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## The Presbyterian Church of St. Charles, Missouri. It's Recent History: Strife and Disturbance

George Champlin Sibley

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**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
OF ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI.  
**ITS RECENT HISTORY:**  
**STRIFE AND DISTURBANCE.**

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INTRODUCTION.

A sense of duty constrains the writer to prepare this narrative, after having examined a great mass of testimony; the greater part of which was obtained from the records of the St. Charles and Missouri Presbyteries, and the Synod of Missouri—the facts proven from those records, together with such as he knows he can prove by competent witnesses, and can verify himself from his own knowledge; will form the basis on which he means to found the following story: which it is his purpose to relate as briefly and plainly as he can.

The objects in view are, to collect and preserve the facts touching the unhappy dissention that exists in this church: to arrange and set them forth in their natural order, and to present the whole subject impartially to the understandings of all who are interested in knowing how the truth stands in relation to the parties implicated. And the writer indulges a hope, that he shall thus be able to afford good and sufficient arguments to all those who are immediately concerned, to unite in a firm and consistent course of action, to put an end to this unprofitable contention. For it cannot be disguised or concealed, that the strife and disturbance now prevailing in this church, have a decided tendency to paralise and destroy its legitimate influence, and render it an object of merited reproach—they present to the surrounding multitude, too much evidence, that more exertion is used to make proselytes to the opposing parties, than to the true Religion:

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THE NARRATIVE.

CHAPTER I—*From the death of Mr. Robinson to the invitation of Mr. Gray.*

1. The character of this Church and Congregation for peace and concord having been called in question, makes it proper to commence the narration thus far back. This will be a mere sketch however; sufficient to enable the reader to draw a just inference.

2. The late Rev. Charles S. Robinson, was the last settled minister of the church of St. Charles. He died in September, 1828. There is no evidence that there existed any discord in the church during the ministry of that excellent man. It is testified by several witnesses, that Mr. R. was supposed to have had a theological difference with his brother-in-law, Mr. Lindsay, and that Mr. R. became dissatisfied, and spoke of leaving St. Charles, on account of that difference. Mr. Lindsay himself, testifies however, that there was no such difference; and it is fully proved, that the most intimate friendship subsisted between Mr. R. and Mr. L. during the whole period of Mr. R.'s ministry here.

3. Not long after the death of Mr. Robinson, the Rev. Hiram Chamberlain visited St. Charles, and preached morning and evening: during the interval between the two sermons, Mr. Thomas Lindsay, a Ruling Elder, met Mr. Chamberlain at Dr. Wilson's, where they had some conversation relative to certain doctrines held by Mr. C., which Mr. Lindsay pronounced unsound; and told Mr. C. "that he did not wish him to preach here any more."

4. In April, 1829, an effort was made by Judge Tucker and some others, to introduce Mr. Chamberlain into this church as its minister. A written invitation, signed by twenty-four persons, ten of whom it is believed were members of the church, was presented to Mr. C. requesting him "to locate himself in St. Charles, at least for a season." Mr. Chamberlain refused to accept this invitation, for the reason, as he stated, that Mr. Lindsay and family and the widow of the late Pastor had not joined in it.—The invitation was strenuously opposed by Mr. Lindsay and some others, which induced several of those who had signed it to withdraw their names. It appears from the testimony, that some excitement was produced in the congregation on this subject. Several public meetings were held, and much effort made to overrule Mr. Lindsay's objections to Mr. Chamberlain; but without success. The dispute ended in Mr. C's. refusing to accept the invitation.

5. In the winter 1830, the Rev. George C. Wood accepted an invitation for a year; at the expiration of which, the session did not renew the invitation. A strong desire was manifested however, by a considerable majority of both church and congregation, to retain Mr. Wood another year. This was firmly opposed by two Elders, (Lindsay and Watson,) and fourteen other members; who in a written protest gave as their reasons for opposing the wishes of the majority, that "although we entertain a high regard for Mr. Wood as a Christian brother, and esteem him as a useful and good citizen, we nevertheless feel he is not calculated to do as much good in a place like St. Charles as some other person might be. We do not wish to let our sympathies and partialities blind our judgments and lead us to forget that in choosing a Pastor it is our duty rather to consider who will be most likely 'to turn many to righteousness,' than to consult our own predilections in favor of any individual whatever."

This opposition produced some excited feeling in the church and congregation for a short time; but it was soon calmed, and peace and harmony restored, by the prudent course pursued by Mr. Wood. He knew that it was his duty to retire, and not seek to enter a church, the door of which was closed against him by its sworn guardians; for although the popular clamor demanded admittance for him, he resisted the flattering solicitation; being well aware, that it was the duty of a Presbyterian Minister to rebuke, and not to encourage confusion in the church. Mr. Wood left St. Charles with the esteem of all; by none was he *more* esteemed than those who had, in duty, as they believed, declined to offer him a second invitation. He is now occupying a station for which his talents and habits are suitable, and his labours are believed to be attended with much success in his ministry.

