

The Beginnings of
Presbyterianism in the
Southwest

By LOUIS VOSS, D. D.
Pastor First Street Presbyterian Church
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

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INTRODUCTORY.

American Presbyterianism is the product of the combined European elements which contributed to it. French Huguenots, English Puritans, Dutch and German Reformed, Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, all have had a share in its development.

French Huguenots landed in the Carolinas in 1562 and in Florida in 1565. Others settled in Nova Scotia in 1604. The later Huguenots mingled with the Dutch in New York and the Presbyterians in New England and the Carolinas.

From 1620 onward English Puritanism colonized New England. It assumed the two types of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. Presbyterianism was stronger in Connecticut than in Massachusetts. Thence it crossed into the Dutch settlements on the Hudson and the Delaware and mingled with other elements in Virginia, Maryland and the Carolinas.

Dutch Presbyterianism was planted in New Amsterdam (New York) in 1628.

Irish Presbyterianism was carried to America in 1668. Francis Makemie, an Irish Presbyterian minister, was invited in 1683 to minister to Virginia and Maryland Presbyterians. He was the chief instrument in establishing the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in 1706.

In the Carolinas, Presbyterianism had an independent development. A mixed congregation of English Puritans and Scotch Presbyterians was organized at Charleston in 1690. In 1710, there were five churches which combined to form the Presbytery of James Island in 1722.

In 1789, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia resolved itself into a General Assembly. An effort for union with the Reformed Dutch and the Associate Reformed failed, but under a Plan of Union adopted in 1801, the Presbyterian General Assembly and the Congregational General Association joined their efforts in home mission fields. Under this plan Congregational ministers were allowed to serve Presbyterian churches, and vice versa. The result was mixed churches in western New York and the new States west of the Alleghany Mountains. The plan remained in operation for a generation. That it was useful for a time, is freely admitted, but ultimately it led to the great division of the church into the "New School" and "Old School," in 1837.

The question of ordaining ministers only partially qualified for the office resulted in the formation of a Cumberland

Presbytery, in 1810. By 1813 this new church was large enough to form three Presbyteries, and in 1829 held its first General Assembly at Princeton, Ky.

In the meantime a stream of white settlers poured into the West and Southwest and one vast domain after another was added to the territory of the United States.

By the terms of the Treaty of 1783, all the territory east of the Mississippi and south of the Great Lakes was surrendered to the United States. It embraced the Northwest Territory, which included the present States of Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, the Southwest Territory embracing Tennessee, and the Mississippi Territory including the States of Alabama and Mississippi, except the gulf coast, which formed part of the Spanish province of Florida. The Louisiana Purchase, in 1803, added the vast territory west of the Mississippi, from the gulf to the lakes, except California and Texas. Out of the Southern portion of the new acquisition the Territory of Orleans was organized, with the same limits as the present State of Louisiana; the rest of the vast tract continued to be called The Territory of Louisiana. Up to 1819 Spain laid claim to Texas. This was disputed by the United States, which claimed it as a part of the Louisiana Purchase, but in that year it relinquished its claim in consideration of the ceding by Spain of the two Floridas. Spain regarded this transaction as a diplomatic triumph. In abandoning Florida, it acquired a full title to Texas. But Texas did not long remain a part of the Spanish province of Mexico. In 1836 it seceded from Mexico and became an independent state or republic from 1836 to 1845. Its annexation by the United States in the latter year led to the Mexican War. California also was not included in the Louisiana Purchase. When the news of the Mexican War reached the British and American fleets at the same time, both started out to take possession of California. The American commodore got there first and raised the Stars and Stripes, only a little while before the English admiral arrived. Had the treaty by which California was ceded to the United States not been signed just when it was, it is probable that the news of the discovery of gold there would have modified the character of the treaty.

From this brief review it is seen that Providence has wrested one vast section of our domain after another from Roman Catholic governments, and made this a distinctly Protestant nation.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN THE SOUTHWEST.

The religious history of the Southwest received its coloring from its political history. Under British rule the provinces of East and West Florida ceded to it by Spain, enjoyed religious liberty. The section then known as the Natchez country was attached to West Florida. Gratuitous grants of land were made to settlers. This policy drew to the Natchez country some valuable citizens. Among them was Rev. Samuel Swayze, who, with a number of emigrant families, came from New Jersey in 1773, and organized a Congregational Church, the first church of any Protestant denomination ever organized in the Southwest, according to an article in the Southwestern Presbyterian of January 26, 1871.

One result of the American Revolution was that Great Britain ceded back to Spain the Florida provinces, which continued under Spanish rule eighteen years, from 1779 to 1798. This event again closed the Southwest against the preaching of the gospel. The Roman Catholic religion was made the only lawful form of worship. Protestant services were strictly prohibited. Persons detected in religious worship which did not conform to the Catholic Church were arrested and thrown into prison. As the condition of release, they were required to give bond not to repeat the offense and were threatened for such repetition to be sent as slaves to the mines of Mexico. Thrilling scenes transpired of worship with sentinels picketed out to give notice of the approach of the executioners of the law, and of heroic confronting the tyrants. Among the faithful and true Christian men who suffered this imprisonment for holding religious meetings were John Bolls, a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church and Richard Curtis, a Baptist preacher, who afterwards organized a Baptist Church called Salem, the first Protestant church organized in the Southwest under American rule.

As a result of the treaty with the United States, the Spanish governor with the troops under his command at Natchez evacuated Fort Rosalie and departed for New Orleans during the night of March 29, 1798. Early the next morning the American flag was elevated over the fort, and American jurisdiction was proclaimed. This act conferred religious liberty on the province.

The next minister of the gospel who arrived in the Southwest was Rev. Tobias Gibson, a Methodist. In 1800, he organized at Washington, the territorial capital, the first Methodist church in the Southwest.

The Presbyterian Church was the next to enter the field. It was by a missionary enterprise of the Synod of Carolina, the jurisdiction of which at that time extended over the States of North and South Carolina, with Georgia. Within Georgia all the territory west of the present limits of that State to the Mississippi River was included. As soon as American civil authority was established over that territory, in 1798, the Synod of Carolina immediately adopted efficient measures to send the gospel to it and plant the church there. It sent two missionaries to the Mississippi Territory, Rev. Wm. Montgomery and Rev. James Bowman.

A pastoral letter to its churches issued by a commission of the Synod in 1801, says:

"It is but a little more than twenty years since we consisted of only nine Presbyteries and we are now increased to twenty-eight. Sixteen years ago, we composed only one Synod and now consist of four, all united in one General Assembly. Hundreds of our churches, we believe, are supplied with faithful pastors and daily accessions, through their instrumentality, are making to the Redeemer's kingdom. Those are still enhanced by missionaries sent to publish the glad tidings of salvation to those who are destitute of the Gospel and its ordinances.

"It must be matter of joy to every friend of Zion to hear what God has effected within the bounds of our General Assembly through the instrumentality of their missionaries. For a proof of this you need only consult the extracts from their annual proceedings, together with the extracts from the reports of our missionaries sent to the Mississippi Territory.

"It must also give pleasure to every benevolent mind to hear how God is opening the hearts of His people towards carrying on the missionary business. Of this you need no other proof than the extracts from the minutes of our last General Assembly, where credit is given for near eleven thousand dollars collected during the last year for the purpose of establishing a permanent fund, the interest of which is to be appropriated for the support of missionaries on fron-

tier settlements and other places destitute of religious instructions, and to propagate the gospel among the heathen tribes.

"The annexed statement will inform you what has been contributed for the payment of our two missionaries to the Mississippi Territory for the last year. Two others are now appointed for the same place and one to itinerate in the Carolinas during part of the present year."

The two missionaries referred to were Rev. Wm. Montgomery and Rev. James Bowman. They spent seven and a half months on their visit to the Mississippi Territory, and upon their return submitted full reports to the Synod. Following are some of their experiences:

Extracts from the report of Rev. Wm. Montgomery:

"Your missionary left home on the 14th day of October, 1800, proceeded on his journey and met his colleagues, Messrs. Hall and Bowman, in the neighborhood of Knoxville, on the 27th of the same month. From thence we proceeded to the Cumberland settlements where we were detained some time waiting for the rising of the river; but the drought continuing, and no probability appearing of our being able to reach the Mississippi Territory in any reasonable time, we determined to go thither by land. We left Nashville on the 17th day of November, prosecuted our journey through the wilderness, and arrived at the upper settlement in the territory on the 4th day of December.

"After we had gone once round the territory preaching in different places, we met in the town of Natchez, and intimated to some leading characters of that place the propriety of having particular places appointed to preach at in different settlements. In consequence of a hand-bill published by them, a respectable committee of persons from different parts of the territory met in town and appointed for us nine places of preaching. We continued to preach at those places on Sabbath days; and at those and other places on as many week days as we judged expedient. Our religious assemblies were frequently large and generally decently, and sometimes solemnly, attentive.

"We administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper three times among them. At the first sacrament we had twenty-seven communicants, at the second, forty, and about the same number at the last. We have reason to believe that those were blessed seasons to a number of persons. The influence of the Divine Spirit seemed to be poured out on a

number. Those whom we admitted were recommended to us as persons of good moral character.

"Before we administered the ordinance of baptism among them, a discourse explanatory of the principles on which we administered pedobaptism was delivered in the presence of a pretty large assembly.

"Presbyterians and Episcopalians appear to be the most numerous denominations in the territory. There are a few congregations of Baptists and Methodists. Of the Baptists there are only two ordained ministers, who do not appear to be very influential among the people in general. Of the Methodists there is only one minister, a pious, amiable man. There appears to be an earnest desire among the inhabitants to have Presbyterian ministers among them.

"Your missionary baptized thirteen children and received eighty-six dollars as a compensation for his labors."

(Signed) WM. MONTGOMERY.

Rev. James Bowman reports:

"On the first Sabbath of March, I assisted in administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Pisgah, where the people had lately erected a large and commodious church about twenty miles above the town of Natchez. We continued to preach in the nine places pointed out to us by the territorial committee, until the 15th of April, on which we set out for North Carolina. I mention it to the credit of the citizens of the territory that in the whole of my travels there I did not meet with one avowed infidel. I hope the Synod of the Carolinas will not forget a people so anxious to be remembered by them. . . . The whole of the money which I received was eighty-six dollars, four and three-fourths of those I received on my way to and from the territory."

(Signed) JAMES H. BOWMAN.

An address to the missionaries from the citizens of the town of Natchez and its vicinity expresses cordial approbation of the missionaries' conduct while amongst them, although not all of them had been educated in the pale of the church of which they were ministers, mentioning also the great pains taken by one of the ministers to instruct them in things merely material, referring to a course of lectures on natural philosophy held weekly in Natchez, and offering their thanks for the faithful execution of the well-timed

mission among them, with an earnest solicitation for their return to the territory, or, if this be impracticable, to exercise their influence in procuring and sending others.

Much additional light is shed on the adventures and labors of these first Presbyterian missionaries in a series of articles which appeared in the Southwestern Presbyterian during the year 1871. The writer signs only the initial H. From them we gather the following facts:

The route from Nashville, Tenn., to Natchez, was through the Indian nations of Shawnee, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians, over the road known as "the Natchez trace," the only road in the country. The only mode of traveling was on horseback. The road was infested by a numerous band of robbers. It was not unusual for travelers to be robbed and killed. To see a human body covered with blood by the roadside, the pockets and saddle-bags rifled, gave no surprise. Such were the dangers of that long and perilous journey through the wilderness, that travelers set out heavily armed and prepared to meet the most desperate emergencies.

