

**LIFE OF REV. JAMES
RICHARDSON: A BISHOP OF
THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH IN CANADA**

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Life of Rev. James Richardson: A Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada by
Thomas Webster

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THOMAS WEBSTER

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THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH IN CANADA**

LIFE OF
REV. JAMES RICHARDSON,

A BISHOP OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
IN CANADA,

BY THOMAS WEBSTER, D.D.,

Author of "HISTORY OF M. E. CHURCH IN CANADA," "WOMAN MAN'S EQUAL," etc.

WITH

INTRODUCTION

BY REV. BISHOP CARMAN, D.D.

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life : and he that winneth souls is wise."

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INTRODUCTION
TO DR. WEBSTER'S LIFE OF
BISHOP RICHARDSON;
BY
BISHOP CARMAN.

When one, that leaves any impress on society at all, has died, we know him better than while he was living. We view his actions and judge his motives with less bias: we set a fairer estimate upon his character; and with a calmer eye, in a clearer light, we perceive the ruling principles of his conduct and the results of his labors. If the will and the way have been evil, the general tendency of our nature—bad as it is sometimes said to be—is *not* to set down aught in malice, but to search out an excuse. And if they have been right, it is a pleasure to the mind to recall them, and a strength to virtue and a joy to the heart to hold them in remembrance.

Because these things are so, the review of the life of a good man can never cease to be both a benefit and a pleasure. Imperfections he may have; errors he may have committed; but the very grandeur of a man is to struggle

above imperfections, and, in moral worth, to shine out beyond errors, so that his excellence is acknowledged, and his life on the earth beams with a perpetual lustre. The steady course of the upright man compels admiration. Kindness in the heart and purity in the life levy a tribute of respect and love on all the generations of men. Our moral instincts are the grandest safeguard of the race, and the hope of religion and truth; to them we must ever appeal. Since the human heart is what it is, and the incentives to virtue and to vice are what they are, human life is that one profound problem, that one solemn and tremendous conflict, from which not one of us stands aside a curious student or an uninterested spectator, but in whose issues our best possessions and our highest happiness are most deeply involved. Wherefore every man that casts the force of his convictions, the energy of his soul and the weight of his character on the side of the good and the true, while he serves his God in his generation, confers an inestimable blessing on his species. He demonstrates that, with all our weaknesses and disadvantages, a purer life is possible to all men; and to all that choose it, it is the safest pathway to honor and felicity.

In presenting the life and character of JAMES RICHARDSON to the public view, Dr. Webster is certainly furnishing such an encouragement and support to religion and virtue. And not only to virtue as taught in the schools, as exemplified and praised in heathen philosophy, but to religion as given in the Holy Scriptures,—the power of God that cometh down from Heaven and worketh wondrously in the hearts of men. To JAMES RICHARDSON religion was not merely a negative

condition, a neutral ground ; it was a positive, vigorous life. It was its province to assimilate all the elements of our manhood to its nature, and to mould the entire being. To him religion meant Christianity. It was not Naturalism, but Supernaturalism. It was not a decent Deism or an orderly Rationalism laying a sickly hand on the arm of man, the pilgrim and warrior, and speaking to him in a faint whisper of duty and destiny. It was an energy in the heart, cooperating with the Reason, and refining and directing the Affections ; it was a force in society, forming the institutions, elevating the conceptions, inspiring the aims, and controlling the conduct of men. It laid a firm grasp upon evil, to check it and cast it out ; it sustained and protected the right with an omnipotent arm ; and it spake in plain words, with strong voice and unfaltering accents, of the relations and engagements of this life, and the prospects and claims of the life to come.

When a man with penetrating mind, extensive information and sound judgment gives in the adhesion, the devotion of a life to a system like Christianity, he manifests his maturest opinions as to its pretensions, and declares his soberest convictions as to its adaptations and merits. But when going farther, he accepts it as the one Divine provision for the wants of man, the remedy given by the Author of our being for all our woes, he binds it to his spirit and his immortality with his reason, and seals it with his faith and hope. But when going even farther yet, he is so impressed with its importance, and so persuaded of its power in all generations of men and in all climes of earth, that he feels impelled to proclaim it to the universal brotherhood as the

will of God and the glad tidings of salvation, he rises into the sublimer sphere of philanthropic thought and action, and pours forth his soul under the throbbings of noblest impulse and in the currents of purest love. With such a man our author has to do, in this interesting narrative. The subject of it did not live with the expectation of having a book written to preserve his name and commemorate his deeds. He lived to serve his God, his country, the Church, the truth. He had no plan to make or spread a fame. He simply did his duty as he understood it. And from his powers of mind and his acquaintance with men and things, it was his privilege and honor to understand it well. He had carefully explored the fields of religious inquiry, and found in the Word of God the rest of his soul; and with all his heart he believed it to be the Word of Life unto all nations. Under the guidance of his Lord, it was as natural, therefore, to proclaim it unto others, as it was to embrace it for himself.

Such votes, it may be said, have always been had, and are yet given, for any and all religions in the world. The statement fails much of truth. Unquestionably there are men of good minds and sound judgment under the sway of all religions. But they could only determine according to the light given them. What is seen through a green glass *alone*, is always green. But what, viewed through various colored glasses, takes the color of the medium; and then viewed in the open light stands manifest in a hue of its own, but reveals to us that the medium is colored, and that the entire beam displays the object as it is. Men in other religions have had little opportunity of comparing one Pagan-