6. After Mr. Wood, came Mr. Hall and Mr. Nichols, in succession; each of whom ministered to the church and congregation by invitation, a year; the last term expiring in the fall of 1834. Nothing occurred during either of their ministrations, that need be noticed in this sketch. They both left the church in peace, and with the esteem of most of its members.

CHAPTER II—*The Rev. F. R. Gray invited.*

1. In October, 1834, the Synod of Missouri held its annual session in St. Charles, and was attended throughout, by an unusual number of ministers. The church of St. Charles, then consisting of near about seventy members, including four Elders and three Deacons: had not yet obtained a minister in place of Mr. Nicholas; and the session was making anxious enquiries for a suitable person. The occasion, (so many ministers being present,) was deemed propitious. The members, and congregation generally, had become very desirous of settling a Pastor; and as it was known that several of the ministers then at St. Charles, were not permanently located, and were at liberty to accept a call, the wish became general, and was frequently expressed, that proper measures should be promptly used, to effect that object. Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Gray, and Mr. Brown, were frequently mentioned as fit persons to invite. Mr. Chamberlain was not a stranger in St. Charles. On a former occasion (See Ch. 1. § 4.) his friends had failed to obtain admission for him, and it was known that the same, and even greater opposition still existed against him. It was therefore deemed altogether unwise and impolitic to hazard the interruption of the harmony and good feeling that then so happily prevailed in the church and congregation, by making any serious proposal to invite Mr. C.; this was the more readily conceded on the part of Mr. C's-particular friends, because it was found that there was an almost perfect unity of sentiment in favor of another.

2. All could unite with entire cordiality, in an invitation to the Rev. F. R. Gray; at least it was satisfactorily ascertained, that there were very few, if any, of the church, who would not very readily waive any predilections they might have for another; and for the sake of harmony join in support of Mr. Gray.

Such was the prevailing sentiment, when the Synod adjourned; and a general meeting was appointed to be held on the 2d day of November, to consummate the united wish of the session, members, and congregation, to call Mr. Gray.

3. The meeting took place according to appointment, and was very well attended. After some desultory enquiries as to the probability of Mr. Gray being willing to come to St. Charles, (of which some doubts had been suggested,) the meeting, on motion; "Resolved that the session be requested to invite the Rev. F. R. Gray to be Pastor of this church."—But before the question was put on this resolution, it was moved to amend, so as to ask the session to invite "Mr. Gray, or some other Minister."—Many present believed at the time, that the mover of this amendment, (who was not a church member,) had it in view to nominate Mr. Chamberlain: and such he has since declared to have been his intention. His motion was not entertained by the meeting, but instantly rejected. The resolution as first moved, was then adopted *nem. con.* Not a breath of opposition to Mr. Gray was publicly manifested at this meeting. No other person was nominated or named. In truth the single purpose for which the meeting was appointed, was to adopt the preliminary formalities for calling Mr. Gray.

4. As it was known that Mr. Gray's engagements at Columbia would prevent his coming to St. Charles before the ensuing May, even if he should accept this invitation; a resolution was adopted to authorise and request the session, to procure some other minister until that time, expressing the wish that Mr. Brown might be procured, or if the session failed in that, to obtain the occasional services of Mr. Lovejoy. Subscriptions were then made, quite liberal, to sustain those resolutions, and there was no rea-

son to doubt, that very ample provision would readily be made in due season.

5. The whole proceedings of this meeting, were conducted with perfect harmony, and with a spirit that evinced an earnest desire that its object might be accomplished. For though some doubts were entertained and expressed, as to the result of the invitation to Mr. Gray, there were none as to the expediency of the application, and its happy effects if successful. And a most reasonable expectation seemed to be indulged by all; that as the little jars that had previously occurred in the church and congregation, were all now entirely quieted. The blessed spirit of peace and concord, was about to exercise its benign influence over our community with unwonted power and effect: And the prospect of much future prosperity in the church, was indeed highly encouraging, and very cheering to the hearts of all those, who felt warmly interested in the Christian cause.

But alas! how bitterly have these expectations and hopes, been disappointed and destroyed.

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CHAPTER III.—*A necessary digression. Mr. Thomas Lindsay, Sen. Ruling Elder.*

1. This venerated servant of the church, occupies so conspicuous a place in its history, and has been so frequently mentioned in connection with the unfortunate contention that has arisen since the invitation of Mr. Gray; that it is due to him, as well as to the subject in hand; that the reader should know something more about him; or, to speak more properly, that those concerned in the "strife and disturbance" about to be detailed, should be reminded of the nature of his connection with this church; of his high obligations to preserve its Presbyterian character, and of theirs to co-operate with him in all his legitimate endeavors to that end. This appears to be the more necessary; because a great deal of the blame of "disturbing the peace of the church of St. Charles," has been imputed to Mr. Lindsay.

