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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,

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District of New York.

of half a century to the period when he occupied the Broad Chair at the head of the school room, and when he bent over me with that endearing manner which the heart, once sensible of, never forgets."

In this brief sketch of my early ministerial friend, I feel that I have done little more than indicate a few of the leading features of his character. I am certain that there is not one of his contemporaries who is alive, that would not readily endorse every thing I have said concerning his learning, talents, usefulness, and piety.

I am, my dear Sir,

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

JAMES SCOTT.

CORNELIUS C. CUYLER, D. D.*

1808—1850.

CORNELIUS C. CUYLER was born at Albany, N. Y., on the 15th of February, 1783. His father, Cornelius Cuyler, was engaged in mercantile pursuits in Albany until within eight years of his death, when he removed to Fort Johnson, on the Mohawk River. His mother who was a lady of the finest intellectual and moral qualities,—was a daughter of Joseph Yates of Schenectady, and sister of the Hon. Robert Yates of Albany, Chief Justice of the State of New York. He was one of a family of four children,—two of whom were sons. The letter C. was inserted in his name to distinguish him from six contemporaries of the same surname, all of whom were called *Cornelius*. His father dying when the son was but twelve years old, the forming of his character devolved solely on his mother; and such was his sense of obligation for the benign and powerful influence which she exerted upon him, that he was accustomed, even in his later years, frequently and feelingly to advert to it.

He early discovered a strong thirst for knowledge, and at the age of fourteen had gone through the usual course preparatory to entering College; but circumstances occurred to occasion the postponement of this event for several years. At length, however, he was admitted a member of Union College and was graduated in 1806; after which, for a time, he superintended a Female school at Schenectady. It had been his intention to engage in the profession of Law; but, in consequence of some sad reverses to which his family had been subjected, his thoughts were turned into a serious channel, the result of which was that, within a short time, he made a public profession of his faith, and resolved on becoming a minister of the Gospel. Under the theological instructions of Doctors Livingston and Bassett, he pursued his studies till the year 1808, when he was licensed to preach by the Classis of Schenectady.

On the 2d of January, 1809, he was installed Pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church in Poughkeepsie. That Church had previously been in a divided and unhappy condition. But the very commencement of his minis-

* Dr. Jones's Fun. Sermon.—MSS. from Dr. Cuyler's family and from Rev. Thomas Dewitt, D. D.

try there was marked by a most auspicious change—a revival of religion almost immediately commenced, which continued for two years, increasing the number of communicants from less than forty to more than two hundred. Another revival occurred in 1815, a third in 1819 and 1820, and a fourth in 1831 and 1832. His labours were not more successful than they were abundant. Four stations in the vicinity that he selected for occasional services, were nurtured, through his instrumentality, into vigorous and self-sustaining Churches. As he had an eminently catholic spirit, he found great favour among other denominations as well as his own; and it may safely be said that no minister in the region in which he lived, exerted, at that time, a wider or more powerful influence than he. In 1814, he was called to the Collegiate charge of the Reformed Dutch Church in the city of New York; and though the call was earnestly pressed, he felt constrained to decline it, especially as it was contemporaneous with the commencement of a revival of religion in his own congregation. Several other calls also, which might have been considered highly attractive, he declined in subsequent years.

In 1828, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Union College.

In 1833, Dr. Cuyler was invited to become the Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia; and, though it cost him a severe sacrifice to sunder the tie which bound him to his flock, after an undisturbed and successful pastorate of so many years, he could not resist the conviction that this was a call of Providence, and therefore he determined to obey it. Accordingly, he resigned his charge amidst the deep regrets of an affectionate people, and was installed Pastor of the Church in Philadelphia on the 14th of January, 1834.

