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ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

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BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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VOLUME IV.
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NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
530 BROADWAY.
1858.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856.

By ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern
District of New York.

especially, who for the first time felt the efficacy of the Saviour's precious blood, applied to cleanse their souls from guilt and shame.

I have spoken of Mr. Sloss as a ready debater. He was sometimes called out very unexpectedly, to oppose views and plans that he considered erroneous and of dangerous tendency. But he always acquitted himself with honour, and satisfaction to his friends—never halting, or hesitating, but going on in a direct, manly, free and dignified discussion, proving that he had quick discernment and abundant resources, was always ready, and was not to be taken by surprise. Occasionally, when roused, he would indulge in burning sarcasm—but, ordinarily, he was free from this; and while he was firm and fearless in maintaining and defending his own opinions, he was courteous, both in manner and language towards his opponents and was careful not to offend needlessly any who differed from him.

It was my privilege to see Mr. Sloss several times during his last illness; and I can truly say that I have never witnessed a more striking illustration of the all-sustaining power of the Gospel in the last and most trying exigency. While his devoted attachment to his family and friends came out in the most beautiful and impressive manner, his faith triumphed over even his natural affection, and rendered him far more eloquent in his death than he had ever been in his life. None, I am persuaded, who witnessed that scene, will ever lose it from among their most cherished recollections.

The name of Mr. Sloss is very precious to many of his surviving ministerial brethren, who, after the lapse of fifteen years, cannot think of him but with the tenderest emotions. And there are hundreds of persons, scattered throughout the Southwest, who formerly knew him, and were instructed and comforted, and perhaps, convicted and converted, by his faithful, earnest preaching, who cannot hear his name mentioned without a flood of the most grateful and delightful recollections.

I am, Rev. and dear Sir, yours truly,

J. O. STEDMAN.

JEREMIAH CHAMBERLAIN, D. D.*

1817—1850.

The grandparents of Jeremiah Chamberlain, on the father's side, emigrated from the North of Ireland to America, about the year 1742, and settled in Lancaster County, Pa., not far from Slate Ridge. They removed from that place between the years 1750 and 1760, with a family of three sons and two daughters, to York County, (now Adams,) in the same State. Colonel James Chamberlain, their second son, and the father of the subject of this sketch, was born, during their residence in Lancaster County, in 1745. He early imbibed the spirit of '76, was appointed a Captain, raised a company in his neighbourhood, and marched with it to Chester County, Pa., to join the main forces. He continued in the army during the greater part of the war. In 1777, he was appointed Major, and about the close of the war, was appointed Lieutenant Colonel. After Peace was declared, he returned to his father's farm, near great Conewago, and married Ann Sample

* Presbyterian for 1850.—MSS. from his family, and Rev. Zebulon Butler, D. D.

of York County; and there they raised a family consisting of five sons and four daughters. They were both earnest Christians, and members of the Presbyterian Church; and Jeremiah, their eldest son, is said to have been solemnly dedicated to the Church by his parents, in his infancy, in accordance with a vow made by his mother.

JEREMIAH CHAMBERLAIN was born January 5, 1794, and continued at home, labouring more or less upon his father's farm, until the year 1809. Being then in his fifteenth year, he was sent to Gettysburg, Adams County, Pa., and placed under the care of the Rev. David McConaughy, who, at that time, kept an excellent school for the preparation of young men for College. Here he remained not only a pupil in Mr. M.'s school, but a boarder in his family, until the year 1812, when he joined the Sophomore class in Dickinson College. During his connection with College, he made a profession of religion, and united himself with the Presbyterian Church in Carlisle. He graduated in 1814; and immediately after became a member of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, where he remained three years. He is represented as having been a vigorous and successful student throughout his whole course, both academical and theological.

He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Carlisle in the year 1817. The same year he accepted a commission from the General Assembly's Board of Domestic Missions, to travel as a missionary in the West and South. His appointment to the mission is in the following words,—extracted from the Minutes of the General Assembly of 1817—“Mr. Jeremiah Chamberlain, six months through the Southwestern Counties of Pennsylvania to the Ohio River, and down that river to St. Louis, where he will join Mr. Larned, and then visit the destitute towns on the Mississippi between Natchez and New Orleans, and, if practicable, visit the settlements on the Mobile.” He commenced this mission in November, 1817. At Bedford, Pa., he found the church without a Pastor, and overtures to remain were made to him, which, however, he felt obliged to decline, with a view to the prosecution of his mission. As he was on his way down the Ohio River, he received a formal call from the Bedford Church; and, after accomplishing his mission at Natchez, New Orleans, and Mobile, he returned in the summer of 1818, and accepted it. He entered immediately upon his labours at Bedford; and besides preaching regularly in that church, he preached occasionally at Schellsburg, and conducted a flourishing classical school the whole time he remained there.

