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## BEGINNINGS OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN MISSISSIPPI.

BY REV. T. L. HAMAN.<sup>3</sup>

In 1680 La Salle, the bold and able commandant of Fort Frontinac, on Lake Ontario, determined to explore the Mississippi River to its mouth, and accordingly, with thirty-five other Frenchmen, one of whom was a Jesuit priest, he left the fort, and made his way through the intervening wilderness to the Illinois River. He descended the river to its confluence with the Mississippi, and the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, which he succeeded in reaching in 1682. He at once, in the name of France, and of the Church of Rome, took formal possession of the entire country watered by the Mississippi River and its tributaries, and in token thereof he placed the arms of France and the symbol of the cross upon a column erected for that purpose, and thus, according to the universal custom of Catholic countries, was established the Church of Rome in this large empire, and from it at the same time was excluded all Protestant worship. This state of affairs so continued until 1763, when, as a result of the war which grew out of disputed boundaries of the French and British colonies in the New World, France ceded to Great Britain, Canada and all the countries east of the Mississippi River except the Island of New Orleans, and Spain ceded to Great Britain Florida, which Great Britain at once proceeded to erect into two provinces, East Florida and West Florida, the

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<sup>1</sup>In the preparation of this paper the writer has consulted every available source of information. He especially acknowledges his indebtedness to Jones' (Rev. J. G.) *Protestantism in Mississippi*; Hutchinson's (Rev. J. R.) *Reminiscences*, and Howe's (Rev. George) *The Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*. He has drawn freely from these sources, his purpose being merely to hunt up and arrange, in chronological order, all the data to be derived from any and every source incident to and setting forth "The Beginnings of Presbyterianism in Mississippi," *i. e.*, from the introduction of Presbyterianism in the State up to the organization of the first Presbytery, in 1816.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. Thomas L. Haman was born in Hinds County, Mississippi, near the present town of Learned, on December 7, 1846. He was the son of Stratford and Elizabeth (Allen) Haman. The Haman family was of English extraction, immigrating in the seventeenth century to the eastern shore of Virginia and later a branch of them to North Carolina. In 1831 Stratford Haman moved from North Carolina to Mississippi, settling in Hinds County, where he was a successful farmer until his death at eighty-six years of age.

The subject of this sketch enlisted before he was seventeen years old

latter of which embraced the Natchez country. Great Britain being protestant, established religious liberty, which, however, lasted only until 1779, when the Natchez country passed under the jurisdiction of Spain. In order to attract settlers Great Britain, while in possession, not only proclaimed religious liberty but offered gratuitous grants of land. This drew some valuable citizens to the Natchez country. Rev. J. G. Jones says:

"Among the first who came was Amos Ogden, a reduced captain in the British navy, to whom the king of England had made a grant of 25,000 acres of land on condition that the land be located and permanently settled by a specified number of families. Finding that he was unable of himself to comply with the conditions he sold 19,800 acres of his grant to two wealthy planters from New Jersey, by the names of Richard and Samuel Swayze, on condition that they would assist him in locating the land and would settle their portion of families on it. In 1772, after a tedious and perilous journey, Captain Ogden and the Swayze brothers, with their families and connections to the full number required by the conditions of the grant, landed upon the same in time to raise corn in the following year. They settled on the Homochito River near what was known as *Kingston* and formed what is still known as the 'Jersey Settlement.' "

Rev. Samuel Swayze, one of the original settlers of the above named grant, was a Congregational minister. Soon after their arrival in the Natchez country they were regularly organized into a Congregational Church, with Mr. Swayze as their pastor, which he continued to be until his death in 1784. Mr. Jones says:

"There is no doubt that Mr. Swayze was the first protestant minister that ever settled in what is now the State of Mississippi, and his church, the first protestant church ever organized in it."

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in Harvey's Scouts and served with that gallant company until the close of the War of Secession. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi (1870) and of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Columbia, S. C. (1873). He was married (Sept., 1873) in Sumter, S. C., to Miss Mary Adelaide Blanding, daughter of Col. J. D. Blanding, an eminent lawyer and veteran of the Mexican war and the War of Secession. He has served as pastor of the Presbyterian church at Greenwood (1873-1875) and Yazoo City (1875-1877). Being forced by ill health to resign the latter position, he spent a year in rest and recuperation, after which he became pastor of the Presbyterian church at Vaiden, of which church, in connection with others near by, he is still pastor.

For a period of more than thirty years he has been a member of the Home Mission Board of his Presbytery and, for more than twenty years, President of the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Schools at French Camp. He has also, for a number of years, been chairman of the Synod's permanent Committee on Church, Schools and Colleges, and has several times represented his Presbytery in the General Assembly.—EDITOR.

