

FIFTY YEARS AS A PRESIDING ELDER

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649582761

Fifty Years as a Presiding Elder by Peter Cartwright & W. S. Hooper

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PETER CARTWRIGHT & W. S. HOOPER

**FIFTY YEARS AS A
PRESIDING ELDER**

FIFTY YEARS

AS A

PRESIDING ELDER.

BY

REV. PETER CARTWRIGHT, D. D.,
Of the Illinois Conference.

EDITED BY REV. W. S. HOOPER.

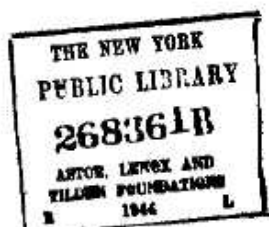


CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK AND WALDEN.

NEW YORK:
CARLTON AND LANAHAN

1871.

69c



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ANNOUNCEMENT.

THIS volume does not contain a biography, but a series of graphic sketches concerning pioneer times and customs. The principal subject of the sketches has long been known in the Church, and his name is familiar as a household word. It is remarkable that he should for so many years have filled the office of presiding elder, and the fact is commemorated in these pages. Like the fabled Phœnix,

"That no second knows nor third,"

his ecclesiastical record stands alone.

Dr. Cartwright began his ministry in the early part of this century and among the first settlers of this Western country. With them and their descendants he has grown up until the infirmities of age are upon him, and the strong man bows himself and the keepers of the house tremble. This is now the memorial of his long life of labor. We have glimpses of the hardships he endured, the perils he encountered, the earnestness with which he preached and argued, the fervency with which he prayed, and the persistency with which he stormed the holds of Satan. The record will serve to strengthen the faith and nurture the graces of its readers, and to this end we cordially commend it.

PUBLISHERS.

Collectors' Bk Each. Feb. 1944

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INTRODUCTION:

BEING A SKETCH OF DR. CARTWRIGHT'S LIFE

PETER CARTWRIGHT was born in Amherst county, Virginia, September 1, 1785. Being of an indigent parentage, he was, in early life, thrown upon his own resources, not only for an immediate temporal support, but for all of his intellectual training, and for every thing necessary for the development of his true manhood.

The sparseness of the settlements and educational advantages compelled him to make a choice between acquiring knowledge by his own unaided efforts and remaining in ignorance. This compulsion, instead of retarding his progress, increased that energy for which his earlier as well as his later life has been distinguished. It required an intense devotion to study in order to prepare him for the future, which his keen foresight had plainly shown to be one of great

importance on account of the rapid increase of population of the West.

Of the few books of science and general knowledge that were accessible to him, by loan or purchase, he made a noble use, until his mind became a vast store-house of valuable information; although without the order and system, perhaps, known to a thorough collegiate education, yet so perfect was his command of that knowledge that at a moment, and under any emergency, in argument, debatē, or in proclaiming Christ from the pulpit, he could bring it into requisition to vanquish an enemy, or convince a sinner of the error of his way.

Knowledge as obtained from books was not the only kind that was necessary in that day. There were the stern necessities and trials of every-day life, wherein a perfect acquaintance with the character of men was necessary in order to be successful; especially was this the case in the itinerancy. In this respect there were none, perhaps, more perfect than Dr. Cartwright, and to his ability to read men is attributable much of his success through life. At one time in an early Conference, when various members were strongly urging the admission of a young man, mainly on account of his literary attainments, Bishop Asbury

quietly heard them through, and then said, "You study books, but I study men." He then gave the future of the candidate, as an itinerant, and it proved very much as he said. This was to a large extent the way Dr. Cartwright viewed men; he considered the man and not the attainments, and rarely was he mistaken in his estimate. The requirements of that day demanded this rare knowledge in men who were to occupy such positions of confidence as were intrusted to Dr. Cartwright.

In the early itinerancy, many instances occurred which called for a firmness and resolution which is now scarcely ever needed—instances wherein the physical power as well as the mental and spiritual were required, not only to subdue the ruffian and keep him from acts of violence, but to teach him the necessity of compliance with moral and religious as well as civil law. Sometimes the severest measures were necessary to convince men of the necessity of conversion; and many times they were very effectual in producing good results.

There have been times when God has raised up men for the accomplishment of certain great results, for the opening up a needed reformation in the Church, the redemption of a nation from vice or slavery, as were Luther and Wesley for