In the winter of 1822-23, he removed to Danville, Ky., in consequence of having received and accepted a call to the Presidency of Centre College. Here he entered upon a new and difficult field of labour, as every thing pertaining to the institution was in an incipient state; but, by a vigorous co-operation of several philanthropic individuals with himself, an important change was soon effected—the College was placed upon a firm basis, and the buildings filled with students. The new College charter, obtained during his administration, included the important feature of authorizing the establishment of a Theological Seminary in connection with it. He preached regularly, besides conducting a Bible class, during the whole time of his residence in Danville. In connection with his labours, a powerful revival of religion took place in the College, which extended many miles into the country; and not a few of the students, who were numbered among its subjects, afterwards became ministers of the Gospel.

In the winter of 1824-25, he resigned the Presidency of Centre College, and removed to Jackson, La.,—having accepted the same office in a State Institution in that place. Here he found every thing yet to be done in organizing and establishing the College; and, after struggling with great difficulties for about two years, with little hope of accomplishing his plans, and little sympathy and encouragement from the State authorities, who had control of the institution, he resigned his office in 1828, and opened an Academy for the instruction of youth, in a church edifice which he had erected in the same place, at his own expense, and especially for the students who withdrew with him from the institution over which he had presided. He preached regularly while he was connected with the College, and organized a Presbyterian Church, where none had existed before.

The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by Centre College, in 1825.

During the summer and autumn of 1828, he matured a plan for the establishment of a literary institution, to be under the care of the Presbyterian Church, and to be located somewhere in that Southern country. After presenting his views very fully to the Presbytery of Mississippi, that Body adopted his plans, and took under their care and control the projected institution. The establishment of Oakland College, in Clairborne County, Miss., was the result of the enterprise. He removed to the grounds of the College in 1830; and, as the exclusive control of the institution was to be vested in the Presbytery, that Body appointed him to the Presidency the same year. Here, doubtless, he accomplished the most important work of his life. He laboured in season and out of season, spared no expense, and shrunk from no sacrifice, by means of which the interests of this favourite object might be advanced. A charter for the College was early obtained from the Legislature of the State, with ample privileges for a theological department; and funds, buildings, and friends were continually added, until the day of his death, when Oakland College had become a noble monument of his untiring zeal and Christian philanthropy.

Dr. Chamberlain's eminently useful life was terminated by a fearfully tragical death, on the 5th of September, 1850. The circumstances, as detailed by a writer in the "Presbyterian," a short time after the event occurred, were these:—

"Under the excitement connected with the late election for a State Convention in Mississippi, a card was published in Fort Gibson, asserting that a student had been expelled from Oakland College, for expressing disunion sentiments in a speech. This charge was at once contradicted by Dr. Chamberlain, and one of the Trustees. Mr. G. A. B. was then mentioned by the author of the first card as his informant. In an excited state of mind, owing to his position in the affair, B. on the 5th of September, was in Rodney, and armed himself with a bowie-knife. After drinking freely through the day, he started for home, driving up to Dr. Chamberlain's house, as he passed. The Doctor met him without suspicion, and stood talking with him at the gate. His two daughters from the house observed what followed. They heard B. call their father repeatedly a liar; to which the latter replied—'You must prove that;' when B. twice struck him to the ground with a loaded whip; and, upon his rising the last time, stabbed him with his knife to the heart. Upon being asked if he was hurt, Dr. Chamberlain replied—'I am killed.' He entered the hall where his daughters and wife met him, and to the exclamation from one of them—'Lord Jesus, receive his spirit,' returned a smile full of the serenity and hope he could not utter with his lips, and fell and expired. On the Sabbath, 7th of September, his remains, attended by a large concourse of people, were laid in the College burial ground. Little was said, for all hearts were pervaded with a sorrow that could not be expressed in words.

