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SOME MINISTERS I HAVE KNOWN.

By

Fr. N. G. Newman



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Some Ministers I Have known

By - N. G. NEWMAN

This paper is a personal word about the outstanding ministers of the Eastern Virginia Conference with whom I was associated in the half century from 1872 to 1922.

Mills Burwell Barrett

Mills Burwell Barrett was the son of Rev. Mills Barrett and the grandson of Rev. Burwell Barrett who was associated with James O'Kelly in the first years of the Christian movement. He was born in Norfolk county but lived and died in Southampton county, the home of his ancestors, and was a member of old Barretts Church. He was ordained at Antioch church, Isle of Wight county, in 1850, the ordination sermon being preached by Rev. Isaac N. Walter of Ohio. He then labored for two or three years in Georgia and Alabama. Returning to this conference he first served Jerusalem (1st Church, Norfolk) and Providence in Norfolk county. Later he served Spring Hill, Barretts and other churches in Southampton county. He was president of the Eastern Virginia Conference for many years and was a good presiding officer. He had a fine physique and dignified bearing. He was a gifted orator and at times preached with great power. In his early ministry he was a popular evangelist and conducted many great revivals. He died in 1891 at the age of sixty three years.

Jesse T. Whitley

Jesse T. Whitley was from Antioch church, Isle of Wight county. He had a fine intellect, was a good student, and became the most scholarly minister in the conference. He was reserved and dignified in manner and clear and concise in speaking and writing. He was pastor of Antioch, Suffolk, Spring Hill, and other churches. He also once edited the Christian Sun. He united with the Virginia Methodist Conference in 1878, was appointed to important charges and became a presiding elder. He kept in sympathetic touch with the people of his first love and preached his last sermon, as he did his first, in Suffolk Christian Church. After retirement he lived in Norfolk and edited a religious column in the Virginian-Pilot.

Robert Howell Holland

Robert Howell Holland dates back to 1819. He was originally from Holy Neck church, but later identified with Hebron and Holland churches. He was a good student, availed himself of the best and ~~and of the best~~ advantages his community afforded for his day. He wrote contracts, wills, deeds, and sometimes speeches for his neighbors. He was ordained at Providence, Norfolk county, in 1852, and did much itinerant preaching in his early min-

He died in 1987 at the age of 60. He was a devoted family man and had three children. He was also a member of the local church and served as a deacon.

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istry. Later he served Holy Neck, Union, (Southampton), Damascus, Hebron, Holland and other churches. He retired from the regular pastorate in 1873, but remained active. He filled appointments for others, conducted funerals, married couples, visited sick, wrote for papers, and was active in his local church and in the work of the denomination. He wrote the biography of Dr. W.B. Wellons, a volume of 448 pages published in 1881. He organized Corinth Chapel and Laurel Hill colored Christian churches. He gave the land for the latter and otherwise helped in its establishment. He also helped to organize Zion colored Christian church at Box Elder, and the Eastern Virginia Colored Christian Conference. With the assistance of Dr. Wellons and others he ordained Justin Copeland the first colored man ever raised to eldership in this section.

It was chiefly through his influence and financial help that Hebron Church, when about to die, was moved to Holland Christian Church, now one of our largest and best rural churches, is a monument to his wisdom and devoted service. He was an active worker in this church till enfeebled by age. He then attended all the services and enjoyed the fruits of his labors till shortly before his death in 1808 at the age of eighty-nine years.

He left more tangible results of his labors than the more outstanding ministers of his day.

#### Edwin Williams Beale

Edwin Williams Beale was a native of Southampton county and a member of Union church. He was educated at Graham Institute, Graham, N.C. under two great educators--Rev. John R. Holt and Rev. Albert G. Anderson. He is said to have been an excellent student and made rapid progress. He taught and clerked till licensed by the Eastern Virginia conference at Bethlehem in 1856, <sup>at the age of 21 years</sup> at the conference of 1857. He was first appointed an itinerant to the "Lower District," which included Liberty, Jerusalem, Providence and Pleasant Ridge churches. He was transferred in 1861 to the North Carolina and Virginia conference where he was a prominent worker and official till 1872. He served New Providence, Union Ridge, Shallow Well and Mt. Zion. In 1872 he returned to the Eastern Virginia Conference to serve Cypress Chapel, Damascus, Berea, and Oakland. Later he served Antioch, Bethlehem and Windsor. Some of these he served continuously through this last nine years of his ministry.

His churches were among the best in the conference and he received the largest salary --sometimes as much as \$850.00. The average salary at this time was from \$300.00 to \$400.00. For two years he was Superintendent of the Suffolk Collegiate Institute and did hard and successful work for the institution.

