethren—both clerical and lay—as "eminently pious, thoroughly consecrated; a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost."

He was fortunate in being sent, at a critical period in life, to Bingham school, in Orange county, N. C., where he was surrounded with excellent educational and religious influences. It was here, when nineteen years of age, at a revival meeting that he found pardon and peace in believing. Of this experience he says:

"I retired to a grove near by before school hours and while engaged in prayer, a holy calm filled my soul, and peace reigned within. All nature seemed touched with supreme beauty and all praised God. While sitting quietly and peacefully contemplating the scene, I realized a dis-

ting and unmistakable call to preach the gospel. How glad I would have been to have responded obediently to the Divine call; but being very timid—excessively and painfully so—also possessing no confidence in my ability. I kept the knowledge of the call to myself alone. I felt it would be presumptuous even to acknowledge it to any one. The idea of my preaching was too much for my bashful, self-distrusting nature."

After the lapse of thirty-eight years and in the full maturity of his ministerial life and usefulness he recurs to his first distinct call to the ministry. Of it he writes:

"Looking back to that happy morning, I am filled with regret that I was not obedient to the call. Every advantage lay before me. All to gain and nothing to lose—if I could have so seen it."

And then adds this reflection: "How much better for the young—the old—all—to submit their all ways to Divine guidance."

Failing to get full consent to avow his call to the ministry and commit himself to the work of preparation, he gradually drifted back to a worldly life.

A few years later an event occurred which, under God, settled his future course. He was married to Miss Annie E. Foxworth, of Sumpter county, South Carolina, a woman of superior qualities of mind and heart, and withal, devotedly pious. It was not long after this union before, at a gracious revival meeting, he was wonderously reclaimed and the joy of salvation restored. With restoration to the conscious favor of God there came a distinct renewal of the call to preach the gospel; and now again, as the first instance, he was involved in a conflict—a struggle. His exalted conception of the sacred office and the work of the Christian ministry on the one hand, and the humble views which he entertained for himself and his abilities on the other, greatly discouraged and depressed him. Nevertheless, he was firm in adherence to the purpose formed—to follow what seemed to be the guiding hand of Divine Providence. He at once fell into line of such church work as came to hand. He rendered efficient service as steward, class-leader and Sunday-school superintendent and meanwhile thought, studied and prayed with reference to that broader field of Christian activity and usefulness which he was destined to occupy.

In due time he was licensed to preach. As a local preacher he was earnest, diligent and faithful. Having been (as he considered it) tardy in beginning the work to which he was divinely called, it appeared as though he would, if possible, make amends for misspent time and lost opportunities by extraordinary zeal and activity. A year or two in the ranks of the local ministry convinced that in that relation he could not make full proof of his ministry. He could not preach effectively and at the same time give attention to secular business, and besides, he felt

that his call was to the work of pastor as well as preacher. After prayerful consideration he decided to seek the pastoral relation, and it seems to have been his original purpose to apply to the South Carolina Conference for admission into the traveling connection, but that body was overcrowded at the time, and in the good providence of the great head of the church, his attention was turned to Florida.

His first wife having died in 1892, he married Miss Mattie Blalock, July 31, 1895, with whom he lived in an ideal union until the close of his useful and devoted life.

Learning that Florida was a field "white unto the harvest" and that more laborers were needed, he responded with eager haste and a burning zeal, and took his place as one of the preachers of the Florida Conference.

He was admitted on trial into the Florida Conference at Gainesville, Nov. 15, 1878. Having stood approved examinations on the courses of study from year to year, he was duly elected and ordained to the eldership in 1882.

From the time of his admission on trial into the Florida Conference in 1878 to the close of his life as a pastor, his walk and conversation were in harmony with the sacredness and dignity of the ministerial office. His pastorate—first and last—embraced a large number of charges. They all with one accord bear testimony to his worth as a man and Christian minister. In every field in which he labored believers were won to Christ. The church where he is known will honor his name and cherish his memory.

C. A. FULWOOD.

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#### LAURINDA McCLARY RHODES.

Mrs. Laurinda McClary Rhodes was born in Yorkville, S. C., August 26, 1822, and died in Jefferson county, Florida, April 16, 1899.

During the second year of her residence in Monticello her husband, pastor of that charge, passed from earth to the joys of the redeemed in heaven. A stranger, widowed and alone, God raised up friends to her and her children, and she realized the fulfillment of the promise that the righteous should not be forsaken, nor should their seed beg bread.

A friend who knew her long and intimately writes: "Truly sister Rhodes was a blessing to every one that knew her, and her loyalty to her friends, her church and her God was beautiful beyond description.