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ELEMENTS of TRUTH

VOLUME II

ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT
**SYNOD'S TRAINING
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CONTENTS

	Page.
I. THE MODERN MIND AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE:	
Rev. R. A. Webb, D.D., LL.D. (Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology, Louisville Theological Seminary).	
Chapter 1—Social Discontent	9- 21
2—The Social Organism.....	23- 34
3—Utopianism	35- 44
4—Secularism	45- 52
5—Altruism: Humanitarianism: Socialism	53- 63
6—Christian Socialism	65- 76
7—Neighborhood and Brotherhood.....	77- 90
8—Social Service	91-101
9—Christian Charlty	103-113
10—The Service of God.....	115-127
II. THE IDEAL STATE:	
Judge W. M. Cox.	
Chapter 1—	129-142
III. EDUCATIONAL ESSENTIALS:	
Dr. Alfred Hume.	
Chapter 1—	145-156
IV. PIONEER PRESBYTERIANS AND THEIR SUC- CESSORS IN MISSISSIPPI:	
Rev. C. W. Grafton, D.D.	
Chapter 1—	159-177
V. PRESBYTERIAN WORTHIES:	
Rev. John M. Wells, D.D.	
Chapter 1—Samuel Davies	183-197
2—Archibald Alexander	199-213
3—John Leighton Wilson.....	215-228
4—Daniel Baker	229-243

PIONEER PRESBYTERIANS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS IN MISSISSIPPI.

By C. W. GRAFTON, D. D.

Let us go back in imagination to the year 1816 March 6th, and take our place with our great grandfathers in Pine Ridge church, Adams County and listen to the first roll call of the presbytery of Mississippi.

Ministers.

Rev. Joseph Bullen, Moderator;
Rev. William Montgomery,
Rev. Jacob Rickhow,
Rev. James Smiley.

Ruling Elders.

John Grafton, Pine Ridge Church;
Matthew Bolls, Bayou Pierre,
Daniel Cameron, Ebenezer.



REV. C. W. GRAFTON, D.D.,
Union Church, Miss.
Lecture—Pioneer Presbyterians.

Four ministers and three ruling elders sat together as the nucleus of the presbytery of Mississippi. All that has been great or good in the shape of persons, all that is noble in the shape of deeds, all that is chivalrous in the line of christian love and duty in the Presbyterian Church of the Southwest sprang from that little body of men whose names we have just called. The men of this generation know nothing comparatively of the grand men who have preceded us in our work. Our school children are taught the names of Mississippi's great statesmen, jurists, orators and soldiers and this is right. It is in a high degree laudable to cultivate a worthy state pride and it is stimulating to the sons of Mississippi to look at the virtues of noble ancestors in the commonwealth. It is the design of this essay to bring to mind as well as possible the labors of our fathers in the Church whose self-sacrifice and devotion made the present stage of our career a possibility. The Presbyterian Church in Mississippi is like a tree planted by the waters. Rooted and grounded in Jesus Christ it has developed continually and borne harvests of blessed fruit for one hundred years.

Rev. Joseph Bullen was sent by the New York Missionary Society as a missionary to the Chickasaw Indians in the year 1799. At the close of this mission to the Indians, he came to Jefferson County in 1804 and in that year organized the first Presbyterian Church in the South-west. This church was named Bethel and was at Union Town a small place west of Fayette on the fork of the historic Cole's Creek. The ruling elders of this church during its existence were John Bolls, Alexander Callender, Joseph Parmelee, John Alsworth, Thomas Grafton and Daniel King.

