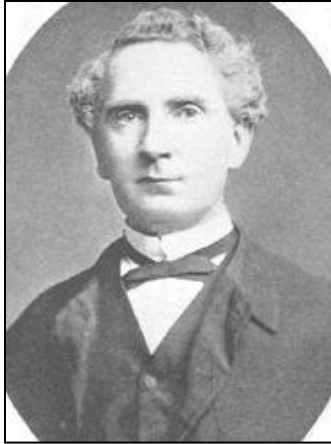




REV. DR. JAMES ARMSTRONG DUNCAN
Served Trinity 1857-1859

James Armstrong Duncan ranks as one of the most influential of Trinity's pastors. He served in the pivotal years from 1857 to 1859, and commenters viewed him as a first-rate orator. He also edited the pro-Confederate *Richmond Christian Advocate* during the Civil War. Following the war, he became president of Randolph-Macon College and served there until his death in 1877.

Dr. Duncan was born in Norfolk, Virginia, April 14, 1830. His father, David Duncan, taught Ancient Languages at Randolph-Macon, from which James graduated in 1849. In 1847, at a revival, he committed to Jesus and expressed a desire for the ministry. He received his preaching license in 1848, entered the Virginia Conference in 1849 and was admitted into full connection in 1851. "The popularity and success of his early preaching and pastoral work steadily waxed until he became one of the most brilliant stars of Methodism."¹ His first appointment was to a newly organized society in Alexandria. He next served churches in Fairfax, Leesburg and Washington before being appointed in 1857 to Trinity.

Trinity was described as "one of our oldest and most important stations."² Despite this accolade, the church was facing a pivotal point in its history. "Its prosperity was already impaired and seriously threatened by the unfortunate location of the house of worship. The young preacher soon had the building crowded with an eager congregation."³ This growth made for a favorable time to consider relocating the church.

A majority of the members resided east of the old church . . . and insisted on the selection of a site near Seventeenth or Eighteenth Streets. Others, however, contended that larger congregations could be secured in the upper part of the city and the influence of Methodism be wider felt and its support be more surely accomplished there. When at length it became apparent that no compromise could be effected between these conflicting opinions and a sufficient number adhered to either side to form a nucleus of a church..., a formal division was made in the membership of Trinity.⁴

Those supporting the up-town site, petitioned the bishop to appoint Dr. Duncan to the new church at the upcoming conference meeting in November 1859. They believed that "only under

¹ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 160.

² Richard Irby (A.B. 1844), *History of Randolph-Macon College* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, undated), p. 255.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "The History of Trinity Church, Richmond," written in 1860, reprinted, *The Richmond Christian Advocate*, (Richmond, Va.: November 22, 1934), p.5.

his leadership, as they were (with a few exceptions) without wealth or influence" would the church succeed.⁵

Trinity selected a site at the corner of Twentieth and Broad Streets, and Dr. John D. Blackwell was appointed minister that year. Both churches engaged the services of noted architect, Albert L. West.

Duncan served Broad Street until the Fall of 1861 and was reappointed from 1863 until 1866. In addition to his pastorate, he edited the *Richmond Christian Advocate* from fall 1860 to fall 1866. Historian Margaret Kidd wrote, "The Reverend James A. Duncan transformed the publication from a thoroughly religious paper to a source of secular news and religious instruction for a country in the grip of war... It devoted its pages to pro-Confederate editorials, letters and news."⁶ Kidd concludes, "Rev. Duncan probably exerted more influence over public opinion on the war than any other member of the M. E. Church, South, in Virginia, or throughout the South."⁷

Dr. Duncan's power as a preacher attracted many to hear him, among them were Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, and General Robert E. Lee, commander of the southern armies, although both were Episcopalians. When President Jefferson Davis was instructed by General Lee to evacuate Richmond, "Dr. Duncan was invited to a seat in the [railroad] car which took Mr. Davis, his family and official staff from the city."⁸

Amid the ruins of Richmond, Dr. Duncan soon returned to his flock and Broad Street Church "was again filled with overflowing congregations"⁹ until he was appointed to Washington Street Church in Petersburg in 1866 where he served for two years.

After the war, Duncan proposed moving Randolph-Macon College from remote, rural Boydton, Virginia, to Ashland. The war had devastated the school's enrollment and endowment, and Duncan and his supporters thought that Ashland's proximity to "the railway system of the South would renew its roots and make it bud and bloom again."¹⁰

Dr. Duncan assumed the college presidency and facilitated its opening in Ashland October 1, 1868. The first class totaled 67 students but by 1872 enrollment reached 234. Duncan did an outstanding job as president. He put the college on sound financial footing, expanded classroom space and had a new library built. Historian William Sweet said, "President Duncan's administration of Randolph-Macon covered a most critical period in the life of the college, and his leadership was a major factor in placing the college on a firmer foundation at Ashland than it had ever enjoyed before."¹¹

President Duncan's management style was described as pious and humble. Bishop John C.

⁵ Advocate, p. 5.

⁶ *Putting on the Armor of the Lord: The Role of Virginia Methodism during the Civil War*, Margaret T. Kidd, M.A. Thesis, University of Richmond, 2007, p. 3.

⁷ Ibid, p. 61.

⁸ Edward Leigh Pell, ed., *A Hundred Years of Richmond Methodism* (Richmond, Va.: Idea Publishing Co., 1899), p.40.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Irby, p. 191.

¹¹ William Warren Sweet, *Virginia Methodism, A History* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1955), pp. 328-329.

Granbery, who was his college friend said of Duncan, "He declared repeatedly that he would not remain in the position [college president] unless he was serving the Church of Christ... He never sought self. He was indifferent to wealth...He governed by personal influence, love and confidence."¹²

He was elected a delegate to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South General Conferences of 1866, 1870 and 1874. However, his responsibilities at Randolph-Macon prevented his attending in 1870. At that session, Dr. Duncan came within a few votes of being elected bishop. "Several delegates of this body, who held him in high admiration, and thought him in every way worthy of the honor, withholding their votes because they believed him essential to Randolph-Macon College."¹³ He gave an address before the General Conference in 1876.

Turning to his private life, he was married early in life to a Miss Twitty of North Carolina. This union brought four children. She was a worthy companion and helpmate for many years until her death in 1870. He married his second wife, a Miss Wade, whose father was a member of the Baltimore Conference, in 1873. One child was born of this union.

Dr. Duncan's health declined in 1874, and for a year he was described as "scarcely fit for work."¹⁴ He resigned as president of Randolph-Macon in June 1876 with plans to return to the pulpit, only to be re-elected president when his would-be successor declined to accept the position. Dr. Duncan died in Ashland at the president's house September 24, 1877, at age 47. Among his survivors was his brother, William Wallace Duncan, who would become bishop in 1886.

A preliminary funeral service for Duncan was held in Ashland and led by Leroy M. Lee, who had served Trinity from 1835 to 1836. The Fredericksburg Railroad ran a special train to carry the Methodist ministers and other clergy of Richmond to the service. Upon returning to Richmond a funeral service was held at Broad Street Church at 4 p.m. The funeral address was given by Bishop David Seth Doggett, who had served Trinity from 1834 to 1835.. Memorial services also were held in Petersburg and Baltimore. Dr. Duncan was laid to rest in Hollywood Cemetery.

His friend, Bishop Granbery, characterized him as an outstanding speaker and a gracious man: "These honors he bore with modest dignity and... Godly simplicity... No man in our day has accomplished more for Methodism or for the cause of Christ in the capital of Virginia than James A. Duncan."¹⁵

¹² Keene, p. 161.