But the missionaries were prompted by different motives from other travelers. Their motive was not to secure gratuitous land grants, nor to procure riches or any personal benefit, but to carry the gospel and plant the church in the new territory, which a long series of wonderful providences in the overthrow of heathenism and of papal intolerance and superstition had recently opened to the gospel of Christ. They adventured on that road without carnal weapons or defensive armor, but with an unwavering faith in their divine call to the work to which the Head of the Church had appointed them by his Spirit as truly as Barnabas and Saul had been separated by the church at Antioch to a similar service, and the church which sent them had as truly fasted and prayed as that in Antioch. They traveled on horseback, with an extra horse as a pack-horse, on which they packed their provisions and camp fixtures. They cooked their own provisions, camped out at night, and forded the streams. When they pitched their tent in the evening and sat around the blazing fire, they made the depths of the forest ring with their hymns of cheer.

Soon after leaving Nashville, they fell in company with some men who were driving horses to the South. These drivers contributed company and security, but were not well supplied with provisions, supposing that they could buy from the Indians all they might need by the way. But the Indians

at that season of the year had mostly gone west of the Mississippi river on their fall hunt. Consequently the drivers were reduced very nearly to starvation. The missionaries shared their provisions with them. Their stock became exhausted. At last all was gone except a little meal which was equally divided. This they mixed with water and ate with thankful heart, calling it "grewel." At one time they caught a raccoon which they roasted and ate without salt or condiments. They pressed forward day and night, as fast as their horses could carry them, in hope of relief. On the morning of December 4, 1800, about two o'clock, they drew near to a dwelling on Black River. The first intimation they had of their vicinity to human habitations was by the crowing of the rooster, which sounded in their ears like music. They hastened to the house and without ceremony aroused the inmates, presenting starvation as their apology. They were kindly received and food was prepared, consisting of bacon, cornbread and coffee. Over forty years afterwards, when engaged in relating the adventure, Mr. Montgomery remarked: "That was a night never to be forgotten by any of us."

At Big Black the missionaries established a preaching station, to be supplied statedly in rotation with others which they desired to establish. A few miles further south they established a station at Grind Stone Fort and another at Clark's Creek. The first town which they reached was Port Gibson, which at that time was called Gibson's Port. A few hours before their arrival, Mrs. Gibson, the wife of the original settler, whose name was given to the town, had died and the missionaries at the request of Mr. Gibson performed the funeral service, probably the first sermon ever preached in the place.

A few miles southwest of the town they found several Presbyterian families exceedingly anxious for religious privileges. They united and built a log house for that purpose. The name of Bayou Pierre was given to it and a congregation collected. The missionaries established it as a preaching station.

At a small village called Union Town, which has since disappeared, they found two brothers, Samuel and Alexander Montgomery, who were Presbyterians. By their assistance they found others anxious to unite in securing religious services. Among them were seven families who had emigrated from New Jersey with Rev. Samuel Swayze and had belonged to the Congregational Church organized by him,

which was dispersed and broken up by the Spanish authorities. Sufficiently near to unite with them was also John Bolls, who, under the Spanish rule, had braved the tyrants' fury and suffered imprisonment for holding prayer and other religious meetings. His name appears frequently on the records of the first Sessions and Presbytery among the foremost in laying the foundations of the church.

Rev. Dr. Thos. R. Markham published some historical articles in five successive numbers of the Southwestern Presbyterian in 1890, which the Synod of Mississippi of that year requested him to publish in book form. In them he quotes from a "History of the Presbytery of Mississippi," by Rev. Dr. Joseph B. Stratton, for almost fifty years pastor of the church at Natchez, saying that "John Bolls was a member of the Mecklenburg, N. C., Convention, signed its 'Declaration,' and fought through the War of the Revolution. He was betrayed to the Spanish priest by a man he had nursed in sickness, for holding prayer meetings and was cast into a filthy prison in the town of Natchez." It will be of interest to many of later generations to know that the late Rev. M. B. (Matthew Bolls) Shaw, for many years pastor of the churches at Clinton and Jackson, La., and Centreville, Miss., was a great grandson of John Bolls.

The missionaries continued their course south along the Natchez trace. At Washington, the capital of the territory, they found the state of things still more interesting. In the vicinity were several Presbyterian families of intelligence and wealth who were collected with other families of social position and liberality into a congregation, and a preaching point was established.

At last the missionaries reached Natchez. Here they found only one Presbyterian family, but that was John Henderson's, a name which has become identified in the subsequent history of the Presbyterian Church in this section with Christian benevolence and piety.

The experiences of the missionaries in Natchez have already been told in their own reports to the Synod of Carolina.

There were nine preaching points which they established on their first journey, viz.: Big Black, Grind Stone Fort, Clark's Creek, Bayou Pierre, Callender's Meeting House, Washington, Natchez, Jersey Settlement, and Pinckneyville. Of these nine stations five were subsequently organized into Presbyterian churches. These five original churches constituted the germ of the first Presbytery in the Southwest

which in 1816 was organized in Pine Ridge Church, the congregation collected at Washington. This Presbytery extended from the Perdido river indefinitely westward and at this day embraces many entire Synods.

The Synod of Carolina continued to prosecute their domestic missionary enterprises to the Mississippi Territory. They sent out men to succeed the returned missionaries, among whom were Rev. Samuel Matthews, Rev. James Smylie and Rev. Wm. Brown. They traveled on horseback over the same perilous route by which the first came. On their arrival in the territory they adopted the same plan of labor and filled appointments by rotation in a circuit. Many of them were men of great abilities as was shown by the eminence to which they rose. Their labors and character were considered as illustrations of Christianity approximating to those of the apostles.

Rev. Wm. Montgomery returned with his family to Mississippi in 1811, and became pastor of Ebenezer and Union Church, which he served through the long period of thirty-seven years. He died at the advanced age of eighty years. A biography of him is found in the columns of the Southwestern Presbyterian of March 9, 1871, and similar biographies of Rev. Jas. Smylie and Rev. Jacob Rickow in the same paper of February 23, 1871.

THE PRESBYTERY OF MISSISSIPPI.

The mother of all Presbyteries and Synods in the Southwest was the Presbytery of Mississippi, organized March 6, 1816, and forming a part of the Synod of Kentucky. It embraced all the vast territory west of Georgia, including Texas and Arkansas and the regions beyond, afterwards embraced in the Synod of Mississippi. The Presbytery consisted at first of only four ministers. Three of these were still living and present at the meeting of Synod in 1834, when the four had become fifty.

Among papers and documents received from the family of the late Dr. Palmer after his death, the writer received original copies, stained with age, of "A Pastoral Letter from the Synod of the Carolinas, through the medium of their Commission, to the churches under their care, Salisbury. Printed by Francis Coupee, 1802" and a well preserved copy of "Extracts from the Minutes of the Mississippi Presbytery and a Pastoral Letter to the different Presbyterian Churches within the bounds of the Presbytery. By Rev. J. Smilie and

Roger Dunn, Elder, Committee of Presbytery to form extracts, 1816, Natchez—Printed by Andrew Marschalk, 1816." Rev. Dr. Markham relates that on a visit to Bethany Church, in Amite County, it was his privilege "to feast his eyes upon a venerable document, tinted by time," referring to these same "Extracts." It was a mutilated copy, at that, as some leaves of the "Pastoral Letter" were missing. He quotes at length from this document. This little pamphlet was transcribed by Prof. R. B. Fulton, of the University of Mississippi, from a copy in the possession of the University, for the Southwestern Presbyterian, which published it December 18, 1890. Another pamphlet, containing Extracts from the Minutes of the Presbytery from 1820 to 1824, also gives "An Account of the Proceedings of the Missionary Society under their care," and a third pamphlet, of 1825, embraces "A Narrative of the State of Religion within their bounds." Many of the data given in this paper are based on these original sources of information, together with the printed Minutes of the Synod of Mississippi, beginning in 1829.

On page 4 of the "Extracts" for 1816 is printed the following:

"Charter of the Mississippi Presbytery."

"Synod of Kentucky in Session at Nashville, October 6, 1815.

"The Committee of overtures reported a petition of the West Tennessee Presbytery, praying that a new Presbytery might be formed, having for its eastern boundary the Perdido River, from thence a direct line to Fort Jackson, at the junction of the Coose and Tallapoosa Rivers; thence to the line of division between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations of Indians, and along that line indefinitely forming a division between the contemplated Presbytery and the West Tennessee Presbytery; to be known by the name of the Mississippi Presbytery, and to be composed of Rev. Joseph Bullin, William Montgomery, Jacob Rickhow, and James Smilie, which petition was granted.

"Ordered that the said Presbytery hold their first meeting at Pine Ridge Church, Adams County, on the first Wednesday of March next, and that the Rev. Joseph Bullin, or (in case of his absence) the senior member present, preside as moderator.

"A true copy from the original records of Synod.

(Signed) THOMAS CLELAND,
Clerk Pro-tem."

(Spelling as in the original.)

The first meeting of the Presbytery was held at Pine Ridge or Salem, on Wednesday, March 6, 1816. Rev. Joseph Bullin, after reading audibly the charter of the Presbytery given by the Synod of Kentucky in session at Nashville, October 6, 1815, opened the Presbytery by prayer. Rev. James Smylie was chosen clerk and Elder Peter Bisland, treasurer.

"Extracts from the Minutes of the Mississippi Presbytery," give the following names of the members composing the first session of this Presbytery:

Ministers—Joseph Bullin, Wm. Montgomery, Jacob Rickhow, James Smylie, with Daniel Smith as corresponding member.

Elders—John Grafton, John Bolls, Daniel Camron.

The second session was composed of the same ministers, except Rev. Daniel Smith, and the following elders: John Bolls, Roger Dunn, Peter Bisland, Daniel Gilbreath and Neil Buie.

Rev. Wm. Montgomery and Elder John Grafton were appointed a committee to draft its by-laws and, in asking aid from the Assembly for its missionary work, it recommended the Rev. Jacob Rickhow as a man "inured to the climate, in whose fidelity, zeal and ability they can place confidence, as a proper person to be employed in that business."

Of Rev. Jacob Rickhow, Rev. Dr. T. R. Markham relates in the Southwestern Presbyterian of October 30, 1890, that "he was of Dutch descent and came from Staten Island, N. Y., to Natchez in 1808. He was induced to visit the 'Scotch Settlement' in Jefferson County, where he preached under an arbor of brush, soon replaced by a log-house and where, in 1811, he organized Ebenezer Church.

"Removing, in 1814, to the vicinity of Port Gibson, he took charge of the Bayou Pierre Church and, in 1817, was appointed by the Presbytery its pioneer evangelist in southwestern Mississippi, where he itinerated the rest of his life, organizing most of the churches now existing south of the Vicksburg and Meridian road. He died near Mississippi City, in 1855, aged eighty-seven years. 'An unremitting laborer, he preached at every opportunity, even when past four-score, braving all weathers to keep his appointments. More than fifty years a minister of the Presbyterian Church, which may boast of more eloquent intellects, but of none who had more zeal and good hard common sense.'"