The pioneers succeeding Mr. Bullen were Rev. William Montgomery, James Hall and James Bowman from the synod of the Carolinas. The next two were the Rev. James Smylie of North Carolina and Jacob Rickhow. The first ten churches were organized in the following order;

Bethel in 1804 by Rev. Joseph Bullen.
 Pine Ridge, Feb. 25, 1807 by Rev. James Smylie.
 Bayou Pierre in 1807 by Rev. James Smylie and Joseph Bullen.
 Bethany in Amite County in 1807 by Rev. James Smylie.
 Amite in 1807 by Rev. James Smylie.
 Florida in Louisiana about 1807 by Rev. James Smylie.
 Ebenezer in 1811 by Rev. Jacob Rickhow.
 Union Church March 2nd, 1817 by Rev. Joseph Bullen.
 Natches 1817 by Rev. Daniel Smith.
 First Church, New Orleans in 1823 by Rev. Theodore Clapp.

The first seven of these churches were organized prior to the organization of presbytery, the other three afterwards.

In 1815 Rev. James Smylie travelled all the way from the Natches country over Jackson's war trace through canebrakes and the wilderness to attend a meeting of the presbytery of West Tennessee to whose territory these churches belonged. He induced that body to overture the synod of Kentucky to take steps for the organization of the presbytery of Mississippi. In 1815 the order was passed by that synod and the presbytery of Mississippi held its first meeting at Pine Ridge Church March 6, 1816 with Rev.

Joseph Bullen as moderator. The roll of its members was given above.

From the first visit of Joseph Bullen to the organization of the presbytery we have seventeen years, and we now see the mother presbytery of Mississippi launched upon her career with this little handful of ministers and elders the root of our great family tree. Its territory in extent was immense. Its northern line was the dividing line between the Choctaws and the Chickasaws; on the east the Perdido River for some distance up from its mouth and thence a line running north-east till it intersected the Choctaw and Chickasaw line; on the south the Gulf of Mexico; and the western boundary was indefinite. It thus embraced nearly all of the states of Alabama and Mississippi, the whole of Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas. In 1817 the synod of Kentucky was divided, the southern part embracing the presbyteries of Union, Shiloh, West Tenn., and Mississippi, these constituting the synod of Tennessee. According to the narrative prepared by the General Assembly of 1822 the territory of the presbytery of Mississippi embraced at that time a population of 200,000 souls with only eight Presbyterian ministers and four licentiates. New Orleans had at that time 46,000 inhabitants and had enjoyed the glorious ministry of Sylvester Larned. The Presbytery of Mississippi now began to be represented in the General Assembly. Her first commissioner to that body was the Rev. Hyland Hulburd. The next one was the Rev. Benjamin Chase, the first licentiate of the Presbytery in 1825. Churches began to be rapidly organized throughout all the bounds of our section and the time came when the first presbytery was set off from the main body. This was the Presbytery of Tombigbee in 1828. At that time there was some confusion of boundary lines. The Synod of the Carolinas having sent out the first missionaries to the Tombigbee country naturally claimed it and in 1828 the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia passed the order for the organization of the presbytery. In 1831 the Presbytery of Clinton was set off in the central part of our state. Then followed the Presbyteries of Arkansas and Amite in 1834. The name of Amite being changed in 1836 into Louisiana. In the year 1825 the Synod of Tennessee was divided into two synods of Tennessee and West Tennessee

and to this latter the Presbytery of Mississippi was attached. In the year 1829 the Presbytery of Mississippi having protested against the action of the synod of South Carolina and Georgia in the Tombigbee matter the Synod of Mississippi and South Alabama was formed with the three presbyteries of Mississippi, Tombigbee and Alabama. Six years later in 1835 the Synod of Mississippi was solemnly organized under the act of the General Assembly and its first meeting was held October of that same year in the city of Natches, its first moderator being Rev. William C. Blair of the presbytery of Amite. It was at that time composed of four presbyteries; to wit, Mississippi, Clinton, Amite and Arkansas. As immigrants poured into the state the synod showed wonderful flexibility and its acts showed that its members were fully abreast with the needs of the times. It is interesting to watch the development.