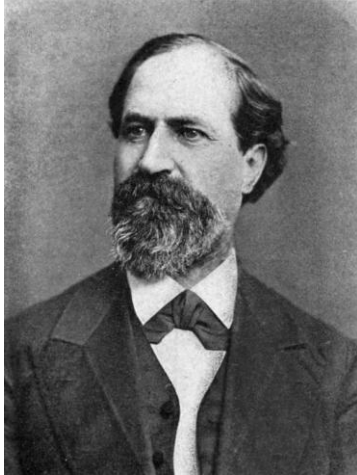
¹³ Irby, p. 259.

¹⁴ Keene, p. 161.

¹⁵ Ibid.

OTHER SOURCES:

Richmond Christian Advocate (Richmond, Va., September 27, 1877)



REV. DR. JOHN DAVENPORT BLACKWELL
Served Trinity 1859-1860

In an era when the hourglass silhouette was much in vogue for both genders and manners still most elegant and formal, John Davenport Blackwell was noted for his masculine good looks and gentlemanly demeanor. Rev. John J. Lafferty described him as having a “courtly dignity,” “manly grace and form,” and stated, “If the environments mould the life, a crooked and dwarf soul would be a surprise in such ensowrthment.”¹

However, much more than his dashing and romantic appearance was at play in this young man’s life. Born in Fauquier County, Virginia, June 17, 1822, to John and Rebecca Davenport Blackwell, he shared this earth with such men as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams for the first three years of his life. He sprang from two families who held strong moral and religious beliefs. On his father’s side, his grandfather was a Quaker renowned for his love of truth; his grandmother was an Episcopalian with the high moral and social standards of a true Virginia “lady.” His mother’s parents, John and Ellen H. Davenport, of Frederick County, Virginia, were among the first Methodists in that area and were well known as great leaders in the faith.

John Blackwell, his father, held many positions in the church and served diligently and successfully in them all. Rebecca Blackwell was unusually intelligent and deeply religious. She provided wise and caring counsel to others.

Coming from such a family, it is no surprise that John Davenport Blackwell should join the church at age 14. He was educated well and received a solid foundation in the classics from a tutor, Captain J. B. Smith, in Fauquier County. Then he entered the Warren Green Academy of Professor R. M. Smith, a boarding school in Warrenton, Virginia, which also focused on classics. He later graduated from Dickinson College.

Rev. Blackwell began his formal ministry in 1846, choosing to join the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to which he was admitted on trial. He was initially assigned as assistant pastor and then took over as chief pastor on the Bedford Circuit. He went on to serve in Hampton and Farmville and, as chaplain, Randolph-Macon College when it was still located in Boydton, Virginia. Appointments to Fairfax Circuit, Washington City, Warrenton Circuit, Union Station in Richmond and the Nottoway Circuit preceded his appointment to Trinity.

Serving a circuit was no small feat. Ministers often preached several times a day. A circuit was usually between 200 and 500 miles, and ministers were expected to cover that area in three to six weeks. Whatever the weather or conditions, they pushed on. Many of them died. They were reassigned to a new circuit after one year so that they could recycle and perfect their sermons. It was a hard and usually lonely life.

In November 1859, at age 37, Dr. Blackwell came to Trinity Church in Richmond following a split in the congregation to form two churches, one remaining as Trinity. Dr. Blackwell oversaw plans

¹ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1880), p. 49.

to build a new church building at Twentieth and Broad Streets. At its first meeting December 29, 1859, the building committee contracted with Albert West, a noted architect, to make the drawings and serve as superintendent of the building project. The building was to cost approximately \$30,000. Construction began in the spring of 1860.

When excavation began, fossil remains were found about 50 feet below the surface of the ground. It was speculated that they might be bones from a prehistoric seal or walrus. Eventually, it was decided that they were probably the bones of an ancient amphibian of some kind.

Later in 1860 before the building could be completed, Dr. Blackwell was sent to Granby Street Church in Norfolk. He moved in 1862 to Cumberland Street Church and later returned to Granby Street in 1863. He was elected a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South multiple times from 1862 through 1886 and to the Centennial Methodist Conference in Baltimore in 1884.

The Civil War interrupted the building of Trinity's new church and Dr. Blackwell's church ministry. On March 1, 1864, Dr. Blackwell enlisted as chaplain and commissioned officer of the Eighteenth Virginia Infantry, serving in Company S. During that year, the regiment fought under horrible circumstances in numerous places, including Cold Harbor, the Siege of Petersburg and Saylor's Creek, where many of the men were captured. Only two officers and 32 men were left to surrender. It must have been a difficult time indeed for the chaplain. He was mustered out April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House.

After the surrender at Appomattox, he returned home to Warrenton. Between 1865 and 1870, during the challenging period following the Civil War, he served the Warrenton and Amherst Circuits. Beginning in 1870, he became presiding elder on the Murfreesboro District. He next served Cumberland Street, Norfolk. In 1875 he was appointed presiding elder on the Lynchburg District, followed by the Charlottesville District. Then, he was appointed to Washington Street, Petersburg.

In 1883, Dr. Blackwell became pastor of Monumental Church in Portsmouth. He returned home from a funeral feeling ill June 23, 1887. He nevertheless sat up to write a short article appealing for charity on behalf of the poor of the city. Sunday, June 26, 1887, he passed away at about six o'clock in the morning. His funeral was attended by numerous clergy, more than 25 of them Methodists, but also many of other denominations. He was buried in Warrenton, Virginia, near the home of his childhood.

Dr. Blackwell was married twice. His first marriage was to Miss Julia Ann Butts, from Southampton County, with whom he had six children. His second wife was Miss Fanny G. Smith, from Fauquier County, with whom he had five children.

Beloved by all, Dr. Blackwell was intellectual, kind, gentle, but ever vigilant in the opposition to wrong. His love of people and God was evident in all that he did. His pastoral visits were considered a blessing, and his counsel and guidance valued. The keynote of his preaching was "Christ in you,"² and his life and his behavior to all embodied that idea. He turned down numerous opportunities to move into the presidency of several colleges and chose to remain in the ministry in which he so excelled and which he so loved.

² W. D. Keene, ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 194.



REV. DR. ALEXANDER GUSTAVUS BROWN
Served Trinity 1860–1862

The Reverend Alexander Gustavus Brown, D.D., was described by Rev. D.G.C. Butts as “not a great preacher, but a monumental success in every post assigned him.”¹ Others would disagree – Dr. Paul Whitehead described Dr. Brown as a “strong, vigorous preacher... eminently evangelical in the pulpit”² – but his financial and administrative talents were invaluable to church leadership and governance, an area in which he held a number of positions during his more than 45 years in the ministry.

Dr. Brown was born in Stephensburg, Frederick County, Virginia, February 22, 1833, to Gustavus Alexander Scott Brown and Nancy Murphy Brown. His father, a physician, died when Dr. Brown was two years old. His mother’s piety and devotion made a profound impact on him during his childhood. Dr. Brown was converted in 1848 by Rev. Joseph Carson at Shiloh, Rappahannock County, Virginia, when he was age 16. Soon after, he heard the call to ministry. He continued his education at Hillsboro Academy and New Lisbon Classical Institute in Loudoun County, Virginia, and would have completed his studies at Randolph-Macon College had he not been persuaded to enter the ministry immediately.