2. It appears from the recorded testimony, referred to in the introduction, that Mr. Lindsay is by some thought to be too rigid—by others not enough so. By one, exceedingly intolerant; by another, much the reverse. It is complained of him by some, that he is too fond of exerting his power as a ruling Elder; by others, that he is very remiss in this particular—by some that he acts too little, and by *the same*, that he acts too much. These contradictory complaints are found throughout the testimony introduced by Mr. Chamberlain. Nearly all the *same* witnesses *agree* however, in testifying that Mr. Lindsay possesses a most thorough knowledge of, and experience in church matters, and the most exemplary piety—that he is esteemed as "the Father of the church of St. Charles;" and has always manifested great devotedness to its spiritual welfare; and *all agree* in according to him perfect integrity of purpose in all things.

3. The chief object of so much testimony concerning Mr. Lindsay, appears to have been, to prove his inflexible adherence to his own views, as to essential church interests; even when opposed by considerable majorities; and the great complaint seems to have been, that *in such cases*, his views have generally prevailed. To break down this influence, which it was said that Mr. Lindsay had too long held over this church, especially in its choice of a minister; was a favorite object in the early part of 1835, with a few individuals who had then but recently become members; and it is believed that the strenuous efforts to effect that object have, more than any thing else, produced the strife and disturbance, that have so

greatly injured this church, and blighted the fair prospects it had in view at the close of the year 1834.

4. Whether the age, experience, long residence, high christian character, and acknowledged faithfulness as one of the constitutional guardians of the church of St. Charles, entitle Mr. Lindsay to the confidence and *deference* of the junior and newly admitted members, especially in the election of a Pastor: all those concerned must decide for themselves, in the fear of God and their consciences. The suggestion will naturally arise in every candid mind, how much more safely the inexperienced wayfarer may submit to the guidance of long known and long tried friends and brothers, than to strangers.

Mr. Lindsay is well and extensively known, as a learned, experienced, old and devoted christian. His views and opinions on church matters, and the interests of religion, are certainly entitled to much respect. If he is firm and inflexible in adherence to his deliberate convictions of duty as a ruling Elder; never swerving to the right hand or to the left, to secure any man's favor, or to avert any man's frown; it is very well known, that in his ordinary intercourse with mankind, he possesses much of the "milk of human kindness."

5. Although there is no evidence of a deliberate design to injure this venerable Patriarch of our little church, except as stated in § 3, yet it cannot be denied, that the tendency of the effort to destroy his official influence, *however righteous that effort may have been in itself*, has been to lessen his usefulness in some degree, and in a far greater measure to injure the Holy cause to which he has been so long and faithfully devoted. This effort, though it *may* have been intended for good; being essentially an irregular procedure, has without doubt, produced confusion; the natural concomitants of which, are strife and disturbance. What follows of this narrative, will serve to set forth more in detail, the progress of the mischief alluded to; and peradventure its authors and fomenters may also be discovered, and presented to the reader.

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#### CHAPTER IV.—*Mr. Chamberlain comes to St. Charles. The disturbance begins.*

1. Mr. Chamberlain came to St. Charles early in January, 1835, on his way, it was said, to Memphis, in Tennessee. He preached in the Methodist Chapel on Sunday the 4th day of that month, and on the same day a proposition was circulated to engage him as a temporary supply, under the second resolution of the meeting of the 2d November, (see Chap. II. § 4.) it being understood that Mr. Brown could not come, and there was but little expectation of getting Mr. Lovejoy. The proposal to invite Mr. Chamberlain to preach about six weeks, was favorably received by many; probably the greater number of those who heard it. He was desired by some of the Elders, Mr. Lindsay not concurring, to remain and preach the next Sabbath, which he agreed to do. This request was made in compliance with the wish of some half dozen members of the church. Meanwhile there was considerable effort made by a few of Mr. Chamberlain's particular friends, to induce a general concurrence in the proposition already spoken of, to invite Mr. C. to stay and preach six weeks; and it was understood that the subject would be submitted to the congregation on the coming Sabbath. Previous to the arrival of that day, the rumor had gone abroad, that Mr. Chamberlain would not consent to remain six weeks, unless there was a probability of his being invited for a year, or as the sat-

ted Pastor, at the expiration of the six weeks; and the report was by many believed. In fact, it was by most persons considered, that it was by no means the ultimate object of Mr. C's. friends to invite him here for six weeks only.