The Indian Presbytery was set off October 25, 1840. In 1841 the Presbytery of Holly Springs was set off and its name changed to Chickasaw in 1842, and in 1856 having come under the jurisdiction of the Synod of Memphis was divided so as to form the presbyteries of North Mississippi and Chickasaw. In 1842 the Presbytery of Tombigbee was received. In 1844 the Presbytery of New Orleans was organized, dissolved in 1845 and reorganized in 1854. In 1845 the Presbytery of Brazos was received and in 1850 the Synod set off from it the two Presbyteries of Eastern and Western Texas. In 1853 the Presbytery of Red River was set off and in 1854 the two Presbyteries of Yazoo and East Mississippi. In 1855 the name of Yazoo was changed to Central Mississippi and in 1866 East Mississippi was dissolved and its territory divided among other presbyteries. In 1864 the New School Presbyteries of Clinton, Lexington South and Newton were received, then dissolved, and the members and churches transferred to the old school presbyteries. The Presbytery of Ethel was set off in 1890 and in 1899 the Presbytery of Meridian. In 1901 the General Assembly set off the synod of Mississippi the Presbyteries of New Orleans, Louisiana and Red River and formed them into the Synod of Louisiana.

In the same year the Synods of Memphis and Nashville were dissolved and the Tennessee presbyteries were organized

into the Synod of Tennessee; and the two presbyteries of North Mississippi and Chickasaw were assigned to the Synod of Mississippi. The boundary lines of the Synod of Mississippi now coincide with state lines.

The Presbyterian people in Mississippi have been under the care of four General Assemblies.

I. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

II. In part (three presbyteries) under the new School General Assembly of the United States.

III. The General Assembly of the Confederate States of America.

IV. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

We have been likewise successively under the care and supervision of six synods; namely, the Synod of the Carolinas, the Synod of Kentucky, the Synod of Tennessee, the Synod of West Tennessee, the Synod of Mississippi and South Alabama and finally the Synod of Mississippi.

Still further the Synod of Mississippi has had under its jurisdiction from its organization in 1835 up to the present, twenty three presbyteries; namely, the Presbyteries of Mississippi, New Orleans, Amite and Louisiana, Brazos, East Texas and West Texas, Red River, Arkansas and Indian, Clinton, Yazoo, Holly Springs and Chickasaw, North Mississippi, Central Mississippi, East Mississippi and Tombigbee, Ethel, Meridan, Clinton New School, Lexington South and Newton. In several of these cases indeed we have the same presbytery appearing under two names, but they all appear on the rolls of the synod and were, with the exception of those north of the Chickasaw line all carved out of the territory once belonging to the Presbytery of Mississippi. In addition we note the Cumberland Presbyterian Synod with its five presbyteries: viz, Bell, Mississippi, New Hope, Oxford and Yazoo, at date of 1900.

Out of that little band of pioneers that sat at Pine Ridge Church a hundred years ago with their faces turned toward the future, there has been a wonderful development and the Presbyterian Church finds upon its rolls a great many noble

men. It is a fact conceded by those who know, that the early immigrants to the Mississippi Territory were men of superior attainments. Some of the best blood of New England and the Middle States and the Carolinas came into the Mississippi Territory to seek their fortunes and build their homes. There were able jurists, high-toned politicians and men who as farmers and merchants reached a high grade in those callings, while Sargent S. Prentiss and Sylvester Larned stood forth as orators of unrivaled power. The lands were new, every thing was new and every thing was calculated to bring forth the best that was in a man. The ministers of the gospel too were of the highest class. There were men on the rolls of the Synod of Mississippi who were the peers of any in all the land. There was Father Montgomery, in rank and learning the Nestor of the Presbyterian Church, James Smylie a second Nestor, Benjamin Chase, Benjamin H. Williams, Thomas A. Ogden, Cyrus Kingsbury, Loring S. Williams, Cyrus Byington, Jeremiah Chamberlain, James Purviance, Robert L. Stanton, William L. Breckenridge, Zebulon Butler and quite a number of others who graced the Faculty of Oakland College. In a later day Joseph B. Stratton, B. M. Palmer, J. A. Lyon, John N. Waddell, Sam Montgomery, John Hunter, J. H. Alexander, Richmond McInnis and others whose names are like ointment poured forth.

