



MEMORIAL VOLUME

OF THE

SEMI-CENTENNIAL

OF THE

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AT

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA.

COLUMBIA, S. C.

PRINTED AT THE PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1884.

MEMORIAL OF CHARLES COLCOCK JONES, D. D.

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CHARLES COLCOCK JONES, the son of Captain John Jones and Mrs. Susannah Hyme Jones (née Girardeau), was born at his father's plantation, Liberty Hall, Liberty County, Georgia, on the 20th of December, 1804.

His parents were born in South Carolina. His mother, of Huguenot descent, was a woman of great excellence of character and sincere piety. She was a member of old Midway church, and in that church her infant son was consecrated to God in baptism by the pastor, Rev. Cyrus Gildersleeve. Becoming fatherless at three months of age, the sole care of little Charles devolved on his mother, who earnestly desired and prayed that her orphan boy might glorify God in the Christian ministry. She was signally answered long after her lips were silent in death. Although bereft of her tender care before completing his fifth year, his mother was never forgotten. And God remembered the child by committing him to affectionate relatives: to the pious training of a godly aunt, Mrs. E. G. Robarts, and the special guardianship of his uncle, Capt. Joseph Jones, who ever was to him as a father, and to whom he ever accorded the respect, obedience, and affection of a son.

Having received at the Sunbury Academy, Liberty County, under the preceptorship of Rev. William McWhir, D. D. (a renowned educator), the rudiments of an excellent English education, he entered at the age of fourteen, and continued six years, in a counting-house in Savannah. While thus employed, his evenings were passed in reading and study. He not only acquired much historical information, but disciplined his mind by a thorough mastery of Edwards on the Will. Having accomplished himself for commercial life, such were his energy, system, and integrity, that his services were in demand, and a bright business prospect was before him. About this period an opening was pre-

sented him for entering the military academy at West Point. But God had other work for him. During his commercial career a severe sickness brought him to the verge of the grave, and was, under God, the means of his profound awakening. While still a resident of Savannah, he at the age of seventeen, on the fourth Sabbath of November, 1822, with about forty others, mostly young persons, connected himself with Midway church, Liberty County, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Murdoch Murphy, and at once became an active Christian in the Sabbath-school and church. The idea of studying for the ministry was first urged upon his serious consideration by Mr. Murphy. After careful and prayerful deliberation, he felt called to the ministry of the gospel. At twenty years of age he entered the famous Phillips' Academy, Andover, Mass., and for the first time commenced the Latin grammar. From Phillips' Academy, after two years, he entered Andover Theological Seminary, then under the tuition of Rev. Moses Stuart, a distinguished Greek and Hebrew scholar; Rev. Dr. Leonard Woods, a profound theologian; and the godly and scholarly Dr. Ebenezer Porter.

From Andover Mr. Jones went to Princeton Theological Seminary, and studied eighteen months under those remarkable men, Doctors Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller. In the spring of 1830 he was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New Brunswick at Allentown, N. J. In November, 1830, he returned to his native County, Liberty; and on the evening of the 21st of December following he was married at the Retreat plantation, by Rev. Dr. McWhir, to Miss Mary Jones, the daughter of his uncle, Capt. Joseph Jones.

On the 31st of May, 1831, he was called to the charge of the First Presbyterian church of Savannah; and in November of the same year was ordained by the Presbytery of Georgia, and installed pastor of said church. After eighteen months of earnest, laborious, and successful work for the good of both races, Dr. Jones resigned his first and last pastoral charge of whites, leaving with his people a precious memory for many years. Constrained by a sense of duty, long felt, to devote himself to the evangelisation of the colored people, he decided that the time had come to

begin the work of his life. To the needy spiritual condition of our servants his mind was drawn while a student of Princeton Seminary.

