Purity and Its People

A History

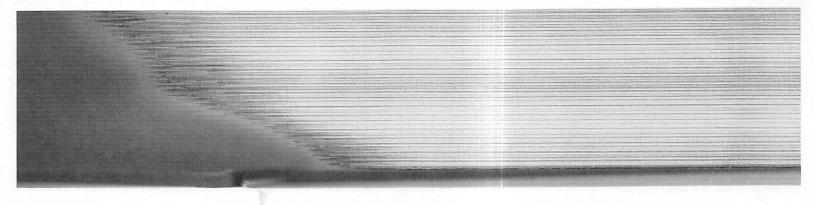
of

Purity Presbyterian Church

Chester, South Carolina

1787 – 1987

Edward Hood Dawson



Purity had attempted to call as gations, located mainly in the hdrew to join the new denomiiblished churches left as well, Church, less than two miles ent Presbyterian Church. egation of Purity was able to

stone wall in 1813. Members inal document gives testimony hat time.

ibed do promise to pay unto in Douglas, John Walker and in office. Being an appointed hundred feet square and four ent burying ground at Purity the sum ascribed to his or her oner if required by the Comment this 12th day of January

subscribed is given in the back



1813.

and a major force a significant bequest designated his wife estate was to go James Allen, Charles Memmedy and Agnes and appoint my be-Margaret and

James Kennedy made another will the day before his death. His wife, Margaret White Kennedy, had preceded him in death a short time before, August 5, 1820. Kennedy specified a sum of \$200 to be used: one-third to a Bible Society, one-third to a Missionary Society, and one-third to a Society for the purpose of aiding "poor and pious young men for the ministry of the Gospel." He bequeathed to his negro boy Prince the sum of \$50. The remaining part of the estate, after payment of debts, was left to Purity.

The executors of the second will were Major John Walker and William White, Jr. The will was witnessed by Charles Boyd, George Hardin, and Matthew McClintock (his "mark"). The monetary value of the estate to Purity is not clear. It probably amounted to between one thousand and two thousand dollars. Its helpfulness was incalculable. From the account book of his nephew, John Walker, who handled the estate for more than forty years, entries show money paid for the upkeep of the graveyard as well as money "paid for preaching." In order to settle the estate, a vendue (sale) was held. Appraisers sheets listing items and giving estimated values are in the records of Purity.

With this bequest, John Walker and the leaders of Purity were able to hold the little congregation together during the perilous and divisive years of the early 1830's. There is no record of what became of the principal. It is probable that it was wiped out as Confederate money or securities. The fund did not seem to be in existence in 1874.

After Mr. Porter left in 1816, John B. Davies served as supply from 1817 to 1821. He is mentioned in the will of James Kennedy as the one to oversee the \$200 bequest to the various societies. Mr. Davies may well have penned the will, as there is a memorandum with the initials "J.B.D."

In 1823 Purity united with Concord Church in calling James Biggers Stafford, a native of North Carolina. He had served as supply for Purity and a congregation near Beckhamville, as well as other churches in the area, during the preceding twenty-four months. Stafford was twenty-nine when he first began to preach at Purity. After he accepted the call in 1823, he made his home two miles southwest of the church and remained there during the ten years of his pastorate. One who knew him well described him as:

A man of large frame, slow of speech, and slow of tongue, neither very eloquent or persuasive in his manner; slow in forming opinions, and equally slow in yielding them up when formed. His co-presbyters regarded him as a sound, orthodox theologian; but being naturally timid and unpretending, he displayed in the pulpit no extraordinary gifts or ability. (Douglas, History of Purity, 1865, page 16)

9 to erect a new building for f 72 signatures is in the records t the end of this volume. This near the log structure of 1796, in and painted without, and impleted in 1832. Elder John criptions for the building show ther supplies, as well as a nota-

wenty-five dollars for building

ie by John Douglas, Sr. for the his building.



WORSHIP - Wooden would by fire in 1904.

affected Purity as itnessed many mob arch, approximately three elders. Some from Purity, which accord of some of an interview his aunt, Mrs.

The old lady of 1832. She

White), Jimmie

McClintoch and his wife Elizabeth and daughters Peggy and Katti, and Elizabeth McClintoch's sister, Elsie Wilson, and her sons George and Robin (and perhaps her sister Ann Sarvis), Abram Ross and his wife Ann, Frank White and his wife Wherry, Mrs. Jennet Knox.

Two of the elders, James McClintoch and Abraham White, mentioned above, were leaders in forming Pleasant Grove Church. Elder Matthew McClintoch left without applying for his dismissal. Existing records do not indicate whether the remaining sixty members of Purity were for or against nullification.¹⁷ The bitter quarrel in the congregation depressed and discouraged the minister, Mr. Stafford. At the meeting of Bethel Presbytery in November 1833, he asked to have his pastoral connection with Purity dissolved; however, he was willing to remain with the more peaceful Concord congregation.¹⁸ In 1834 Mr. Stafford left Concord Church also and moved to Mississisppi.