A great many of these are resting in unmarked graves unknown to the world like the grave of Calvin at Geneva. Others, one at least, was put away on the banks of the Mississippi and went down into its swollen waters with the crumbling banks and like the ashes of Wickliffe have gone out to the distant sea. But the work of these men abides forever.

Singling out a few of these for special notice take a glance at William Montgomery and James Smylie, Father Montgomery and Uncle Jimmie. These titles were the tribute of affection. They were a pair of royal co-laborers both of them being learned men and more than any others in the state of Mississippi did they contribute to the advancement of the Presbyterian church. They were well known throughout our bounds. Each had a home of his own and they were able to give themselves freely to the

work in hand. Rev. John A. Smylie was a nephew of James Smylie. Of the Smylie family, including sisters' children, there have been six ministers, eight ruling elders, and seven deacons. Rev. Sam Montgomery, son of Wm. Montgomery, was a man of wonderful eloquence. He had a deep penetrating mind and could master the subtlest questions in metaphysics and theology. His power as a preacher was remarkable, but the two old men lived for a long time in the steady discharge of every duty. They were pioneers in education, in farming, in good morals, in religion and every thing else that pertained to the general welfare. We note among the early contributors to Oakland College that Father Montgomery gave \$1000. These two faithful soldiers came to their graves like the shocks of corn heavy with rich fruit.

The Rev. James Hall was one of the first three that came to Mississippi territory. In a book by the Rev. W. P. Breed entitled "Presbyterians and the Revolution" the following quotation is taken from Gillett's History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. "James Hall of North Carolina, subsequently the pioneer missionary in the valley of the Mississippi was selected as leader and accepted the command of a military company formed mainly from his own congregation whom his fervid and pathetic appeals had inspired to arms against Cornwallis. Such was his reputation that he was offered the commission of brigadier-general."

This James Hall was almost without a doubt the same man that accompanied Father Montgomery and James Bowman, and ate cornbread and coon meat on their way to the Natches Country. Those men that had drilled and marched in the continental army knew how to fight for their country and did not hesitate a moment to answer the call of need but when the war was over they laid aside their regimentals and Dr. James Hall, a true soldier of the cross and minister of the gospel gave a part of his life's energies to service among our early pioneers.

SYLVESTER LARNED.

There is one man, however, that we must note specially because of his really remarkable career. This man was Sylvester Larned. He died upon the very threshold of his work. He spent only three years in the ministry. He died

when he was very young but during those three years he mightily impressed the whole city of New Orleans. Of course every one should be reminded that New Orleans at that time belonged to the Presbytery of Mississippi. He was the stated clerk of the Presbytery of Mississippi during his short career. He was born in New England, and from his earliest years displayed most wonderful talent. He was evidently born great. He studied at some of the finest schools in New England. His experience as a Christian was toned up and regulated by a hearty belief in Calvinistic theology. Many ardent admirers wanted him to be a lawyer, others expected him to exercise his ambition in the wide field of politics, but a whisper from the Man of Nazareth arrested him and with a heart full of enthusiasm, thrilling with joy and love, he gave himself to the ministry. He received his theological training at old Princeton, and the finest pulpits of the whole northeast were at his disposal; but as he turned away from the law for the ministry so he turned away from attractive fields of labor in the rich states of the North and East, and cast his lot in the unknown region of the Southwest as a domestic missionary.