Though Dr. Cuyler laboured with unremitting assiduity in Philadelphia, and his ministry was by no means without visible tokens of success, it seemed to be accompanied by less of Divine influence in the direct conversion of sinners than had attended his labours in his former charge. He had naturally a fine constitution, and was never disposed to spare it in the service of his Master. It was only for a short time previous to his death that he was taken off from his public labours; and even during the greater part of his brief illness, he was enabled to enjoy his food, and rest, and conversation with his friends. His disease was dry gangrene making its first appearance in the heel. As the disease advanced, and his prospect of recovery grew dubious, his mind seemed to take on a more elevated spiritual tone, and he evinced the most mature preparation for going to render an account of his stewardship. He died on the 31st of August, 1850, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. An Address was delivered at his Funeral by the Rev. Dr. Plumer of Baltimore, and a Sermon, commemorative of his life and character, was preached by the Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Jones, both of which were published.

The following is a list of Dr. Cuyler's publications:—A Sermon preached at Poughkeepsie on the death of Andrew M. Young, one of the teachers in the Dutchess County Academy, 1814. Narrative of a Revival of Religion in the Reformed Dutch Church in Poughkeepsie, 1815. The Question answered—Whose children are entitled to Baptism? A Sermon preached before the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, 1816. God's presence and blessing in his House: A Sermon preached at the Dedication

of the new Reformed Dutch Church at Poughkeepsie to which is added the Address delivered on laying the corner stone, 1822. A Sermon occasioned by the death of the late Rev. John H. Livingston, D. D., LL. D., preached at Poughkeepsie, and afterwards before the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church at Albany, 1825. A Sermon on the Nature of the Atonement, 1835. The Beauty and Excellency of the Church, the foundation of her influence on the world: A Sermon preached before the Synod of Philadelphia at the opening of its annual meeting in York, 1835. Believers, sojourners on earth, and expectants of Heaven: A Sermon occasioned by the death of Robert Ralston, Esq., 1836. A Sermon on the death of Robert Smith. The Believer's views of Life, Death and Eternity: A Discourse occasioned by the death of Dr. John White, 1838. The Law of God with respect to Murder: A Sermon preached in the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1842. Three Tracts published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, entitled—"The Parity of the Ministry"—"Evidences of a gracious state"—"Who shall dwell in Heaven?" He contributed also to some of the religious newspapers; and among the most important of his contributions was a series of essays on the doctrine of Atonement, which appeared in the Journal and Telegraph, published in Albany.

He was married on the 16th of February, 1809, to Eleanor, daughter of Isaac De Graff, of Schenectady. They had ten children, seven of whom survived their father. One son, *Theodore*, was graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1838, and is a distinguished lawyer in Philadelphia.

FROM THE REV. THOMAS DEWITT, D. D.

NEW YORK, February 8, 1853.

My dear Sir: While pursuing my literary course in Union College, from 1806 to 1808, I had some acquaintance with the late Dr. Cuyler, who had then recently graduated, and was residing at Schenectady as a student of Theology. I renewed my acquaintance with him at the time of his settlement as Pastor of the Church in Poughkeepsie, in the beginning of the year 1809. After finishing my theological course at New Brunswick, and being licensed to preach, I was called to the pastoral charge of the Reformed Dutch Churches in New Hackensack and Hopewell, in Dutchess County, in the neighbourhood of Poughkeepsie, in the autumn of 1812. I remained there till the fall of 1827, and was thus brought into constant intercourse with Dr. Cuyler both in ecclesiastical relations, and in those of personal friendship, for the space of fifteen years. Some few years after my removal to this city, Dr. Cuyler was called to Philadelphia. Our intercourse, after that, though less frequent, was renewed, as opportunity offered, and always with great cordiality, till his removal to his rest.

I have always viewed Dr. Cuyler as an excellent model of diligence, fidelity, and wisdom, in the discharge of the various duties pertaining to the ministry. His mind, though not of a brilliant or imposing character, was well balanced, well disciplined, and characterized by that sterling quality—sound common-sense. This gave a wise practical direction to his whole course. His piety, which was deep rooted and carefully cultivated, expressed itself strongly and uniformly in his public ministrations, his private intercourse, and his domestic relations. He was careful and diligent in his preparations for the pulpit. His views of Christian truth, which were in conformity to the standards of his Church, he exhibited with great clearness, and always in their bearing on the heart and the life. His sermons were framed with a good degree of logical accu-

