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by Ralph Hardee Rives, 1994

29 Nov. 1880–10 Aug. 1957

Jesse Eli Pritchard, Methodist minister and administrator, was a native of Asheboro, the son of Isaiah Franklin and Nancy Ellen Conner Pritchard. Upon graduation from Western Maryland College in 1909, Pritchard enrolled in Westminster Theological Seminary, where he received the bachelor of divinity degree in 1912. Accepted on trial in the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant church in November 1911, he was ordained an elder in November 1912 and assigned to the Halifax Circuit, where he remained until 1915. Afterwards he served churches in Thomasville (1915–16), Burlington (1916–21), Henderson (1921–26), Asheboro (1926–31), Winston-Salem (1931–34, 1940–41), Greensboro (1934–38), Ramseur (1941–45), and Mocksville (1945–46).

In 1938 Pritchard became president of the North Carolina Annual Conference of the Methodist Protestant church[2], a position he held for two years. He was a member of the church's General Board of Education from 1924 to 1928, serving as recording secretary. In 1932 Western Maryland College conferred on him the doctor of divinity degree. Pritchard served for a number of years as a trustee of High Point College and for twelve years as a trustee of the Methodist Children's Home of the Western North Carolina Methodist Conference in Winston-Salem. From 1934 to 1936 he was the editor of the *Methodist Protestant Herald*, published in Greensboro, the official church paper for the North Carolina Annual Conference.

Pritchard was a delegate to three General Conferences of the Methodist Protestant church, a delegate to the Uniting Conference of the Methodist church in Kansas City in 1939, and a delegate to the first Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of the Methodist church. He was a charter member of the Asheboro Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club and the Mocksville Rotary Club, and a life member of the North Carolina Society of County and Local Historians. Pritchard was a recognized authority on the history of the Methodist Protestant church in North Carolina, and his ability as an administrator within his denomination earned him the respect and esteem of church leaders statewide and nationally. His great wisdom and knowledge of church affairs, as well as his innate wit and talent as a conversationalist and pulpit speaker, endeared him to a great host of friends.

On 12 Dec. 1912, Pritchard married Laura Vestal of Siler City. Following his retirement in 1946, he resided in Asheboro. He was buried in Asheboro.

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