In 1853, he was licensed as a local preacher and employed to assist Rev. John Lewis on the Manassas Mission of the Loudoun Circuit. Later that year, he was received on trial into the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South and placed in charge of the Rock Creek Circuit. When he began, the circuit was composed of four preaching places in the Maryland and Washington, D.C. area. During his tenure, the Rock Creek Circuit expanded with three new churches in Maryland and increased membership. Dr. Brown was ordained a deacon in 1855 at the conference in Petersburg. He went on to serve the Fairfax Circuit that year and Harrisonburg and Woodstock in 1856.

At the 1857 conference in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, he was ordained an elder. His next appointment was chaplain at Randolph-Macon College, where he continued his studies while ministering to the students and faculty. In 1858, he was appointed to Third Street Church in Lynchburg. Shortly afterwards, on January 6, 1859, Dr. Brown married Fannie Cooksey of Fairfax County. His ministry at Third Street Church met with great success. “Many souls were converted and added to the church, and Centenary, a large and handsome church edifice, was built, paid for, and dedicated to the worship of Almighty God”³ in May 1860 during Dr. Brown’s pastorate.

His next appointment in November 1860 was to Trinity, which at the time met in “Old” Trinity church on Franklin Street but was planning its move to a better location at Twentieth and Broad

¹ D. G. C. Butts, *From Saddle to City by Buggy, Boat, and Railway*, 1922, p. 381.

² W. D. Keene, ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co. 1998), p. 294.

³ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1880), P. 77.

Streets in Richmond. With construction still in progress, the congregation held their first service February 3, 1861,⁴ in the completed, elegant lecture room in the basement of the new church. Work continued on the main audience room “until September, 1861, when it was interrupted by the war, and he [the architect, Albert L. West], receiving the appointment of architect of the Confederate Government works at Augusta, Ga., left the city.”⁵ Additional work was postponed until the end of the Civil War.

Wesley Chapel, Trinity’s first outreach mission, had closed in 1860, but John F. W. Jones was overseeing the Rocketts mission, which was still operating during Dr. Brown’s tenure. Though shadowed by the Civil War, Dr. Brown’s time at Trinity was marked by congregational growth. His next appointments were to High Street, Petersburg, where he served from 1862 to 1864, and to the Bedford Circuit from 1864 to 1866.

He became presiding elder of the Lynchburg District in 1866, remaining in that position until 1870, when he was appointed to lead the Norfolk District. His time in Norfolk was cut short by his accepting the call to serve as financial secretary of Randolph-Macon College in 1871. Whitehead wrote

He gave himself to this labor for four years, which time covered the period of the greatest financial disturbance in our country for fifty years past. He systematized the College business, then in much confusion; guarded it against some special perils; by wise piloting, brought it through stormy waters; and preserved the best results of the labors of many good and wise men for its firm establishment.⁶

Dr. Brown served as a trustee of Randolph-Macon College for many years, chairing the executive and finance committees and giving freely of his experience, knowledge and ability. While his strong opinions occasionally caused friction with others, they were tempered with good humor, which tended to resolve conflicts. Whitehead described him as “alert, sagacious, far-seeing, broad-minded, fervent in spirit, at once progressive and conservative... full of resources.”⁷

Dr. Brown went on to serve a second two-year appointment to High Street, Petersburg from 1875 to 1877; four years at Clay Street, Richmond; four years at Main Street, Danville; and four years at Cumberland Street, Norfolk. Aside from ministry, he also chaired the joint board of finance for 25 years and managed the conference’s book business for approximately 10 years in the 1890s.

Dr. Brown, who had abandoned his collegiate studies to enter full-time ministry, received an honorary doctor of divinity degree from Emory and Henry College in 1890. He was elected to all eight General Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South from 1870 through 1898, and was appointed as a delegate to the Centenary Conference of American Methodism in 1884. His final years were spent as presiding elder in the Richmond, Gloucester and Norfolk Districts.

⁴ Lafferty, p. 77.

⁵ “Dedication of Trinity Methodist Church, Description of Trinity Church”, *Daily Dispatch*, Richmond, Va., Monday, September 17, 1866.

⁶ Keene, p. 295.

⁷ Ibid, p. 294.

Although Dr. Brown enjoyed strength and good health for most of his life, he was felled suddenly in 1899 by paralysis. Despite treatment and a brief rally, he was disabled and bedridden for several months before his death March 16, 1900. Bishop John C. Granbery conducted his funeral service at Park Place Church, Richmond. He is buried in Hollywood Cemetery in a spot that “overlooks the sweep of the James, with its rocky islets and picturesque ‘Falls.’”⁸

⁸ Keene, p. 297.



REV. DR. ROBERT NEWTON SLEDD
Served Trinity 1866-1868

Eleven years before coming to preach at Trinity, Robert Newton Sledd experienced a life-altering year. In March 1855, at age 21, he graduated with high honors from Randolph-Macon College, joined the Methodist Church and took a position as principal of the Clarks-ville Male Academy. In September 1855 he married Fannie Carey Greene. However, the most significant event came later that year when he “felt a call to the ministry of the Gospel of such force that he could not resist it and retain his peace with God.”¹

Thus, in September 1856 Robert Sledd returned to Randolph-Macon College to study theology and in late 1857 was admitted to the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. “This entry into the ministry was a distinct disappointment to his father and at first a shock. Subsequently he became quite reconciled to it, and was very proud of his distinguished son.”² This initial reaction seems surprising as his father James Sledd, a Methodist himself, seemed supportive of Methodist ministers in general. “His father’s house in Powhatan was the stopping place of Methodist preachers and often their preaching place.”³

Sledd was born in Powhatan, Virginia, December 19, 1833, to James V. and Ann P. Justice Sledd. His father was a successful farmer and able to provide his son with educational benefits, especially in his literary training. Robert grew into a tall, lanky man, reticent socially, and not given to small talk. However, his suitability to his vocation was evident early in his ministry. In 1860 he was appointed to Market Street Church in Petersburg. “He was quite young: had been in the Conference only three years. But he had ‘risen rapidly to high usefulness and distinction,’ and his congregation soon learned that the appointment was not a mistake.”⁴

Rev. Sledd was charged with “serving the Church in our most important positions”⁵ and in large city churches. Fourteen of his first 20 years in the conference were spent in multiple appointments to two churches – Market Street in Petersburg and Court Street in Lynchburg. His time at Trinity, from 1866 to 1868, came in between his first and second periods at these two churches.

Rev. Robert A. Armistead, an ordained elder who was highly respected but licensed only as a local preacher was sent to Trinity in May 1866 to direct Trinity’s mission program at Rocketts and continued to serve in this capacity under Rev. Sledd. Armistead would remain in this position under Sledd’s successor.

¹ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), pg. 288.

² Ibid.

³ Arthur L. Stevenson, *Native Methodist Preachers of Richmond, Virginia and Vicinity*, seventh *Native Methodist Preacher Series* (Brevard, NC: published by the author, 1978), p. 20.

⁴ D. G. C. Butts, *From Saddle to City by Buggy, Boat and Railway*, 1922, p. 378-379.

⁵ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va.: Christian Advocate Office, 1890), p. 83.

In 1875, while at Market Street Church in Petersburg, Sledd received his doctor of divinity degree from Emory and Henry. Dr. Sledd then served Centenary in Richmond from 1877 to-1880; as presiding elder on the Richmond District from 1880 to1882; Epworth in Norfolk from 1882 to-1885; and Centenary in Richmond again from 1891 to-1895. His last appointment was to Main Street Church, Danville, Virginia, from 1895 until his death in 1899.