2. It will, no doubt, strike every candid reader, that it was manifestly indelicate, not to say improper, to think of presenting to *any* one an invitation for a permanent location, or even for six months; before any definite answer had been received from Mr. Gray: especially as the contemplated movement in favor of Mr. Chamberlain, was not predicated on the contingency of Mr. Gray's refusal. Under such circumstances, it would seem perfectly reasonable to expect opposition from the session to the proposed measure, even though there had been no other objections to Mr. C.

3. On the appointed Sabbath, (11th January,) the congregation attended Mr. Chamberlain's preaching. The so much talked of *election* had no small influence in drawing many there. The sermon was appropriate to the occasion; having for its leading object, to caution the hearers; and especially such as were to take part in the election, against the influence of prejudice. The subject of the proposed election was unexpectedly postponed 'till afternoon; when there were much fewer of the people assembled. After the sermon, "the congregation was called, and Hugh H. Wardlaw was called to the chair. On motion it was resolved that the session be instructed to secure the services of Mr. Chamberlain, for at least five or six weeks."

4. The above resolution was opposed: but it passed by a small majority; several persons voting on both sides, who were not entitled to vote.— Only about twenty-six members of the church were present; of whom it is believed 14 voted in the affirmative. Mr. Chamberlain accepted the above invitation, which was announced to him on the day following by two of the Elders, Messrs. Lindsay and Watson, refusing to participate in the measure.

5. It will be seen that the invitation for six weeks, which Mr. Chamberlain signified his acceptance of, on the 15th of January; was sanctioned by the votes of about *fourteen* members and *two* Elders of the church, and opposed by about *fourteen* other members, including the two senior Elders. And it ought to be borne in mind, that the church of St. Charles then numbered *fifty-nine* white, and *eleven* coloured members.

6. In about two weeks after Mr. Chamberlain had thus identified himself with *this* procedure; *another* project was set on foot by some of his friends; the avowed object of which, was to establish him as *Pastor* of this church. With this view a petition was addressed to the session, requesting "to convene the congregation on the third Sabbath in February for the purpose of holding an election in favor of Rev. H. Chamberlain as Pastor of this church."

7. It appears that Mr. Alex. B. Campbell, one of the elders, used much exertion to procure signatures to this petition; resorting to certain expedients which, to say the least of them, were disengenuous and unfair.— And it also appears that Mr. Chamberlain himself exerted an influence not strictly justifiable, in the premises. The result of all this effort, was *fifty-six* subscribers in all; *thirty-three* of whom were church members, only *twenty-five* of the latter number were, it is believed, members of *this* church. So that *twenty-five* of the *fifty-nine* white members of the church of St. Charles, including one elder, with *thirty-one* others, not members, constituted the true force of the petition. A force that seems to have been quite respectable. The petition itself, was in its language, decorous and respectful.

8. As might have been reasonably expected; this attempt to introduce Mr. Chamberlain into the church as its Pastor, created no little agitation

in its bosom; and quickly excited much unpleasant feeling throughout its bounds. Mr. C. was warned by two of the Elders, Lindsay and Watson, that he could not enter through the session; that many members were decidedly opposed to him; that if he persisted he would cause much strife and trouble, and destroy the peace of the church; and finally advised him to desist, and leave the place. At first it was hoped that Mr. C. would pursue this course; as he had on several occasions, whilst these agitations were commencing, declared himself to be "*too good a Presbyterian to enter the church except through the door of the session.*" But he seems to have been influenced subsequently, by other considerations; for on one occasion, when the invitation to Mr. Gray and pledge of the church to support *him*, was mentioned to Mr. C. as a reason why he ought not to expect any thing like a cordial reception and support; he replied, that he had been told that if he would remain, a good salary would be made up for him, and no more be said about Mr. Gray.

9. The session could not in good faith comply with the request of the petitioners; because they were in actual negotiation with Mr. Gray, in obedience to the unanimous resolution of the November meeting; and had reason to hope for his acceptance. Besides, the whole proceeding was considered as rather disorderly, and entirely uncalled for by the actual condition of the church; and it was deemed utterly hopeless *ever* to unite the church under Mr. Chamberlain; and little less than a wanton act of discourtesy towards Mr. Gray; and of ruin to our peace, to attempt it.

10. For these reasons, the session declined calling the meeting requested in the petition; three of the four elders concurring. The other elder, Campbell, took it upon himself, however, to appoint the meeting, as in compliance with the petition, and invited Rev. Mr. Potts, of St. Louis, to assist as Moderator. The day came, 22d February, and the meeting took place as notified. Rev. Mr. Potts having declined being present, Mr. Cayce was invited to the chair, and B. R. Wardlaw acted as Secretary. The object of the meeting having been announced by the Chairman "to elect Rev. H. Chamberlain Pastor," &c., Mr. Thomas Lindsay, Sen., presented a protest signed by himself, Mr. Black, and Mr. Watson, Elders, and Mr. Copes and Mr. Jordan, Deacons, remonstrating against the proceeding as tending to destroy the peace of the church, being "in opposition to the known wishes of the undersigned, who are sworn guardians and protectors of the spiritual and temporal interests, order and well being of said church; and also in opposition to the opinion and wishes of twenty, or more, of its members. We also enter our protest against the means already resorted to, to procure the names of members to a subscription for the purposes aforesaid, and against all means that are decided upon or may be decided upon by a part of the members, to force Mr. Chamberlain into the Presbyterian church of St. Charles, contrary, as we believe to the peace and union of this church."