Leaving Savannah, he returned to Liberty County, as the centre of his operations, in November, 1832, and gave himself, body, mind, and soul, to his chosen, self-denying, and, so far as pecuniary recompence was concerned, gratuitous work, the full results of which eternity alone will disclose. Although he commenced his work in the most favorable location in Georgia, yea, in the entire South, he nevertheless encountered opposition, both open and secret, demanding a spotless personal reputation, a strong social position, and unwavering decision, combined with a patient manly prudence; and all animated and controlled by love to the Lord Jesus, and life-long consecration to his service. These qualifications were wonderfully combined in Charles C. Jones. By nature and by grace he seemed to be called of God to meet a new, most difficult, and delicate emergency; to personally open and occupy an almost untried field. As a good brother, in allusion to his work among the colored people, once said, he seems to be the apostle to that portion of the Gentiles. And he succeeded to a remarkable extent in awakening an interest in this neglected people, not only in his own County, but by his extensive correspondence, his writings, and annual reports of his labors, he, under God, did more than any other man in arousing the whole Church of this country to a new interest in the spiritual welfare of the Africans in our midst. And how abundant, self-sacrificing, and untiring were his personal labors for that people! He had three principal stations: Midway, Newport, and Pleasant Grove. Midway was hard by the old mother Midway. There was another station, Hutchison, where he occasionally preached. Three of these houses of worship were erected very much through his agency. His work commenced in the closet and study. His preparations for Sabbath were made most carefully, with critical examinations of the original Scriptures. His sermons were often expository, and uniformly instructive and impressive. He generally rode to the stations on horse-back. The labors of the Sabbath were introduced by a prayer-meeting and a watchman's

meeting; then followed the regular services of the morning, himself leading the music. The third service was a patient inquiry meeting, to which all were invited to come who desired personal instruction. This meeting, to which many responded, was highly prized by him, having faithfully tested its value. The closing exercise was the Sabbath-school, in which he taught hymns and his catechism. Into these schools hundreds of all ages gathered, but especially children and youth. All recited together. These schools illustrated the efficiency of oral instruction. They were remarkable for their animation, proficiency, and accuracy, and their scriptural instructions received the special sanction of God the Holy Spirit.

Such were the Sabbath labors of this beloved missionary. He literally worked whilst it was day! The sun was usually in the tops of the trees, and the shadows of evening fast gathering, before turning his face homeward. In addition to Sabbath labors, he had, during seven months of the year, when at his winter home, his plantation meetings, from once to thrice a week. These were at night. He would ride in the saddle, from three to ten miles, to some plantation, preach and return home, however late the hour or long the distance. This part of his work was very useful, but a great draught on his constitution.

His labors were confined to a warm, damp, and exceedingly depressing climate. The plantation work was particularly drastic. Frequently he would return home in mid-winter, and at mid-night, with feet and clothing thoroughly soaked from watery roads and night dews. From such exposures and unremitting toil, his constitution received a shock which resulted in a premature decay of vigor and the going down of his sun, even before the autumn of old age. But he was permitted to see the pleasure of the Lord prospering in his hands, in the happy results and abundant fruits of his labors. These were manifest in the increased intelligence, good order, neatness, and general morality of the colored people; their elevated regard for marriage vows, and attention to the morals and manners of their children. Scripture knowledge abounded in comparison with the past; and the blessed Spirit sealed the word in the conversion of many souls. The good seed

was continually watered; and there was one season particularly distinguished by a marked and protracted refreshing from the presence of the Lord. It commenced in 1838 and continued until the close of 1842; and the fruits were an addition to the churches of the County of three hundred members. And the general results of his labors were seen in other communities and regions beyond: a decided attention to the physical, as well as the moral, condition of the race; the erection of neighborhood and plantation chapels; the multiplying of family and plantation schools, in which Jones' Catechism was taught; a greater devotion of time to the negroes by pastors and churches; and an emphatic awakening throughout the South to the duty of systematic religious instruction to the blacks. In fact, the work of Dr. Jones for the spiritual elevation of the colored race was a decided success. His catechism of Scripture doctrine and practice, prepared especially for the colored people, used extensively in the South, and translated into three foreign languages by our missionaries and adopted by them, will remain a witness of his devotion and adaptation to his work. His book on the "Religious Instruction of the Negroes," and other kindred writings, and his last public utterances before the Confederate General Assembly at Augusta, Ga., in December, 1861, all attest that he was earnestly consecrated to one great mission of life. Dr. Jones had some important and pleasant diversions from his missionary work.

