

OBITUARY

Doctor James Bivings, M. D.

In researching the life of Dr. James Bivings, founder of Bivingsville Cotton Mfg. Co. and village (Glendale, S.C.) I found that he was far more than just a popular Medical Doctor and a shrewd business man. I found that he was a real philanthropist, a loving husband and father, a genuine Christian and builder and supporter of Churches. Records show that he helped build the first Methodist Church in Lincoln, N.C. He built at his own expense, the first Church in the mill villages he started. The following obituary of Dr. Bivings written by W. Bowman on September 18, 1869, which is presented as published in the *Carolina Spartan*, *The Spartanburg Gazette* and *The Southern Christian (Methodist) Advocate*, proves those points.

Obituary

Dr. James Bivings was born in Edenton, N. C. April 28, 1787 and died at his residence near Crawfordville, Spartanburg County, S. C. August 16th, 1869 in the eighty third year of his age.

Early in life he located in Lincolnton, N.C. and engaged in the practice of medicine. With a vigorous intellect, a retentive memory and studious habits, his mind soon become well stored with knowledge of the healing art. And by application and energy he won an enviable reputation in his profession, practicing through Lincoln and several of the adjoining counties and making himself eminently useful.

Notwithstanding his wide field of labor as a man of medicine, it was too small for his expansive mind. Being a natural genius, he turned his attention to building manufacturing establishments and other enterprises tending to the common interest of the community in which he lived. Being a good judge of business and a safe financier, almost everything prospered in his hands. His genius, his power of intellect and firmness of purpose would have insured success in any profession or calling to which he might have turned his attention. He never quoted applause nor turned his eye to follow the popular current, but acting emphatically on his own judgment, first seeking to know the right way and then pursuing it.

In the midst of an active business life, providing for the wants of the body, he did not forget to lay up treasures in heaven, remembering that this earth is not his home. He joined the Methodist Church and became a warm and liberal supporter of all the interests of the Church. Some of the old class books at Lincolnton could indicate the time, but of that the writer is not advised. His house was the preacher's home, where with kindest heart, he bestowed his hospitalities upon the faithful messengers of God. There they found a resting place amid the toils of itinerant life, and a pleasant friend to entertain them.

He was a man of progress. The bent of his mind seemed to favor the improvement in every department of life. He was one of the leading spirits in the establishment of

Rock Springs Camp Ground in Lincoln County, N. C., so well known to the preachers of the South Carolina Conference and which has been more largely attended than any other within our knowledge. There he set up his tabernacle to entertain the preachers and many of the homeless and to join the many thousands that congregated there annually to worship God. There as elsewhere, he wielded a steady and happy influence for good. In fact his influence was felt wherever he went. In the workshop it was a stimulate to action, in the Sanctuary a restraint upon those who would indulge in improper conduct.

Later in life he removed to Spartanburg District, S. C. where he ended his days. In his new home he continued his active labors for many years before his death. How his energies were exerted with telling effect in building cotton factories and other improvements, never forgetting that when the six day's work ended, a temple must be had in which to worship God on the seventh. A detailed account of the leading acts of his life would fill a volume...all of which were more or less connected with the good of the community in which he lived.

After some changes of locality in his adopted state, he finally established a cotton factory on Tyger river, and built a neat church on the hill, where with his family he spent his Sabbaths in offerings to God. There he acted as Class Leader and Steward, (as we believed he had often done before) attending to the interests of the church generally and especially to the wants of the minister, giving liberally from his own store house and purse till finally the infirmities of age compelled him to retire. His religion consisted not in ostentation and show, but in a sound morality and a strict observance of the rules of true piety. His purpose was fixed firm and steady and no influence could turn him out of his course.

At last the ruthless hand of death hath taken it's victim. He is gone--gone to his reward. Thus ends a long and useful life. Useful as a citizen in setting an example of industry and economy, useful as a neighbor in doing acts of kindness and giving advice and instruction, useful as a man of God in deeds of charity, sustaining the Church, promoting the cause of Christ by precept and example and giving words of encouragement to his fellow travelers to the better land. His last days were peaceful and hopeful. While the spirit lingered with the tenement of clay which was worn down by age and affliction, the bright star of hope still glittered ahead and faith, the anchor of the soul maintained it's hold till at last times great ocean was crossed, Jordan's waves calmly met and the immortal took its flight to the spirit world.

“when faith is lost in sight and hope in full fruition dies”

He often spoke of death as a welcome visitor. On one occasion he remarked in the presence of the writer, “Death has lost it's terror, Thank God!”. He would sometimes remark that while he had as much to bind him to the earth as any one, yet he was resigned to the Master's Will. During his last days, he was often powerfully blest by the Divine presence and would burst forth into raptures of joy. He bore his lingering illness with a true Christian fortitude, often praying that his last hours might be calm and serene. His prayers were answered. In his last hours of

rationality, his faith was unwavering, his love pure and his hope of heaven, bright and clear.

He was a faithful husband and a kind father and governed with ease and firmness. He leaves a wife and a numerous family of children, grandchildren and great grandchildren with many friends to mourn his loss. But their loss is his eternal gain.

Addendum; I have found that obituaries of the 1800s seldom carried the names of survivors. According to census and other records which I have, his survivors were; his wife, Elizabeth T Bivings and three children; son, James Bivings; Daughters, Susan E, Bivings Cleveland and Kiddy Catherine Bivings Wingo; a good number of grandchildren and great grandchildren,

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