

HISTORY

OF THE

Baptist Denomination in Georgia:

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL COMPENDIUM AND PORTRAIT GALLERY
 OF BAPTIST MINISTERS AND OTHER
 GEORGIA BAPTISTS.

I WILL GIVE YOU PASTORS ACCORDING TO
MINE HEART, WHICH SHALL FEED YOU WITH
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.

— *Jeremiah 3:15.*

COMPILED FOR THE CHRISTIAN INDEX.

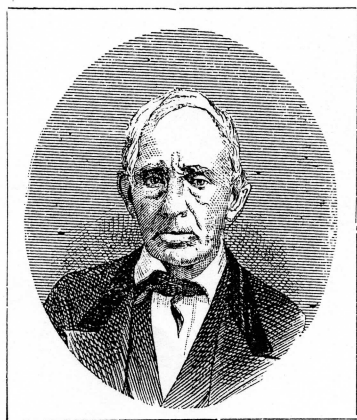
ATLANTA, GEORGIA:
JAS. P. HARRISON & CO., PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.
1881.

#457

Hog Mountain, Alcovy, Bethabara, Cedar Creek and Hebron churches. He was elected Moderator of the Mulberry Association in 1876 and '77. He was married on the 5th of September, 1869, to Miss Amanda Bagwell, of Gwinnett. Their only child, a little daughter, the Lord has taken to himself.

A life-long friend says of him: "His aim and object from childhood seems to have been to make himself useful and beneficial, not only to himself but to others. In common with many others, in early life he had his troubles and besetments, which seemed at times sufficient to crush every hope and aspiration for anything like usefulness. But, despite all misfortunes and disappointments, he, by honest industry and fair-dealing with his fellow-men, succeeded at an early day in gaining the confidence of all with whom he had business transactions. He is a good financier. Starting in life without means, he has, by God's blessing, accumulated a competency of this world's goods. In person, he is above the medium size, of commanding appearance, of mild and pleasing address, and in any assembly would be recognized as a man of mark and ability. He is actively watchful of all matters pertaining to the interest of his churches, true to every trust, popular with his brethren, kind and charitable to the poor. In fact, he is one of Georgia's best men."

JAMES RAINWATER.



This venerable father in Israel has left behind him the memory of a life stretching through seventy-six years, marked throughout by a pure morality, and halloved for more than half a century by simple yet strong faith in Christ. In him were fulfilled those words of Scripture: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

"The days of the years of his pilgrimage" began in Spartanburg district, South Carolina, January 13th, 1795. No record of his early youth survives; but in the year 1820 he made a profession of faith in Christ and connected himself with the Philadelphia Baptist church, in his native district. Five years later that church granted him authority to preach, and we quote the document of licensure in full,

for the sake of a notable peculiarity of phrase, which may or may not have been partially current at that time:

"STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, Spartanburg District:

"We, the Baptist Church of Christ at Philadelphia, believing that a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed to the charge of our beloved brother, JAMES RAINWATER, therefore *tolerate* him to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in any part of the world where God, in his providence, may call him.

"Done in church conference, this 12th day of March, 1825, and signed by order of the church.

MOSES H. SMITH, C. C."

This action was followed by his ordination, January 6th, 1826, the presbytery consisting of Revs. Thomas Bomar, Gabriel Phillips, T. P. Hernden, Miles Rainwater and Nathan Langston. He became pastor of the Philadelphia church, and held that position until November, 1835, when he removed to Georgia and settled in Coweta county. After a residence there of ten or twelve years, he transferred his home to Campbell county, where the rest of his life was passed in simplicity of spirit and in useful toil. He served Macedonia church, Coweta county, twenty-two years, and Antioch, Meriwether, county, twenty-five years;

besides ministering for a number of years to Ramah, Providence, Enon and Bethlehem churches, Campbell county, Carrollton and Pleasant Grove churches, Carroll county, and still others.

Deprived in a large degree of the advantages of early education, he was possessed of a vigorous, well-balanced mind, which, united with his deep piety and untiring energy, made him a power among the churches of his day. Endowed with a sound constitution, and a full, strong voice, his love for the name and the cause of Christ led him to undergo physical labors that would have shattered the health of ordinary men. He feared not to attack error and sin in any of their Protean forms; and he discharged this usually unwelcome task with such earnestness of purpose and meekness of manner as to secure the respect and confidence of all classes. This was exemplified by his bold advocacy of temperance when its friends were few and its enemies numerous and powerful, and by the success which crowned that advocacy. But that which is first in importance was always first in his affection; he found his chief delight in "preaching Jesus and the resurrection," and few men have been more effective in winning souls to the Redeemer.

Mr. Rainwater continued in charge of his churches until a few years before his death, when the infirmities of old age compelled him to relinquish them. Even then, unlike the soldier who retires, when wounded, from the line of battle, he persisted, as often as opportunity allowed, in lifting up his voice in warning, even after disease had broken it.

It would be easy for the reader to judge what manner of death must follow such a life. But the record is pleasant, and we make it, less because it is necessary than because we love to speak of it. His last admonition to his brethren on his dying bed was, "Pray for the salvation of sinners," and "Clear as the clearest" were his ringing words of reply, when a friend asked whether he saw his way clear. In this frame of mind, the torch of mortal life went out, June 22d, 1871. To him the tomb was the gateway to the skies; and, doubtless, his enfranchised spirit "leaped with joy" out of the prison-house of clay into the heavenly temple.

He was married in the fall of 1817 to Miss Polly Mason, of Spartanburg district, South Carolina, and in the spring of 1859 to Mrs. Nancy Dobbs, near Villa Rica, Carroll county, Georgia. The first wife became the mother of twelve children, of whom four only are living.

J. J. D. RENFROE.

Dr. J. J. D. RENFROE is a native of Alabama, and a grandson of Georgia, his parents, Nathan W. Renfroe and Mahala Lee, having emigrated from Washington county, Georgia, before he was born, and settled in Montgomery county, Alabama. He was born in the latter county August 30th, 1830. His father used to tell him in his boyhood, that "when a man got into difficulties there were three ways to get out—to back out, explain out, or fight out, and he hoped he would never back out." This may serve in part as a solution of that more than common vehemency of temperament which has marked his character through life; for no one was ever left in doubt as to where he stood on important questions.

Dr. Renfroe's early advantages were quite limited, having been in school but fifteen months in all; but an irrepressible desire to improve his mind has impelled him to a regular course of study at home, embracing most of the usual college curric-