11. The protest of the session produced some warm discussion; but the objections were overruled by a majority of voices; and when the main question was put, (the record says) "Mr. Chamberlain was *unanimously* chosen Pastor of this church for one year, *so far as any voice was expressed.*" Although there were several present who warmly supported the views of the session, and tried to dissuade the conductors of the meeting from their purpose; they declined any further participation in the proceedings. When the final vote was put, there was no negative voice heard. Several persons voted, who were not members of *any* church: and some church members voted, who were not of *this* church. It is believed to be impracticable now, to ascertain with exact certainty, how many members *proper* were present on that occasion, or how many of those who *were*



there voted for Mr. Chamberlain. The witnesses differ widely as to this fact. Some *think* Mr. C. had a *large* majority of the church: others *believe* he had *not* the majority. Mr. Emmons *supposes* there was a large majority, tho' he says "the number of votes for Mr. C. was not counted." This *supposition* is not at all concurred in by Mr. Alex. B. Campbell, who from the active and prominent part he is known to have borne in the whole affair from first to last, may justly be considered the most intelligent witness. He testifies that he *does not think* a majority of all the members voted, though he *knows* there was a majority present; and he says further, that he *thinks* all those who signed the petition did *not* vote for Mr. C.; that one or two of them did *not he thinks*. Allowing Mr. Campbell's testimony on this point, to be pretty well founded, it would seem that about *twenty-four* members *proper* voted for Mr. Chamberlain. Which number is less by *six*, than a majority of all the white members belonging to the church of St. Charles at that time. There appears to be yet better ground for the belief, that of those who voted on that occasion for Mr. C., not over *twenty-two* were members of this church. After much enquiry, the writer is of the opinion that this is the nearest approximation to the truth of the matter, ever to be reasonably expected.

12. It is proper here to state, that Mr. Chamberlain was absent from St. Charles when the election took place; having shortly before gone up to Franklin.

Meanwhile, the session was in correspondence with Mr. Gray. In one of their letters to him, they urged him to accept the invitation of the church, and expressed much apprehension that if he did not, Mr. Chamberlain would probably settle in St. Charles; and if he did, the peace of the church would be entirely destroyed. Mr. B. R. Wardlaw, who was the bearer of this letter, "substantiated its contents to some considerable extent," as Mr. Gray testifies; and when Mr. Wardlaw returned to St. Charles, he expressed the opinion, that Mr. Gray would accept the invitation. On the 18th February, Mr. Gray wrote to the session that he had not yet decided whether to accept or not, but soon would.

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#### CHAPTER V—*Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Gray.—New Elders.—Mr. Chamberlain accepts, &c.*

1. Such was the condition of these affairs when Mr. Chamberlain went up to Franklin. Soon after his arrival at that place, he had an interview with Mr. Gray at the tavern where Mr. C. boarded. Mr. Chamberlain introduced conversation by asking Mr. G. if he had heard that he, Mr. C. had been supplanting him at St. Charles? which led to a long conversation between them; in the course of which, Mr. Chamberlain told Mr. Gray, that there was opposition made when his, Mr. Gray's name was put in nomination at the St. Charles meeting, in November, 1834. That to him, Mr. C., there were but *three* opposed in fact, in sentiment; but that there were *ten* others, who under the influence of those three would act against him. That if he, Gray, or any other minister could unite that people, he, Mr. C., would say go, with all his heart. That if he, Mr. G., went to St. Charles on the invitation authorised by the November meeting, there would be opposition to him the same as there would to him, Mr. G., or any one else. That he felt it to be his duty to apprise Mr. Gray of the state of things in St. Charles, in case he should have any thought of going there.