Of Rev. Joseph Bullen. Dr. Markham says that in 1799 "the Presbyterian Board of Missions of New York sent Rev. Joseph Bullen, a New Englander, as a missionary to the Chickasaw Indians in Northeast Mississippi. Transporting his family and household goods in a flat boat from Pittsburg to the Chickasaw Bluffs, now Memphis, but then the site of Fort Pickering, and thence on pack horses eastward seventy or eighty miles, he began his work at an Indian village, where now stands the town of Pontotoc, Miss. From this field he removed, in 1803, to Southwest Mississippi, where, in 1804, he organized the first Presbyterian church in the Mississippi Territory, near Uniontown, in Jefferson County. . . . It was named 'Bethel'—the house of God. In 1807 or 1808 Mr. Bullen formed a second church, in the Bayou Pierre settlement, in Claiborne County. . . . Mr. Bullen in 1811 organized Union Church in the 'Scotch Settlement', in Jefferson County, which still exists. Ripened in age and by grace, twenty years shepherd of the same flock, and over fifty years in the ministry, Mr. Bullen died in 1825—a man of cultivated mind, literary attainments, amiable manners, Christian benevolence and energy of character.' Zealous and self-denying, his salary per annum at the Bethel Church, for half his time, of fifty-five dollars, was received in kind, provisions being plenty and money scarce. His remains rest in the burying ground of Old Bethel beside his wife, rough stones bearing names and dates, telling where these pioneers, the forefathers of our Church, sleep."

Rev. Jas. Smylie (sometimes he signs himself as Jas. Smilie) exerted a wide and strong influence in both church and state. The committee appointed by the Synod of Mississippi, in 1852, to prepare a notice of his death, says of him: "When he opened his Academy at Washington and commenced operations there, he was the honored instrument, in the hands of God, of laying the foundations and organizing the first Presbyterian Church within the bounds of this Synod. Two Scotchmen, brought up under the instructions of the Presbyterian Church in their native land, had carefully preserved the religious faith and practices of their forefathers amidst the corruption and immorality with which they were surrounded. The name of the one was John Henderson, who resided at Natchez, and the name of the other was John Bisland, who resided at Pine Ridge—names which will ever be dear to the church. They erected a large building at Pine Ridge, invited Mr. Smylie to preach, and vigorously sustained him in all his operations; and here the

first church was organized and the ordinances administered, and a nucleus formed for the future operations of the church in this destitute region.

"In the course of time, the Rev. Joseph Bullen and the Rev. Jacob Rickhow arrived in the country and Mr. Smylie undertook a dangerous and difficult journey through the wilderness to Tennessee and obtained from the Synod the organization of himself and associates into a Presbytery. He continued to supply the church he had organized for several years.

"At length, the Rev. Daniel Smith arrived at Natchez and organized a church there and served it as stated supply. About this time Mr. Smylie removed to the county of Amite, where he continued to reside until the day of his death. Here he was instrumental in the establishment of several churches which were delivered over to other ministers, one after another, as age and infirmity, and consequently inability to serve them, increased upon him. Thus he may be truly considered the father of the Presbyterian Church in this country."

In the "Extracts from the Minutes of Mississippi Presbytery etc," the following action appears:

"Resolved, That the cordial thanks of Presbytery be presented to the Rev. Jas. Smylie for his disinterested, benevolent and successful exertions in procuring the organization of this Presbytery."

"The last of the four pioneer pastors who entered the Territory, Mr. Montgomery, was the second to depart to the 'better country.' Smylie survived him five years and Rickhow seven. Bullen had 'gone before' in 1825."

Interesting accounts are given in the Southwestern Presbyterian of 1871 of the first Presbyterian church organized in the Southwest (in the issue of August 24th), of the second Presbyterian church in the Southwest (issue of September 7th), a history of the church of Bethel and Rodney, Miss., (issue of September 14th), of Ebenezer and Union churches, (issue of October 5th), of the origin of Port Gibson church, (issue of November 2nd), of Rev. Z. Butler at Port Gibson, (November 9th), and Rev. Z. Butler's call to Mississippi, (November 30th).

The population within the limits of this Presbytery was estimated in 1816 as "at least 100,000." In the narrative of the Presbytery of 1825, the number of inhabitants in the States of Mississippi and Louisiana is estimated at 230,000. "These are scattered through an extensive territory of about

80,000 square miles. To relieve the wants of this numerous and scattered people there have been of our denomination only fourteen ministers, some of whom have remained in the country only a part of their time. Thirteen churches are enrolled."

The relation of Mississippi Presbytery changed with the movement of population and the expansion of the church. In 1817 it was associated with the Synod of Tennessee. In 1826, we find it placed on the roll of the Synod of West Tennessee. In 1829, in connection with the two Presbyteries of South Alabama and Tombeckbee which seem to have been set off from its territory, it was erected into a Synod called the Synod of Mississippi and Alabama.

In 1832, the name of the Presbytery of Clinton appears on the roll of this Synod, and in 1835 that of the Presbytery of Amite. The name of the latter was changed in 1836 to be known as the Presbytery of Louisiana.

THE SYNOD OF MISSISSIPPI.

In 1835, the Synod of Alabama was set off and the original Synod is known thereafter as the Synod of Mississippi. In that year it embraced the Presbyteries of Mississippi, Clinton, Amite and Arkansas. The limits of the latter were the same as those of the State of Arkansas, but in 1836 they were enlarged so as to include that portion of country lying west of the State of Arkansas called the Indian Reservations, which until then had not been included in the chartered limits of the Synod of Mississippi, or of any other Synod. In 1840, the missionaries and churches in the territory occupied by various tribes of Indians were erected into Indian Presbytery.

As early as 1840 a committee was appointed to correspond with the newly organized Presbytery of Brazos, in the Republic of Texas, in relation to their connection with the Presbyterian church in the U. S. A. The three ministers composing said Presbytery and at that time the only Presbyterian ministers in that entire vast region, had declared it inexpedient for the present to become ecclesiastically connected with this Synod and consequently with the General Assembly of our church. The Synod urged them to recede from this position, "as the field of Texas is one of vast promise and importance—too important and too deeply interesting to be neglected in our exertions to plant and foster

the institutions of the gospel and that, if we may not act with those brethren, we ought to take prompt measures to build up Zion there through other laborers."

In 1845, the Presbytery of Brazos became one of the Presbyteries of this Synod upon its own petition, and at the meeting of 1850 two Presbyteries were set off from the Presbytery of Brazos, to be called the Presbyteries of Eastern Texas and of Western Texas.

God so prospered the Synod that in 1847 it became necessary to divide it again, and four Presbyteries were set off to form the Synod of Memphis. In 1851 the three Presbyteries in Texas were erected into the Synod of Texas, and in 1852, out of the territory ceded to the Synod of Memphis, there was formed still another Synod, that of Arkansas.

THE FIRST PROTESTANT SERMON PREACHED IN NEW ORLEANS.

In the Southwestern Presbyterian of March 10, 1870, appears a letter from Benjamin Chase, to Rev. Jno. G. Jones, author of "A Concise History of the Introduction of Protestantism into Mississippi and the Southwest," in which he gives what he calls some "additional scraps of our early Protestant history." He says:

"The Rev. Jedediah Smith was a Congregational minister, with twelve children, ten of whom accompanied him from Greenville, Mass., to the 'Natchez Country,' in 1776. On his way, landing at what was then called 'The Island of New Orleans,' under the dominion of Spain, he was there seized by the Roman priesthood, all his property confiscated and his library burned. After his release he obtained a keel-boat and with the aid of his sons slowly and tediously ascended the Mississippi, in the month of July, as far as 'Loftus Heights,' now Fort Adams. Exposed to the midsummer sun, unaccustomed to the climate, he was taken sick, and the boat left to the management of his sons, who conducted it to Natchez, where he died soon after the arrival, and was buried below the Bluff, not far from Fort Rosalie. In a few years the breaking away of the bank removed and ever after rendered the place of his interment unknown."

* * * * *

"In September, 1805, Bishop Benj. Moore, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, New York, received a letter from James M. Bradford, James C. Williamson and Edward Liv-

ingston, dated, New Orleans, August 12, 1805, requesting him to send them a minister of the gospel of the Episcopal denomination, adding, "It is to be recollected that his supporters are not only of his own persuasion, but also Presbyterians, Catholics, etc." Bishop Moore recommended the Rev. Philander Chase, rector of the Church of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., who consented to go, and, sailing on the 20th of October, arrived at New Orleans on the 13th of November. On Sunday, November 17, 1805, at 11 a. m., the Rev. Philander Chase preached the first Protestant sermon ever delivered in New Orleans or Louisiana, and on Wednesday, November 20th, the vestry met for the first time, Benjamin Morgan, chairman, and A. R. Ellery, secretary, returned Mr. Chase a vote of thanks for his readiness and zeal in tendering his services—proffering him a salary of \$2,000 per annum, and use of a house or \$3,000 yearly in lieu of it, which he accepted as their rector, and remained until the autumn of 1811, when he returned to the North and became rector of Christ Church, Hartford, Conn.

"In 1815, soon after the close of the war with England, Mr. James Hull (said to have been a licentiate of the Presbyterian Church, Ireland), came to New Orleans from Georgia and after preaching a few months to the Protestant congregation went to New York to obtain ordination and, unexpectedly to many of the people, received it from the Episcopal bishop, returned to New Orleans and became rector of the Episcopal Church, Alfred Hennen, Esq., becoming one of his vestry.

"On the 30th of December, 1817, the Rev. Elias Cornelius, on an agency to the Southwestern Indians for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, arrived in New Orleans and, much to the gratification and delight of the Protestant worshippers, preached several times, while awaiting the arrival of the Rev. Sylvester Larned, who came on the 23rd of January, 1818. The people were charmed with Mr. Larned's eloquence and power as a preacher, and on the 9th of February, held a meeting to take measures for the erection of a second Protestant house of worship, for his accommodation, subscribed \$6,200 for that object and soon after increased it to \$42,000, extended a call to him to become their pastor, with a salary of \$4,000 per annum, which he accepted. The church edifice was erected the following year, 1819, and on the 31st of August, 1820, Mr. Larned died from yellow fever."

PRESBYTERIANISM IN NEW ORLEANS.

In an historical paper read at the Semi-centennial of Presbyterianism in New Orleans, held November 27, 1873, Rev. Dr. B. M. Palmer said:

"It is a little remarkable that the first successful effort to plant Presbyterianism in the city of New Orleans should have originated with the Congregationalists of New England. Near the beginning of the year 1817, Rev. Elias Cornelius was appointed by the Connecticut Missionary Society to engage in a missionary tour through the Southwestern States, more especially to visit New Orleans, then containing a population of 30,000 or 34,000, and with but one Protestant minister, Rev. Dr. Hull, an Episcopalian. He arrived in New Orleans on December 30, 1817. The most important service rendered by Dr. Cornelius was that of introducing Rev. Sylvester Larned, whom he had met on his way through New Jersey, where Larned was then finishing his divinity course at Princeton and with whom he made the arrangement that he should follow him to New Orleans. Sylvester Larned reached his destination January 22, 1818, and on account of his splendid attractions, overtures were soon made to him for a permanent settlement. Subscriptions were circulated for the building of a church edifice, which by April 5th amounted to \$16,000. A loan of \$40,000 was negotiated. A building sixty by ninety feet, with about 2,000 sittings, was planned. Generous assistance was received from the City Council in the grant of two lots of ground valued at \$6,000 and in a subsequent loan of \$10,000. On the 8th of January, 1819, the cornerstone of the new edifice was laid with imposing ceremonies and in the presence of an immense throng, on the selected site on St. Charles Street, between Gravier and Union, and on the 4th of July, following, was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God.