That these early pioneers had to endure many hardships, privations and dangers on account of the unsettled state of the country and the frequent hostile raids of the Indians, goes without saying, but, as intimated above, they were called to endure sufferings from other sources also. In 1779, as a result of the Revolutionary War, Great Britain ceded East and West Florida to Spain. The Natchez country was made a Spanish province and continued under Spanish rule for eighteen years. Again we find protestant worship strictly forbidden. Protestant Bibles and religious books, whenever they fell into the hands of the priests, were at once committed to the flames. Persons detected in religious worship not in conformity with the Catholic Church were cast into prison; as a condition of their release they were threatened, on repeating their offense, to be exiled as slaves to the mines of Mexico. Among the faithful who suffered imprisonment for holding religious meetings were John Bolls, a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, and Richard Curtis, a Baptist minister. These bitter and persistent persecutions soon scattered the members of Mr. Swayze's church and eventually broke it up entirely. But, though harassed and scattered, they remained true to the faith and principles of evangelical religion, and later, under American rule, they and their descendants became constituent elements in the formation of the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and, to some extent, the Episcopal Churches in the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas.

On March 29, 1798, the Spanish secretly evacuated Fort Rosalie and departed for New Orleans. Early the next morning the American flag—symbol of civil and religious liberty—was raised and American jurisdiction proclaimed. And thus the way was opened for the entrance and exercise of Protestant religion. The Presbyterians were not the first to take advantage of these auspicious circumstances. First were the Baptists, under the leadership of Rev. Richard Curtis, who had, as a licentiate during the Spanish rule, gathered congregations to whom he preached and with blessed results; but who, for this very reason, was first imprisoned and later, in 1795, forced to leave the country and return to South Carolina. Having been ordained in that State, he returned to the Natchez country

soon after the departure of the Spaniards and resumed his work effecting the organization of the "Salem Church" in 1798, "which," says Hutchinson, "was the first protestant Church in this country under *American rule*."

The next denomination in order of time that was represented in the Natchez country was the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the person of Rev. Adam Cloud, a native of Delaware. He settled on St. Catherines Creek, near Natchez, in 1792, and was warmly received by protestants, especially by those who wished to have their children baptized, they having been deprived of that privilege since the death of Rev. Mr. Swayze, in 1784. After about three years he was arrested by a file of Spanish soldiers and sent in fetters to New Orleans for the offense of "preaching, baptizing and marrying people contrary to the laws of the existing government." In 1816 he returned to Mississippi and settled near Greenville, in Jefferson County, and it appears that the first Protestant Episcopal Church in the Territory was organized *after* this time.

The next protestant denomination that was represented in the Southwest was the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the person of Rev. Tobias Gibson, who, according to Rev. J. G. Jones, came as a missionary from the South Carolina Conference and landed at Natchez in the spring of 1799. Soon after he organized the first Methodist Church in Washington, the seat of the Territorial Government. At an early date Mr. Gibson visited most of the important settlements in the Western portion of the Territory between Fort Adams, below Natchez, and Walnut Hills, near the present site of Vicksburg, in most of which he laid the foundations of future churches. Mr. Gibson died in what is now Warren County, about six miles south of Vicksburg (April 5, 1804), where a monument has been erected to his memory.

The next protestant denomination represented in Mississippi, Mr. Jones says, was the Presbyterian. Its first missionary was the Rev. Joseph Bullen, of Worcester, Mass. He was sent out by the Presbyterian Missionary Board of New York in 1779 as a missionary to the Chickasaw Indians. But the real work of laying the foundation of the Presbyterian Church in Mississippi was a missionary enterprise of the Synod of the Carolinas, at

which time the jurisdiction of that Synod extended over the States of North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. Georgia at that time, according to the charter granted to her by the British Government, included all the territory west of the present limits of that State (Georgia) to the Mississippi River, constituting the present States of Alabama and Mississippi. After Georgia, in 1803, relinquished this territory to the Federal Government, the Synod of the Carolinas still regarded this territory within its Presbyterian jurisdiction, and hence, on the establishment of American civil authority over the Mississippi Territory in 1798, that Synod immediately adopted efficient measures to send the gospel and plant churches in it. At this time Mississippi Territory was little more than a vast wilderness, the entire population, according to the census then being taken, exclusive of Indians, was 8,850. Of these 5,361 were white and the remainder were African slaves.