Dr. Sledd made good use of his academic abilities not only in his sermons, but also in his literary contributions. In addition to writing for the conference's periodicals, he edited and published *The Theological and Homiletic Monthly* journal. His writing is described as "weighty, lucid and valuable, giving evidence of wide and careful research in theology and acquaintance with the tenets of our faith."⁶ He compiled a volume of sermons, *True Heroism and Other Sermons*, which was published after his death. "It will remain as a valued and prized memorial of his work."⁷

Recognition of his strong leadership abilities was apparent in his positions within the conference and with his alma mater. Dr. Sledd was president of the conference board of missions from 1884 until his death. He was a delegate to all six of the general conferences from 1878 to 1898. For the 1894 General Conference, he was "chairman of the delegation, his popularity among his brethren being, in his generation, as great as that of almost any other man."⁸ In 1890 he was selected to serve as a fraternal delegate to the Canadian Methodist Church. Dr. Sledd was also a trustee at Randolph-Macon College for many years and once came within one vote of being elected president of the college. "He appeared, however, to be reluctant to turn from his work as a pastor, and this weakened the hands of his friends who nominated him."⁹

Given his literary, pastoral and leadership skills and accomplishment in pursuing his vocation, it is surprising to learn that he at one time had doubts as to his worthiness. "It may help some despondent servant of God to know that even such a preacher, a man so beloved, so desired, so useful, so honored, was once sorely tempted, and that not in the very beginning of his ministry, to think of retiring from the work, as one mistaken in his calling and unblest and unendorsed by divine approbation. Opening his heart to his Presiding Elder (Rev. Geo. W. Langhorne), who prayed with him, turned aside this 'fiery dart of the wicked one.'"¹⁰

His legacy rests on his preaching. As was said of John Wesley, Dr. Sledd was a man of one book. His sermons were based in Scripture and he worked hard to give his congregations "the benefit of well-digested interpretation, exposition and application of the Scriptures."¹¹ His style was established from his earliest appointments: "He was a charming preacher, – gentle, modest, grave, intensely in earnest in the pulpit, not always eloquent, but holding attention and arousing in his hearers a sympathetic emotion like unto that which blazed in his fervid paragraphs and flashed in his brilliant eyes, as he caught the spirit of his theme."¹²

His death came quickly and unexpectedly. Dr. Sledd attended an annual meeting of the general board of missions in May 1899 in Nashville. He decided to return home to Danville by way of

⁶ Lafferty, p. 83

⁷ Keene, p. 289.

⁸ Ibid, p. 288.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 290.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 289.

¹² Butts, pp. 378-379.

Atlanta, so that he could visit his son, Dr. Andrew Sledd. He contracted a severe illness on the train and was assisted to a hotel in Atlanta by a commercial traveler who contacted Sledd's son. Dr. Sledd died from typhoid fever May 15. His funeral was conducted May 16 by Bishop John Granbery, assisted by several ministers. He was buried in Powhatan, Virginia, beside his wife whose death had occurred in March 1898. "Not since the death of James A. Duncan has the grave of any man among us been bedewed by the tears of a greater multitude of God's children."¹³

¹³ Keene, p. 290.



REV. JOSEPH A. PROCTOR
Served Trinity 1868-1870

Joseph Proctor was born around 1830 near Edenton, North Carolina, to wealthy, slave-owning parents who brought their son up “in the ways of the Lord.”¹ Although orphaned when he was a young boy, he was given a sound and well provided for education. He grew up to be tall and handsome with a “manly bearing.”²

In 1852, at about age 22, Proctor attended the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in Fredericksburg, Virginia, and was admitted into the conference. His first appointment was to a circuit in the Lynchburg District. He was quickly recognized as an excellent preacher and was requested by and served some of the best stations. Among his early appointments were Leesburg in 1858 and Washington, D.C., from 1859 to 1861. While serving in Washington, Rev. Proctor came only one vote shy of being appointed chaplain to the House of Representatives. Upon the start of the Civil War, because of his Southern heritage, he left the nation’s capital and returned south.

“His manners were charming, urbane, affable, modest and sincere. The pleasant voice, the gracious smile, the hearty handshake, seemed to be all that could be desired in a gentleman to make him the winner of friends and a leader of men.”³ In addition to these traits, he had the qualities of an effective preacher. “His sermons were models of literary finish, and were delivered with elegant voice and gesture... almost faultless in its excellence.”⁴

Rev. Proctor quickly rose to positions of prominence in the conference. He was appointed presiding elder to the Fredericksburg District in 1861. His next appointments included Market Street, Petersburg; Main Street, Danville; and Trinity, Richmond. While at Trinity from 1868 to 1870, he was assisted by Robert A. Armistead at Rocketts mission. Armistead’s responsibilities the following year included Oregon and Sidney, missions under Centenary. Rev. Proctor’s next appointments were as presiding elder to the Charlottesville, Murfreesboro and Norfolk Districts.

In the prime of his life, he married Miss Kate Foreman of Norfolk County, Virginia, who was held in high esteem as a refined, Christian woman. They had a happy life together. Because of failing health, he retired to his farm at Hickory, Norfolk County in 1890 and was placed on the superannuated list. He welcomed the itinerant ministers and assisted his pastors as needed. Mrs. Proctor’s death in December 1900 brought him much sorrow. He suffered a fatal stroke November 7, 1910, and was buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond. “By it [his ministry], saints were edified, and sinners converted to God.”⁵

¹ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 383.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.



REV. DR. JAMES POWELL GARLAND
Served Trinity 1870-1872

A biographical sketch of a minister often opens with standard facts: date and place of birth, family, education, etc. Not so with Rev. James Powell Garland. A sketch of Rev. Garland's life by John J. Lafferty begins surprisingly by praising his appearance:

Dr. Garland is wanting in nothing that makes up a model of physical grace and manly form. His face is Grecian, and would invite the chisel of the sculptor.¹

The author continues with references to, "the tinge of olive, the straight, raven hair, the upright bearing" as indications of, "the Pocahontas blood in his veins."² It might be safe to conclude from this rather breath-taking description that the Rev. J. P. Garland attracted many admirers to his congregations – some not just enthralled by his pastoral abilities.

More mundane details of this apparent Adonis's life include the fact that he was born in Amherst County, Virginia, November 9, 1835, to Samuel Meredith Garland and Mildred Jordan Garland. His father was clerk of Amherst County Court and was also a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1850. His paternal great-grandfather was brother-in-law to Patrick Henry and served under his command in 1775. His maternal grandfather, after whom he was named, was a well-respected physician. Both sides of the family produced many people who gave distinguished service to their communities in varied capacities.

While some of his relatives were Methodists, most were Episcopalians, and he was raised in that faith. In May 1853, however, he attended his first Methodist revival meeting and was converted.

He continued with an education that included studies at Higginbotham Academy, and later at Emory and Henry College, from which he graduated in 1857. He was determined to study law but felt a strong call to the ministry. He resisted at first but finally abandoned his law studies and was received on trial into the Virginia Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at Portsmouth and licensed to preach in November 1858. During that same year, he married Lucy Virginia Braxton of Fredericksburg. They would have eight children, all of whom survived into adulthood.

Methodist ministers in the nineteenth century were "broken in after the Old Methodist fashion to circuit preaching."³ They moved to different circuits frequently. Rev. Garland's first assignment in 1858 was as a preacher in the Appomattox Circuit. He was next sent to Cumberland for

¹ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference, Twentieth Century Edition* (Richmond, Va., 1901), p. 55.