At that time New Orleans and the Southwest had just come out from under Spanish domination. Our great Southern city was filled with a mongrel population. Roman Catholicism was in full sway and every one understands its spirit towards Protestantism. It seemed like a forlorn hope to plant a Presbyterian Church in that great city, and then, too, the city was constantly scourged with epidemics of yellow fever. The fear of that dread disease has, indeed, only partially subsided in recent years. But the fear of it at that time spread far and wide and the fear was well grounded. Every one who has passed through an epidemic of fever will know what it means. Farther still, Sylvester Larned had a family that was devoted to him. 'Twas a hard thing to part with them and go so far away, for transportation in those days was exceedingly difficult. Weeks and even months were spent in the passage to New Orleans. 'Tis much easier today to go to China than to go in those days from Philadelphia to New Orleans, and far more dangerous. Of course the spirit of the apostle will carry a man anywhere even to shame and sorrow, and even death itself;

but when we find a man who is willing to undergo these things it shows a great triumph of grace, and in this respect Sylvester Larned was a marvel of grace.

In the year 1817, Rev. Elias Cornelius, a missionary of the Connecticut Missionary Society, preceded him to New Orleans and paved the way for him. Mr. Larned followed in three or four weeks. He came down the river in the distinguished company of Jeremiah Chamberlain, who was a college mate and friend. Bouyed up by the natural exhilaration of a great soul, chastened and tempered by the love of God within him, he landed in New Orleans, in January 1818.

From the preaching of his first sermon, he took his place at once at the summit. For thrilling eloquence, for sound doctrine, for gentleness and tact, and other qualities, he stands unrivalled among his brethren, a prince in the pulpit, and yet with all this the sweetness of his temper and his humility were most marked. When early biographers began to speak of him, they found ordinary language too tame to express their views. In the second year of his ministry at New Orleans, some business outside the city detained him in the country and he could not get back. During his absence yellow fever broke out and raged with awful severity. His absence was wholly providential, and he could not control the circumstances that kept him away but his sensitive heart was greatly grieved at this separation from his flock. He would have preferred a great deal rather to have been with them and died, than to have been away and lived. He prayed that he might be restored to his flock and never leave them again. In the year 1820 the fever broke out again. Some of his friends wanted him to leave, but no inducement could move him. His staying at his post was with him a principle of honor. One after another of his little flock died of the disease, and all unseen to himself the angel of death came nearer to him. On Sunday, August 27th, he preached from the text, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." He and all his congregation were carried away on the deep floodtide of devotion and feeling. On the following day the fatal chill seized him and delirium set in. For four days he hovered on the border land till on Thursday, August 31, his unfettered soul passed away. On this day he was just twenty-

four years old. A wail of sorrow went up far and wide at the news of his death. A wonderful ministry was compacted into three short years. A plain monument of white marble was erected to his memory in Lafayette Square, and his name will be forever associated with the first Presbyterian Church of New Orleans and the pioneers of the Southwest.

In addition to the above roll of ministers there is a large body of ruling elders whose names should awaken a thrill of the deepest reverence. These ministers and elders preached and exemplified the gospel in their lives. As preachers, pastors, missionaries, and educators, they endured hardships which pioneers could appreciate. They bore themselves with a gentleness and a dignity that could not fail to attract the world, yet they could rebuke boldly and they stood always the foes of vice and patrons of virtue.

Let us see some of their testimony and work:

First: The Presbyterian Church in Mississippi has from its very beginning put the greatest emphasis on the home. Among those early pioneers the constitution of the home was one of the choice themes of the pulpit. The doctrine of the Abrahamic covenant was very dear to our fathers. They believed in the Gospel promise "to you and to your children." They believed that covenant children were specially blessed above all others. The great promise indeed with baptism as its sign and seal, is the very charter of the church militant, and wherever it has been held and taught, there its blessed influence has been felt. The home circle with the catechism and the family altar and the Sabbath day faithfully observed was emphasized throughout all our bounds. In the last two or three decades of years, there is constant complaint that the family altar is neglected, the Sabbath day is disregarded, and family religion is dying out. There is much ground for these sad notes and the next revival of religion among us should, perhaps, be in the resurrection of the home altars. Our fathers set for this generation a blessed example. At its first meeting in 1816, the Presbytery of Mississippi in a terse pastoral letter urged all families to worship in the closet, the household and the sanctuary; to educate their children in the Scriptures and the catechism; to attend to the preaching of the Gospel, and