The mode of conducting domestic missions by the Presbyterian Church at that day seems to have been derived from the Kirk of Scotland, which was to conduct her missions through the immediate agency of her own divinely ordained courts, which appointed the missionaries and provided for their support. Accordingly Dr. Howe informs us that, at its sessions in the year 1800 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed the Rev. James Hall, of the Presbytery of Concord, North Carolina, a missionary to the Natchez country, and that a few months later the Synod of the Carolinas, while in regular session, expressed themselves as impressed with the importance of the mission and with the belief that, if possible, Mr. Hall should have company. They therefore determined to send with him two members, viz., Rev. James H. Bowman and Rev. William Montgomery. The pastoral charges of Messrs. Hall and Bowman were in North Carolina and that of Mr. Montgomery in Georgia. These men were directed to spend eight months in the Natchez country and places adjacent, if convenient, and expedient, and for their support the Synod pledged itself to give them thirty-three and one-third dollars per month from the time they engaged in the work. Mr. Hall and his missionary companions made their journey separately to Nashville, Tenn., thence together over the "Natchez Trace" to

Natchez. The entire trip being made in the saddle and an extra pack horse. They had to travel not only through territory of the Indians, with possibly no chance of protection or accommodation from white settlers north of the Warrenton Hills (Vicksburg), but their road was infested with a band of robbers under the celebrated Mason, "the Robin Hood" of the day, consequently ordinary travelers went heavily armed and ready for the most desperate emergencies. But not so with the little band of three, whose only arms were an unwavering faith in their Divine Leader and the protection of an overruling Providence. Mr. Hall had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War and knew how to fight. When the troops of Cornwallis were overrunning South Carolina, he called his flock together not for the peaceful worship of God, but to take up arms in the defense of their neighbors, and the result was he in a short time led them on an expedition into South Carolina in the double office of leader and chaplain.

In the northeastern part of the present State of Mississippi at Pontotoc, they spent the night with Rev. Joseph Bullen, at the mission station he had established among the Indians. Toward a late hour in the night they talked over their plans for extending the Redeemer's kingdom in the Southwest. This night's entertainment was quite different from their ordinary experience on the trip. Ordinarily, when night overtook them they pitched their tents, tethered their horses and cooked and ate their evening meal and "the wild woods rang with their hymns of lofty cheer" in spite of the fact that their meals sometimes consisted of a little meal gruel or a raccoon which they were so fortunate to catch and which they cooked and ate without salt or condiment, "not," as Mr. Montgomery with much glee would say, pausing to examine the Levitical code as to whether it was "a clean or unclean beast," farther adding that "that same old coon" was about the best he ever tasted.

At one time their circumstances became so desperate that they pressed forward day and night as fast as their horses could carry them. At last at 2 o'clock in the morning they drew near to a dwelling on Big Black, to which they had been attracted by the crowing of a rooster. They hastened to the house, aroused the inmates, pleading starvation as their apol-

ogy. They were kindly received and a meal of corn bread, bacon and coffee was speedily furnished them. Near this point they established their *first* preaching station; a few miles farther south, at Grindstone Ford, they established the *second*; still a few miles farther south they established the *third*. The next place at which they halted was the Samuel Gibson plantation, a mere ferryboat crossing over Bayou Pierre, but which two or three years later grew into a small settlement known as Gibsonport, and afterwards as Port Gibson. Here, by request, Mr. Montgomery preached the funeral of a Mrs. Gibson, who had died a few hours before their arrival; this is thought to be the first sermon ever heard in the settlement. A few miles south of the Gibson plantation they found many Presbyterian families, says Dr. Hutchinson, exceeding anxious for religious privileges. Here the people united and built a log house and called it "Bayou Pierre Church." This was their *fourth* station. They continued their course south along the Natchez Trace until they crossed "Coles Creek." Here they found a small town called *Uniontown*, to which they were attracted by the name of Montgomery, where they found two brothers, Samuel and Alexander Montgomery, who had immigrated to that vicinity from Kentucky, and were originally from Georgia. They were planters of influence. One of them, Alexander, was at the time (1800) a member of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Mississippi, and later (1809) and perhaps from 1810 to 1812 the President of that body. They were Presbyterians. They also found others anxious to co-operate with them in securing religious privileges; among them were seven families who had emigrated from New Jersey with the Swayze brothers, and who had been charter members of the Congregational Church at Kingston. After the breaking up of this church by the Spaniards these families had settled at Uniontown. Their names were Jeremiah, Israel and Ephraim Coleman; John Griffing, Alexander Callender, Archibald and Stephen Douglas; also Felix Hughes, an intelligent Irishman of Episcopal education, whose wife had been a devout member of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina, and the renowned John Bolls, of blessed memory, who, under the Spanish rule, had braved the tyrant's wrath in behalf of religion, suffered imprisonment for



holding prayer-meetings, and who, when the American went up over Fort Rosalie, was under arrest awaiting exit to the mines of Mexico. Of whom Dr. Hutchinson says:

"He was a ruling elder in the Hopewell church, North Carolina, before the Revolutionary War; was in the Mecklenburg Convention where the first Declaration of Independence was adopted; had served as a soldier in the Revolutionary army; was a man of devout piety and heroism; by lending himself to various congregations for the elders and in other ways, helped to lay the foundation of many churches in Mississippi."