² Ibid.

³ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 334.

a year in 1859 and then on to Fincastle from 1860 to 1861. During these early years of his ministry, he conducted several successful revivals, bringing in many converts.

The thunder of war loomed over the Commonwealth, and in 1861 he resigned his charge at Fincastle to become a Confederate Army chaplain in the 52nd Regiment, Virginia Infantry. The following year he transferred to the 49th Regiment, Army of Northern Virginia. He served as chaplain at the battles of Chancellorsville, Winchester, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse and Cold Harbor among others. Poor health forced him to resign his chaplaincy in 1864. He was appointed to the Amherst Circuit, his home circuit, for the next four years, and regained his strength.

Following the war, he served the Ninth Street Church in Manchester for two years, followed by Trinity in Richmond for another two years. His assistant for the Rocketts ministry was noted in the conference minutes of 1870 as "to be supplied." R. H. Mullen was named to this position for 1871.

Portsmouth's Dinwiddie Street Station was his next charge. During his four-year tenure, he laid the cornerstone for the rebuilding of the church. When completed, it was renamed Monumental in honor of Robert Williams, pioneer Methodist preacher who formed the first Virginia circuit, the Brunswick Circuit, in the 1770s.

Rev. Garland was next assigned to Petersburg for four years, where he led the Market Street Station. As in his early ministry, he conducted numerous revivals, bringing many converts to Methodism. He was made presiding elder to the Randolph-Macon District in 1880. Sadly, it was during his ministry there that his wife, Lucy, died. Following her death, Rev. Garland asked to be released from his charge to take care of his domestic affairs and family.

After this respite, he was appointed presiding elder to the Lynchburg District in 1882. Two happy events occurred during his tenure in Lynchburg. First, in 1884 he married Narcissa E. Dillard, and second, in 1885 Emory and Henry College, his alma mater, conferred on him an honorary degree of doctor of divinity.

Continuing his dedicated service, Dr. Garland ministered to many districts as presiding elder toward the end of the nineteenth century, including Richmond, 1886; Lynchburg, 1890; Norfolk, 1894; West Richmond, 1898; and Richmond again in 1899.

It was during this last term in Richmond that Dr. Garland served as a member of the program committee for the Centennial Celebration of Richmond Methodism, during which he gave an impromptu speech at the ecumenical Sunday school reunion held at Trinity. Among the dignitaries present were Richard M. Taylor, mayor of Richmond, and Governor Lyon G. Tyler, who shared memories of his work as a superintendent of a Methodist Sunday school.

Dr. Garland was chosen by his peers to represent them at the general conferences held in 1890, 1894, 1898 and 1902. He served on the committee on appeals, the general conference's version of an appellate court. He also served as a long-term trustee of Randolph-Macon College and was a member of its executive committee.

Sadly, his personal life received a shock when Narcissa Garland died suddenly in 1901. He found personal happiness again toward the end of 1902 with his marriage to Lucy Richardson of New Kent County.

In 1904, his health failing, he presided over the district conference with the assistance of his colleagues and Mrs. Garland.. Realizing his physical limitations, he asked to be placed on the superannuated list and retired to his home in New Kent County.

In January 1906, Rev. Dr. James Powell Garland, age 70, died from complications of heart disease and pneumonia. The following memorial appeared in the *Caduceus of Kappa Sigma*:

The Rev. J. Powell Garland, D.D., a minister of the M. E. Church, South, and an old and honored alumnus of Phi Mu Omicron, died at his home in Lynchburg, Va., January 13, 1906. A local paper says:

The funeral services to the last detail were arranged by himself. His deathbed scene was the grandest sermon he ever preached. An hour before the end, which he himself said must be near, he called his children to his bedside and instructed them on the way of life, directed his sons, whom he named as his executors, in detail, in what manner his estate should be managed and disposed of, gave thoughtful directions as to his funeral and burial, exhorted them to love each other and stand together and having set his earthly home in order, without excitement or mental weakness, closed his eyes and surrendered his soul to the God who gave it.⁴

Rev. James Powell Garland, good and faithful servant, was laid to eternal rest in Spring Hill Cemetery, Lynchburg, Virginia, January 16, 1906.

⁴ *Caduceus of Kappa Sigma*, Vol. 20.

OTHER SOURCES:

Edward Leigh Pell, ed., *A Hundred Years of Richmond Methodism* (Richmond, Va.: Idea Publishing Co., 1899).



REV. DR. ADAM CLARKE BLEDSOE
Served Trinity 1872-1876

"He has a splendid presence... His face beams with intellect and benignity... He will lead in a solo (and he is almost unrivaled as a singer) and the verses become a sermon of song."¹ These are the words of one author describing Rev. Adam C. Bledsoe, pastor at Trinity from 1872 to 1876.

Rev. Bledsoe was born in Buckingham County, Virginia, February 12, 1839, of devout Methodist parents, John and Nancy Bledsoe. They moved to Fluvanna County where he spent his childhood and youth. His father was a faithful steward and Sunday school superintendent. Bledsoe Chapel, on the Scottsville Circuit, was built mainly at his expense and bore his name in his honor. Rev. Bledsoe's maternal grandfather was a Methodist minister, so young Adam had deep roots in the ministry.

He attended prestigious Emory and Henry College and in 1859 made his commitment to Christ during a revival at that institution. During his college years, he was the leader of the young Christians. He graduated in 1860 with high honors. In later years, Emory and Henry conferred the doctorate degree on him.

Rev. Bledsoe's professional clergy-life took a traditional pat, for the times. He received his license to preach in 1861, and he was assigned as an assistant pastor on the Albemarle Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South's Virginia Conference.. He stayed there just two months, after which he served as a pastor in Harrisonburg until 1863. Next, he was appointed a chaplain in the Confederate Army to the Fifteenth Virginia Cavalry.

After the war, without a pastoral assignment, he opened a boarding school in Scottsville, Virginia, which he operated for two years. One commentator noted, "In this position his sphere of influence was an important one, having numbers of young men committed to his charge, upon whom impressions for good were made for a lifetime."²

However, Rev. Bledsoe was intent about preaching the Gospel, and in November 1868 he returned to the ministry. He was appointed to the Louisa Circuit for two years. "During this period the circuit was wonderfully blessed with revivals."³ Next, he served one-year appointments to the Pungoteague Circuit and to Central Church, Portsmouth, Virginia.

In 1872 Rev. Bledsoe was sent to Trinity Church in Richmond, where "he labored four years with great success."⁴ In his second and fourth year, more than 300 people were converted. In each of his years at Trinity, he was assigned an assistant minister to oversee the church's program at Rocketts Mission. Rev. R. H. Mullen, having been assigned in 1871, continued to serve in this

¹ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Richmond, Va., Christian Advocate Office, 1890), p. 97.

² Ibid, p. 98.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

position until November 1874. At the Virginia Annual Conference that year, Rocketts became Nicholson Street Church, and Rev. Herbert T. Bacon, serving under the guidance of Dr. Bledsoe, was appointed as its first minister.