"The first notice of this church being organized into an ecclesiastical body is the record of a meeting held for this purpose on November 23, 1823. Prior to this, the labors of Mr. Larned, extending over a period of two years and seven months, from January 22, 1818, to August 31, 1820, when he died of yellow fever, and those of Rev. Theodore Clapp, his successor, over one year and nine months, from March, 1822, to November, 1823, were simply evangelistic. A congregation had been gathered, a house of worship built, the word and sacraments administered. The time had now arrived for gathering up the results of those labors in a permanent and

organized form. At the meeting referred to, nine males and fifteen females presented credentials of having been admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by Mr. Clapp. These twenty-four persons were formed into a Presbyterian Church and by a petition to the Presbytery of Mississippi, to be enrolled among the churches under its care. Four ruling elders were elected on the same evening and ordained and installed on the following Sabbath, November 30, 1823."

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Two of the first Presbyterian ministers that visited New Orleans, afterwards became closely identified with the first training school for a Christian ministry south of the Ohio, Oakland College, the Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain, D.D., its founder, and the Rev. Benjamin Chase.

Concerning the former, are gleaned the following facts from an obituary, adopted by the Synod of Mississippi, January 19, 1852.

In the beginning of the year 1818, Rev. Jeremiah Chamberlain arrived in New Orleans in company with the Rev. Sylvester Larned. After some missionary work in Mobile, Ala., and a brief pastorate in Bedford, Pa., he became President of Centre College, Danville, Ky. From that post, in 1826, he was invited to become President of the College of Louisiana, then lately established at Jackson by the State authorities. Here he soon found himself at variance with the Trustees, in regard to the propriety of his ministerial functions, and, in consequence, was led to offer his resignation. After this he opened an Academy at Jackson and continued to preach in the neighborhood, till he was invited to take charge of Oakland College. "This institution was an enterprise which he had himself projected. At a meeting of the Presbytery of Mississippi, held in Baton Rouge in 1830, he presented a plan for a college, to be under the care and supervision of the Presbytery, which plan was approved and ultimately adopted. Dr. Chamberlain commenced his labors in this post in a small building near Bethel Church, Claiborne County, Mississippi, with three pupils, who had followed him from Louisiana. With the subsequent history of Oakland College, in all its troubles and all its successes,

his own life was identified. Few men could have performed the difficult and often embarrassing duties which devolved upon him, with more wisdom and fidelity. His labors were incessant and diversified to a degree that would have baffled the resources of any ordinary mind. For his manifold services in the cause of popular Christian education, the States of Mississippi and Louisiana owe him a debt of gratitude that they owe perhaps to no other man."

Dr. Markham, in a sketch of Dr. Chamberlain's Life, adds: "In the person of a grandson, Rev. C. A. Hyland, he has a successor in the ministry in (the Presbytery of) New Orleans."

Of Rev. Benj. Chase, Dr. Markham gives these particulars:

"Before the arrival of Rev. Mr. Cornelius, in 1817, there came to New Orleans a teacher from New Hampshire, who became an assistant in a school conducted by Rev. Dr. Hull, the Episcopal clergyman who gave Mr. Larned so fraternal a welcome. An earnest Christian, he promptly identified himself with the little band that was then laying the foundations of Presbyterianism in this city. At a later date, he opened and kept for several years a school at St. Francisville, La., back of Bayou Sara. While there, he entered the ministry, the first licentiate of the Presbytery of Mississippi. This was Rev. Benjamin Chase, who, in 1828, became the pastor of Carmel Church. . . . In 1840 an impaired voice compelled the resignation of his Carmel charge and closed practically his career of a preacher. But his multiform labors made his life a continued, active and effective consecration. One of the founders and liberal supporters of Oakland College, he gave to it largely his time and care, soliciting funds, looking after its finances and keeping a watchful supervision of its affairs. To him, with its President, Dr. Jeremiah Chamberlain, and its benefactor, Mr. David Hunt, its maintenance and progress were mainly due. A specialist in geology and natural history, the 'Chase Cabinet', his collection of the antiquities of the Mississippi Valley, costing him \$5,000, was his liberal gift to this charitable institution. . . . As expressing the appreciation of his brethren, the Presbytery of Mississippi took the following action: 'Resolved, That the eminent services of Dr. Chase, in planning and sustaining the religious and educational institutions of the Presbyterian Church in this portion of our land entitle his name

to a foremost place among those whom, as a Church, we delight to honor and to insure his grateful commemoration for generations to come.'"

Of Mr. David Hunt, Dr. Markham writes: "Oakland was his foster child, and without stint he lavished on her of his great wealth. Her students he was wont to call his investments, and her graduates the proceeds, the percentage, of his favorite stock."

"Transferred to the Synod of Mississippi in 1840, through forty years, Oakland gave training in whole or in part to two thousand students who, as preachers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, merchants, engineers and planters, gave strength to the Southwest and honor to their Alma Mater, from Tennessee to Texas, useful and honored citizens. The war so crippled her finances that her diminished endowment was re-transferred to the Presbytery which, in Chamberlain-Hunt Academy, at Port Gibson, has embalmed the names of her venerable first President and her chief benefactor."

The great leading principle in attempting to establish Oakland College was to make provision within the bounds of Mississippi Presbytery for the education of young men for the ministry. From long experience all the members of the Presbytery in 1830 were fully convinced that this portion of our church could not depend upon the schools and seminaries of the church in the North for a supply of ministers. In the year 1836 a benevolent gentleman gave \$20,000 to endow a professorship of theology in the college, on such conditions as to guard it against the errors and controversies which at that time were agitating, and in the very next year led to the division of the Presbyterian Church into a "New School" and "Old School," when the General Assembly abrogated the Plan of Union with the Congregationalists. (Minutes of the Synod of Mississippi, 1843.)

Among other schools founded by Presbyterians, Dr. Markham enumerates Silliman Female Collegiate Institute, at Clinton, La., the grounds and building of which, with a liberal endowment, were given to the Presbytery of Louisiana, in 1852, by William Silliman, a liberal helper also of Oakland; French Camp Academy and Seminary, besides many minor schools established by churches, presbyteries and ministers, with a sketch of the Southwestern Presbyterian University at Clarksville, Tenn.

PRESBYTERIANISM IN CENTRAL LOUISIANA.

By Rev. B. L. Price, D.D.

It is with many regrets that I am not able to speak more fully of the old Presbyterian Church of Alexandria, Louisiana, as the building was burned before the civil war and all the records were lost. I have been informed by many who attended services in the old church that it stood on half a square of ground bounded by Front, Beauregard, and Second Streets. I am not able to tell how the property passed out of the church and fell into other hands.

The best record that I can find of early Presbyterianism in Central Louisiana is found in "Recollections of the Last Ten Years," in a series of letters to the Rev. James Flint, of Salem, Massachusetts, by Rev. Timothy Flint, Principal of the Seminary of Rapide, Louisiana, published in 1826 by Cummings, Hilliard and Company of Boston, Mass. In order to get a vision of the early church, its people and work, I quote from the author, giving pages.

"You are aware of the views which I have always entertained of city life" and so "it becomes with me a matter of painful solicitude whether it was the way of duty and expediency to settle in New Orleans." "During this state of suspense, I was requested to take charge of the seminary over which I now preside, which had become vacant by the death of the Rev. Mr. Hull," (page 319). "We finally concluded to accept the appointment, and to move to Alexandria on Red River. We took affectionate leave of our friends and went on board the steamboat Spartan, which we chartered for the purpose of conveying our family to their destination," (page 320).

"In the winter of 1823, in January, we ascended the Mississippi River, (page 299). We had a very pleasant company on board our boat, and made a quick and delightful trip to the mouth of Red river," (page 321). "Alexandria is a pleasant and neat village on the western bank of Red River. The village of Alexandria is an important depot of cotton, issues a weekly paper, has a number of respectable lawyers and physicians and many very respectable citizens. It is a place of recent growth, and yet three Presbyterian ministers, of whom Rev. Mr. Hull was one, have already laid their ashes here. The college over which I preside is a huge and tolerably commodious, but rather ugly building, upon which great sums of money have been expended and to which eight hun-

dred dollars, besides the proceeds of tuition, are annually appointed," (page 323).

"The ladies no doubt have their tea-table, or rather their coffee-table scandal, but I confess, that I have seen less of that prying curiosity to look into the affairs of neighbors and have heard less scandal here than in any parts of the United States," (page 336). "A Louisianian will forego any pleasure to witness and bet at a horse race. Even the ladies visit these amusements and bet with the gentlemen," (page 337). "Marriages take place when parties are very young and mothers of fifteen are not uncommon," (page 338).

"It is justly said that the Protestant worship has less hold of the people here, than in any part of the United States. I have personally found a very attentive and affectionate audience in the place where I reside and friends who are justly dear to me. The people, too, are as punctual in their attendance on public worship as in other and more favored regions. There are very few Protestant churches of any sort. I have no minister, with whom I can interchange, nearer than Natchez, Miss., a distance by the river of two hundred and thirty miles. There are perhaps about three Baptist churches in the state and the Methodists labor with their customary zeal. Their known feelings on the subject of slavery operate as an impediment to their usefulness," (page 340).

"The first year that I spent in Alexandria, passed pleasantly in the discharge of uniform duties. My society was small, but embraced some of the most amiable families with which I have been acquainted. The people, too, are very attentive to my ministry. We formed a singing society and the people were beginning to cultivate a taste for sacred music," (page 358). "In October of the last year, we resumed our laborious duties in the seminary. I had my son and another young man under a particular course of personal instruction. I had boarders, a numerous school, preached after a sort and as I could and was trying to digest this work," (page 364).

Kirkpatrick, in his book published in 1911, on the life of Rev. Timothy Flint, a Presbyterian minister from New England, gives the following record:

"REV. TIMOTHY FLINT
1780—1840

"In 1823 lived in Alexandria, La. In 1828 returned east to visit his people. In 1832-1834 lived in Alexandria. In 1835

he visited Cuba and in 1840 he goes to North Reading, Mass., and died in August 16, 1840, and was buried in Salem, Mass.

"A man of sound observation, of liberal principles, of engaging simplicity, pure benevolence and unaffected piety."

From 1834 to 1867 I can find no trace of any work being accomplished in and around Alexandria. Mrs. Jennie Palmer Grimes of Ruby, Rapides Parish, La., writes me as to her father's work, the Rev. Dr. Edward P. Palmer, a brother of Rev. B. M. Palmer, D.D., LL.D., of New Orleans: "No one in the world now knows as well as I, if at all, how earnestly and faithfully and voluntarily and yet with great joy and comfort, papa labored to gather the Presbyterians together, for they were much scattered and without church services until he came. He served as chaplain and professor of English in the old Seminary during the years 1867-1869. I knew how much zeal and love and effort he put forth in getting the Presbyterians to work and worship in Alexandria. He did a fine work there for it increased in volume and interest all the time he stayed at the Seminary. He was summoned constantly to go up and down the river to marry and bury them."

It was my privilege, in July 1923, to drive Mrs. Grimes for her first visit, after the fire that destroyed the institution in 1869, out to the campus of the old Seminary. These beautiful grounds are now used as the United States Veterans Hospital No. 27 for tubercular patients. As a young girl of great charm and personality, this good woman in those days was most popular and a great favorite among the student body. She strolled around over the campus relating in a most interesting way many happy and thrilling events of the long ago. As she walked over the great pile of debris left from the administration building, she tried in vain to find the granite step on which the students had chiseled her footprint alongside of the footprint of the daughter of General Sherman. He was connected with the institution and lived on the campus. The footprints of Palmer's daughter, from the South, were to remain alongside of the footprints of Sherman's daughter, from the North, as long as the hieroglyphics on granite could tell the story of ancient times.

