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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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By ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

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

love, who had himself a loving heart; a man who worked long, hard, with great delight, and great success for his Master: was a man free of all bad and malignant passions, and strongly confided in by some of the best and wisest men of his day.

This is my impression of the man.

With best wishes, your brother in Christ,

R. J. BRECKENRIDGE.

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## THOMAS CHARLTON HENRY, D. D.\*

1816—1827.

THOMAS CHARLTON HENRY was the eldest son of Alexander and Sarah Matilda Henry, and was born in Philadelphia, September 22, 1790. His father was distinguished for his wealth and benevolence, and was for several years President of the American Sunday School Union. At his birth, and during his childhood, his father repeatedly devoted him to the ministry, in the hope that, in due time, he would have the requisite qualifications for the work. But his early years were passed in great buoyancy of spirit and love of pleasure, though he had withal a considerable fondness for books. His father was disposed to indulge his literary tastes by giving him the best advantages for improvement; but he became satisfied ere long that his lighter propensities were so predominant that there was little hope of his becoming a vigorous and successful student. Accordingly, at the age of about eighteen, he placed him at mercantile business. This, however, proved so distasteful to him that, after a short trial, he resolved, with his father's consent, to return to the pursuit of learning.

Up to this time there had been nothing on his part to indicate the probability of his ever being any thing more than a man of the world. But his excellent father, ever intent upon the promotion of his highest interests, omitted nothing that seemed to give any token of a favourable result. Having heard of a remarkable attention to religion in Middlebury College, he sent him thither, in the hope that he might be a sharer in the spiritual blessings with which that institution was then so highly favoured. The revival into which he was thus introduced passed away, without leaving upon his mind any permanent impression. Another revival, however, subsequently occurred, which, at its very commencement, numbered him among the anxious inquirers, and ultimately among its hopeful subjects. He immediately engaged with great earnestness in the promotion of the work, and his labours in College, then and afterwards, were thought to have been eminently useful to many of his fellow students.

Soon after he believed himself to have felt the power of religion, his mind became deeply exercised in regard to what should be his future course of life; and the result was a full conviction that it was his duty to devote himself to the work of the ministry. He was graduated with high honour in 1814; but he had commenced his preparation for the pulpit before the

\* Chr. Adv. v.—MSS. from his family.

close of his college life—he was so much in advance of his class that he was able to devote a large part of his Senior year to Theology. Immediately after his graduation, he joined the Theological Seminary at Princeton, and remained there, a diligent student, for two years. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, April 17, 1816; but in October following was dismissed to join the Presbytery of Newcastle, by which he was subsequently ordained. For two successive years he performed gratuitously the work of a missionary. Several months of this period were passed at Lexington, Ky., where he had great popularity as a preacher. From Lexington he was unanimously called to the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, S. C. He accepted the call, and was installed as its Pastor in November, 1818.

Here he continued about five years; and the Church was eminently prosperous under his ministry. In January, 1824, he accepted a call to the pastoral charge of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, S. C., and laboured in this connection during the rest of his life.

In 1824, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Yale College.

In the early part of 1826, his health had become so much impaired that it was thought necessary that he should allow himself a few months of relaxation. He accordingly sailed for Europe, and, after remaining six months in Great Britain and France, returned and resumed his duties towards the close of that year.

In the autumn of 1827, the yellow fever, of a very malignant type prevailed extensively in Charleston. Dr. Henry's friends urged him to withdraw till the danger should be over; but he resisted their importunity, satisfied that it was his duty to remain with his flock, as long as Providence might enable him to do so. On the morning of the 1st of October, he was in his usual health—in the afternoon he was under the arrest of death. He had just finished correcting a work which he designed for publication, when a sudden chill passed over him, which was the first indication that disease was already in his system; and in less than four days, it had accomplished its fatal work. From the beginning, he manifested unqualified submission to the Divine will; and he conversed with his friends in the most comforting and even rapturous manner, testifying to the power of his Redeemer's love and grace, till he had reached the very end of the dark valley. He died October 4, 1827, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and the eleventh of his ministry. On the Sabbath after his death, his remains were carried into the church where he had preached on the previous Sabbath, and a Funeral Sermon was delivered by the Rev. B. Gildersleeve.