2. It is not unreasonable to suppose that such remarks as these, coming from a brother minister fresh from the field of which he draws so forbidding a picture, should have considerable influence on the mind of a young minister whose great repugnance to an atmosphere of strife and disturbance was well known. Whether they were *intended* to deter Mr. Gray from accepting the invitation to St. Charles, or actually *did* deter him, is not clearly in evidence. It is certain however, that he soon afterwards determined *not* to accept the invitation; and it is also certain, that Mr. Chamberlain was entirely mistaken as to every material fact touching "the state of things in St. Charles," as stated in his conversation with Mr. Gray, in the last paragraph. True it is, that Mr. C. had but recently left the church and congregation of St. Charles in no little confusion; but the proof is perfectly clear, that it was produced by his own unaccountable conduct in allowing himself to be a candidate for the pastoral office, knowing, as he certainly must, that Mr. Gray had been *previously* invited to the same office by the united voice of session, church and congregation; and that he had not yet, (even at the time of Mr. C's. interview with him at Franklin,) communicated to the session his final answer, whether he would accept or not. Mr. C. surely must have known, early in January, that there was a very great and decided opposition to *him* at St. Charles; and before he went up to Franklin, in February, he must have been perfectly well aware, that three of the four elders, two of the deacons and at least *twenty* of the members of the church *besides*, were irreconcilably opposed to him. And it is the natural inference from these facts, that Mr. Chamberlain's withdrawal from a place where his presence produced so much strife, was his reasonable and plain course: leaving "the state of things in St. Charles" as he found them, in a perfect unity of sentiment towards Mr. Gray, who was undoubtedly the minister most likely, under God, to build up this church in union and christian fellowship. Those who may have *misled* Mr. C. into the palpable error and unfortunate course that he adopted, have had abundant cause to mourn over the effects of their ill judged advice; although some of them may not even yet, be convinced of their own mistaken views.

3. Although Mr. Chamberlain manifested so much solicitude lest Mr. Gray should be misled by what the session had assured him was the unanimous wish of the church and congregation, as expressed at the meeting in November, (see Chap. II.) and find himself amidst strife and confusion if *he* went to St. Charles, without any reasonable hope that *he* would be able "to unite that people;" it appears that he himself determined, about that time, to make the essay. On the morning of the 7th March, he received (in a letter from Mr. A. B. Campbell of the 2d.) an account of the proceedings of the meeting of 22d February, and on the same day wrote to Mr. Campbell, authorising him to give *public notice*, that he would "visit the church of St. Charles again in a few weeks, for the purpose, as he tells Mr. C., of "preaching the Gospel of Peace," and of justifying *himself*."

4. The record goes on to say (in connection with the meeting in February) "accordingly, on the 17th day of April, Mr. Chamberlain arrived, and on Sabbath the 25th of April, at the request of Mr Campbell, only acting elder, a meeting of the church was called, after the morning service; and on motion, Rev. H. Chamberlain was called to the chair, and B. R. Wardlaw appointed Secretary. The two following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—"Whereas, three members of the existing session of this church, have refused to act when petitioned by a majority of the church and congregation, Therefore, resolved; that it is expedient to call a public meeting, for the purpose of electing one or more ruling elders of this church. Resolved, that public notice be given, that such a

meeting will be held on the 2d Sabbath in May, immediately after the morning service, and a general attendance be requested."

Although it is thus set forth, (the record is exactly and fully quoted,) that these resolutions were *unanimously* adopted at a meeting of the church, convened after the morning service, at the request of Mr. Campbell, *only* acting elder; at which meeting, Rev. H. Chamberlain presided; and although the actual proceedings of the meeting are, no doubt, correctly given as above copied from the report of Mr. Wardlaw; yet it is obviously proper, in order to correct any erroneous impressions that the *language* of the record may produce, as to the true character of the meeting, to add a few words of explanation. The writer has no idea that any deception was actually intended; but is very clearly of opinion that the construction of the document in question, is such as might lead many into error on a very important point in this history, and this opinion is sustained by the fact, that in about two weeks after the adoption of the resolutions, Mr. Chamberlain and his little party did undisguisedly assume to be the "Presbyterian church of St. Charles:" which assumption, whether designed or not, is very plainly to be *inferred* from the record of the little meeting on the 26th April; so that without this explanation, those not apprised of the real facts, might most naturally fall into the mistake that the resolutions to elect one or more new elders, were the offspring of a *general meeting of the church*; when in truth they were sanctioned by only a few members, who had been persuaded to withdraw themselves from the session, and to support Mr. Chamberlain, contrary to their advice and earnest remonstrances. This meeting of "*the church*" consisted of less than a *third* part of its members, and among the absentees were *three* of the *four* elders, and *two* of the *three* deacons; and those who assented to the resolutions, as well as those who proposed them, knew that they were acting contrary to the wishes of the session, and a large number *besides*, of their fellow members. The allegations, that Mr. Campbell was then the *only* acting elder of the church, and that "three members of the existing session" had "refused to act when petitioned by a majority of the church and congregation," are also very far from being correct. Messrs. Lindsay, Watson and Black, were still acting elders as well as Mr. Campbell. Nor had they refused to act when petitioned by a majority, &c. For though no such petition was ever presented to *them*, (so they aver,) yet the record, as certified by Mr. Wardlaw, shows that they *did* act in relation to the very petition referred to. (See Cha. IV. § 10.) It is indeed true that their action was in opposition to the views of the petitioners, for reasons which they considered good and sufficient in the premises; and which their duty as the sworn guardians of the church forbade them to disregard; so they declare. If they erred in this; if they were bound by the sacred obligations of their office, to do the *specific bidding* of a portion, even of *any* portion of the flock of their charge, contrary to their own solemn convictions of their duty; even *then* the refusal to act, could not subject them under the law of the church, to the censure of *such* a tribunal as the "*meeting of the church*" on the 27th of April' appears to have

been. In such case they were amenable to the Presbytery of St. Charles only.