to observe the Sabbath day; to attend to the reading of God's Word, reading it for themselves, their children, and servants with diligence, preparation and prayer; to meet together on the Sabbath day, and where preaching is not practicable, to have Scriptures and sermons read. The Presbytery expected all parents, especially ruling elders, to set up the altars of religion in their homes. At a meeting in 1831, an overture concerning the duties of ruling elders was answered as follows:

"Resolved, That if any elder shall, except in case of extreme bodily infirmity, habitually neglect family worship or refuse to aid according to his ability in conducting other religious exercises, it is the duty of the session to which he belongs faithfully and affectionately to admonish him and if such neglect be persevered in to suspend him from the office of ruling elder."

The public deliverances of those pioneer days on dancing, gambling, and other such worldly amusements are straight to the point and ring like a trumpet. The Synod of Mississippi in an earnest pastoral letter to the churches, says as follows:

"We consider the theatre a great evil to the community and to the nation at large; the most fruitful source of corruption to the morals of the people. There is scarcely a patron of the theatre who does not know and believe in his heart that it is inconsistent for professors of religion to be seen there. When a man can deliberately bring reproach upon religion for the sake of a temporary gratification, we cannot suppose that the cause of the Redeemer lies very near his heart. We believe that the ball (dancing) is adverse to vital piety and promotive of thoughtlessness and irreligion; an amusement that cherishes vanity, pride, and envy. It fills the youthful bosom with emotions inconsistent with true Christian feelings. It destroys devotional frames of mind, chills the ardor of pious zeal and rolls back upon the heart the warm current of holy love to God and man. It unfits the mind for the duties of religion, and fosters the giddy and frivolous propensities of our nature."

"**Card playing and games of chance**—All games of chance are so many inconsiderate and irreverent appeals to divine providence. If we may not take the name of God in vain

neither may we trifle with and make sport of His Providence. All gaming, even if it be for mere amusement, tends more or less to the practice of gambling. Some games being more abused and prostituted to purposes of gain than others, have become more odious to the feelings of the moral and the upright. Of this class we may mention 'card-playing' as an instance and this very fact should deter men from the practice and lead them to despise and abandon an amusement around which are thrown so many painful and disgusting associations. Christian feeling has long since proscribed this amusement and this Christian feeling is neither to be despised or wounded by those who call themselves Christians. There is but one sentiment on this subject among the truly pious and it has become the moral sense of the Christian Church. To offend this is to offend the Church. Therefore forbear! The sighs of many aching bosoms, the lamentations of many care-worn and heartbroken fathers, the flowing tears of many widows and orphans, the cause of our country, and God, all cry forbear!—"

So much for the church courts on the subject of home. Beginning with the pioneer days and coming down through all the years the Synod and the Presbyteries have constantly brought the home before the minds of the people, urging, exhorting, and warning all our people to see to it that the home, the foundation of all social life, should be made pure and kept pure. Here, now, is a particular church which was typical of many in the State of Mississippi. Pine Ridge Church is the most venerable church in the Synod and is too old to be flattered. With the exception of two Baptist Churches, New Providence and Ebenezer, and possibly one M. E. Church at Washington, Adams County, Pine Ridge is the oldest living Protestant Church in the Southwest, and stands today enriched with the memory of over a hundred years. I quote from "A Brief History of that Church," by Rev. Benjamin H. Williams, its faithful pastor of former days. He says:

"January 1st, 1812, the Rev. William Montgomery commenced his labors as stated supply, and continued them for six years. During this time the Lord's Supper was regularly administered every spring and autumn. These communion seasons seem to have been occasions of great interest

and profit. The services usually commenced on Friday preceding which was observed as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. There were also public preparatory services on Saturday and the Monday following was observed as a day of thanksgiving. The following is a record of preparation exercises in the Session Book, viz.:

"March 21st: Our reverend pastor held a general examination of this church of the different sexes and ages of his congregation and in order to gratify the people at large, he complied with their request to continue their preceding mode of examination and issued inquiries in writing to the male sex that were of mature age. All the young and the females were to recite the shorter catechism. At the date above the congregation collected together for the intended purpose and after solemnly imploring God for his blessing to crown the proceedings, our reverend pastor began the business of the day. When he received the answers in written form proven by scripture: every one's answer publicly read and very lengthy and stands filed in the church. Then he entered on the shorter catechism throughout and closed the business of the day with prayer.'"

Here, now, was the genuine apostolical method. Here was teaching and preaching,—the preacher with the catechism on Saturday, and his sermon on Sunday. It was a combination of the catechetical method and the preaching service, a method which in the hands of Luther and Calvin, and John Knox, bolstered the Reformation and saved it. The significant thing is that Pine Ridge stands today strong and vigorous. It has had many battles to fight. It has given its young men and women to other churches, its fine old building was blown down in 1908 by a roaring storm and it was rebuilt at great labor to the people, but look in the Minutes of the Assembly, and you will see that its record is still good. Such teaching as that above described strengthens the pulpit, indoctrinates the home, gives moral strength and vigor to sons and daughters, and it is fair to say that the brick church at Pine Ridge stands a monument to the memory of precious homes.

You have seen the deliverances of the Church Courts, and also a typical congregation going back to those pioneer days. Here is now an individual whose life spanned almost

over the whole century of the church life of which I am writing, and who is a conspicuous illustration of the blessed power of the home life. Here is a minute from the First Volume of Sessional Records of Union Church:

"Union Church, June 3, 1826—The Session met on the call of the Moderator, and was constituted with prayer. Present: Rev. William Montgomery, Moderator; Elders John Buie, Angus Patterson, Charles McDougald, Murdoch McDuffie, John Watson, Neil Buie, and Matthew Smylie Rev. James Smylie being present, was invited and took his seat with us. The following persons made application to be received as members in the communion of the Church, viz.: James Bisland, Katherine and Mary McDougald who were duly examined and received.—NEIL BUIE, Clerk

"Adjourned by prayer."

This Mary McDougald came out of a Christian home and her profession of faith at this early age (just fifteen years old) was just the thing to be expected. Three years later she married and went with her husband to Carroll County carrying her church letter and her religion with her. Being herself the precious product of a Christian home she with her loyal husband established another Christian home. Bible, catechism, worship, Sabbath day, God, in all his ordinances were recognized. She stood unswerving in her loyalty to the doctrines she had imbibed in her childhood days, and when she died in 1903, 92 years of age, she left behind her 121 children, and grand children, and great grandchildren, nearly every one who has reached the years of accountability being the subject of renewing grace. She lived to see also seven Presbyterian Churches around her, all of which were traceable through the old Shongalo Church to her influence. This mother in Israel bore the name of MARY McDOUGALD McEACHERN, the grandmother of our present governor.

Our pioneer fathers set the pace for a whole hundred years in the matter of education. The first thing James Smylie did when he came to the territory, was to organize a classical academy at Washington. In this school Father Montgomery taught for a good long period. Then came the founding of Oakland College with all of its pathetic and romantic history. The men of the present day can scarcely

realize the devotion of these pioneer Presbyterians to that grand school. No one who visits the site today would fail to grasp the natural beauty of the place. Nestled there among the oak trees this school of the prophets served as a sacred fountain of Christian learning. You should have heard such men as Dr. Markham, Dr. Stratton, Dr. Price, and others speak of old Oakland. To it Jeremiah Chamberlain gave all his energy and later on his blood. Father Montgomery gave of his money and his constant presence. David Hunt gave to it from first to last \$175,000, and all watered it with their prayers and best wishes and by and by under the orderings of Providence they laid it down, 'mid the tears and lamentations of the whole church. Dating from those pioneer days the Synod has numbered some faithful educators and some fine schools, but we pass on and note:

