

Holly Springs, Mississippi

April 24, 1934

1892-1898.

Dear Leesburg:

I wish I could be with you on this interesting anniversary. You remind me that I am the oldest ex-pastor. Six years I worshipped with you, from 1892 - '98. During those years three of our nine children were born, and just as I was leaving my aged father passed on. He had been born in Loudoun County eighty years before and it was as he had wished, that his life should end where it had begun.

I was with you when the Saloons were closed: One result of the gracious Fife Revival - How happy we all were!

Among the members added in my time were Major B. F. Sheets, the Editor, Claud Myers, who became a minister, and John Clemens, who, I think, is now a member of the Session. We had four Elders: C. P. Janney, A. J. Bradfield, R. M. Preston and Robert Harper, all devoted and earnest men. Mr. Janney went with me to my first General Assembly in 1893 and also to the Pan-Presbyterian Congress at Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1913. Mr. Preston became most active in outpost work, "preaching" once a month at Farmwell and superintending the Sunday School at Clark's Gap.

For several years we maintained four outpost Sunday Schools, at Clark's Gap, Cannon Chapel, Cool Spring, and Farmwell. I preached three times most every Sunday and had "meetings" at all these places annually, - the Church Leaders had a mind to work and we had good times together in gracious service.)

John Simpson was Church Treasurer and a mighty good one - those were lean years in the nineties, like unto our present "depression". It was sometimes difficult to secure needed funds. My salary was ~~\$800.00 from Leesburg and \$150.00 from Farmwell Church.~~ We never suffered • God supplied all our need.

It is exactly fifty years since I left Union Theological Seminary and began my ministry as Assistant at Versailles, Kentucky. Then, after nine months teaching Greek and Hebrew in the Austin School of Theology in Texas, I was installed Pastor of Augusta Stone Church in 1885. I am thanking God for these fifty years and feel right confident that my job is more than half done.

And now, Beloved, farewell. It may be I shall see your faces no more. How often my thoughts go back to you all in tender retrospect, to those especially who were won to Christ under my ministry; how dear to my heart they are and have ever been. The Lord have you in His Holy keeping! And those who walk alone, bereft of loved ones - may their latter days be their best!

And to you all, till we meet again, tender love!

Your "old" Pastor,

Geo. L. Bitzer

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4-25-1934-

My dear Bro. Mautgauer:
Here is the letter you asked for. Will you not write and tell me all about the Celebration? Thank you!
I will be thinking of you all -
With love and prayer
Yours
G. L. B.