A monumental event took place during Dr. Bledsoe's years at Trinity. In 1873, at the encouragement of the architect, Albert L. West, the building committee resolved to add the steeple to the tower and thus truly complete the edifice begun in 1860. The work had been suspended during the Civil War and completed in 1866 except for the steeple. The [Richmond] *Daily Dispatch* of October 4, 1873, reported that Bledsoe and a few church members raised the necessary funds finally to complete the edifice after an interval of seven years. Trinity's iconic steeple was described by the paper as having been constructed "of wood, with iron finial, with copper point tipped with platina that reaches the height of nearly 200 hundred feet above the curbstone." [Reflections of Faith gives the height as 225 feet.]⁵ Trinity's famous spire was dismantled in 1955, after suffering a devastating blow from Hurricane Hazel the previous year. By that time, Trinity was no longer occupying the building.

The remaining years of Dr. Bledsoe's career followed a Methodist preacher's typical pattern. He completed assignments in Lynchburg, Norfolk, Broad Street Church in Richmond, North Danville, Petersburg, and his last appointment, Charlottesville. In all these assignments "crowds heard him gladly, and more than a thousand were converted."⁶ Throughout his career, Bledsoe was described as a big man with a first rate singing voice. "His stature was of unusual size, stout and tall."⁷ As for his singing, he was characterized as "our sweetest singer.... The victorious verse became a Methodist Marseillaise. His voice had richness and compass."⁸ Dr. Bledsoe was an outstanding preacher, and he was described as giving "the Church much – his genius, his life. The career of an evangelist was peculiarly fitted to his powers... He was foremost [a] preacher."⁹

He died September 4, 1896, in Charlottesville, Virginia. He was survived by his wife, Annie Thurmond Bledsoe, a son and two daughters.

Adam Bledsoe did not edit an influential newspaper, become a college president, nor was he appointed a bishop, but he heeded the words: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."¹⁰

⁵ Sue Ould Marmon and Dorothy Wilber Peers, *Reflections of Faith: A Bicentennial History*, (Richmond, VA: Trinity UMC, 1990): p. 12.

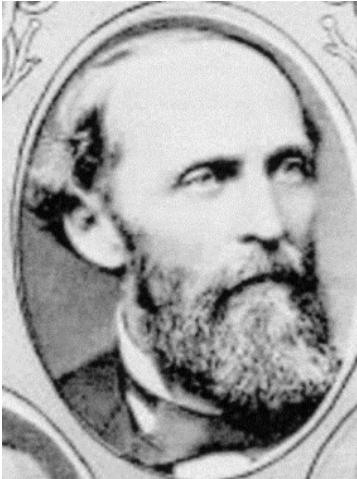
⁶ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 263.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Matthew 28:19-20 (RSV).



REV. DR. WILLIAM ELLIOTT JUDKINS
Served Trinity 1876-1880

William Elliott Judkins was one of the Methodist church's most gifted clergymen. He was endowed with an intelligent mind, a memory able to store carefully the literature of his calling and a commendable smooth that delivered his thoughtful words with ease and grace. Where others labored over sermons, he delivered them with ease. These qualities brought him devoted friends and pleased congregations.¹

Dr. Judkins was especially gifted in prayer. His sympathetic nature fitted him for helpful ministration to the sick. In homes of sorrow his presence was a comfort. He was well instructed in the Holy Scriptures and in the history and teachings of Methodism. He served his generation well and was considered one of the most prominent preachers of his day.

Judkins, the only son of Jarrett W. and Content Judkins, was born in Southampton County, Virginia, April 10, 1829. His father died when he was three years old, leaving his widowed mother to care for him and his four sisters. In January 1841, his mother moved them to Suffolk, Virginia, to obtain better schooling and he spent four years there under good teachers. At age 14, while a student, and under the ministry of Rev. William W. Kennedy, he accepted God and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church.

When he was about age 20, he began struggling with his thoughts of entering the ministry. After about a year, he sought the counsel of his mother whose prayers and constant teachings undoubtedly contributed to his thinking and who promptly gave her blessing. His pastor, Rev. William J. Norfleet, and a few responsible friends confirmed his conviction that the ministry was to be his future.

In August 1852, he entered Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, and November 22, 1852, he was licensed as a local preacher. Yielding to what he felt was God's will, Rev. Judkins decided he would leave college sooner than he had planned. At age 24, Judkins was received on trial into the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South at Lynchburg with the understanding he was to remain in college until the end of that year.² He received his first appointment in January 1854 to the Fairfax Circuit on the Washington District. The next year he was returned to this circuit. Church membership on the circuit doubled in those two years.

On November 15, 1855, he married Mary G. Ball of Fairfax County, Virginia. At the 1855 Conference in Petersburg, Virginia, he was ordained a deacon. From this conference he was sent to the Warrenton Circuit on the Washington District where he remained two years. Then at the November 1857 Conference in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, he was received into full membership and ordained to elder's orders. From this conference he was sent to the Charles City Circuit on the Richmond District.

The year 1858 was difficult. In June, Rev. Judkins came down with an extended illness, and before he fully recovered, his wife was stricken and died on August 3rd. They had been married three years and had a son, William D. Judkins. For the next two years, he was stationed in Charlottesville. A new church

¹ John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference, Twentieth Century Edition* (Richmond, Va., 1901).

² Lafferty, p. 24.

building was begun, though not completed, before he went to High Street Church in Petersburg, Virginia, in 1861.

In December 1862, he married Miss Esther L. McKenzie of Alexandria, Virginia, and began his ministry at Farmville. Soon after this pastorate began, he accepted a request to join the faculty of the Farmville Female College, where he taught for two years.

From 1866 to 1868, Rev. Judkins was assigned to Centenary Church in Lynchburg. Then in 1869, he went to Market Street in Petersburg. While there he filled a similar position to the one he held in Farmville by teaching at Petersburg Female College for one year. After that he was assigned to Dinwiddie Street, now Monumental, in Portsmouth from 1870 to 1872. Next, he went to Court Street Church in Lynchburg from 1873 to 1876. While there both the Lynchburg churches, Court Street and Centenary, combined for a big revival. More than 300 conversions were made.

In 1876 to 1880, Judkins was assigned to Trinity Church in Richmond. He returned to Monumental in Portsmouth from 1881 to 1883. From 1884 to 1887 he was appointed presiding elder of the Norfolk District. During that time, three stations and one circuit were added to the district.

At the close of his fourth year in the Norfolk District, he was stationed at Centenary Church, Richmond, where he served from 1888 until 1891. This pastorate was one of the most successful of his ministry, as membership increased and the church acquired a parsonage costing about \$8,000. During this time, he earned his doctor of divinity from Randolph-Macon College. Yet, this success was darkened by the death of his second wife in 1889.

From Centenary, Dr. Judkins was sent to Laurel Street in Richmond from 1891 to 1893. During this time about 100 members were added to the church. In 1894 he returned to Charlottesville where again more than 100 members were added to the church. In 1895 he was sent to Calvary Church in Danville and then to Ashland from 1896 to 1897.³

In June 1897, he married Miss Bettie W. Hodges of Norfolk, Virginia, and, in 1898, was stationed at Lekies Memorial Church in that city. By the end of the year, Dr. Judkins was appointed presiding elder of the Eastern Shore District. The district was enlarged at the Conference of 1899 by the addition of six Norfolk churches and the name was changed to Norfolk and Eastern Shore District. At the session of 1900 the district was rearranged and named Norfolk District over which Dr. Judkins presided as lieutenant-bishop.

In 1905 Dr. Judkins retired from active service. He continued spending time with other ministers in weekly meetings and attending Sunday church services. His last appearance at a session of conference was at Epworth Church, Norfolk, in 1920, when he made a brief but affectionate and impressive address.