racy, his style was simple and perspicuous, and his application direct and not unfrequently pungent. His delivery was simple, without much gesture, and without any remarkable animation,—better fitted perhaps to the didactic than the hortatory. He was remarkably assiduous in his pastoral labours, and was especially felicitous in his ministrations at the bed of sickness and death, and in the house of mourning. He was most exemplary in his attention to the young, causing them to regard him as a personal friend, and availing himself of every opportunity to communicate to them religious instruction. It might reasonably be expected that much good fruit should have come from such a ministry; and accordingly, in Poughkeepsie especially, a very rich blessing attended his labours. Several revivals occurred while he was there; and one of them I particularly remember as having been characterized by great interest and power.

Dr. Cuyler was remarkably punctual in his attendance on the various judicatories of the Church. He had a fine talent for business, and was never more in his element than while engaged in the management of ecclesiastical affairs. He was at once conciliatory, cautious and energetic. He kept a watchful eye upon whatever was passing in the Church, and felt that he had important duties to perform towards the Body at large, as well as towards his own immediate congregation.

Dr. Cuyler, in his general intercourse with society, never lost sight of the dignity that belongs to his profession, while yet he never took on any stiff or artificial airs. He was an agreeable and instructive companion. He had a kind word for every body, and his benignant smile diffused a kindly feeling in every circle.

Yours with fraternal regard,

THOMAS DEWITT.

FROM THE HON. JOHN KINTZING KANE,

JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES.

IRON ROCK, near Philadelphia, May 14, 1857

My dear Sir: I became acquainted with Dr. Cuyler within a few weeks after I reached manhood. It was in the interior of Dutchess County, N. Y. I was trying to reach some wild lands that had come to me by inheritance, and found myself a storm-stayed visiter for some forty-eight hours among the hills. Dr. Cuyler was my companion from the same cause.

He was then a noble looking person, with all that courtesy of manner that used to distinguish gentlemen. His conversation I remember fascinated me; for he was an elegant scholar, and he had the happy art of choosing topics on which I thought myself informed;—so that he flattered while instructing me. I was fresh from College, and my ideas of the clerical character had been moulded under the auspices of Dr. Dwight; but Dr. Cuyler struck me, by his quiet cheerful tone, his frank and genial, yet dignified, bearing, and the graceful facility with which he adapted his teachings to the somewhat mixed group that made up our company at the inn, as the very best representative I had seen of the Christian gentleman.

I knew him more intimately afterwards, and owed him much more, when he had become our Pastor at the Second Presbyterian Church; but my estimate of him underwent no change. You do not require me to speak of him as a sound theologian, according to the standards of his own Church, or an able sermonizer, or a most faithful and affectionate pastor—all this he was; but he combined with it all the beautiful traits of personal character, that won my affections in earlier life.

I am very truly, dear and Rev. Sir,

Your faithful servant,

J. K. KANE.

FROM THE REV. JOSEPH H. JONES, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA, January 14, 1856.

My dear friend: My recollections of the late Dr. Cuyler of this city are still fresh and very pleasant. For more than twelve years we were co-presbyters, and at the same time accustomed to meet very often as members of several Boards of the Church, with which we were officially connected. Such prolonged as well as familiar intercourse gave me many opportunities of knowing the qualities of his mind and heart, as they were developed by the varied circumstances in which we were called to act.

In person, Dr. Cuyler was tall, measuring six feet and nearly two inches in height. His limbs and body were well formed, and indicated great physical vigour. When walking abroad with his cane which he usually carried, he was remarkably erect until the latter part of his life, when his head inclined a little to his left shoulder,—the result perhaps of his long habit of bending over his desk in study. His complexion was light, and in his youth he must have been, like David, of “a ruddy and fair countenance.” In conversation with friends, his manner was cordial and affectionate. At such times, his fine blue eye would occasionally beam with an incipient smile, which evinced the sincerity and kindness of his heart. In all his life, he was most exemplary in his habits of living, keeping his body under by a proper control over every appetite. When, after having passed his sixtieth year, he discovered the noxious effect of tobacco on his nervous system, to the use of which he had been accustomed from his youth, he immediately gave it up. The conflict for a time was severe, but his triumph was complete.