The three missionaries collected the families into a congregation and formed the nucleus for a future church. These families thus collected, united and built a log house of worship on land belonging to Alexander Callender and called it first "Callender's Meeting House," and later "Bethel." It was located near the fork of Cole's Creek, in sight of the road leading from Port Gibson to Natchez.

Leaving Uniontown, which was their *fifth* station, the missionaries, says Dr. Hutchinson, continued their course south along the Natchez Trace.

The next point where they established a station, the *sixth*, was Washington. Here they found the state of things still most interesting. In the vicinity were many Presbyterian families of wealth, intelligence and high social position, to whom they proposed and carried into effect the establishment of a place of worship.

The next point they reached, says the same author, was Natchez, where they found only one Presbyterian family, that of John Henderson, a Scotchman brought up under the instructions of the Presbyterian Church in his native land, and who had carefully preserved the faith and practices of his forefathers. The name of Henderson has become identified with the Natchez Church and community down to the present time, and has proven a tower of strength to the cause of Christ. This was the *seventh* station.

In the vicinity of Natchez they found, in what is known as the "Jersey Settlement," some of the most eminent families who had once belonged to Mr. Swayze's congregation, which was dispersed by the Spanish authorities. Holding the same standard of doctrinal faith with the Presbyterian Church, they

readily co-operated with the missionaries, who made this their *eighth* station.

The *ninth* and last station which they established was at Pinckneyville, south of Natchez and not far from the boundary line of the Territory. Thus we find that these faithful missionaries established in the Natchez country nine preaching stations—Big Black, Grindstone Ford, Clarke's Creek, Bayou Pierre, Calender's Meeting House, Washington, Natchez, Jersey Settlement, and Pinckneyville. Of the nine five were subsequently organized into churches which flourished years afterward. Having done the work they were commissioned to do, viz., to explore the country, to hunt up the members of the church who were scattered as sheep without a shepherd, and by the aid of leading members of the communities to establish at eligible points preaching places and nuclei for future churches, they left the Territory in April, 1801, and returned to their pastorates over the same long and perilous route by which they had come. According to their report to Synod they found the Territory of Mississippi exceedingly destitute of religious privileges, "only one Episcopal, one Methodist and two Baptist clergymen besides a few exhorters."

On their return to North Carolina Dr. Hall published in pamphlet form "A Summary view of the Country from Settlements on the Cumberland River to and Including the Mississippi Territory,"<sup>3</sup> in which he gave his impressions of the people, of the manner in which the missionaries were received, and a farewell address to them adopted at a public meeting of the chief citizens of Natchez. From this "summary view" it appears that, though there was great religious and spiritual destitution throughout the country, yet there was much to favor and encourage the propagation of the gospel there, for the most opulent citizens and influential characters expressed an earnest desire for a permanent ministry and promised every encouragement. When Dr. Hall and his companions made their report, the Synod felt impelled to act at once for the furtherance of the good work so auspiciously begun and so full of promise for the Master's kingdom in the great Southwest. Accordingly

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<sup>3</sup>This pamphlet was reprinted in the *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, Vol. IX, pp. 539-575.—EDITOR.

we find that at the same meeting of Synod (October, 1801), to which the report was made, Mr. Montgomery was reappointed to the Natchez country and Rev. John Mathews appointed to accompany him. Mr. Montgomery did not go at the time, but Mr. Mathews did and remained one year. In order to conduct its missionary operations with system and efficiency, Synod also appointed at this meeting a *commission*, which should have charge of the same in the interim. This commission, in 1804 sent out Rev. Daniel Brown and Rev. Malchom McNeil, who remained in the Territory six months. Later it appointed Rev. James Smylie, of Orange Presbytery, N. C., who, in the fall of 1805, says Dr. Hutchinson, made a favorable report to Synod by letter, and asked for further aid. He settled at Washington the Capital of the Territory, and took charge of the congregation which the missionaries, who preceded him had collected.

#### PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERS PERMANENTLY SETTLED IN MISSISSIPPI TERRITORY.

As we have seen, the first Presbyterian minister to visit the Territory of Mississippi was Rev. Joseph Bullen, who came, in 1779, as a missionary to the Chickasaw Indians. He was also the first to permanently settle in the Territory. In addition to what has been said of Mr. Bullen it will only be necessary to add that after serving one year, the limit of his commission, he returned to New York and received a second commission for three years. About the middle of March, 1800, he set out with his wife and children on his long and perilous journey from Windham County, Vermont, to the Chickasaw Nation in the Southwest. His course was by way of Troy, New York, and thence through Pennsylvania to Pittsburg. At the town of Bedford, in Pennsylvania, several members of his family were taken sick, one of whom, an amiable daughter just blooming into womanhood died.

Having arrived at Pittsburg Mr. Bullen procured a flatboat, on which, with his family, he descended the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the Chickasaw Bluffs, where Memphis now stands. There being neither wagon nor wagon road, Mr. Bullen procured pack horses from the Indian traders to convey his family and

chattels one hundred miles to the Indian town of Pontotoc, near which he procured an old Indian settlement for a family residence. The Indians generally received him kindly and through the aid of an interpreter he preached the gospel to them. He also organized a rudimental school, which was taught by his son Joseph, and having a blacksmith and wood workman connected with the mission family, he succeeded, to some extent, in teaching some of the Indians the use of tools. This mission was not without some fruit, for in addition to some improvement in agriculture and the use of tools, several learned to read, and a few were admitted to the church. Mr. Bullen's term of missionary service expired towards the close of 1802, and in the early part of 1803 he left Pontotoc and settled in Jefferson County, as before stated, where he labored as a faithful servant of his Master until March 26, 1825, when his sojourn on earth was closed and he went to his reward. The wife of his youth and faithful partner of his long and eventful pilgrimage preceded him in October, 1818. Both of them were buried at Bethel, which he had organized twenty-one years before and whose faithful pastor he had been from that time on. He was the first Moderator of the first Presbytery in the Southwest.

The second Presbyterian minister to settle permanently in the Territory was Rev. James Smylie, who came as a missionary from North Carolina in 1804 or 1805, and settled at Washington. Dr. Hutchinson says Mr. Smylie was born in North Carolina of Highland-Scotch parentage about the year 1780. He received his classical and theological education at Guildford, North Carolina, under Rev. Dr. Caldwell, and was licensed and ordained by Orange Presbytery. He established a classical academy at Washington, which is believed to be the first in the Territory. In 1811 he removed to Amite County, Mississippi, and was actively engaged in missionary labors and organizing churches in Mississippi and Louisiana. He planted Christianity over a wide extent of country and greatly elevated the standard of education. Many of his pupils became leading men. When the storm of abolition arose and swept with the violence of a hurricane over the country, he was one of the first to oppose it. He prepared a sermon, giving the scriptural views on the subject, and preached it extensively over the country. In

1836 the Presbytery of Chillicothe addressed a violent ab letter to the Presbytery of Mississippi. This letter Mr. S answered in a pamphlet which was extensively circulated the whole question of domestic slavery was universally agi . This pamphlet, it is said, influenced the legislation of the try. It was recognized as a sort of text-book on the su and exerted a large influence in shaping the subsequent cou the South, both in Church and State. Mr. Smylie had honor of being the first stated clerk of the Presbytery of M sippi in laying the foundations for which he was in the han his Master, such an important factor. In addition to the he had done in mission work, gathering and forming chur he in 1814 rode on horseback and alone through the Cho and Chickasaw Nations to Nashville, Tennessee, and prev on the Presbytery of West Tennessee, then in session, to c ture the Synod of Kentucky to organize a Presbytery in Mississippi Territory. The first act of the Presbytery after organization was to extend to Mr. Smylie a vote of thanks procuring the organization. In his old age he devoted his exclusively to the religious instruction of the negroes. collected large congregations of them, and in addition to pre ing prepared a catechism for them, which was approved by Synod of Mississippi, and which large classes of them co repeat from memory. He was an accurate Latin and Gr scholar, a profound theologian and a thorough Calvinist. died in 1853, aged seventy-three years. He left many valua manuscripts behind him, but nothing has seen the light exce ing his pamphlet on slavery.