The following is a list of Dr. Henry's publications:—A Plea for the West: A Sermon before the Missionary Society of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, 1824. The Song of Ascent: A Sermon preached on the fourteenth anniversary of the Dedication of the Second Presbyterian Church in Charleston, 1825. Popular Amusements, 12mo., 1825. Letters to an anxious inquirer. 12mo., 1827. [This work was passing through the press at the time of Dr. Henry's death.] Etchings from the Religious world, 12mo. [Posthumous.]

Dr. Henry was married; in July, 1816, to Abbe M., daughter of Samuel Davis, M. D., of Ballston, N. Y. They had three children, one of whom

graduated at the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, and is now (1854) Assistant Surgeon in the army, in New Mexico.

FROM THE REV. WILLIAM NEILL, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA, September 20, 1856.

My dear Sir: When you asked me for my recollections of Dr. Charlton Henry, my first impression was that I could refer you to some one whose more intimate relations with him would supply more ample material for such a sketch as you propose than my very general acquaintance with him has furnished. But I found, upon reflection, that nearly all who knew him well, have passed away; and as I am glad to serve you to the extent of my ability, I cheerfully communicate such general impressions as, after the lapse of almost thirty years, remain upon my mind respecting him. I had no acquaintance with him previous to my going to reside in Philadelphia in 1816. From that time, I was on terms of friendship, I may say intimacy, with his father's family; and though he was part of the time at Princeton, pursuing his theological studies, and was afterwards settled as a pastor in South Carolina, yet his frequent visits to Philadelphia gave me the opportunity not only of seeing him in private, but of occasionally hearing him in public. He had strongly marked qualities both of person and of character, that could hardly fail to make him vividly remembered, where he was once known.

Dr. Henry possessed great advantages on the score of personal appearance. He was, according to my recollection, of about the medium stature, had a fine, well formed, even elegant person, and a face denoting great vivacity and energy, and an exuberance of good feeling. His manners were graceful and polished, and he was altogether a highly accomplished gentleman. Few men knew better how to grace a social circle than he; though I never heard of his doing it at the expense of compromising in the least his consistency or dignity as a Christian or a minister of the Gospel. He was warm and genial in his temperament, and wherever he might be, he could hardly fail to draw around him many earnest and admiring friends.

Dr. Henry, from the time of his first appearing in the pulpit, took rank among the most popular preachers of the day. His graceful form and expressive countenance, his full, pleasant voice, distinct intonation, and appropriate gesture, together with a glowing interest in his subject, constituted him a finished specimen of pulpit elocution. His discourses were written with great care, and were rich in evangelical, practical truth, expressed in a style of more than common force and beauty. The fact that, after having been but five or six years in the ministry, he was called to occupy one of the most important posts of influence and responsibility in the Presbyterian Church, is a sufficient attestation to the high estimate in which his character as a preacher was held.

I believe it was generally conceded that Dr. Henry, in the last years of his life, made increasingly rapid progress in spirituality, and became proportionally more deeply impressed with the responsibilities of his office. It became evident to all that his ruling passion was to do good, and especially to be instrumental in saving the souls of his fellow-men. In a visit which he made to England a year or two before his death, I have been informed that he left a most favourable impression in regard to the tone of his religious feelings; and that many years after his decease, he was spoken of there in various circles as having exhibited a very extraordinary type of Christian character.

Regretting that my recollections are not more extended and satisfactory

I am, with great respect and affection,

Yours in the best bonds,

WM. NEILL.

FROM THE REV. BENJAMIN GILDERSLEEVE.

RICHMOND, Va., April 6, 1857.