Dr. Cuyler had a manly, vigorous, and well cultivated intellect. His mind was cast in a mould of great sobriety and evenness, and was always safe and healthful in its operations. No matter what might be the subject that engaged his attention, or what the object he was endeavouring to compass, you always felt sure that there would be nothing in the movements of his mind that would savour either of eccentricity or extravagance. He was not remarkable for a rapid flow of thought, but when his thoughts came, they were generally marked by so much correctness and transparency that you would be willing to receive them almost implicitly.

Dr. Cuyler was a man of great kindness of spirit, and delighted to do what he could to render every body around him happy. Though he could not be said to be a great talker, and never manifested a disposition to arrogate to himself more than his share of the conversation, he was always affable and communicative, and always showed that he spoke out of a benevolent heart and a well furnished mind. He was zealous for what he believed to be the truth, while yet he had Christian sympathies large enough to embrace all the real followers of Christ. He had never learned to make a man an offender for a word.

As a preacher, he was unaffected, earnest and persuasive. His discourses were written with care, and characterized rather by purity and correctness of diction than by imagination and ornament. His grand aim evidently was to present Divine truth in the most simple and lucid manner, leaving it to God's Spirit to give it its legitimate effect upon the heart and conscience. In his preaching there was a felicitous blending of the doctrinal, the practical, and the experimental; and thus both the intellectual and moral nature were duly cared for. His manner was sedate and dignified without any extraordinary degree of animation. It was his custom to use his manuscript in the morning, but in the afternoon, either to preach from a carefully prepared skeleton, or to have no notes at all. It may safely be said, in view of his labours, both in the pulpit and out of it, that he was an able, faithful, useful and acceptable minister of

Jesus Christ. I love to call up his venerable image, and to recount the substantial and manifold services which he rendered to the cause of Christ, as a fellow-labourer with some who are still clad in their armour, and some who have entered into their rest.

Believe me ever fraternally yours,

J. H. JONES.

JAMES M'CHORD.*

1809—1820.

JAMES M'CHORD, a son of John and Isabella M'Chord, was born in Baltimore, Md. March 29, 1785. His parents, it is believed, were both of Scotch Irish descent. His father was a mechanic in very moderate circumstances. In the year 1790, he removed with his family to Kentucky, and settled in Lexington.

His son James, at a very early period, discovered a decided taste, and an uncommon capacity, for acquiring knowledge. He had a great fancy for drawing and painting; and to the gratification of this taste many of his leisure hours were devoted. Some of the portraits which he sketched at this early period, still remain among his relatives, and they evince very considerable native talent for the arts. At the age of twelve, he was quite a proficient in Geography, Arithmetic and History, had considerable knowledge of the politics of the day, and had read Shakespeare and a number of the most eminent poets.

He commenced the Latin language when he was thirteen, in the Lexington Academy, where he gave decisive evidences of superior genius. One of his class mates writes thus concerning him:—"From his thirteenth year, every thing about the Academy, except the instruction and discipline, was managed by him. All our sports, all our preparations for exhibition, the selection of the plays and speeches, and the persons by whom they were to be spoken and acted, were all directed by him. Nobody assigned to him that business, and nobody charged him with assuming it, but he was always consulted, and his judgment was generally decisive."

In 1801, he completed his course in the Academy, and entered the Transylvania University. Here he continued from eighteen months to two years, when he commenced the study of the Law under Henry Clay. The numerous engagements of the teacher allowed him no other time for the recitations of his pupil than the Sabbath. Against this his conscience, which had been enlightened by a religious education, earnestly remonstrated; and, after a few months, his mind took a decidedly serious turn, and all the powers of his mind were roused into vigorous action to secure the salvation of his soul. This was in the spring and summer of 1803, when he was in his eighteenth year. The result was that he made a profession of religion, abandoned the study of the Law, and resolved to devote himself to the Gospel ministry.

* Sketch of his Life, by Rev. John McFarland.—Preface to his Sermons.—MSS. from Rev. R. H. Bishop, D. D., and Rev. R. J. Breckenridge, D. D.