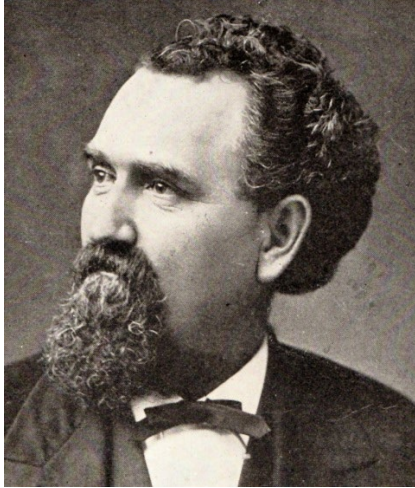
After the death of his third wife in 1910, he went to live with his daughter, Mrs. John S. Jenkins of Norfolk. Dr. Judkins outlived nearly all his contemporaries. He died March 11, 1923, at age 94 and was buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Alexandria.⁴

³ Lafferty, p 26.

⁴ Find A Grave Memorial #104242967, Created by Todd Whitesides, Record Added: January 27, 2013.

OTHER SOURCES:

W. D. Keene Jr., Ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1795-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), pp. 471-472.



REV. DR. JAMES WILEY BLEDSOE
Served Trinity 1880-1884

James Wiley Bledsoe was born in Fluvanna County, Virginia, April 6, 1841. His parents were Methodists, and he joined the Methodist Church early in life. He began his formal education at Humanity Hall Academy, a well-regarded private school in Buckingham County that thrived in the middle nineteenth century until it closed permanently during the Civil War. He went on to Emory and Henry College, where he earned a master of arts degree. At the beginning of the war, he helped raise an artillery company from his county. He was in the Confederate

Army until the surrender, enduring the hardships of camp life at some expense to his health.

After the war he returned home, married Miss Fannie D. Anderson of Lynchburg, Virginia, and began studying law. He had intended to enter the legal profession but changed direction, against the protests of his friends, when he became convinced that it was his duty to be a preacher.

The legal profession was the surest road to financial independence and political success in those days. In the ministry of the gospel, on the other hand, salaries were next to nothing and the way was toilsome. But the need was great for trained consecrated leaders who, called of God and under the guidance of His spirit, would strengthen the hearts and kindle the hopes of the people, and lead them in rebuilding their churches and establishing a new civilization on the ruins of the old.¹

Bledsoe was licensed to preach in November 1868 and began work as a junior preacher. He was admitted on trial at the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South in 1869. Within two years he was ordained deacon and then elder. He was assigned to a series of circuits and stations: West Amherst, Prospect, Smithfield Station, Central Church in Portsmouth, Lynn Street Station in Danville and Charlottesville Station.

In 1878, while pastor at Lynn Street, he published a book under his name at the request of an anonymous author. It was a brief autobiography of a devout Christian woman whose husband was indifferent to religion. Her message was clear: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."^{2, 3}

In 1880 Rev. Bledsoe went to Trinity in Richmond, where he was pastor for four years. During this period, the church was reaping the benefit of post war prosperity and was seeing an increase in middle- and upper-class membership.

Next, he was sent to Market Street in Petersburg and three years later was made presiding elder of the Charlottesville District. Then he was pastor of Park Place Church (later Pace Memorial) in

¹ W. D. Keene Jr., ed., *Memoirs - 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987* (Decorah, Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., 1998), p. 507.

² 2 Corinthians 6:14 (KJV).

³ *Phebe's Marriage*, "Published at the Request of the Authoress" by Rev. J. Wiley Bledsoe, Pastor of Lynn Street M. E. Church South, Danville, Virginia, 1878 (Danville, Va.: I. P. Raines & Co.).

Richmond for four years. At the 1892 Conference his duties were reduced because of ill health. At the Conference of 1895, he was appointed conference missionary secretary, and in 1896 he was sent to the Charlottesville Station again. In 1897 he was appointed chaplain of the Miller Manual Labor School, a technical school in Albemarle County.

In 1899, Bledsoe became general superintendent of Orphanage. "He was directly instrumental in establishing the Virginia Conference Orphanage and was one of the first trustees. He raised the first thousand dollars for buildings and was the first superintendent."⁴ When ill health forced him to resign in September 1902, with only seven children having been admitted to the orphanage, he accepted the position of field agent and held that office until his death.

"Dr. Bledsoe had unusual executive ability...He was given membership in important committees of the Conference; his advice was sought at times of emergency. Randolph-Macon College elected him a trustee, placed him on finance and executive committees, and conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity."⁵

After his wife died in 1918, Dr. Bledsoe lived with his nephew in Danville, Virginia, where he died on March 29, 1928. Dr. Bledsoe and his wife are buried side by side at Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, near Ellett Avenue

⁴ Keene, p. 508.

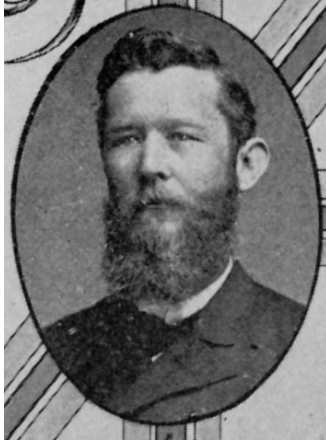
⁵ Ibid.

OTHER SOURCES:

Sue Ould Marmon and Dorothy Wilber Peers, *Reflections of Faith: A Bicentennial History* (Richmond, VA: Trinity United Methodist Church, 1980), pp. 16-17.

John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference, Twentieth Century Edition* (Richmond, Va., 1901), p. 87.

Paul H. Neff, "Eighty years of child care," *Virginia Advocate* (Richmond, Va., June 10, 1982).



REV. DR. JAMES CLAYTON REED
Served Trinity 1884-1887

At the time of his death in January 1935, at the age of 92, James C. Reed was the oldest Methodist minister in Virginia and the last veteran of the Civil War in the Methodist clergy. The son of an itinerant Methodist preacher, older brother to the celebrated medical doctor Walter Reed and a sergeant in the Confederate army who was with General Lee at Appomattox, it was said of Reed: "In purity of character, singleness of heart, correctness of conduct, courageous discharge of duty – in fact, in all qualities that constitute genuine worth and Christian manhood – he has no superior among the many meritorious men of the Methodist ministry."¹ Reed's "tall and erect body was crowned by a well-poised head, ruled by a strong mind, warmed by a generous heart, animated by a gentle spirit, radiant often with genial humor. The fine combination of virtues which he embodied made him a valued citizen, a cherished friend and neighbor, a popular pastor, a capable and earnest preacher, a true, devoted husband and father."²

James Clayton Reed was born in Pasquotank County, North Carolina, November 1, 1842, the son of Pharaba White Reed and Rev. Lemuel Sutton Reed. Lemuel was the pastor of the Gloucester Circuit in 1851 when Reed's younger brother, Walter, was born in the parsonage at Belroi. The "humble little cabin"³ is now on the National Register of Historic Places as the birthplace of Major Walter Reed, M.D., the U.S. Army physician renowned for his breakthrough research and discoveries into the cause and spread of typhoid and yellow fever.

Before the Civil War, Reed spent two sessions at Randolph-Macon College, which at that time was in Boydton, Virginia. At age 18, when his father was pastor of Bedford Circuit, he volunteered in the Confederate army, joining the Bedford Light Artillery at Jamestown Island on July 17, 1861. A "reluctant secessionist," Reed had declared his "favor of the Union" at Randolph-Macon but lost his resolve following President Lincoln's call for volunteers from Virginia "to squelch the rebellion" after the firing on Fort Sumter and the Commonwealth's ensuing secession.⁴ Appointed a sergeant in September 1861, Reed saw significant combat in the war. He was in battles around Yorktown, Virginia, in the spring of 1862, followed by battles around Richmond, and then the Battle of Second Manassas (Bull Run).