"On the afternoon of the same Sabbath, B. was found by a negro in a thicket, in a dying state, giving every indication of having poisoned himself. He lived a few hours after being found, and then passed to the bar of his Judge!"

Dr. Chamberlain's life was so much a scene of active labour, that he very rarely spoke through the press. Some of his Inaugural and Baccalaureate Addresses, and Circular Letters on Education, and Letters to the Churches designed to awaken a spirit of Christian enterprise, were printed; but only in the newspapers of the day. In 1831, he published a Sermon on the sanctity and perpetuity of the Sabbath. The last Sermon he ever preached, was published after his death.

On the 29th of July, 1818, he was married to Rebecca, daughter of Robert and Susan Blaine of Carlisle. She died very suddenly in 1836, in the forty-third year of her age. She was a lady of rare intellectual, social and Christian qualities, and was an efficient helper of her husband in every good work. In 1845, he was married to Catharine, daughter of Jacob Metzger, of Hanover, Pa., who still (1855) survives. By the first marriage he had eleven children; by the last, none. He had one son, of much promise, who graduated at Oakland College in 1851, but soon after fell a victim to the yellow fever, at Warrenton, Miss., at the age of twenty-one.

FROM THE REV. JOHN N. WADDEL, D. D.,

PROFESSOR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, March 21, 1854.

Rev. and dear Sir: The opportunities which were afforded me of knowing the late Rev. Dr. Chamberlain, were the occasional meetings which occurred between us at Presbytery, at Oakland College, and other places in the State, together with a correspondence of some extent by letter, joined with the fact that we belonged to the same Synod, and resided both of us in Mississippi, during the last ten years of his life. And from these opportunities of becoming acquainted with him, I give you the following as my impressions of his personal appearance, manners, and general character.

His person was tall and dignified—the prevalent expression of his countenance was that of mild benignity, mingled with a very perceptible vein of humour. A man of more amiable disposition I never have known; and his propensity to humour and pleasantry was never indulged at the expense of the feelings of another. And yet few men were more ready in repartee, which, though uttered in a pleasant way, would often silence an antagonist, by exposing the weak points in his position. An anecdote illustrative of this trait in his character occurs to me—Dr. C. was dining in company with a large party, among whom was a man noted for his infidelity, who assumed a conspicuous place in the conversation. He presently entered into a debate with the Doctor, in which he was profuse in his eulogy of human nature—its perfectibility, its many virtues, its superiority in freedom from priestcraft, its native love of truth, &c. The Doctor, with a pleasant smile, replied to all this—“Well Colonel, the Psalmist states that, on a certain occasion, he said *in his haste*, ‘all men are liars!’ but for my part, I think if he had lived in our day, he might have said *so at his leisure!*” A laugh was raised at the expense of the Colonel, and he was silenced.

His manners were courteous and easy, and his solicitude seemed ever to be that all around him should be happy and contented.

He was a man of more than ordinary intellectual power. His mind was comprehensive and quick in its grasp of a subject, while his judgments generally showed mature thought and profound wisdom.

He was a man not only of incorruptible integrity, but of distinguished benevolence and public spirit. The sacrifices which he made to sustain various benevolent

and religious institutions, among which Oakland College stood prominent, it is not easy adequately to estimate. As a preacher, he was clear and logical in the treatment of his subject, and set Christ forward always as the great Sun of the Christian system. His views of doctrine were fully in accordance with the standards of the Church to which he belonged. Though he never rose to what would be called a very high pitch of eloquence, he was always sensible, earnest, and affectionate, and there was so much of sincerity manifest in all he said, as to disarm prejudice, and win confidence at once.

He was distinguished in ecclesiastical bodies for his success as a queller of disturbances, and a restorer of peace. Many instances of this kind will occur to the memory of those who were once associated with him.

But it is perhaps as President of a College, that Dr. Chamberlain was most favourably known and most eminently useful. He seemed to be constituted by nature for a governor of youth. There was such a combination of kindness and firmness in his discipline, that, while the subject of it saw there was no moving him from his purpose of enforcing his rules, he could not find it in his heart to be offended, or at any rate to cherish towards him a malicious temper. He was considerate of the students' feelings—never harsh or hasty in his language. He had the entire confidence of all who were entrusted to his care; and the student knew that his paternal counsels were always ready to be afforded to him, whenever they were sought. Indeed he was the sole,—the father, of the College. The good he effected in his Presidency, can never be fully estimated; but his influence, beginning with the young men sent out from Oakland, (among them several prominent ministers of the Gospel,) will, through them, be continually widening and deepening, and will be perpetuated to eternity.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

JOHN N. WADDEL.