From the period of Rev. Dr. E. P. Palmer's activity until 1891 we have no record. The church was reorganized with twelve members on the first Sunday in August, 1891, by Rev. Cyrus Harrington of Mansfield, La., who was acting under the authority of Red River Presbytery. This organization took place in the Court House, where services were held until

the 14th day of February, 1897, on which day services were first held in the second building. The membership of the church gradually increased until it reached twenty-eight. After the death of Rev. Cyrus Harrington, which took place in the summer of 1893, the church was without regular services for more than a year. However, during that time, Synod's evangelists, Rev. G. E. Chandler and Rev. W. D. Spurlin, both visited the church and held meetings for several days, encouraging and strengthening the struggling flock.

I was induced to take the field under the direction of Louisiana Presbytery, arrangements having been made with the Presbytery of Red River and that of Louisiana by which the church should be transferred to the latter Presbytery in order to facilitate the work. The pastoral agreement went into effect on the first day of November, 1894, though Synod did not transfer the church until its meeting at Monroe, La., December, 1897.

ATCHAFALAYA CHURCH.

The Rev. George Hyde, of New York city, came to Louisiana in 1854 and made his home on the Atchafalaya River and in the same year organized the Atchafalaya Presbyterian Church in the northeastern portion of Saint Landry Parish and on the river. In 1861 he moved to Lake Charles and started the work for the Presbyterian Church in that place. He died in Lake Charles and is buried there.

On the 13th day of November, 1904, the semi-centennial of this church was celebrated with appropriate exercises. The season was one long to be remembered and is today a topic of frequent conversation.

The following ministers have served as pastors for this good country church and splendid people:

Rev. George Hyde.....	1854—1861
Rev. W. A. Hall.....	1878—1879
Rev. Mr. Shepperson.....	1879—1880
Rev. B. F. Peters.....	1888—1891
Rev. J. S. Dunning.....	1893—1895
Rev. Dr. B. L. Price.....	1895—1909
Rev. W. A. Ziegler.....	1910—1917
Rev. A. Sifton.....	1917—1918
Rev. T. T. Trimble.....	1919—.....

PRESBYTERIANISM AT OTHER POINTS IN LOUISIANA.

During the early months of the year 1823, Rev. Edmund Lanier or Lanair, from Nashville, Tenn., employed by the Missionary Society of the Mississippi Presbytery to preach the gospel on his route to New Orleans for the space of two months, reports to the Society that he fulfilled his engagements, preaching at Woodville, Pinckneyville, Bayou Sarah meeting house, St. Francisville and New Orleans. In the last named place he spent twenty-seven days and preached fourteen times to crowded, solemn, and attentive audiences. In the two months he traveled over three hundred miles by land and three hundred by water and received \$34.25 for the Missionary Society.

Another missionary of this society, Mr. Alexander Williamson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Carlisle, who had been sent by the Board of Missions of the General Assembly, reports to the Society that he had been preaching at Jackson courthouse on Pascagola (Pascagoula) and even to the very seacoast between Pascagola and Baluxy (Biloxi) bays, where his meetings had been very well attended, not only by the Americans, but by the French and Creoles. Respecting one of his appointments here he observes: "On the 12th of August, (1823), preached on the coast west of Pascagola to about twenty Americans and twelve or fifteen French. This was an interesting meeting. There were present three Methodists, one Baptist, one Presbyterian and several Roman Catholics. Few of the French can read and they have no schools among them. They are truly in a deplorable state of ignorance."

The committee on missionary tours of Mississippi Presbytery recommended on October 12, 1827, that the Rev. Messrs. Smylie and Patterson itinerate one or more weeks from Amite County to Covington, La. They reported fulfillment of these appointments on April 4, 1828.

Very early after the organization of the First Church of New Orleans, Presbyterianism seems to have spread to adjoining points, especially St. Tammany Parish, where Presbyterian schools and churches were organized at an early date. "It is a tradition," says Rev. J. C. Graham in an article in the Southwestern Presbyterian, "that Rev. Mr. Flint preached and taught a female school in Covington away back in the twenties. . . . Along in the thirties a Presbyterian divine and celebrated teacher, Rev. Professor Finley,

established a school and was the means of organizing a Presbyterian Church at Pine Grove, in West St. Tammany Parish, one of the constituent churches of New Orleans Presbytery, when it was first organized in 1844. In this school some of the first ladies of Louisiana, among them the mother of the Misses Perkins of Madisonville, were trained and educated in knowledge and piety. The Hon. Alfred Hennen was a patron of the Pine Grove church and school.

Another Presbyterian church was organized in St. Tammany, at Madisonville, in the early forties. The first Protestant service was held there, probably in 1843, in a bar-room, the only available place to be procured, by Rev. Henry G. Blinn. Through his efforts, subscriptions were solicited for building a Presbyterian church, the work on which must have commenced in the spring of 1844. The first regular meeting held by Rev. Mr. Blinn, took place on Sunday, May 19, 1844. Some of the subscribers failing to pay, a large debt was left on the building, which remained after it was dedicated. This was cancelled by Mrs. Sarah Ann Harper, wife of the late Judge Samuel Harper. She was one of the original members of the First Church, New Orleans, and one of the founders of the Madisonville Church. She had donated the lot on which the building stood. The church was dedicated Friday, November 8, 1844. The day was clear and pleasant, the thermometer registering 52 to 58. Rev. Wm. A. Scott, pastor of the First Church, conducted the service. Bishop Polk, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was present and led in prayer. There was a general reunion of the different denominations and it was a season of great rejoicing among the Christian people. After the Civil War came on, there was no resident minister and no officers. It was considered best to make the church a union church to be used by the different evangelical denominations. There were times when there was no other denomination but the Presbyterians to care for the building. During the war, when the Federals occupied the town, their soldiers used the church as a barracks and left it in a bad state.

Rev. Samuel B. Hall followed Mr. Blinn in the pastorate, remaining several years, then removing to Covington. Rev. Robert Campbell and Rev. Wm. McConnell supplied the pulpit for a time. From time to time ministers from the city held services. In 1855, Rev. J. C. Graham took charge of the Madisonville and Covington Churches and remained until 1862.

During the war the church drifted into disorganization. Rev. R. Q. Mallard, then of the Prytania Street Church, held the first Presbyterian service there after the war, on June 10, 1874. Later the city ministers preached there occasionally. Through the efforts of Rev. J. M. Williams, who began his work in St. Tammany Parish in 1899, the church was reorganized on September 9, 1900. On March 14, 1901, the church building was destroyed by fire. Efforts were made at once to rebuild. Through the self-sacrificing labors of the members, mostly ladies, with liberal contributions of friends in New Orleans and elsewhere and aid received from the Synod's Church Building Fund, the new building was completed and dedicated September 27, 1905.

A third Presbyterian church was organized in St. Tammany Parish, at Covington, about the year 1848, under Rev. S. B. Hall, pastor, and Isaac W. Cutrer, ruling elder. "Mr. Hall," says Rev. J. C. Graham, "was a famous teacher, as well as sound and faithful preacher. He came from Clarksville, Tenn., where he established and conducted a Boys' High School as early as 1844-45, which was the forerunner of Clarksville university. He was successful as a teacher in the Covington academy, where he taught for several years, while he was at the same time organizing and building the Presbyterian church there. Mr. Hall was succeeded in both church and school by Rev. J. R. Hutchinson, D.D., who had been for years the brilliant professor of Latin and Greek in Oakland College. He possessed fine preaching talent and as such was very popular in Covington during his ministry there of three or four years. The present writer (Rev. J. C. Graham), succeeded Dr. Hutchinson in the church and school and continued to supply the church as evangelist, with the exception of two years that he lived in Texas, until December, 1863."

The Presbytery of New Orleans met in Covington in the spring of 1857, at which meeting Rev. J. C. Graham was ordained as an evangelist, together with another candidate.

The church at Houma appears on the roll of Presbytery as early as 1848, and that at Thibodaux was also one of the earlier churches in this Presbytery, which met there in 1856. The church at Centerville appears on the roll in 1860, and the church at Brashear (now Morgan City) and New River in New Orleans Presbytery are also mentioned before that year.

Among the oldest churches in the other two Presbyteries composing the Synod of Louisiana are Friendship, East Feli-

ciana Parish, prior to 1824, Baton Rouge First Church, organized May 27, 1827, Jackson, prior to October, 1827, Pinckneyville and St. Francisville, taken under care of Mississippi Presbytery in April, 1828. The Comite, Plains, Alexandria and Opelousas Churches appear in the statistical tables of the General Assembly of 1845. In Red River Presbytery the Shreveport First Church, Keachi, Mt. Zion, Ebenezer, Minden, Rocky Mount, Vienna, Good Hope, Mansfield, Vernon and Alabama Churches were all organized prior to 1861.

THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW ORLEANS.

At the meeting of the Synod of Mississippi, held at Oakland College, October 23, 1844, a new Presbytery was set off from the Presbytery of Louisiana, to be denominated the Presbytery of New Orleans, embracing all that part of the State of Louisiana east of the Mississippi River and south of a line running from said river along Bayou Manchac to Lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain, together with St. Tammany Parish, and on the west side of said river beginning at the junction of Bayou Lafourche and running west to the western boundary of Louisiana. This Presbytery included the First Church, New Orleans, the First Church in Lafayette (now a part of New Orleans) and the Pine Grove Church, and four ministers. It is not clear where the church at Thibodauxville, La., and its minister, Rev. S. H. Hazard, already mentioned in the minutes of the Synod of 1837, belonged.

The Synod ordered said Presbytery to hold its first meeting in the First Presbyterian Church in Lafayette, on the second Friday in December, 1844, at 11 a. m. Bishop John B. Warren (all the ministers are called "bishops" as distinguished from "elders" in the earlier minutes) to preach the sermon and preside until the organization be effected.

The Presbytery was duly organized and Bishops Scott, Stanton and Twitchell represented it at the next meeting of the Synod at Columbus, Miss., 1845. The records of New Orleans Presbytery, embracing more than three hundred pages, were also sent up for examination. These records seem to have been lost. They were referred to the proper committee, which reported recommending their approval as far as the close of the fifth line on page 148. "The remainder of the book, except two pages, says the committee, relates

entirely to one subject which has been placed in the hands of the Louisiana Presbytery and can in no case be referred to as official documents."

The subject referred to had come before Synod in the following communications: "A letter from the Presbyterian Church and congregation of the city and parish of New Orleans was received and read."

"Papers, containing complaints and protests against decisions of the Presbytery of New Orleans, presented through the Moderator, were referred to the Judicial Committee."

This committee, after enumerating these papers, seven in all, says:

"All these complaints, protests and answer to protest, and reference have arisen from the action of the Presbytery of New Orleans in relation to certain rumors respecting the Rev. Dr. Scott.

"The facts of the case appear to be these: A memorial was presented to Presbytery by five members of the Presbyterian Church on Lafayette Square, communicating the information that there were several specified reports in circulation injurious to the character of their pastor, the Rev. Dr. Scott, and requesting an investigation of these reports. This memorial was dismissed on account of supposed informality. [The reasons for this alleged informality are given. The committee then proceeds]: The committee are, therefore, of the opinion, that the action of the Presbytery was not wise and for the edification of the church, and they therefore, recommend that the complaint (of R. H. McNair) be sustained, so far as to say that the Presbytery should have ordered an investigation of these reports."