The third Presbyterian minister who permanently settled the Territory, according to Dr. Jones, was Rev. Jacob Rickho who was born in 1768 on Staten Island, N. Y. He had not t advantage of a classical education. He began to preach in t Methodist Church and was ordained to the work by Bish Asbury. In 1808 he was received into the Presbytery of N Brunswick, assigning as a reason for leaving the Method Church that he was not in accord with her views of the pos sibility of falling from grace. He came to Natchez in 181 Here he taught and preached to a little flock of Presbyterian Shortly thereafter he began preaching in the eastern part

Jefferson County, where he organized Ebenezer Church, of which he was the stated supply until about 1817. In 1814 he removed to the vicinity of Port Gibson and settled on a farm, where he remained many years. In 1817 he was appointed by the General Assembly itinerant missionary to Amite County and the neighboring parishes in Louisiana. At a later date he became the great missionary to the Piney Woods counties in Eastern Mississippi, in the region of Pearl River. Dr. Hutchinson says:

"Here he was in all his glory. He had the true spirit of a pioneer preacher. The Piney Woods churches seemed to belong to him. No sacramental meeting or baptism of a child seemed to be right without his presence. He was indefatigable in his long journeys on horseback, and in his old age enduring the fatigue of all weathers and all seasons for the glorious privilege of preaching the Gospel."

After the death of his wife he removed to Mississippi City, where he resided with his son-in-law until his death on the 23d of November, 1856, at the advanced age of ninety-one years.

The fourth Presbyterian minister who located permanently in the Territory was Rev. Wm. Montgomery, one of the three missionaries who came here in 1800. He was born in 1768, in Shippensburg (or Chambersburg), Pennsylvania. Rev. J. G. Jones says that about the commencement of the Revolutionary War his father moved to North Carolina and settled in Mecklenburg. On the outbreak of the war he joined the patriot army and took an active part in the struggle. About the close of the war he moved to the Waxhaw settlement in South Carolina. During his residence there his son William graduated from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Soon thereafter we find the family in Georgia. While there Mr. Montgomery took his theological course under Rev. Dr. Cummings. Shortly after entering the ministry he came with Messrs. Hall and Bowman as a missionary to Mississippi, under the direction of the Synod of the Carolinas. When the mission was completed Mr. Montgomery returned, says Dr. Hutchinson, to Georgia and settled as pastor of the Church at Lexington. Soon after this he was married to Miss Lane, a niece of General Joseph Lane, who in 1860 was candidate for the vice-presidency of the United States on the ticket with John C. Breckenridge. In 1810 he once more visited Mississippi with the view of finding a permanent field of

labor. In 1811 he removed with his family to Washington, the Territorial capital, and became President of Jefferson College at that place. He soon resigned this position that he might devote all his time to the work of the ministry. In 1812 he became pastor of Pine Ridge Church. Although this was a wealthy congregation he resigned the place in 1818, and from 1820 to 1848 devoted his whole time to the two churches of Ebenezer and Union in the Scotch settlement.<sup>4</sup> Under his faithful pastorate these two fields developed into large and influential churches. He made occasional preaching tours in various directions and was personally known in almost all the churches in Mississippi. It was the age of camp-meetings in which he took great delight, and was a willing and efficient laborer. He was scrupulous to meet all his appointments, and during his long ministry he failed to do this only twice. One failure was caused by the death of his wife and the other by the death of his son. Mrs. McEachern (*nee* McDougal), a member of his church when quite young, told the writer that he missed only *one* appointment and that was caused by having his feet badly scalded while scalding hogs. In old age he was a great favorite with the young, and exerted a great influence over a wide extent of country. At the time of his death a generation had grown up around him and under his influence. He had baptized most of them in infancy, united most of their parents in marriage and buried their dead. At the time of his death in 1848 he was over eighty years old and had been in the ministry fifty years. He left two daughters and five sons, one of whom was Rev. Samuel Montgomery.

#### THE FIRST EIGHT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN THE SOUTHWEST.

The *first* Presbyterian Church in Mississippi, and indeed the first in the great Southwest, was organized in the year 1804 by Rev. Joseph Bullen. It was organized near Uniontown, Jefferson County, and was called "*Bethel*." The families composing it were chiefly of Mr. Swayze's Congregational Church at Kingstontown. Among its members were: Alexander Montgomery, John

<sup>4</sup>A sketch of this settlement will be found in the *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, Vol. IX, pp. 265-271.—EDITOR.

Bolls, Alexander Callender and John Griffing, ruling elders. In 1817 John Ailsworth, Daniel Huey and Joseph Parmalee were added to the eldership. In 1822, as a matter of accommodation to a majority of the members this church was dissolved and its members transferred to the *Harmony* Church, which had been established a few miles south of the town of Fayette. The Harmony Church was subsequently dissolved and its members attached to the Ebenezer Church, which had been organized by Rev. Jacob Reckhow in 1811.

