

[Chamberlin, William Rogers]

VIII. REV. WILLIAM ROGERS CHAMBERLIN, son of Thomas and Mary (Rogers) Chamberlin, was born in Brookfield (Carroll Co.), N.H., November 2, 1816, and died in Clinton (Oneida Co.), N.Y., April 28, 1876. In the death of Mr. Chamberlin our ministry has suffered a serious loss. He was a man of marked ability, and as a preacher was much above the average. He had a great love of books, and was of a very studious habit. In his early manhood he followed for several years the vocation of school teacher. He was licensed to preach at Wolfborough, N.H., in 1844, and was ordained in Dighton, Mass., in 1847. While preaching at Dighton he accepted an invitation from a private individual to go to Abingdon, Va., and engaged in missionary work in that State. For two years he preached in the Virginia backwoods—in its highways and byways—in school-houses, mills and log cabins—enduring great hardship, encountering many dangers, risking his life from violence, and depending for support solely upon Divine Providence. Young men in the ministry seeking large salaries and easy places would do well to ponder his example. Mr. Chamberlin was not of that class. He steadily pursued his work in that section until he felt that it was the Lord's will he should go elsewhere. In the fall of 1849 he went to Cincinnati, O., and for twelve years was employed as a book-keeper. But though engaged during the week in secular pursuits, his activity in behalf of his faith did not in the least diminish. He connected himself with the Second Universalist Church in that city, and for three years was superintendent of its Sunday school. Subsequently he became superintendent of the school at the First Church, and held the position for seven years. It was in this capacity that he was eminently fitted for usefulness. His influence over children was unbounded. He was all kindness and gentleness, and the children instinctively regarded him as their natural friend. His imagination was exceedingly fertile. He abounded in stories such as children ever love to hear; and he never failed, at the conclusion of the lessons, to improvise a story focalized around some striking truth, which was certain to hold both old and young spell-bound. He laughed and cried by turns, and with these emotions the school was always in close sympathy. He had all the gifts of the improvisator of the olden time.

But he was never thoroughly in harmony with his secular work. He knew he was out of his proper element. He longed to be at work again in the ministry, and in 1867 laid aside his accountant's pen, and resumed the armor of the preacher. He was settled successively at Mendota, Ill.; Vinton, Council Bluffs, and Dubuque, Iowa; and at Clinton, N.Y., at which last place he spent his last days.

His work at Clinton was very successful. He attached his people to himself by his amiable disposition, his unselfish spirit, and his devotion to his work. His personal influence was greatly aided by his marked ability as a

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preacher. [He] Having a wide acquaintance with books and a fine literary taste, his sermons were always neat, compact, and often highly polished. Intellectual, cultivated people always admired and enjoyed them

When, in 1873, he went on a sort of missionary tour to England and Scotland, wherever he preached his sermons were highly spoken of, and it is known that they impressed on those who heard them a high idea of American Universalism. He undoubtedly did a good work for our faith in the United Kingdom.

For the last three or four years of his life he was a great sufferer from an incurable disease, but he worked steadily on till within a few weeks of his death. His last service was held at his own house, March 21, 1876, when he arose from his sick-bed and gave the right hand of fellowship to twenty-one persons, baptizing seven, and consecrating the babe of a friend. With this service his work on earth was done, and yet not wholly done, for it was appointed that he should bear thrilling testimony with respect to death. On Sunday evening preceding his death, he said with deep feeling: "The idea of heaven open, and angels ascending and descending, is beautiful, is poetical. But the life of trust which enters the heart and brings heaven down to us, to make the way smooth, is *mine*. I can therefore leave you all to that beneficent Providence which has been, and is now, my support."

On Thursday morning, the day before he died, he said, "I wish you would all come into the room together, for I have learned something about dying which I want all of you to hear." When those whom he addressed appeared, he said, "Dying undisturbed is exceedingly pleasant, restful, and beautiful—consciousness settles down gradually into unconsciousness. But death seems often very *timid*. The least noise—the opening of a door, voices in another room—frightens him away for a time. For this reason, *protect the dying*." The announcement of his physician that his end was near, he hailed with joy. Like Stephen of old, he saw heaven opened, and he longed to enter it and be at rest. Thus triumphantly passed away an able preacher of the gospel, and a most excellent Christian man—one, indeed, whom our whole denomination should delight to remember and honor. He was married in 1841 to Miss Sophia B. Smith, who survives him. He left no children.

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