Sergeant Reed was severely wounded at the Battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam) on September 17, 1862, when a shell tore away his left hand and wrist. He was first treated at a makeshift hospital

¹John J. Lafferty, *Sketches and Portraits of the Virginia Conference, Twentieth Century Edition* (Richmond, Virginia: Christian Advocate Office, 1901), p. 119.

²W. D. Keene Jr., Ed., *Memoirs – 200 Years! Soldiers of the Cross 1785-1987*, (Decorah, Iowa: The Amundsen Publishing Company, 1998), p. 575.

³*Richmond Christian Advocate*, Vol. XLIII, No. 30, Aug. 1, 1935, p. 17.

⁴"Unmonumented Saints" by David W.C. Bearr, *Virginia United Methodist Heritage Magazine* (Richmond, Virginia: Conference Historical Society, Vol. XXII, No. 1, 1996), p. 15.

near the Potomac River. At the time of Reed's injury, his father, Lemuel, was serving Methodist churches in Nottoway County. Reed made his way on foot to Staunton and then boarded a train for Richmond. By fortunate timing, James arrived in Richmond on the same day Lemuel had come to the city to retrieve his underage son, Thomas, who had been released by the Richmond City Battalion. Knowing James's condition, Lemuel met the incoming train in the hope that his oldest son might be aboard. That evening, the Reed family stayed in Richmond with Rev. Alexander Gustavus Brown, then minister of Trinity Church. They reached their home in Blackstone—then known as “Blacks and Whites”—on October 4.

After his wounds healed, Reed was detailed under a quartermaster in Petersburg to collect taxes for the Confederate government, remaining with his father during this assignment. He sought to be reunited with his company, and after a 22-month absence he rejoined the battery in July 1864 at Fort Dancier, south of Richmond near Dutch Gap. Reed saw action in several artillery engagements up until the end of the war. Reed's final campaign with the Bedford Light Artillery took him to Appomattox in April 1864. When asked following a Confederate Reunion to provide a statement about his war record, Reed modestly summarized his account as follows: “In other words, joined the Confederate Army, fought with Lee, starved with Lee, surrendered with Lee.”⁵

At the end of the war, Lemuel's appointment was to the Brunswick Circuit, and the family lived in Lawrenceville. James, a “reluctant scholar,”⁶ enrolled at the University of Virginia. He was only a few courses shy of his diploma after a session and a half at the university when he heard the call to the ministry. During the war, Reed and his company had not been part of the religious revival that had swept Lee's Army and made campfire prayer meetings commonplace. Virginia Conference biographer John J. Lafferty revealed Reed's religious progress:

“With the vitiating influence of camp life and neglect of religious duty, ‘hope declined and love grew cold’ in his heart; but, in 1866, at a meeting held in Mecklenburg County, Va., by his brother-in-law, the lamented Rev. J.W. Blincoe, the backslider was reclaimed.”⁷

Reed was licensed to preach by the Quarterly Conference of the Charlottesville Station September 8, 1868, and, in Charlottesville, he was admitted into the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South on trial November 23 of the same year and sent to the Nelson Circuit. In November 1869 he was ordained deacon in Richmond and sent to the Powhatan Circuit. A year later, he was ordained an elder and returned to Powhatan. Having completed the Conference “Course of Study” and been received into the full connection, Rev. Reed was given a succession of appointments, holding at least 12 pastorates over 38 years, including his three years at Trinity in Richmond from 1884 to 1887.

⁵ *Richmond Christian Advocate*, Aug. 1, 1929, p. 3.

⁶ Berr, p. 19.

⁷ *Ibid.*

The contemporary biographical sketches are effusive in their praise and affection for the younger Rev. Reed. Lafferty, in his "Sketches," wrote

"In stature he is tall, measuring full six feet... His countenance is strongly marked, his features being somewhat rugged, but pleasing and attractive. He has brain as well as brawn, for his intellect is as robust as his physique...

As a preacher, Mr. Reed is as free from empty platitudes as from pyrotechnical display. ... His sermons offer to the hearer nourishing fruit rather than fading flowers. ... He always has something to say, says it in the fewest words, and the congregation leave the church feeling that the preacher thought more of the message than of the messenger.... There are few better preachers than Mr. Reed, and none more unassuming or less artificial. He never poses as an orator. In forming opinions, he is cautious; in expressing them, discreet. Yet when his conclusions are fully matured, he is bold and unflinching in maintaining the conscientious convictions for which, if necessary, he would die. ..."⁸

Reed's profile for "Memoirs – 200 Years!" states that his

"high character and sterling qualities gained him first place in the esteem and confidence of his brethren. His handless arm, mute witness of valor, gained him sacred place in the affection of all who knew him. ... He cherished no selfish ambition, rarely claimed the Conference floor, but when depression and defeatism challenged his faith and courage, his voice rang out in vigorous protest."⁹

Rev. Reed married Miss Sallie Clarke of Fluvanna County December 13, 1869. She was described as a "a choice young woman who enriched his life and graced his home."¹⁰ They had 10 children, three of whom died in infancy. Mrs. Reed died in January 1890. Rev. Reed married Miss Janie Veale of Portsmouth April 2, April 1891. They had one child, Jesse Veale Reed. Sadly, in 1918 he was killed in France in World War I.

Rev. Reed served 15 years as a presiding elder over six districts, was a member of countless boards and commissions of the annual conference and was also elected a delegate to general conference six times. Reed was an active trustee of Randolph-Macon College for 37 years, where he had been given the degree of doctor of divinity.

He retired in 1922 to Blackstone, "in the midst of parishioners of former days and devoted friends of many years."¹¹ James and his father together served more than 100 years in the Methodist ministry.

After several years of failing health, Dr. Reed died at home in Blackstone January 7, 1935. The next day and during his funeral January 9, flags in Blackstone flew at half-staff, and all schools and businesses were closed. He was survived by his wife Janie, six of his children and a half-

⁸ Lafferty, pp. 119-120.

⁹ Keene, p. 575.

¹⁰ Memoirs, p. 576.

¹¹ Memoirs, p. 576.

sister. Dr. Reed was laid to rest in his Confederate uniform in Blackstone's Lakeview Cemetery near his son, Lieutenant Jesse Reed.

Ten days after his death, The Richmond Christian Advocate remembered the beloved former Trinity minister with these words:

On the morning of January 7 at one-thirty, Dr. James C. Reed departed this world for heaven. He lived in this world for ninety-two years, two months and six days.

He was the last surviving Confederate soldier in the Methodist ministry, if not the entire South.

He leaves behind as a heritage to this earth an influence for good not surpassed by any and equaled by few. . .

The church was always safe in his hands as was everything else. He never embarrassed his friends or his Church, but honored it and them at all times.

Few men were as well versed in the facts of life and none surpassed him in uncommon common sense.

He was old-fashioned in his conception of Righteousness and Religion, but knew how to adapt himself and his Religion to life. He was converted in the Old Fashion way and held to the Right Road until it carried him to Heaven.

We will never see his like again. We are poorer because he has gone, but richer because he was here."¹²

¹² *Richmond Christian Advocate*, January 17, 1935, Vol. XLIII, No. 3, p. 9.