The *second* Presbyterian Church organized in the Territory was in the Bayou Pierre settlement, two and a half or three miles southwest from Port Gibson, where the missionaries had established a preaching station. It was organized by Rev. Joseph Bullen and Rev. James Smylie in 1807. The church was called *Bayou Pierre* and among the families composing its membership we find the names of Waterman, Crane and Alexander Armstrong, the last of whom became the first elder in the Port Gibson Church. This church at a later date was dissolved because it was more convenient for some of the members to attend the church at Port Gibson, and for others to attend a second "Bethel" church, which had been organized in Claiborne County east of Petit Gulf or Rodney, not far from Oakland College.

The *third* Presbyterian Church was organized by Rev. James Smylie, February 25, 1807, at the town of Washington, with twenty members and three elders, and was called "Salem." Rev. B. H. Williams, pastor of this church for ten years, in a farewell sermon, 1854, names the following as the first three elders: John Bolls, John Grafton and James McKnight. In 1808 the church was removed to Pine Ridge, about four miles west of Washington, where they built a house of worship and assumed the name of "Pine Ridge," which it still bears. This house of worship, as appears from the memorial of Rev. James Smylie in the minutes of the Synod, was erected by John Bissland and John Henderson, two Scotchmen who were brought up under the instruction of the Presbyterian Church in their native land and who carefully preserved the religious faith and practices of their forefathers. Rev. James Smylie continued to act as stated supply to this church until March, 1811, when



he removed to Amite County, Mississippi, where he died in 1853. This is the oldest existing Presbyterian Church in the Southwest and still has a healthy and apparently permanent existence, with the promise of future blessedness and blessing. It has been peculiarly blessed with a succession of faithful pastors and ruling elders. It has just passed its century mark, which event the Presbytery of Mississippi, which was organized within its walls ninety-one years before, celebrated in April, 1907, with suitable and most impressive exercises.

The *fourth* Presbyterian Church organized in the Territory was "*Bethany*," in Amite County. It was organized by Rev. James Smylie, perhaps in 1807, but certainly prior to 1811, as is to be inferred from the fact that he resigned the Pine Ridge Church in March, 1811, and moved to Amite County to take charge of other churches.

The *fifth* Presbyterian Church in the Territory was *Amite*. It was also organized by Mr. Smylie about the same time that he organized Bethany Church. This church was also in Amite County.

The *sixth* Presbyterian Church in the Southwest was also organized by Mr. Smylie at about the same time that he organized the churches at Bethany and Amite. The name given to this church was *Florida*. Its locality was not in the Territory of Mississippi but in Louisiana, near the present town of Jackson, to which place it was subsequently removed.

The *seventh* Presbyterian Church in the Southwest was *Ebenezer*, organized by Rev. Joseph Rickhow in 1811. Its locality was in the eastern part of Jefferson County in what was known as the *Scotch Settlement*. Mr. Rickhow arrived in Natchez in 1808 from the Presbytery of New Brunswick. Here he opened a school and preached to a little flock of Presbyterians. Dr. Hutchinson says:

"Through the invitation of Dougal Torrey, whom he met in Natchez, he made a visit to the Scotch settlement in Jefferson County and preached for them and afterwards kept up a stated appointment in connection with his Natchez labors, though it necessitated a ride of thirty miles each way. A temporary bush arbor was erected, which was soon supplanted by a log house of worship. A considerable congregation was collected, a ruling elder, presumably Daniel Cameron, elected and the Ebenezer church organized. Dougal Torrey was a representative of four emigrant Presbyterian families, George Torrey, Dougal Torrey, Lockland Currie and Robert Willis, all of whom except Dougal Torrey, were born

in the highlands of Scotland before the Revolutionary War, but had settled for some years in North Carolina, where Dougal, son of George Torrey, was born. On March 30, 1805, these emigrants landed at Bruinsburg on the Mississippi River, and in the next year they purchased land and settled in the eastern portion of Jefferson County."

Dr. Hutchinson further says:

"The settlement of these Scotch-Irish Presbyterians on the border of an unknown wilderness of public land, just having been surveyed and offered at government prices, with the right of pre-emption to actual settlers, at once attracted numerous settlers, generally of the same race and religion. In a few years over one hundred Highland Scotch Presbyterian families settled in this vicinity. Most of them spoke the Gaelic language, had been taught the Shorter Catechism and the forms of worship and usages of the Presbyterian Church and were persons of elevated and devout piety."