The committee then recommends that the second complaint of R. H. McNair and others be returned to the complainants, and goes on to say:

"The committee has the high satisfaction of presenting to Synod the following communication, which opens the way for the termination to all the present difficulties and for the arrangement of the business in such a way as to secure a free and full investigation:

"To the Judicial Committee of the Synod of Mississippi:

"Gentlemen: The undersigned members of the Presbytery of New Orleans, beg leave to request that upon the papers submitted to you by the Synod, relating to a case of judicial process referred by the Presbytery of New Orleans

to the Synod, you will present to Synod for consideration the following propositions:

"1. That the protest and complaints against the said reference be returned to the complainants, and that the answer to the said protest be returned to the committee who prepared it.

"2. That the Presbytery of New Orleans be dissolved and its members, etc., etc., be re-united to the Presbytery of Louisiana.

"3. That the case be entertained by Synod to this extent that it be transferred to the Presbytery of Louisiana thus constituted, and that the said Presbytery be directed to take up and dispose of the case without delay.

"4. That the Presbytery of Louisiana be directed by the Synod to meet immediately in order to take action in the premises.

“(Signed) R. L. STANTON,
W. A. SCOTT,
J. TWITCHELL.

Columbus, Miss., October 24, 1845.’

“The committee would therefore recommend that the propositions agreed upon by the parties be adopted and carried out by the Synod.

(Signed) J. H. VAN COURT, Chairman
THOS. HENDERSON,
JOHN N. WADDELL,
D. McDOUGALD,
J. A. LYON.”

This was done and the Presbytery of New Orleans passed out of existence as a separate body after its short career of less than one year. The trouble which led to its dissolution was not fully allayed by the above action. Bishop Zebulon Butler offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

“Resolved, that in the view of this Synod, great injustice has been done the Rev. Dr. Scott and the Rev. J. A. Lyon, by the publication and circulation of anonymous pamphlets previous to and during the present sessions of this body; we view those publications as un-Presbyterian and tending to prejudice the public and members of Synod against gentlemen who had no means of defense against such an attack, but a resort to the same very unjustifiable measures.”

Furthermore, a protest against the proceedings of Synod, signed by seven members, was entered because said “refer-

ence," memorial and complaint were not read in open Synod, which the protestants claim is "subversive of the principles of our ecclesiastical polity and calculated to increase, rather than remove, the prejudices against Dr. Scott."

To this the Synod makes answer that the reading of these papers was not called for "in open Synod" and that as the whole case had been referred to the Presbytery of Louisiana, it would have been highly unwise to enter upon a discussion of the merits of the case, especially as the case might yet possibly come before Synod, by appeal or complaint, and in such event the Synod ought to be entirely free and uncommitted.

The final disposition of the case by the Presbytery of Louisiana, revealing its real nature, can doubtless be found in the minutes of that Presbytery for 1845.

Rev. J. C. Graham states in an article on Presbyterianism in St. Tammany Parish, published in the Southwestern Presbyterian, May 1893, that at a meeting of Louisiana Presbytery held in Madisonville in 1844, so the writer had been told, "Rev. R. L. Stanton consented to become the prosecutor before the bar of the Presbytery, of Rev. W. A. Scott, D.D., on a charge preferred against that able divine of violating the ninth commandment, to-wit: slander of the Honorable Henry Clay—a case noted in history, and one that aroused to the utmost the pastor and people of the First Church of New Orleans."

The matter cropped up again at the next meeting of the Synod, when the body directed the Presbytery of Louisiana to alter their minutes in reference to the testimony of Rev. James A. Lyon in the case of the Rev. Dr. Scott, and replied to a memorial from Rev. James A. Lyon complaining of false charges made against him by Joseph A. Maybin, Esq., in connection with his testimony in the Scott case, that Mr. Lyon could obtain redress in the constitutional way agreeably to the Book of Discipline.

The Synod also recommended to Rev. James Smylie that he withdraw his complaint to Synod against the reasons of the decision of the Presbytery of Louisiana in the case of Dr. Scott, or carry it directly to the General Assembly with the consent of Synod.

Dr. Scott continued as pastor of the First Church until September 14., 1855, when he resigned and his pastoral relation to the church was formally dissolved. His active labors, however, had ceased in November, 1854, covering a period of twelve years.

In 1853, the Presbytery of Red River was organized with two ministers from Louisiana Presbytery and one from Tombeckbee Presbytery.

An item appertaining to the formation of a New Orleans Presbytery was indefinitely postponed, but at the next meeting, in 1854, the Presbytery of New Orleans was again set off, embracing all the State of Louisiana south of Donaldsonville, lying on the west side of the Mississippi River, and all that part east of said river beginning at the northern boundary of St. James Parish, to the Amite River, along the margin of the lake to the western boundary of St. Tammany and Washington Parishes and thence with the State line to the mouth of Pearl River. Said Presbytery to embrace all the churches within said bounds and the following ministers: W. A. Scott, S. Woodbridge, S. B. Hall, J. Twitchell, N. G. North, I. J. Henderson, A. Campbell, N. P. Chamberlain, D. S. Baker, J. S. Hayes, J. Richards, W. McConnell and J. R. Hutchinson. The Presbytery was duly organized on January 8, 1855, in the Second Presbyterian Church, New Orleans. A list of elders and churches in 1860 contains the following names:

A. Hennen, J. A. Maybin, W. P. Campbell, W. A. Bartlett, E. S. Keep, W. C. Black, W. G. Richards, J. T. Hardie, of the First Church.

J. W. Stanton, G. W. Moss, H. Nelson, Jr., R. G. Latting, H. Thomas, Jr., of the Second Church, (now extinct).

W. C. Raymond, F. Stringer, of the Third Church.

J. D. Henderson, J. R. Young, of the Fourth Church, (now Canal St.).

S. B. Newman, M. Greenwood, D. Hadden, E. Peale, of the Prytania Street Church.

Wm. Henderson, C. B. White, J. E. Childs, of the First Church, Fourth District (Lafayette).

G. McFarland, E. Dillon, of the Carrollton Church.

J. D. Fulford, of the Thibodaux Church.

Wm. A. Bisland, Jos. Sample, of the Houma Church.

Thos. S. Bisland, of the Centreville Church.

To this list should be added the First German Church, one of the constituent churches of the Presbytery, organized in 1853.

The Thalia Street, now the (Bartlett) Memorial Church, was organized in 1860, the Napoleon Avenue Church in 1861, the Second German, now Claiborne Avenue Church, in 1863, the Berean (colored) Church, about 1872, the Amite and Tangipahoa Churches, about the same time, the Brashear

(now Morgan City) Church, before 1860, the Jeanerette Church, about 1881, the Italian Church, 1894, the New Iberia Church, 1895, the Gretna Church, 1897, the Ponchatoula Church, 1898, the Abbeville and Gueydan Churches, about 1898, the Arcola Church, 1899, the Slidell Church, 1899, the Westwego Church, 1903, the Hungarian Church, 1907, the Bogalusa Church, 1907, the Garyville Church, 1908, the Hammond Church, 1908, the Kentwood Church, 1909, the Lakeview and Gentilly Terrace Churches, 1912.

THE BURNING OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN NEW ORLEANS.

A graphic account of the complete destruction by fire of the First Church, appeared on November 12, 1917, in the Times-Picayune, reprinted from the newspapers of the year 1854, which reads as follows:

"The destruction of the First Presbyterian Church, in Lafayette Square, the morning of the 29th of October, 1854, was an event deeply lamented by the whole community, especially by the old residents. It was the oldest existing Protestant church in the city. In the minds of a majority of the population of the city it was conspicuously associated with the history of the old Faubourg St. Mary, subsequently the second municipality. The First Dissenting church erected in New Orleans was more recently known as Dr. Clapp's church, in St. Charles Street, at the corner of Gravier. That church was dedicated in 1819, nearly a hundred years ago, by the Rev. Sylvester Larned, the first Presbyterian minister to settle in this city. Mr. Larned had scarcely commenced his career, which promised to be one of great distinction and usefulness, when he fell a victim to the yellow fever. His remains were interred beneath a modest slab in the church whose destruction is now being recorded.

"Dr. Theodore Clapp succeeded Mr. Larned and filled the pulpit with great acceptableness to the people generally until 1833, when on account of doctrinal and other difficulties with a portion of his congregation, Dr. Clapp seceded, or was expelled, and set up for himself as an independent minister of an independent and isolated congregation. Previous to this, however, the church had been sold by the sheriff and was purchased by the venerable and benevolent Judah Touro, from whom the congregation rented. When Dr.

Clapp's differences with a portion of the congregation arose, the latter offered to purchase the church, but Mr. Touro would not sell it until it was destroyed by the great fire which consumed the St. Charles Hotel in 1851.

"In 1835, the Presbyterians erected their church in Lafayette Square. The first pastor was the Rev. Joel G. Parker, who subsequently rose to eminence in Philadelphia. The congregation was wealthy and prosperous, but previous to the installation of Dr. Scott, it was very unfortunate in obtaining permanent pastors. Mr. Parker left because of the excitement produced by a letter written by him, which was published in the North, reflecting upon the morals of New Orleans people. It is an instructive and remarkable fact, however, that Mr. Parker, who was so distasteful to the people of this city, was in turn seriously prejudiced in the estimation of Northern people by his manly fidelity to the rights and honor of the Southern people in the matter of slavery. Dr. Scott, who succeeded Dr. Clapp as pastor of the church, gave it great popularity. He was a man of distinguished ability and his church was constantly crowded by people representing every complexion of faith, taste and doctrine. Fortunately the building was largely insured, the amount said to be about fifty thousand dollars. 'This and other resources of the congregation,' said the Picayune, 'will insure the erection of a larger and more impressive edifice. The church had recently been repaired at an expense of ten thousand dollars. There are many rumors as to the conflagration being the act of an incendiary, but at present we have no evidence to justify such apprehension.'

"'About half past four o'clock,' said the Delta, in its report of the destruction of the church, 'just as the watch were being called from their beats, an alarm of fire aroused the drowsy sleepers of our city from their downy couches. The gloomy horizon was all ablaze and the rumbling of the engines quickly responded to the harsh music of the watchman's rattle. So rapidly had the flames spread that shortly before the first engines reached the scene of conflagration, the building was completely enveloped in a sheet of flame from basement to steeple. The fire brigade led on the attack under the supervision of the intrepid Colonel Adams and fought the flames with their usual energy and determination, but their efforts were entirely ineffectual. The fire seemed to laugh to scorn every attempt made to reach its stronghold and revelled in conscious safety. Upward and onward the fierce fiend shot with the speed of lightning until

he perched upon the apex of the electric rod, and there dancing in wild glee, he looked down upon the futile efforts of his enemies with derision and continued the work of destruction. Still gallantly did the noble firemen combat the flames, regardless of the risk they ran of being crushed beneath the falling timbers of the belfry, and still gallantly did their brave foreman lead on the forlorn hope, pouring their quenching streams through the windows in the very center of the burning building, but in vain—the total destruction of the church was certain. The belfry and steeple soon came thundering down to the ground with a crash that caused the earth to quake, breaking down the iron railing around Lafayette Square and creating a panic among the thousands of spectators to the sublime scene. These people had assembled to witness the death, as it were, of an old friend—the church whose tall steeple had pointed the road heavenward to them for more than a quarter of a century. Fortunately no one was injured by the falling timbers and the flames now began to rapidly decrease in volume and violence and by seven o'clock were entirely subdued, but the church was a mass of ruins, scarcely a vestige of woodwork, of which there was a great deal about the building, being left unburned.'