5. The systematic exertions of Mr. Alexander B. Campbell, and other active friends of Mr. Chamberlain, to settle him as Pastor at St. Charles; and the evident desire of that individual to meet their views, appear to have been greatly embarrassed by the invitation previously given to Mr. Gray, and the decided opposition of the Session. When the first of these obstacles was removed, there still remained the other in full force. Mr. Chamberlain had so often declared his "sound Presbyterian" principles, which he said would prevent his attempting to enter this church except through the door of the Session, that on his arrival at St. Charles on the 17th April, from Franklin, (after his interview with Mr. Gray) his friends still found it impracticable to introduce him, consistently with his well known scruples. The door was closed, and those who alone could open it, persisted in refusing him admittance. In this perplexing emergency, Mr. Alex. B. Campbell, as he testifies himself, conceived "the scheme of electing new Elders," and immediately communicated it to "several members," telling them "that if they were determined to persevere in maintaining their rights, they must elect some to assist him, that he could not stand alone." This "scheme" it is proper to say, Mr. Campbell claims as wholly his own device, and it does not appear that any of those who assisted in its accomplishment, were ever disposed to question his right thereto. In justice to Mr. Campbell it should also be stated, that he denies it to have been the particular object of his "scheme" to open a door for the reception of Mr. Chamberlain, though he admits, that it was designed for that among other objects. Having been revealed to the "several members," proper measures were taken on the next Sabbath, 26th April, to carry it into effect, as has been related in §4. There is no evidence that Mr. Chamberlain countenanced or approved of these proceedings, except his participation in them as chairman of the "meeting of the church." If he had disapproved of them, however, it seems reasonable enough to conclude, that the influence of his expressed dissent would have suppressed the 'scheme' even in its first conception.

6. Between the 26th April and the 10th May, the day appointed for the election of new elders, much dissatisfaction was openly manifested, not only in "the church" proper, but among those who had joined Mr. Chamberlain. To many of the latter "the scheme" was very objectionable. It seemed to be carrying opposition to the session beyond all proper bounds—much farther than they had ever thought of proceeding. They now discovered that the creation of a new session to act independently of the old existing session, was the main object of Mr. Campbell's "scheme," and that through this new door Mr. Chamberlain was to be introduced into the church as Pastor, regardless of all opposition on the part of the session proper, and those who were still united under their rightful guardianship. The proposed measure was warmly remonstrated against, as highly disorderly and unlawful; but in vain. Mr. Campbell and his associates entertained different views, and determined to persevere; earnestly entreating their followers to adhere to them through

the critical emergence, to which they now found themselves reduced.—These entreaties were in several instances unavailing, and in some others, they were with very great reluctance complied with. Of course they were addressed only to such as had formerly been favorably inclined towards Mr. Chamberlain; as the scheme was not deemed a very likely one to make proselytes. At least six of Mr. Chamberlain's adherents, abandoned him at this time, and several others refused to act in the approaching election. With Mr. Chamberlain it appears to have been highly desirable to obtain certain individuals to be of the new session. It is known that with one very worthy member, he used earnest and oft-repeated persuasions to get his consent to serve as one of the new Elders; and that he could not prevail over his great reluctance, by the assurance that if he did not consent, he, Mr. C. would be compelled to leave St. Charles.