My dear Sir: Among the students of Middlebury College, in the Sophomore class, when I joined it in the spring of 1812, were Levi Parsons, Pliny Fisk, Philanthropos Perry, Reuel Keith, Ira Chase, Edward Hooker, Thomas Charlton Henry, and others, to the number of more than thirty,—much the larger part of whom had been gathered into the fold of Christ. There had then been a recent ingathering among the students of the College, and Mr. Henry was among the hopeful converts, so that I only knew him as one who had professedly “put on Christ.” But until near the close of our Junior year, I knew him less intimately as a Christian than I did some other of my class mates. We were then brought closer together,—he ready to avail himself of my aid in the prosecution of the exact sciences, and I of his, in belles-lettres, history, and other studies in which he excelled. Occasionally we visited neighbourhoods together for the purpose of holding conference or prayer meetings. In this way, in connection with the daily routine of college duties, and our frequent meetings for religious improvement, I had a very fair opportunity of judging as to his talents, attainments, and character.

In the college studies he was less thorough and accurate than some of his class mates, but in general knowledge he excelled them all. Occasionally he exhibited an air of levity; but none who associated with him from day to day, could doubt that he had the root of the matter in him. The sweet and gentle influence of Parsons did much to mould his Christian character, and to impress upon him the duty of consecrating himself to the ministry of the Gospel; for they were room mates, and Parsons was the model of all that was amiable, devout and excellent. When Henry was graduated, though he attained not to the first, or the second, or the third, honour, as honours were then awarded, he was confessedly the best speaker and writer in his class. I must confess, however, that his speaking savoured more of the theatre, which, in early life, he had been fond of attending, than suited my uncultivated taste. After his graduation, he returned to his parents in Philadelphia, where I soon afterwards saw him,—only, however, for a few moments, while on my way to the South. We did not meet again till after he became Pastor of the Church in Columbia, S. C. And this was only while the Synod was in session in his own church. The most prominent subject then before that Body, was the missions among our Indian tribes; and none exceeded him in the zeal and ability with which he urged the importance of the cause. Indeed, he had been elected Corresponding Secretary of the Association, and was the chief executive agent. This mission, it will be recollected, was some years after merged into that of the American Board. There was still another subject before the Synod,—that of founding a Literary and Theological Institution,—in which also Dr. Henry took a lively interest. As the College of South Carolina, which is located at Columbia, was then under infidel auspices,—Dr. Cooper being President,—an institution combining both the literary and theological departments was regarded as essential to the best interests of the Church in that State. In this enterprise Dr. Henry enlisted with great zeal. The final result of the movement was the establishment of the Theological Seminary at Columbia, which had been the seat of infidelity; the literary department having been abandoned—it being evident that the infidelity against which provision had to be made, had become imbecile and effete, and that the main College of the State must either be remodelled on Christian principles, or become extinct. And it *was* remodelled accordingly, by the very men who had shown favour to the infidel dynasty; and the reforming process took place under the external pressure of public sentiment, which demanded that the

youth of the State should have a Christian, and not an infidel, education. I have no doubt that the ministry of Dr. Henry at Columbia had much to do in bringing about this result. I was with him at a subsequent meeting of the Synod in Augusta; where he appeared still more deeply interested, not only in the schemes to which I have referred, and others of a kindred nature, but in the direct work of winning souls;—a work in which he had been greatly encouraged by the blessing of God upon his labours in Charleston, to which place his pastoral relation had in the mean time been transferred.

Two years later,—in November, 1826, I was led, in the providence of God, and in part through his instrumentality, to make Charleston my home, and the centre of my efforts through the press, to edify, strengthen, and enlarge the Southern part of the Church. And for nearly a year, till it pleased God to remove him from earth, I was much in his society. As he had then recently visited Europe, it might have been expected that, in referring to that visit, he would have dwelt largely on the various objects of interest that had come under his observation. But nearly all that he had to say in connection with it, had respect to the faith, and zeal, and elevated Christian character, of many of his Trans-Atlantic acquaintances. About this time, he commenced a series of evening lectures to his people, which formed the basis of his "Anxious Inquirer." That he might have more time for reading and study, and yet perform faithfully all his parochial duties, he rose early and dined late,—devoting his mornings sacredly to these preparations for the pulpit. His people all knew it, and only in cases of necessity did they allow themselves to interrupt him during his hours of study. But no sooner had he dined, than he was ready to go forth to his pastoral labours,—paying special attention to the poor and afflicted ones of his flock; and never did I hear the complaint that any were neglected. By thus rigidly adhering to method, and persevering in the course he had marked out for himself, I think he performed more pastoral service than any minister whom I have ever known.