"The Picayune in its account of the fire stated that there were many conjectures as to its origin, but it was very generally agreed that it was incendiary and the result of religious fanaticism. When the first fire company arrived it was discovered that the fire originated under the staircase leading to the belfry in the right hand corner fronting on South Street, and one of the windows was open. It was believed that a ball of cotton saturated in some combustible liquid had been lighted and thrown into the window. The church building was valued at \$35,000, but was insured for much more than that—as previously stated, about \$50,000, the policies being carried by the Home Mutual and Crescent Insurance Companies. A good deal of the movable property was saved by the firemen, such as silver plate, bibles, etc. The school books and furniture of the schoolroom in the basement were mostly saved."

"By this calamity," said the Delta, "Dr. Scott's congregation was yesterday deprived of a place of worship, but nothing daunted, the eminent divine who has so long and ably presided over this flock, issued notices calling a meeting of his congregation at Odd Fellows Hall, for purposes of worship. In his sermon the doctor alluded very briefly, but

touchingly, to the destruction of his church, remarking that after all it might prove to be a blessing rather than a calamity. Yesterday the scene of the conflagration was visited by thousands of people who thronged Lafayette Square and its environs from morning until night. There were a thousand and vague rumors afloat as to whom the incendiaries were, some connecting them with the recent Know-Nothingism disturbances, but there was nothing definite or tangible in what was gathered or said."

THE MINISTRY OF REV. DR. B. M. PALMER.

At the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rev. Dr. Benjamin M. Palmer, for forty-five years pastor of the First Church, the writer paid the following tribute to his memory:

"One hundred years ago today, on January 25, 1818, a mother in Charleston, S. C., gave birth to her first born son. That child was destined to spend half of his long life in this distant city and to become an instrument in the hands of God, more than any other single man, not only of advancing his kingdom, but also of proving a power for civic righteousness throughout this region, a man whose ministry here of forty-five years was a benefaction to the thousands who hung upon his lips, to the cause of Presbyterianism in this city and state and to this community which proudly called him her first citizen—Rev. B. M. Palmer, D.D., LL.D.

"Three days before the birth of that great and good man, on the 22nd of January, 1818, there landed in New Orleans a young man, Sylvester Larned, who became the founder of Presbyterianism in this city. Thus we might celebrate today not only the 100th anniversary of the birth of Dr. Palmer, but also the centenary of the beginning of Presbyterianism in New Orleans.

"In the brief time allotted to me it will not be possible to give more than a few glimpses of Dr. Palmer's life and work, though it would be interesting and appropriate to cast a glance at the changes God has wrought in this century, much of which is due to the consecrated labors of him whose 100th birthday we celebrate today and whose ministry here covered almost one-half of that century, but time will not permit and arrangements will be made for a fitting celebration, at some other time, of the rounding out of a century of work by the Presbyterians of this city.

"Dr. Palmer sprang from a godly ancestry of staunch Presbyterians. Many of his forefathers were ministers in the Presbyterian Church. He was the son of Rev. Edward Palmer, who continued preaching until his 90th year and whom some of you, like myself, heard here in his son's pulpit. at that age. Dr. Palmer was named after his grandfather, the Rev. B. M. Palmer, D.D., for many years pastor of the Circular Church, Charleston, S. C. His great-great-grandfather was the Rev. Samuel Palmer, whose father was the Rev. Thomas Palmer, and it is recorded that 'William Palmer, the ancestor of the American family of Palmers, came to America on the first ship after the Mayflower.' This appears to have been in 1621.

"Dr. Palmer began his ministry at the age of twenty-three, having completed a course of training covering nine years. He attended Amherst College, where he was associated with Henry Ward Beecher, Stuart Robinson and others who afterwards, like himself, acquired national fame. He devoted a few years to teaching and private study, and then completed his training at the University of Georgia and the Theological Seminary at Columbia, S. C.

"Already as a student in college, he displayed those admirable qualities of heart and mind which graced the mature man. According to the testimony of his teachers, 'he was an elegant Latin scholar, a good Greek scholar, a splendid English scholar, a good mathematician, and stood first in all studies.' Even as a youth he was a brilliant and effective speaker. Says his professor: 'He was as fluent then as he ever became, as eloquent then as he ever became. I have never seen a youth who could pass him as a debater.'

"But Dr. Palmer did not consider his education finished when he left the Seminary. He was a deep student all his life. I have in my library a set of German books in six volumes on 'The History of the People of Israel until Christ,' by Ewald, which once belonged to Dr. Palmer, who inscribed his name on the fly-leaf with the date, 'Columbia, S. C., 1855' and which he presented to Rev. F. O. Koelle, whose family, after his death, gave them to me. These books Dr. Palmer used and studied while he was professor in the Theological Seminary, showing that he kept abreast with the most advanced theological literature of his time even in foreign tongues. Indeed, Dr. Palmer commanded such a comprehensive knowledge of other sciences besides theology, that on occasions he surprised physicians by his

familiarity with *materia medica*, and lawyers by his profound grasp of the fundamental principles of jurisprudence.

“Upon receiving and accepting a call to the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church of Savannah, Ga., he was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Georgia in 1842, his father, by invitation of the Presbytery, preaching the ordination sermon.

“A year later he was called to the First Church of Columbia, S. C. There he remained until 1856, the last three years as professor in the Seminary.

“A call from the First Church, New Orleans, in 1855, to become its pastor, would have been accepted by him, because his conviction was clear and strong that he ought to be a pastor and not a professor, but the call met with a staggering refusal by his Presbytery and Synod, which would not let him go. The call was repeated a year later. The Presbytery again declined to place it in his hands, but referred the matter to the Synod of South Carolina. After spending two afternoon sessions in discussing it, the Synod, by a vote of 67 to 32, reluctantly dismissed Dr. Palmer to his great field in the Southwest.

“Of his labors in New Orleans, as pastor, preacher and citizen, I have neither the time to speak at length, nor the qualifications to do justice to his many-sided activities. The honor of speaking of him on this occasion was doubtless conferred upon me by the good ladies of the Foreign Missionary Society, primarily because I was associated with Dr. Palmer for a longer term of years than any other Presbyterian minister of the city, now living, just as my brethren in the ministry in their kindness saw fit to make me Dr. Palmer’s successor as “dean” of our Presbyterian Ministers’ Association, simply on account of my seniority in service. Permit me, therefore, to say a few words concerning Dr. Palmer from a personal standpoint, as his life touched mine.

“For twenty-two years it was my privilege to sit with Dr. Palmer in the councils of the church, to hear him preach from his own pulpit and that of other churches during the meetings of our church courts, and to be most intimately associated with him at the semi-monthly meetings of our Presbyterian Ministers’ Association, held in rotation in the homes of the ministers, an organization which had been formed at Dr. Palmer’s suggestion, its first meeting being held by his invitation at his home, and of which he was the dean until his death. It was in the intimacy of this circle of brethren

gathered together to discuss the problems of our common work, that Dr. Palmer, with an absolute confidence in his brethren, which was considered sacred by every one of them, would sometimes unbosom himself with a frankness and candor that afforded us deeper glances into his great heart than were afforded to others, and where again we profited by his vast learning and ripe experience, as he opened the treasures of his mind and heart.

"Personally, I looked upon Dr. Palmer as a fatherly friend and when he died I felt that I had lost a dear personal friend. During my entire ministry, from the day on which he preached my ordination sermon until his death, he was to me a kind helper, counselor and friend.

"The church also of which I have now been pastor for thirty-seven years, enjoyed his fostering care and interest from the day he began his ministry here. On December 9, 1856, Dr. Palmer came to this city and on the 21st day of the same month, he preached the dedication sermon in the newly built First Street Church, as is seen from a printed program of the dedication services which is still preserved by us.

"Of the speeches and addresses and sermons which I heard Dr. Palmer deliver, there stands out most vividly in my memory his great anti-lottery speech, delivered in the Grand Opera House in the summer of 1891. I shall never forget the opening sentence of that terrific philippic:

"I lay the indictment against the Louisiana State Lottery that it is essentially an immoral institution, whose business and avowed aim it is to propagate gambling throughout the State and country,' nor the frenzy of applause that greeted every salient point of the speech by the vast audience that packed the building to the doors.

"If Dr. Palmer were with us today, I have no doubt that he would lay the same indictment against the race track in our city as an institution that fosters and propagates gambling throughout the land, an open sore on the body politic, which our legislature has plastered over in an effort to hide its most repulsive features, but which will not heal until it is cut out as with a surgeon's knife.

"I remember also Dr. Palmer's lectures on 'The Beginning of Things,' delivered on successive Sunday nights to large and interested audiences during the winter of 1895, all based on the first chapters of Genesis, and his historic century sermon—historic in the two-fold sense of dealing

with history and marking an historic event in his own life and memorable occasion in the history of our community—delivered on New Year's Day, 1901, at the request of prominent citizens irrespective of creed, in which he traced the hand of God in the history of the world throughout the ages, a discourse which marked the speaker at once as historian, philosopher, prophet and seer.

“The outstanding feature of Dr. Palmer's personality was his matchless eloquence. He has been described as the most eminent orator of his day, an opinion which I unqualifiedly endorse, and I have heard eloquent speakers in many lands. I quote a few opinions of others:

“‘It was in the flood of ideas, always expressed in the most fitting words, moving the heart with intense emotions at one moment, or convincing the understanding by his irresistible logic at another, that his wonderful oratory excelled.’ ‘Confessedly he was the intellectual peer of any of the great men of his time. He possessed gifts and graces which seemed never to be exhausted, sending forth streams of blessing, meeting all demands, equal to every emergency, falling short of no occasion, however great.’ ‘He was gifted with a wonderful voice, by which he could express every variety and shade of feeling, and which carried easily into every corner of this auditorium, without being ever strained, and swaying the hearts of his hearers at will.’

“His preaching was intensely Scriptural, generally topical rather than expository. He gloried in the cross of Christ and in the gospel of the Crucified.

“He was a great preacher, but perhaps, a greater pastor. He has been called the ‘Son of Consolation’ to the sorrowing, because out of his own heart chastened by the sorrows of repeated bereavements he knew, as few others, to comfort mourners ‘with the comfort wherewith we also are comforted.’ And not only by his words of tenderness spoken at the bedside or in the house of mourning, but by his written letters of sympathy to bereaved friends, did he become a pastor to many beyond his parochial bounds.

“However, when the occasion demanded it and his sense of right was stirred within him by the wrong he witnessed, he could be terrible in his denunciation of sham or vice or corruption, in high places or low, in private or public. He has been rightly called the ‘public conscience’ of the people. But there was no man more free from malice and bitterness toward any, no man of warmer love, broader sympathies, more catholic spirit.

"The Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society of this church has reared a noble monument to his name in the erection and maintenance, solely by their own self-denying contributions, of the B. M. Palmer Woman's Annex to the Kashing Hospital in China. Our city has named after him the beautiful avenue on which he lived and a park in one of the newer sections of our city, which has added another to the many similar beauty spots of our beautiful city. A public school was also named after him and still another more conspicuous and worthy memorial to his name may be erected, it is hoped, in the near future, if plans looking to that end mature.