FROM THE REV. GEORGE POTTS, D. D.

NEW YORK, December 23, 1856.

My dear Brother: I wish your request in regard to our excellent brother Chamberlain had been addressed to some one better qualified to do justice to his memory. But you are pleased to commit the duty to my hands, partly, I suppose, because those who held the longest communion with him during life, are at a great distance, and partly because you know that I was, for many years, his co-presbyter and friend, in that distant region in which he laboured. Without making any further apology for the imperfection of the memorial, accept what I shall say as the sincere tribute of my heart.

My personal recollections of him commence with his arrival in the South to take charge of one of the Southern Colleges in Louisiana. The infancy of that institution, and the want of unity of sentiment in its governing council, made the task one of great difficulty—too great indeed, even for his great patience and executive ability. Abandoning this post, after suffering untold trials, he willingly assented to the proposal made by a few of us, to undertake the organization of a College, which should be placed under Presbyterial supervision, and which should thus insure at least unity of purpose, based on unity of religious principle. It was a project, however, that required great patience and perseverance, because, at that time, the Presbyterian interest in all that region was very limited. But there were a few gentlemen connected with our congregation, who felt that the interests of education could best be promoted by establishing an institution that should not be subject to the change of masters,—one of the pernicious effects of sectarian differences among the Trustees. We were rejoiced to have the experience of one so highly principled, so active, and so ready to encounter labour and self-denial in this difficult undertaking. In that region,

the very name of *College* was, by many, considered almost a synonyme for failure. But the zeal and quiet decision of Dr. Chamberlain shamed the reluctant prudence of those who feared failure. To him mainly, is the credit due for canvassing the friends to whom we must look for funds, in doing which, he travelled much and far, and for giving force and even direction to the thoughts of many on the general subject of education, in its bearings on the Church. We all admired his quiet, cheerful, resolute zeal in the matter—his great good-sense and practical wisdom. He might, at any time, have commanded a settlement as a pastor, but he seemed to have made up his mind that his service to Christ and his cause was to be mainly in this field, and from the commencement of his work to its untimely close, he devoted himself to it with patient ardour.

Dr. Chamberlain was a good preacher: sensible, scriptural, and full of unction. I knew no one who kept more steadily in view the great end of all labour in the ministry,—the conversion of souls. He was a simple-hearted believer and preacher, amidst all his practical cares. My congregation in Natchez always heard him gladly. He was a thoroughly sincere and frank, though a courteous, man. A gentleman, not in the way of outward pretension,—for in this he was rather negligent,—but in his careful regard for the feelings of others. There ran through his nature a strong current of cheerfulness, when in company with kindred minds, and the humorous always had attractions for him.

Of his skill as a teacher, I thought highly,—although he had had too much executive labour thrown upon him for many years before I knew him, to allow of his becoming a learned man. His erudition was that of one who had laid a good foundation in early life, and who kept an eye upon the subject of education, with a view to the benefit of others, rather than for the pleasure and advantage of a learned fame.

In short, he was one of those hearty, energetic, self-denied workers, who find their resemblance in the pioneers of civilization—men who subdue the forest, and open the fields, and build the log-houses and fences, thus preparing the way for more enlarged and careful results. In doing this work, I do not think he had a superior. An obscure, laborious, thankless, self-denying work—it is to be feared that it would not have been begun, or carried on as it has been, but for his great administrative ability.

The institution to which he devoted so much labour, and for which he encountered so much self-denial, has been sustained by the gifts and prayers of many. It has had some staunch friends, to whose liberality it owes the respectable and permanent character it has now assumed. But I am not detracting from the merit of any of these, when I say that our friend was the rallying point for their gifts and prayers, and that to him, more than any other, is due the praise of its ultimate success. He died by violence, but even his death was overruled of God to the confirmation of the institution in the regards of the public. Under its present auspices, it promises benefits even greater than those it has already conferred.

Trusting the numerous friends of our excellent friend and brother will pardon this imperfect testimony,

I remain ever yours,

GEORGE POTTS.