

“The Dead of the Synod of Georgia.”

NECROLOGY:

OR

MEMORIALS OF DECEASED MINISTERS,

WHO HAVE DIED DURING THE FIRST
TWENTY YEARS AFTER ITS
ORGANIZATION.

PREPARED IN OBEDIENCE TO THE ORDER OF THE SYNOD.

WITH A

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

BY

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The memory of the just is blessed.—Prov. x: 7.

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REV. ROBERT QUARTERMAN.*

The Congregational Church of Midway, Liberty county, has been long and well known in Georgia. It is about one hundred years old, having its origin some time before the Revolutionary War. The ancestors of those who composed it were Puritans from Dorchester, England, who first settled at Dorchester, Massachusetts, and emigrated there in a body, with their pastor, and formed a settlement about 20 miles from Charleston, S.C., at a place which they also called Dorchester. This locality proving unhealthy, they again removed in a body, and settled in Liberty county, then called St. John's Parish. About half way from Savannah to Darien, the traveler passes the Church on the left of the road, with the grave yard on the right, where sleep the remains of most of the original settlers.

Among the early pastors of this Church, more than half a century ago, was the Rev. Murdock Murphy, brother of the late Governor Murphy, of Alabama, who resigned his charge in order to spend the residue of his days near his brother, having served the Church faithfully and acceptably about ten years. He had been preceded for the previous 20 years, in the same office, by the Rev. Cyrus Gildersleeve, who was afterwards settled in New Jersey, and finished his course at Wilkesbarre, Pa. Robert Quarterman, the subject of the following memoir, succeeded Mr. Murphy in 1822, or 1823.

Robert Quarterman was born in Liberty county, Ga., on the 13th day of January, 1787. Bereaved in childhood of father and mother, he was taken into the family, first, of a sister, and afterwards that of an aunt, where, in early life, he received those religious impressions which were afterwards so fully and so brightly developed.

MSS. from Rev. T. Sumner Winn and Miss Quarterman.

He received his classical training in the Sunbury Academy. In the year 1809, when he was twenty-two years old, he united himself to the Church at Midway, in his native county, and was chosen to the office of deacon in the same Church in 1811.

The war with Great Britain commenced in 1812. The people of Liberty county were on the alert, and ready, as they had ever been, to oppose the enemies of their country. Their ancestors, in the war of the Revolution of 1776, had been so distinguished for their lofty bearing and love of liberty, that the name of their county had been changed from that of St. John's Parish to that of *Liberty*.

The British fleet threatening to effect a landing on the coast of Georgia, every important point was carefully guarded. In the history of these times, among others, appears the name of Robert Quarterman, who had nobly responded to the call of his country, and volunteered his services in defence of her invaded rights. He was elected captain of the rifle company, and was stationed at Darien. His noble bearing, his stately mein, his courteous manners, his officer-like conduct, and his Christian deportment, won for him the confidence of his men, and commanded the respect of all the people.

The following extract, from a historical address of the Rev. Charles Colcock Jones, D. D., delivered to the "Liberty County Independent Troop," in 1856, presents an interesting memorial of Mr. Quarterman's military life. Speaking of the war, he observed: "At the same time the infantry companies of the county were ordered to Darien, under the command of Captain Robert Quarterman and Captain John Winn. The two companies were afterwards united under Captain Quarterman. On Captain Quarterman's 'pay roll,' the original of which I have in my possession, there are one hundred and thirty-three names, including officers and privates.

“My first recollections of Captain Quarterman were during his march to Darien. The troops passed along the public road. A couple of us lads were playing at mimic war, firing our brass cannon from our little fort, attacked by the British fleet afloat on the pond. We heard the drums, and rushed to see the show. Captain Quarterman was at the head of his company, a tall well proportioned and handsome officer, with full whiskers, and had his sword drawn. You all remember and venerate him. For twenty-three years afterwards he was the able, consistent, and successful pastor of Midway Church. He has had few or no superiors, take him all in all, among the prominent citizens of this county.”

At the close of the war he resigned his commission and returned to his farm, and soon thereafter commenced a course of Theological studies, preparatory to entering the ministry. In 1819, he was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Harmony, which at that period included the low country of South Carolina, and the seaboard counties of Georgia.

On the removal of Mr. Murphy to Alabama, he was called to the pastoral charge of Midway congregation. He was ordained to the full work of the ministry on the 27th of May, 1823, by the Presbytery of Georgia, it having been set off from Harmony Presbytery in 1821.

This relation he sustained to the Church of his fathers for thirty years, faithfully discharging all the duties of the ministerial charge to that people so long as his health permitted. Some twelve or fifteen years before his death, as his field of labor had become extended, and as the summer retreats of the people rendered it expedient that he should have help, the congregation elected the Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith Axson, D. D., at present the beloved pastor of the Independent Presbyterian Church, of Savannah, his colleague; and no two ministers ever occupied the same field with more har-

mony, and with greater acceptance to the people, until Mr. Quarterman was laid aside by a paralytic attack.

We beg leave in this place, to introduce a letter written by Dr. Axson, a few days after the decease of Mr. Quarterman, in May, 1849, and furnishing a faithful and interesting portraiture of his venerable co-pastor.

“MY DEAR BROTHER :

“You will not be surprised to learn that our friend and fellow-laborer in the Gospel is no more. The messenger came at last, and this servant of God has entered upon his rest. We were deprived of his parting counsels, and disappointed in regard to a dying testimony, it having pleased God, for many weeks previous to his death, severely to impair his mental faculties, and almost to destroy the power of speech. When the last conflict came he was almost insensible to everything around him.

