

PASTORS OF FAIRFIELD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Rev. Frank R. Symmes Pastor from 1886 – 1890

"May 13, 1886 marks the date that Rev. Frank R. Symmes was ordained and installed as pastor for the Fairfield Presbyterian Church. . . Frank Roosevelt Symmes was born in Madison, Indiana on October 24, 1856. . . he graduated from, and then briefly taught at the College of New Jersey in Princeton. In 1886, he completed his studies at the Princeton Seminary there and was ordained in Fairton by the Presbytery of West Jersey."

"On January 24, 1890, Symmes asked to be released to accept the call to the Old Tennent Church near Freehold, New Jersey."

"Rev. Symmes was to serve in a very distinguished pulpit at the Old Tennent Church. This historic building preserves the heritage of the Tennent family in the Great Awakening of the 1740's. While serving there, Symmes carefully researched and then published a complete history of that church. He retired in 1919, and elected Pastor Emeritus. He died in Freehold on March 22, 1928, having been awarded the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree four years earlier."



The Fairfield Presbyterians, Puritanism in West Jersey from 1680, Pg. 48, Lawrence C. Roff

In an obituary for Dr. Symmes, it was stated that he, ". . . was a past master in the art of blackboard illustration, and with voice and hand pointed many a moral that would have brought him popularity in a public center, but it was a Providence that it was otherwise, and that the last twenty-nine years of his life were spent at Old Tennent." (*Hightstown Gazette, March 29, 1928*)



In May, 1983, Miss Marion Symmes of Freehold, Dr. Symme's daughter, gave to the Princeton Seminary Archives a series of sermon and Sunday School lesson manuscripts. Dr. Symmes was a skillful artist, and some of these hand-illustrated papers were placed on display in the campus Mackay Center for several years. The collection was organized by Ray Cannata and this

The Old Tennent Church, Freehold, NJ

sample was photographed by Pastor Mike Schuelke on a visit to the Princeton Seminary Archive. Note, this Sunday School lesson was taught at Fairfield Church, June 12, 1887 and at the Back Neck Sunday School June 19, 1887.

Fairton & Back Neck, N.J. June 12, 1887.
Deerfield, N.J. - June 19, 1887.

Revised - Tennent, June 21, 1903. Many. Appo.
~~Johnson Place, May 16, 1926 - afternoon. 18 present. rain.~~

Is. 28:10.
"Here a little, and there a little."

This tells about how the prophets & preachers taught the children of Israel. And as your preacher to-day, I want to teach you so that you can learn } a little here, and a little there.
 a little from this thing, and a little from that thing.
 a little from one Bible verse, and a little from another Bible verse.

God gave us holy SS^o that we may learn from them Righteousness. So he teaches us many wonderful truths therein.




God made the world and all things in it. These things often illustrate the wonderful truths. Thus it was that Jesus said: "Behold the fig-tree." "Behold the fowls of the air." "Consider the lilies."

You have to learn Little here, Little there.

Let us look at some of the things God has made in the world. Learn a Little lesson from this, Little lesson from that.

Shall we let the SS^o guide us in these Lessons.

Is. 28:10. Here a little, and there a little.
Little Lessons - from - Little Things.

I Busy Industry Prov. 6:6.	
II Sweet Ways Prov. 16:24.	
III Safe Hope Prov. 30:26.	

The ABC of a successful life.

Little Great Lessons from Great Little Things.

Great Lessons ^{out} from Little Things, by Prov. 6:6 - 16:24 - 30:26

Princeton Archivist, Kenneth Henke passed on the following excerpt from an unpublished autobiography by Carl R. Woodward(1890 – 1974), former President of the University of Rhode Island, which is a first-hand description of how Rev. Symmes delivered his illustrated sermons. It is a reference to the message, *The ABC of a Successful Life*, posted above.

“Truth from his lips prevailed”

. . . . Notably effective in reaching the young people were Mr. Symmes’ “illustrated sermons,” in which he excelled. Standing before a blackboard, and giving simple words of explanation, he would deftly sketch with colored crayon a drawing that conveyed a simple lesson and stamped it indelibly on our mind.

One day he he brought me a small wooden box with a wire-netting window in one side and asked me to collect a supply of ants before the next Sunday. At the service that day we had a lesson on “the ABC of a Successful Life”—illustrated by three of nature’s creatures. There in the square was my box of ants, beside it some bees on a frame of honey comb, and in a cage was a rabbit, first cousin of the coney of the Old Testament.

The ant stood for the virtue of industry—“Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.” The bee, which stores up supplies against future needs, represents thrift. And the coney, which makes its home in the rocks, teaches us to put our trust in the Rock of Ages. That was a sermon I didn’t forget.

By such devices did our pastor capture the interest and admiration of the younger generation.



The Rev. Frank R. Symmes is interred in the Old Tennent Church Graveyard.