Two or three weeks before he was seized with the malady that took him out of life, he sent me an earnest message, as I was living in the part of the city where the yellow fever prevailed, to come to his house, which was thought to be a safe retreat, and share with him his study. Meanwhile he had removed his family to what was regarded as a yet safer place; and the study only was occupied, and that during the day. I accepted this invitation, and was therefore with him during the last days of his life. But nothing could prevent him from visiting his flock in their hour of affliction. One morning he officiated at the funeral of a child in the infected part of the city, and there, it is believed, contracted the disease—a disease which quickly did its work, but left him, during most of the time, with the ability to give full utterance to his religious emotions, and to administer counsel and warning to those around him. I will not dwell upon the closing scene;—for I could only repeat what was detailed in the obituary notices which were soon afterwards published, and which are doubtless within your reach. Suffice it to say, it was one of the rarest instances of death-bed triumph it has ever been my privilege to witness; and though more than a quarter of a century has since elapsed, I often recur to it as among the most solemn, impressive and cherished scenes that are treasured in my memory.

I will only add a single word in regard to Dr. Henry's theological views. The mail had brought us, while we were together in his study, a pamphlet of no small notoriety in its day, which diverged not a little, as Dr. Henry thought, from the line of accredited orthodoxy. He expressed a wish that it might form the subject of an early review; and so it probably would have done, had not his lamented death intervened to prevent it. He took a deep interest in the theologi-

cal controversy, that was then beginning to show itself, and was jealous of all innovations upon the standards of his Church, in their fair and legitimate construction.

Very fraternally yours,

B. GILDERSLEEVE.

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### MATTHIAS BRUEN.\*

1816—1829.

MATTHIAS BRUEN, son of Matthias and Hannah (Coe) Bruen, was of Puritan extraction,—his remote ancestors having been among the early settlers of New England. His family, for several generations, had resided in Newark, N. J., where he was born, April 11, 1793. He was favoured with a religious education, and, from his earliest years, manifested an unusual tenderness of conscience; but it was not till he was in his eighteenth year, that he considered himself as having entered decidedly on the religious life. He evinced, even from childhood, an uncommon fondness for books; and when he was only six years old, would sometimes lock himself into a room, that he might not be disturbed in his reading. At the age of eight, he went to live with his paternal grandfather, and continued with him till he had reached his fifteenth year, and had become fitted for College. He entered Columbia College in the city of New York, in 1808, and was graduated with high honour in 1812. Shortly after, he joined the Theological Seminary in New York, of which Dr. J. M. Mason was at the head, and passed through the regular course of studies prescribed in that institution. He was licensed to preach by the Classis of New York on the 2d of July, 1816, and was received as a member of the Classis on the 19th of October, 1819. His relation was transferred to the Presbytery of New York on the 15th of April, 1823.

In the year 1812, he was visited with a severe illness, which gave a shock to his constitution, the effects of which were felt during several subsequent years. It was partly, though not entirely, with a view to the establishment of his health, that, soon after he was licensed to preach, he resolved to devote some time to foreign travel; and, accordingly, in the summer of 1816, he crossed the ocean in company with his honoured teacher and friend, the Rev. Dr. Mason. In regard to this important step he writes thus:—"With every means of pursuing my inquiries, and the most flattering prospects, may I never forget that they form the standard of my responsibility. While I am, for a time, relieved from the pressure of public labour, may it be for some better purpose than to satisfy an idle curiosity or an empty ambition."

Having passed two years and a half in travelling in different European countries, during which time he formed an acquaintance with many of the most eminent men of the age, he was on the eve of embarking at Liverpool for his native country, when he received an urgent invitation, to preach in the American Chapel of the Oratory in Paris. Having accepted this

\* Obituary notices.—Memoir by Mrs. Lundie.