“From the note book of the attending physician, I have gathered this description of his case: He was seized suddenly and very violently on the night of the 14th of February, 1845, with pulmonary apoplexy, from which he recovered by morning. Subsequently he had several attacks somewhat similar, but not so violent. In September, 1848, his articulation became impaired, and in December, after a sort of simple apoplexy, his case terminated in palsy, and the loss of nervous power in one side. On the night of the 18th of April, he gently sunk into death, and is now buried with his fathers.

“The day of his interment was one of solemn interest to his people, who gathered from all parts to look for the last time on his gray hairs; and it may be hoped, that around the aged pastor’s bier, good purposes were formed, to ‘call to remembrance,’ and, by the grace of God, to heed ‘the things which he spake unto them while he was yet with them.’

“The most interesting recollections of the man, by the

people of this community, will unquestionably be those associated with his character as a Christian and a servant of Jesus. For forty years he had walked with God, during the whole of which period his history was closely connected with that Church in whose grave-yard he is now sleeping. He was admitted into its membership in the year 1809. Two years after he was elected to the office of deacon; and in the year 1823, having privately pursued a course of preparation for the ministry, he was chosen pastor of the Church, which relationship, as an expression of their respect for one who had long watched over them in the Lord, his people resolved he should hold till death, notwithstanding that disease had, in a great measure, excluded him from the pulpit for the last four years.

“In glancing at his career, I am reminded that our brother’s usefulness was not limited to the exercises of the pulpit. Practically, though not professionally trained, he was skilled in medicine; and in the part of the country where he for the most part resided, no regular physician being at hand, it is impossible to say how much the suffering and the sick were indebted to the pastor’s labors in this line; for it was his common practice, where ever and when ever called, cheerfully to wait upon the sick, administer to their wants in regard to prescriptions, and medicines, and nursing, and diet, and all necessary articles.

“As a tribute to his memory, setting forth the influence of his private walk and conversation, let me register a testimony which, since his decease, has been handed me under the signature of many of his parishioners: ‘His grave and even deportment,’ say they, ‘his unquestioned Christian character, his spirit of kindness and sympathy with the distressed, caused him to be approached with the utmost confidence by all. He was very generally consulted in cases of difficulty, whether religious, civil, or domestic; and the whole manner of his life was such as to give him an influence over

the community, which they feel even more than his pulpit preaching.

“Farewell to the aged pastor, who has now finished his course, having fought the good fight, and kept the faith! May we, my brother, be partakers of the same blessedness, when we shall next meet him, wearing the crown of righteousness, awarded by the Righteous Judge to all his faithful servants.

Yours in the Gospel,

“I. S. K. A.”

Although Mr. Quarterman was physically unable, for many years, to render any pastoral services, yet he was continued the senior pastor of the Church.

Among the foreign missionaries who have been sent out to foreign lands by the Presbyterian Church, were two of his children—a son and a daughter. The Church itself has sent into the ministry more of its sons than probably any Church in the South. Among those who entered the ministry during the pastorate of Mr. Q., are the Bakers, Daniel, John W., and Richard W.; Dr. and John Jones, Cassels and Dunwody; John and T. Sumner Winn; John Quarterman and R. Q. May. The most of these were brought into the Church during his ministry, so that he did not labor in vain, nor spend his strength for nought. Having fought a good fight and finished his course, he entered into rest, amid the regrets of all who knew him.

It was during his ministry the system of means for the religious instruction of the colored people, which became so efficient, had its origin, and so far as that congregation was concerned, its maturity—presenting a model which deserved to be generally imitated, but which, by the events of a few past years, has been overthrown.

He died the 18th of April, 1849, in the 62nd year of his age, and the 30th of his ministry. His remains were laid in the Midway Cemetery, to await the glorious morn of the resurrection.

At a regular meeting of the Session of Midway Church, May 15, 1849, the following resolutions were adopted, expressive of the feelings of that body in reference to the death of their aged pastor, to-wit :

“It having pleased Almighty God to remove by death our revered and honored pastor, the Rev. Robert Quarterman, and the fact having been announced to this Session by our clerk,

Resolved, That in this dispensation we recognize the hand of God, and bow in humble submission to his sovereign will.

Resolved, That in his decease we regard ourselves as having sustained a serious bereavement—the *Church*, in the loss of a pastor and spiritual guide, by whose ministrations we have been instructed, and whose example has ever tended to our edification—and the *community*, in the loss of a friend whose memory is endeared by numerous acts of generous philanthropy and private kindness.

Resolved, That while recording this our loss, it is our consolation to believe, that death has been his unspeakable gain, and that we are herein admonished to live the life of the righteous, that our last end may be like his.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the bereaved family, as a mark of our sympathy and condolence, and that they be published in the *Southern Presbyterian*.”

Faithfulness and industry in the Master's work characterized him as a minister. His sermons were of the most practical and pointed character. The spiritual interests of his flock ever laid near his heart; and his ministerial success was very great, as doubtless scores of redeemed souls now in Heaven, and many still on earth, are able to testify, who will rise up in the last day and call him BLESSED.

He was married four times, and at his death left a widow and eleven children. Four of his sons have become ministers, and two of his daughters minister's wives. One of his sons, the Rev. John W. Quarterman, was for twenty years a

faithful and successful missionary to the Chinese, among whom his remains are now deposited. One of his daughters, the wife of the Rev. R. Q. Way, spent sixteen years among the same people, and in the same glorious work.

Such is a brief memorial of the Rev. Robert Quarterman, of Midway.