"But even without such material testimonials, Dr. Palmer's name and memory will live in the hearts of the thousands that came under his blessed ministry and of that greater number of every class and creed who co-operated with him in philanthropic or patriotic services.

"To us who knew him best, he will be, as long as we shall live, not merely the most shining example of a Christian minister or great preacher, but a dear personal friend, whose kindness and love impressed on our hearts an esteem bordering on veneration, and we thank God, who gave us such a man, that we were privileged to know him."

THE SYNOD OF LOUISIANA.

The agitation for a division of the Synod of Mississippi, which embraced the State of Mississippi, except the Presbyteries of North Mississippi and Chickasaw, which belonged to the Synod of Memphis, and the entire State of Louisiana, dates back to the year 1854, when the Presbytery of New Orleans was reorganized. In that year the Synod sent an overture to the General Assembly to divide the Synod of Mississippi into two Synods, so as that one Synod should be composed of the Presbyteries of New Orleans, Louisiana and Red River, and the other of the four remaining Presbyteries of Mississippi, Tombeckbee, Central Mississippi and East Mississippi. This overture was evidently declined.

In 1894, the Synod in session at Aberdeen, opposed a division of Synod in the following resolution: "Whereas, an overture will be sent up to the next General Assembly

asking that body, in effect, to dissolve the Synod of Mississippi and to extend the bounds of this Synod so as to embrace the Presbyteries of North Mississippi and Chickasaw;

"Therefore, be it resolved, that this Synod overture the General Assembly to make no change in the boundary lines of this Synod."

The Synod declared, "That any action on this important subject at this time would be premature."

But when, in 1901, the dissolution of the Synod of Memphis by the General Assembly in Little Rock, Ark., seemed a foregone conclusion and that two of its Presbyteries in North Mississippi would be transferred to the Synod of Mississippi, thus adding still more territory to the already vast area covered by it and making it still harder to secure a full attendance at its meetings on account of the distance to be traveled by some of its members, it seemed reasonable and natural that the cumbersome branch of the Synod in the State of Louisiana should be lopped off and left to grow by itself as an independent body. Had the Mississippi members confined themselves to this argument, it is certain that those of Louisiana would have yielded to their wishes with good grace. But some things were said on the floor of the Assembly in support of a division which could not but ruffle the feelings of the representatives of Louisiana, and especially of New Orleans.

By more than one speaker it was claimed that the "New Orleans Presbytery, the strongest in the Synod, had failed to co-operate with the Synod in its home mission work, except that it contributed ten per cent of its home missions collections to the Synodical work;" "that it cultivated its own little patch and left the Synod to take care of Red River and Louisiana Presbyteries;" "that it shirked to bear that burden;" and the most ungracious speech of all was made by an elder from the backwoods of Mississippi, who intimated that New Orleans only asked for more time that it might have a little more time to sleep, and then exclaimed: "Let us tell these brethren to go to work." After remarks such as these even the most ardent opponent of division at this time would have been willing to vote in its favor. Two of the representatives from Louisiana, who got a chance to speak, before debate was cut off by a call for the question, plainly intimated that they would vote for the division—Hon. Chas. Schuler, from Red River Presbytery, who denied that his Presbytery had been a burden to the Synod, and

Mr. Henry Ginder, of New Orleans Presbytery, who said that his Presbytery only desired a little more time to adjust amicably all the questions involved in this division, but that personally he did not care to remain with anyone that did not want him.

Earlier in the debate many arguments against division at this time had been presented—that the contemplated Synod of Louisiana would be composed of only thirty active ministers; that the Presbyteries of Louisiana and New Orleans would be rent asunder; that the mission work in Southern Mississippi would be jeopardized, and that in its present feebleness Presbyterianism in Louisiana needed the moral support and Christian fellowship of the church in the more favored land to the eastward of the Mississippi—all proved to no avail. Those favoring the division were determined to force the issue, and they carried it by an overwhelming majority, only a few voices answering in the negative.

Now, what are the facts as to the amount of home mission work done by the Presbytery of New Orleans? From 1895 to 1900 this Presbytery raised for "local home missions" (under this term is embraced both the Synodical and Presbyterical home mission work), the following amounts: In 1895, \$5,283; in 1896, \$4,352; in 1897, \$4,260; in 1898, \$5,630; in 1899, \$6,083; in 1900, \$5,318.

Here are the amounts it contributed to the Synod's work, and what it received in return:

In 1895 it contributed \$850, and received \$75; in 1896 it contributed \$301 and received \$200; in 1897 it contributed \$245 and received \$50; in 1898 it contributed \$410 and received \$108; in 1899 it contributed \$231; in 1900 it contributed \$296, making a total of \$2,333 contributed and \$433 received.

In view of this showing, it will be seen that those aspersions—the utterances made on the floor of the Assembly could hardly be termed as anything less—were ill-timed and unjust.

The Presbytery of New Orleans was the heaviest loser in territory, as five counties in Southern Mississippi were cut off, viz.: those of Pike, Marion, Hancock, Harrison and Jackson, with sixteen churches and eight ministers. The churches are the following: Osyka, Magnolia, McComb City, Summit, Bogue Chitto, on the Illinois Central Railroad;

Lumberton, McNeil, Poplarville and Purvis, on the North-eastern Railroad, and Pass Christian, Handsboro, Gulfport, Biloxi, Ocean Springs, Scranton and Moss Point, on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The ministers are the following: W. H. Perkins, H. J. Cumpsten, Z. B. Graves, H. W. Wallace, J. D. Mooney, W. C. West, W. T. Wadley, and W. C. Lindsey.

The new Synod of Louisiana was organized November 19, 1901, in the First Church, New Orleans, Rev. Dr. J. H. Nall preaching the sermon, and Rev. Dr. B. M. Palmer being elected as its first moderator.

Numerically it was one of the smallest Synods of the Southern Presbyterian Church, but it was not a weak Synod in any sense, either financially or in zeal, and it has not been found wanting in its home mission work and in reaching the destitute parts of the State. The same is true, however, of the other Synods that have sprung from the one Presbytery of Mississippi.

Well says Rev. Dr. H. M. Smith at the end of his admirable address delivered at the semi-centennial of Presbyterianism in New Orleans:

"Our church in the Southwest may not boast of having achieved all that it aimed to achieve. Perhaps a sense of comparative failure and shortcoming has attended its most successful enterprises. Nevertheless there is much to gratify the Christian heart in the contrast between its present efficiency and its humble origin. There is no great interval between the extensive religious liberty and influence which we enjoy today and that Spanish prison at Natchez, and the connection is not hard to trace. It is only another illustration of God's fidelity in rewarding the devotedness of His servants. . . . Could John Bolls have looked through the bars of his prison on the field of religious activity—could his eyes have pierced the veil of a century, he would have seen five Synods, twenty Presbyteries and nearly six hundred churches, together with all the multiform kinds of moral, benevolent and religious enterprises which they represent or sustain."

There are now (1923) 7 Synods and 33 Presbyteries with over 1200 churches and nearly 120,000 communicants in the territory of the original Mississippi Presbytery, counting Oklahoma and Snedecor Memorial Synods.

Pages could be added with extracts from the early records of the Synod, showing their deep and aggressive piety, their missionary spirit, their work among the Indians, a much greater work than is generally known, their dealing with the same problems which still come before every meeting of our Synod—the questions of Education, Sabbath Observance, Family Worship, Sabbath Schools, the Negroes, Foreign Missions and Home Missions. Their intense interest in the latter is seen from a Pastoral Letter from the pen of Dr. B. M. Palmer, chairman of the committee, on behalf of the Synod of Mississippi at Shreveport in 1861, a letter which might well be sent again to the churches.

In the historical articles referred to, Rev. Dr. Markham gives an elaborate account of the missionary work done by the Synod of Mississippi among the Indians and the Negroes during the early years of its existence.

PRESBYTERIAN PUBLICATIONS.

The wisdom of using the printed page as a valuable aid to preaching in propagating our faith was early recognized by the Synod. In 1839 it appointed a Board of Publications, which was incorporated in 1852. Its reports to the Synod and Synod's actions on this matter would fill a small volume.

A number of local Presbyterian newspapers, more or less ephemeral in their existence, had been published in New Orleans, like the "New Orleans Observer" (1836), "The New Orleans Protestant," published under the editorial supervision of the Session of the First Church in 1844, "The New Orleans Presbyterian" (1847), "The Mississippi Presbyterian," "The True Witness" (1854). The failure of the "Index" at Mobile revived the old question of obligation and resulted in the birth of the "Southwestern Presbyterian," for over forty years the official organ of the Synod.

The "Southwestern Presbyterian" started on its career on February 25, 1869, with Rev. Dr. Henry M. Smith as its brilliant editor, as a religious newspaper, and continued as such until it was merged with other Presbyterian papers. It was succeeded by "The Presbyterian Journal," with Rev. Dr. George Summey as editor.

The Southwestern Presbyterian said in its first issue:

"There was never a time, from the moment that the uncontrolled and absolute dominion of Romanism (in Louisiana) was broken, when it was not regarded of paramount importance to originate and sustain sources of religious literature among ourselves. After Protestant Christianity had obtained a footing in New Orleans, the subject came constantly before the attention of our people."

The property in Camp Street, New Orleans, owned by the Synod of Louisiana, was purchased by the Board of Publications in 1852 for \$33,000. The money was raised by subscriptions, the churches in New Orleans and Natchez contributing the greater part. On March 1, 1854, the first number of the "True Witness and Southwestern Presbyterian" appeared. The publication of the paper was interrupted by the occupation of New Orleans by the Federal forces in April, 1862, and never resumed.

THE FIRST ORPHAN ASYLUM IN THE SOUTHWEST.

The first asylum for orphan children organized in Louisiana, was a Protestant institution. The Female Orphan Society, popularly known in New Orleans as the "Poydras Asylum," celebrated its centennial on May 18, 1917.

This institution is closely connected with the early statehood of Louisiana, Mr. Julien Poydras its chief benefactor, being the first Speaker of the House of Representatives during Governor Villere's administration. Associated with him as generous donors were also Nicholas Girod, Alexander Milne and Stephen Henderson. At his death Mr. Poydras left valuable batture land and unimproved real estate to the Society. Mr. Poydras was a Huguenot, born in Nantes, France. He died in Louisiana in 1823, and is buried in Pointe Coupee. He was a regular visitor of the Orphan Home and often spent a portion of the Lord's Day with the children.

The institution is also closely connected with Presbyterianism. While not bearing the name distinctively, it has always been a Presbyterian institution.

In its early history the society rented quarters in several localities and finally located in the property at the corner of Julia and St. Charles Streets, which was donated by Mr. Poydras with a half square of ground. After some years the work grew and the building, though improved from time to time, became inadequate for the growing family. In 1856, the Society sold some of its property and with long leases on other pieces raised sufficient money to build a great and beautiful brick building on Magazine Street and Peters Avenue, on ground occupying two squares. This building cost about \$70,000.

The Home now provides for one hundred and twenty-five orphans, some widows and employees, making altogether about one hundred and fifty to enjoy its shelter. The children attend Sunday school and church services in the Napoleon Avenue Presbyterian Church. They also attend the public schools of the city, the management feeling that they will make better citizens coming in daily contact with the outside world. Some of the teachers in these and other schools have been reared in the Poydras Asylum. The Board of Directresses is composed of ladies of the Presbyterian Church.

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