

WILLIAM CHITTENDEN WAY

He was one of the best known and best loved men ever enrolled in the Detroit annual conference. After forty-nine years of ministerial life in that body, his name was transferred from the roll of the church militant to that of the church triumphant. This exchange of the mortal for the immortal – the terrestrial for the celestial – occurred on the 3d inst. from his home in Leslie. He had been declining in health for some time, and came down gradually and sweetly to his translation.

Bro. Way was seventy-two years old, and was born in East Avon, Livingston County, NY, July 31, 1824. On his father's side he came of English blood and Puritan stock and an ancestor, Henry Way, settled in Dorchester, Mass., in 1630. His mother's maiden name was Chittenden, and her forefathers were Scotch. Many descendants of the two families have come into positions of usefulness, and some into prominence.

Until he was sixteen, young Way was in School and at work on the small farm. He then spent two years as a clerk in a general country store, which were followed by three years in the printing office of the *Livingston Republican*, a paper published at Geneseo, in Livingston County. Some little time was spent after that in various towns in central New York, and then he settled down to the clothing trade, his father and brother and himself opening a store in Rochester, his father being a tailor by trade. In 1856, through the wrong of another, the business failed, and Bro. Way went to work in a daguerreotype establishment, and continued there at \$1,200 a year until he exchanged his position for that of an itinerant at \$450 a year.

His education was limited to the district school. His father gave him his choice at the critical time of life of learning a trade or going on with his studies. The father wished him to choose the latter and attend Canandaigua Seminary. His choice was a trade, and in that choice he afterwards thought he made the great mistake of his life. No doubt that with a more liberal education his ministerial life would have been a more pronounced success.

His mother was a Christian, and from her he very early imbibed religious sentiments and desires, and was ready at the beginning to embrace a Christian life, and would have done so under the wisest care. His father was converted while Bro. Way was a child, and he used to recall the setting up of the family altar, and the picture of the baptism of his father by immersion was indelibly impressed upon his youthful memory. Coming from a Baptist family, his father became a Baptist, and was superintendent of the Baptist Sunday School of the village, which was organized and held in their house. Studying the lessons, his father used Adam Clarke's Commentary, to which the Baptist deacons objected, saying it was a Methodist book. That was Bro. Way's first hearing of Methodists, his mother being a Presbyterian.

In 1842, at the age of eighteen, he was converted in the M. E. Church in LeRoy, where he had gone with a friend. The preacher was Philo Woodward, and he invited seekers

forward after a sermon from James 3:18, and young Way responded, being the only seeker, and after service was converted about midnight in the store while praying with his friend. He joined the Methodist Church, was made class-leader, and taught in the Sunday school, and later was given an exhorter's license. Once he tried to preach and failed and became discouraged, and then followed a time during which his Christian experience was at low ebb. Every time he made an effort to arouse himself to something better he was confronted by the inner command, 'Preach'. Finally he could resist no longer; he gave up his position, came to Detroit, laid his case before Rev. F. A. Blades, was licensed as a local preacher, and put to work under Rev. J. A. Baughman at Lee's Chapel. In the fall, viz., 1857, he joined the conference on trial, Bishop Waugh presiding. The session was at Port Huron, and eighteen were in the class, half of whom remain still in the conference.

His appointments were: 1857, Lee's Chapel; 1858, junior preacher at Wayne, with John Levington in charge; 1859, preacher in charge at Wayne; 1860-61, Plymouth; 1862-64, Chaplain Twenty-Fourth Michigan Infantry; 1865-66, Farmington; 1867-69 Dexter; 1870-72, Sharon; 1873-75, Blissfield; 1876-78, Holly; 1879-81, Rochester; 1882-84, Fort Gratiot; 1885-86, Almont; 1887-88, Bancroft; 1889-91, Chesaning. In 1892, Bro. Way asked to be laced on the Superannuated list, and for the past four years he has been in that relation, living at Leslie, where his daughter, Mrs. Dr. W. H. Morse, resided.

Bro. Way was a genial, common sense man, with a keen appreciation of human nature and a relish for humor. He was spiritual and devout, and yet destitute of cant and sanctimoniousness. His brethren loved him, and his parishioners trusted him as a candid, spiritual teacher. Revivals occurred under his ministry in every charge save Sharon. At Blissfield some 60 were taken into the church, at Holly nearly 100, and at Fort Gratiot over 100. His nervous system became so impaired during his Dexter pastorate that he was quite seriously affected thereby, often fearing that insanity might befall him. These sad fears often rested as a terrible nightmare upon his mind.

His marriage occurred August 30, 1845 at Moscow, NY to Miss Eliza M. Lane. There were two children born, both of whom (Mr. Charles C. Way of Detroit and Mrs. Dr. W. H. Morse, of Leslie) still live, as also does Sister Way. The funeral services were held by Rev. C. A. Varnum, our pastor at Leslie, assisted by other pastors of the place and by Rev. H. W. Hicks, who preached the discourse. The G.A.R. post and the lodge of Masons attended the funeral.

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