In November, 1836, he was elected by the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia to the Professorship of Ecclesiastical History and Church Polity in the Columbia Theological Seminary. His scholarly attainments and wonderful power over young men eminently fitted him for his new work. He passed two years in Columbia. During his professorship, he often presented the colored field to the students, and labored personally for the negroes by preaching and the formation and teaching of a Sabbath-school of two hundred scholars. He returned to Liberty County at the close of 1838, and resumed labor among the colored people, who received him with open arms; and his return seemed to receive the divine sanction by an immediate work of the Spirit, which continued for four years. He continued in this field ten succes-

sive years, the prime of his life, until he was again called to the same Chair in the Seminary. He remained in Columbia during 1849 and the Seminary year of 1850, when the providence of God and voice of the Church called him to another field. He was greatly attached to the Seminary; was one of its early friends and founders. He was for years chairman of the Seminary's Board of Directors, and investing agent of the Georgia funds of the institution.

On the night of the 18th of April, 1850, in Columbia, the house in which Dr. Jones lived, with all its contents, was destroyed by fire, he and family barely escaping with their lives. By this disastrous event, which he bore with beautiful resignation, the most valuable portion of his library, his missionary journals, sermons, and other MSS., and his lectures on Church History, were lost.

Very soon after this calamity, he was elected Secretary of the Assembly's Board of Home Missions, as successor of the Rev. Dr. Wm. A. McDowell. After the most prayerful deliberation he accepted this call of the whole Church, North and South, and removed to Philadelphia in October, 1850, and entered upon his duties as Secretary. In this new and most responsible and laborious position, he manifested his usual characteristics. His practical common sense, systematic business habits, manly independence, his thorough comprehension of the field, earnest zeal, and untiring energy, infused new life into the operations of the Board. His financial ability and watchful diligence very soon discovered and arrested shameful and serious defalcations in the Treasurer of the Board. But in this important position he was not permitted long to labor. His constitution, having never recovered from the shocks of missionary labor, now, under the unremitting toil of his office, completely broke down, and he was compelled, in the fall of 1853, to seek restoration in the quiet seclusion of his own delightful home in Liberty County. From this period we date the invalid life of Dr. Jones, protracted through ten years. But he worked on, preaching and laboring beyond his ability, with a zeal, devotion, and success, which increased as his strength and years declined. When no longer

able to stand, he would preach sitting in the pulpit. His last sermons were regarded his ablest and best.

He was especially faithful to his own servants, giving them public and private instruction in the plantation chapel and the family mansion; and many of them professed the Saviour.

He attended, as he was able, the meetings of Presbytery, and twice during these ten years the General Assembly. He was a member of the first Assembly of the Confederate States, and made a profound impression on that body, as, unmindful of physical weakness, he poured forth what proved to be his last appeal to the Church in behalf of the souls of our servants. But the chief work of this part of his life was the preparation of his "History of the Church of God during the period of Revelation," the foundations of which were laid in his lectures at the Seminary. On this he wrought untiringly with great delight, almost up to the day of his death, which event found it lacking but a few chapters of completion, and ending, strange to say, just where the fire in Columbia had cut short his lectures. But the end was drawing near. His nervous prostration culminated in wasting palsy, his final, fatal disease. It gradually and fearfully consumed his frame, leaving his mind untouched, and growing and ripening to the end. No one watched his symptoms with greater care than himself. With an abiding trust in his Redeemer, he contemplated with cheerful calmness the fatal disease in its gradual dissolution of his tabernacle of clay.

Some months before death he said to his eldest child: "My son, I am living in momentary expectation of death, but the thought of its approach causes me no alarm. The frail tabernacle must soon be taken down: I only wait God's time." Four days before his death, he made this entry in a journal: "March 12th, 1863.—I have been very weak and declining since renewing a cold in the church on the first instant. My disease seems to be drawing to a conclusion. May the Lord make me to say in that hour, in saving faith and love, 'Into thy hands I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth!' So has our blessed Saviour taught us by his own example, and blessed are they who die in the Lord."