That our pioneer fathers were noted for their strict adherence to Calvinistic doctrine. From the very beginning up to date our theology has been Westminster Presbyterianism. Those fine seminaries at Princeton, Columbia, Danville, Hampden Sidney, have moulded our men. The Alexanders, Hodges, Greens, Millers, Thornwells, Breckinridges and other great teachers, gave to our men the undiluted truth from the purest fountain. Our pioneer fathers accepted these great truths without question, and it is gratifying to state that in the long line of their successors there has scarcely been any divergence from the faith. A noted minister of New Orleans was one who did depart from the old paths but the Presbytery of Mississippi met and after patient dealing with him and a long trial running through two sessions and lasting over three weeks, he was found guilty by unanimous vote, suspended from the ministry, and afterwards deposed. This man was the Rev. Theodore Clapp, successor to Sylvester Larned. Those pioneer fathers accepted the Bible as God's inspired word; they interpreted it in its historical sense, and their followers for a hundred years have walked right along in their tracks. Rationalism, Pelagianism, with its kindred errors and the daring conclusions of the "Higher Criticism" have never found encouragement among us, but have been carefully excluded.

Farther still, the greatest attention has all along been given to the great idea of worshipping God with our sub-

stance and in this respect the pioneers again set the example. Long before any one of us was born, the old pioneer church at Natchez is on record as giving to foreign missions nearly \$7,000.00 in five years and to domestic missions over \$7,000. Over a thousand dollars a year to each one of these causes is liberal giving in the Cause of the Kingdom. So the churches of today should hear the call of the fathers ringing out to them in clarion tones urging them to come up to the help of the Lord with their gifts.

Again, while our pioneer fathers with all their hearts believed in salvation by grace they always contended for the purest morality as the fruit of grace. Their deliverances on the subject of temperance and their firm stand for personal morality on the part of her ministers and all her members are among the most noted of all their testimonies and labor for all these years.

The black man amongst us from the earliest years was the subject of the deepest solicitude. These men a hundred years ago did a great deal to soften the lot and ameliorate the hardships of the slave. They did their best to provide him with religious instruction. Be it said to the credit of the Presbyterian Church, that to an extent beyond what any man dreams of today, the black man was looked upon as a solemn trust. Our fathers endeavored to obey the command, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven."

The fidelity of the pioneers of the Presbyterian Church and of their successors; their fidelity, I say, in all these departments of work and witness bearing could be illustrated in a great many ways. Numerous examples could be brought forward to prove their devotion, but with tender and tearful memories of all their wonderful career we must now come to a pause.

Let us be reminded that the Presbyterian Church today in the venerable Synod of Mississippi is rich in the inheritance of memories more precious than gold and silver. King Solomon was rich sure enough in gold and silver and precious stones; rich in houses of cedar wood, rich in the possession of men-servants and women-servants, but above all these things he was rich in the memory of King David his royal father. Sure enough David made mistakes, and at least

one dark shadow stained his name, but his penitence for that great sin, and then his tender love to God, and his splendid devotion to his people, to the cause of God, his tender communion with the Lord of Hosts, and other noble characteristics of the great chieftain were the richest legacy that Solomon could receive from his father! And this royal inheritance lifted King Solomon to a pinnacle of responsibility which ought to have forever kept him sober, and alive to the cause of righteousness. We, the men of this generation with all their precious inheritance, must feel our responsibility and never fall back one step in our labors for God's Kingdom. We must never abate our testimony by one jot or tittle from the straight line of truth. To the wide open fields God calls us. In faith and hope let us follow.