He was never a popular speaker but an untiring worker, loyal to every enterprise of the conference and a faithful and loving pastor. He was the most saintly man I have ever known and his very presence emanated a spiritual influence. One of his great contributions was his help to ministerial students. He encouraged them, gave practical aid and inspired them with his spirit. It was he who led the late Dr. John U.





Newman into the Oakland church, encouraged him to enter the ministry, took him into his own house, and gave him fatherly care and wise counsel. He died in 1881, at sixty three years of age.

#### John T. Kitchen

John T. Kitchen was also a native of Southampton county and a member of Union church. He was educated at the Suffolk Collegiate Institute, <sup>was</sup> licensed at Cypress Chapel in 1873 and was ordained at Berea (Nansemond) in 1875. In an active ministry of thirty years he served Cypress, Hebron, Union, Isle of Wight C.H., Liberty Spring, Mt. Carmel, Windsor, Eurer, Oakland, and other churches. He also served several years in the Virginia Valley Conference. He was a man of fine appearance--broad square shoulders, erect, standing six feet, two inches and weighing 225 lbs. He was dignified in bearing, chaste and elegant in his language, and gracious in manner. He had a keen aesthetic sense, reveled in the beauty of nature and sought the beautiful in language and literature. He was never a popular speaker, but his exemplary life and kindly spirit commanded respect and made him an influence for good. He died at the Protestant Hospital, Norfolk, Virginia, October 8th, 1920.

#### John Pressley Barrett

John Pressley Barrett was from Antioch church in Isle of Wight county, and was educated at the Suffolk Collegiate Institute and Richmond College. He was licensed at Cypress Chapel in 1873 and ordained at Berea church in 1875. He was pastor at Antioch, Providence, Berea (Norfolk), Raleigh, N.C., Memorial Christian Temple, Covington, Ohio, Reidsville, N.C., and other churches. He owned and edited the Christian Sun for thirteen years and later edited the Herald of Gospel Liberty at Dayton, Ohio for twelve years. He loved editorial work, was a prolific writer and ready debater, and an uncompromising champion of the traditional interpretation of the Bible. He was better educated than most of our ministers at that time. He was a man of the strictest moral integrity, great loyalty and zeal and soon became the leading minister in the conference. In pulpit and press he vigorously advocated and promoted every enterprise of the church. He died at Winston-Salem, N.C. on May 1st, 1924, at the age of 72 years.

#### John Uguhart Newman

John Uguhart Newman was born in Portsmouth, Va, in 1860 and died at Elon College, N. C. in 1942, aged 82 years. He was a frail youth, unable to work or eat like others and continued physically weak throughout life. He came from Oakland Church and was educated at the Suffolk Collegiate Institute, the University of North Carolina and Yale. He was licensed at Barretts Church in 1878 when 18 years of age, and ordained at Union (Southampton) in 1883. At the death of Rev. E.W. Beale he was called from his studies at the U.N.C. to take charge of Bethlehem and Oakland until a permanent pastor could be secured. He was a joint principal with Prof.

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P. J. Kernodle of the Suffolk Collegiate Institute in 1883 and 1884. He graduated from the U. N. C. in 1885 and taught one session in Antioch College in Ohio. Returning to N. C. he taught in the old Graham College, Graham, N.C. for the next four years, and served the New Providence, Pleasant Hill, Liberty, Burlington churches in this period. He was connected with Elon College from its opening in 1890, serving as dean for many years and taught Greek and Bible until shortly before his death from an accident in 1942. During this period he served the Elon College church at one time and Union Church at Virgilina. His life was characterized by gentleness of spirit, forgetfulness of self, and sacrificial help to others. He is remembered as an educator rather than preacher.

#### Harrison Holland Butler

Harrison Holland Butler was from Mt. Carmel church, Isle of Wight county, and received his education at the Suffolk Collegiate Institute. He was licensed by this conference in Suffolk, Va. in 1876 and ordained at Windsor in 1879. Among his early pastorates were Berkley, Providence and Berea, Norfolk county. He grew in favor and usefulness as a pastor until he became the most popular minister in the conference. He moved from Berkley to Suffolk in the eighties and spent the remainder of his life there, serving Bethlehem, Cypress, Antioch and Oakland churches. His education was limited and he was never a student, but richly endowed by nature. He had a pleasant personality, affectionate disposition, strong mellow voice and was a natural orator. Under emotional stress he sometimes preached with great power. In his prime he was in great demand as pastor and evangelist. He died in Suffolk, Va., in 1924, at the age of 71 years.