According to Dr. Jones several of these old Scotch families were formed into another congregation as early as 1811, and were formally organized into a church March 2, 1817, by Rev. Joseph Bullen. This was the *eighth* Presbyterian Church organized in the Southwest. It received the name of *Union Church* and gave its name to the village of *Union Church*, close by. This has been and is yet a healthy and prosperous church. It is noted for its long pastorates. In the ninety-one years of its existence two of its pastors have covered sixty-two years. One of them, Rev. William Montgomery, the only one of the first three missionaries sent from the Carolinas, who settled permanently in Mississippi, served the church twenty-seven years. The other, Rev. C. W. Grafton, D. D., the present pastor, has faithfully and acceptably served them since May, 1873. Scores of consecrated men and women, born and reared in this church, have gone forth to other and remote places; one of them, the son of the present pastor, is a missionary to China, and others no less faithful are filling their respective spheres elsewhere. At this time the church still has two hundred living members upon its roll.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERY IN THE SOUTHWEST.

We have now come to the period when there are four Presbyterian ministers and eight organized churches in the Southwest, seven of which churches are in the Mississippi Territory and one in Louisiana. They are in no particular Presbyterial jurisdic-

tion, and too remote from any to enjoy the full benefits of patronage and oversight. The *general* jurisdiction of the region at this time was in the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, at least so held by that Synod which, according to Howe, contested its claim against the Synod of Kentucky in a memorial to the General Assembly. It was therefore proposed as a matter, not of jurisdiction but of nearer proximity, which induced the ministers and representatives of these churches in Mississippi Territory to apply to the Presbytery of West Tennessee for a petition the Synod of Kentucky to erect a Presbytery in the Southwest. This application was made by their representative Rev. James Smylie, who, in 1814, traveled on horseback through the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations to Nashville, Tennessee, where the Presbytery of West Tennessee was then in session, and laid the petition before that body. The following extract from the minutes of the Synod of Kentucky, as quoted by Jones, gives us a correct history of the transaction:

"The Committee of Overtures reported a petition from the West Tennessee Presbytery, praying that a new Presbytery might be formed having for its eastern boundary Perdido River, from thence by a direct line to Fort Jackson, at the junction of the Coosa and Talapoosa rivers, thence to the line of division between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, and along the line indefinitely forming a division between the contemplated Presbytery and the West Tennessee Presbytery, to be known by the name of the Mississippi Presbytery, to be composed of Rev. Joseph Bullen, Rev. William Montgomery and Rev. James Smylie, which petition was granted (October 6, 1815), and it was ordered that said Presbytery hold its first meeting at Pine Ridge church in Adams County on the first Wednesday of March the next; and that Rev. Joseph Bullen, or in case of his absence, the senior member present, preside as Moderator."

In accordance with this action of the Synod of Kentucky we learn from the same author that the following ministers and ruling elders met at Pine Ridge Church March 6, 1816, and organized the Mississippi Presbytery, viz.: Ministers—Joseph Bullen, William Montgomery, Jacob Rickhow and James Smylie. Rev. Daniel Smith, who was laboring as a missionary at Natchez (where two years later he organized the first Presbyterian Church in that city), was also present as a corresponding member. Ruling elders present—John Grafton, of Pine Ridge Church; John Bolls, of Bayou Pierre, and Daniel Cameron, of Ebenezer.

The Presbytery of Mississippi, when organized, formed part

of the Synod of Kentucky. The movement of population and the expansion of the church involved certain changes in its subsequent relations. In 1817 it was associated with the Synod of Tennessee. In 1826 we find it placed upon the roll of the Synod West Tennessee. In 1829, in connection with other Presbyteries which appear to have been set off from its territory, it was erected into a Synod called the Synod of Mississippi and South Alabama. In 1835 three Presbyteries were set off from this growing Synod to form the Synod of Alabama, and from that time it is known as the Synod of Mississippi. God so prospered this Synod that in 1847 it became necessary to divide it again, and four more Presbyteries were set off to form the Synod of Memphis, and in 1851 three more of its Presbyteries were erected into the Synod of Texas. In 1852, out of a part of the territory ceded to the Synod of Memphis there was formed another Synod, the Synod of Arkansas, and again in 1901, three more of its Presbyteries were set off to form the Synod of Louisiana.

From this brief sketch it is seen that Mississippi owes a great debt of gratitude to the Carolinas for what, under the providence of God, they did to lay the foundation for pure evangelical religion within her borders. The principal missionary work done in the early and formative days of Mississippi, whether under Baptist, Methodist or Presbyterian auspices, was done through the missionary operations of these respective denominations in the Carolinas.

During the century which has elapsed since these noble first missionaries, Curtis of the Baptist, Gibson of the Methodist, and Hall, Bowman and Montgomery of the Presbyterian Church, were sent to the Natchez country by the Carolinàs to collect the scattered sheep in the vast wilderness, the congregations so collected have steadily sent forth their saving influence, under the divine blessing, over the communities where they had been located and have poured forth to the regions beyond ten thousand streams of salvation to gladden the hearts of millions then unborn.