On the morning of the 16th of March, 1863, the day of his departure, having dressed himself with scrupulous neatness, he came down from his chamber and breakfasted with the family. Afterwards he walked for a short time on the lawn; but returned much exhausted, and retired to his study and passed the morning in reading and meditation, alternately sitting and reclining. After dining in his study with apparent relish, Mrs. Jones repeated to him some promises of the Saviour to be ever with his people, even when called to pass through the dark valley. To which he replied: "In health we may repeat those promises, but now they are realities." She added: "I feel assured that the Saviour is present with you." He replied: "I am nothing but a poor sinner; I renounce myself and all self-justification, trusting only in the free unmerited righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ." Being asked if he had any messages for his sons, he said: "Tell them both to lead lives of godly men in Christ Jesus, in uprightness and integrity." His feebleness increasing, she suggested to him to retire to his chamber and recline on his bed. He assented, and supported by his wife and sister, Mrs. Cumming, he left the study, pleasantly remarking: "How honored I am in being waited on by two ladies." Reclining on his bed, in a few moments, without a struggle, a gasp, a sigh, he gently fell asleep in Jesus. A glory almost unearthly rested on his peaceful countenance. Shortly afterwards he was borne back to the study, and there, amidst the silent loved companions of life, he lay in quiet repose, until the third day following. Then, just in the same garments undisturbed, the white cravat untouched, arrayed as by himself for his burial, he was carried to old Midway church; when, after most appropriate, solemn, and tender services by his much loved nephew by marriage, Rev. D. L. Buttolph, D. D., the pastor of the church, he was laid to rest in the venerable cemetery, God's sacred acre, where his own parents and many generations of saints await the coming of the Lord in the clouds.

This memorial cannot be properly closed without an extract from the funeral discourse of Rev. Dr. Buttolph on Jeremiah xlvi. 17, "How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod." He thus speaks:

“Dr. Jones was a man of striking salient points of character. He was born to lead. None came into contact with him, even for a short time, without feeling that he was in the presence of a commanding intellect. His mind was of the first order. He would have succeeded in any chosen sphere. Such were his strength of purpose and resolute will, that difficulties, instead of deterring him from his object, only aroused to increased activity the powers of his extraordinary mind. His judgment seemed almost unerring. Seldom was he compelled to reverse a decision. He was an independent thinker and actor. No man surpassed him in moral courage. He was not afraid of the responsibilities which arose in the path of duty. He feared God only. His acquisitions in knowledge were large, and they were accurate as well as extensive, and always at command. Probably no man ever lived who made a better use of time. He regarded it as a precious talent from God. He was unsparing of himself; he labored diligently to the very close of life, and fell, as he desired, with his harness on.

“Dr. Jones possessed qualities rarely found united in the same person. He was not more the strong staff than the beautiful rod. The stronger and the gentler graces of humanity were combined in him. With his strong will and fearless courage, there was a modesty, humility, and gentleness rarely surpassed. He had a tender heart, alive to every kind and generous emotion. He literally wept with the weeping, and rejoiced with the rejoicing. Blessed with wealth, he regarded all he possessed as treasure loaned by the Lord, and himself as God’s steward. He labored for years in the ministry at his own charges, and gave liberally to the poor and causes of benevolence. His home was the abode of hospitality, and his cordial welcome will never be forgotten. But the pulpit was his appropriate place. His whole appearance in the sacred desk indicated the greatest solemnity and reverence. His subject was always well chosen and digested. He seized the strong points, and presented them with a clearness and simplicity which commanded the attention of the learned and the unlearned. At times, becoming all absorbed with his subject, he would rise

to the highest flights of eloquence. There was also a fervor and unction in his preaching not often equalled."

And we cannot forbear adding the testimony of the Synod in the following utterances at Athens in November, 1863: "As a man, Dr. Jones was a fine example of the Christian gentleman. As a preacher, he was sound, practical, and popular. Few men excelled him in the clearness and power with which he uttered truth, and the earnestness with which he besought men to be reconciled to God. And for the manner in which he fulfilled his special mission to the colored people, his praise is in all the churches, and his name will be had in everlasting remembrance. His ministry was eminently useful, and in his death the Church has sustained a great loss, and by it we are impressively reminded that our best brethren, most talented, useful, and beloved, cannot continue by reason of death."