#### Murdock Wellons Butler

Murdock Wellons Butler was from Johnson's Grove in Southampton county, and was educated at the Suffolk Collegiate Institute. He was ordained at Liberty Spring in 1881. Among his earlier pastorates were Bethlehem, Waverly, Spring Hill, and other churches of that area. He also served First Church, Norfolk, Raleigh, and Henderson, N. C., Newport News, Conshocken, Pa., and Munsie, Indiana. Late in life he was called from retirement to serve the Wakefield charge. He was a man of pleasing personality, kindly disposition, and devout Christian spirit. He was refined in manner and chaste in speech. He was a good preacher and a hardworking, faithful pastor, and loyal to the denomination. He died in 1947 at the age of 87 years.



### William Thomas Walker

William Thomas Walker was a native of Caswell county, N.C., and spent only six years in this conference.

He was a great grandson of James O'Kelly and had some of his heroic spirit. He was the most colorful minister of this group, and possessed elements of greatness that never came to full fruition. He entered the confederate army in June, 1861 at the age of 17, was wounded at "seven pines" and lost an arm. He was educated at Graham Institute under John R. Holt and Albert C. Anderson. He had a fine intellect, was a real student, and became one of the strongest men in the N.C. and Va. Conference. He was licensed by the conference at Union Ridge, Alamance county in 1867 and ordained at Salem Chapel, Forsythe county in 1868. He served Hines Chapel, Salem Chapel, and Mt. Bethel for a period, and then the Va. Valley conference churches until 1878. He then came to this conference, served Suffolk church four years and Berea (Nancemond) six. He was editor of the Christian Sun for a portion of this period. After returning to N. C. he served New Providence, Shallow Well, and Burlington churches in the N.C. & Va. Conference. Later he edited the "North Carolina Prohibitionist," and was a candidate for Governor on the prohibition ticket in 1888. "It was generally conceded that he made one of the strongest and most brilliant canvasses the state had known in many years." He was a man of strong personality, honest and deep convictions, tough in debate, and severe against an antagonist. On the floor of this conference at Liberty Spring in 1881 he faced an opponent represented by a prominent lawyer and defended himself in a forensic speech that an intelligent hearer said "would have done credit to any lawyer in the state." His last years were spent in declining health on his farm in Guilford county, N.C. where he died in 1895 at the age of 51 years.

### Malcom L. Hurley

Malcom L. Hurley was a native of Montgomery county, N.C. and received his education at the Graham Institute. After serving a number of churches in the N.C. conference, he came to this conference in 1882 and remained for ten years. He served Holy Neck, Liberty Spring, Bethany, Berea (Nan'd), and organized and served Franklin church. He was then out of the pastorate for many years on account of ill health, but was serving churches in the Western N.C. conference at the time of his death in 1907. He had remarkable gifts as a preacher--"wonderful memory, fluent speech, manner and voice of the orator, and rare insight into human nature." He knew how to handle men. He was a money raiser, church builder and progressive agitator. His keen wit and friendly nature won him many friends, and in his best days was one of the most popular preachers in the Southern Convention.





## Charles J. Jones

Charles J. Jones came to this conference from Ohio in 1890 and remained till 1895. He organized the Memorial Christian Temple in Norfolk and served it for this period. Starting as an obscure mission he soon built up a good congregation and an active membership. The church building was completed and dedicated in 1894. Previous to this he had conducted a revival for Dr. Staley in the Suffolk Christian Church, regarded as one of the best ever held in the church and at which certain young men were reached who later became the most prominent men in Suffolk.

In Dr. Jones's early ministry he did hard service on our western frontier along with the famous Peter Cartwright. Later he served prominent churches in Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts. He edited the Herald of Gospel Liberty for eight years and one time was a general evangelist.

Dr. Jones was of English extraction. His parents were simple, pious English folk who before they ever entered the bridal chamber knelt and in ~~the~~ simplicity promised God that if He ever gave them a son he should be given back to Him for the gospel ministry. Dr. Jones was the first born and said he could not remember the day when he did not feel that he belonged to God and was born into the world to be a minister. He had the finest ministerial appearance I have ever seen. When I first knew him he was just past mid-life with graying hair and beard. He was large and erect. He had an impelling personality which seemed a combination of nobility, humanity, and spirituality. He stood over six feet tall and weighed over two hundred pounds and looked every inch the minister. He was well educated and kept informed. He was a good student and sermonizer. His sermons were, to me, the most inspiring and soul lifting I ever heard. In private conversation he would <sup>sometimes</sup> become eloquent and lead you into the realms of the spirit until you fancied yourself on Mt. Pisgah's height with visions of a promised land. "He was a man; take him for all and all, I shall not look upon his like again."



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