7. The reader is now invited to the record, as certified by Mr. Wardlaw, commencing where the quotation in § 4 concluded. It thus proceeds:—“And accordingly on the 2d Sabbath in May, a meeting of the church was convened. Mr. Chamberlain being called to the chair, and B. R. Wardlaw appointed Secretary. On the vote being taken, it was ascertained that Mr. P. Cayce, Mr. Spencer and B. R. Wardlaw were unanimously chosen. The following resolution was also passed. Resolved, that the Rev. Mr. Chamberlain be requested to proceed to the ordination of the Elders elect immediately after the morning service. Mr. Spencer's ordination was postponed for a time, on account of his not having letters of dismission from the Jacksonville church, Illinois. After an appropriate sermon, Messrs. Cayce and Wardlaw were duly set apart to the office of Ruling Elders, as directed in the form of Government, chapter “13.” This is the whole of Mr. Wardlaw's record of the proceedings of the appointed meeting of “the church” on the 10th day of May. From other testimony it appears that there were but very few members of the church concerned in the election—the proceedings of the meeting were altogether unopposed at the time, by any one present; those who participated in the election of the three new elders, including the chairman, did not exceed twenty persons; and of those some were not members of the church of St. Charles. On the very next day “the Session met at the house of Hugh H. Wardlaw. Present, A. B. Campbell, Mr. Cayce and B. R. Wardlaw—opened with prayer—A written application was then made to Mr. Chamberlain to become our stated supply for the ensuing year, to which he returned an affirmative answer, and took his seat as moderator of the Session. Resolved, that Mrs. Barbara Eversole be received to this church by letter from Boonville church—closed with prayer.” The “written application” here mentioned, was expressly predicated on the proceedings of the meeting of February 22d; and states, that three members of the Session and two of the Deacons, protested against the admission of Mr. Chamberlain—the application is dated May 11th, 1835, and is signed, B. R. Wardlaw, A. B. Campbell, P. Cayce, who style themselves Ruling Elders of the church of St. Charles.

It will doubtless occur to the attentive reader, and produce surprise, how promptly Mr. Chamberlain availed himself of the *new door* that was in *appearance* thrown open to him, to enter the church: overlooking as it would seem, the *very material fact*, clearly disclosed in the “written application,” that the Session, even admitting Messrs. Cayce and Wardlaw to be legitimate members, had not yet assented to his reception: there being an equal division of the six Elders; and consequently a *negative* decision. The course that Mr. Chamberlain so promptly adopted on the 11th May, can only be accounted for *rationaly*, on the supposition that he had ceased to regard Messrs. Lindsay, Watson and Black as members of the

session, and that the recent election of Messrs. Cayce, Spencer and Wardlaw as elders, superceded the old session, except Mr. Campbell, who was not opposed to him. The other newly chosen elder, Mr. Spencer, it must be recollected, had not yet been ordained; in fact was still a member of a church in Illinois, and was not qualified to act as an elder, even in accordance with Mr. Chamberlain's new construction of Presbyterian law, until the 20th of September following. It is not intended to say here, that Mr. Chamberlain *did* consider the three old elders superceded by the election of the new ones; or that he *then* considered them in any manner *out of office*—there is no *positive* evidence to that effect. But the conclusion is irresistible that if Mr. C. considered them *in office* on the 11th May, 1835, he acted very inconsistently with his former views of *sound Presbyterianism*, as expressed to several of the witnesses, which forbade him to enter the church except through the door of the session; unless he considered his own vote as moderator of his new session, the legitimate and fit instrument wherewith to open that door.

8. It is true, that *subsequently* to the 11th May, (to wit: on the 22d October of the same year,) Mr. Chamberlain in his appeal to the General Assembly does assert that the three elders, Lindsay, Watson and Black, by *abandoning* their fellow, Campbell, and opposing his, Mr. C's. entrance into the church, "had broken themselves off, and had thrown themselves out of the pale of the church," and that by their act of protest at the meeting of 22d February, 1835, (see Chap. IV. § 9, 10, 11,) "they did virtually throw themselves out of their official relation to the church, until they should be brought back by the strong arm of ecclesiastical law, or with subdued feelings voluntarily return to act their part as their own sense of duty might dictate." These are reasons that Mr. Chamberlain thinks proper to assign in his appeal to the General Assembly why he "entered the only official door of the church, without stopping to enquire what had become of those who had broken themselves off," &c. The strong language in which the three "recusant" elders are rebuked by Mr. C., if not threatened, as above quoted from his appeal, altho' it was written after he came into *office and power* through the "*only door*," &c., will probably appear to the candid reader, rather presumptuous; when informed, that by the previous decisions of Presbytery and Synod, (certainly entitled to *some* respect,) the official acts of these same elders were substantially sustained, and they recognised as the session of the church of St. Charles; whilst Mr. Chamberlain's "*only official door*" was by those tribunals declared no door at all, and Mr. C. himself advised and requested to leave St. Charles, inasmuch as the election of his new elders was "*irregular and void*" and his invitation thro' them "*irregular*."—With the full knowledge of these decisions (altho' he had appealed from them to the General Assembly,) it was, to say the least of it, rather *lofty* in Mr. C, to pronounce a sort of excommunication against the *recognised session*; so far at least as the deliberate judgment of himself and *his new session*, might go. The more than half threat of applying to those offending elders "*the strong arm of ecclesiastical law*" unless they *return* to their duty, is indeed indicative of a lofty, not to say proud spirit. The *return* to duty, Mr. C. plainly gives to understand, as *his* meaning, consists in recognising Mr. Campbell's "*scheme*," and associating with him and the newly elected elders as "*the session*." And this submission of *three to one*, is thus deliberately proposed to be enforced, under the peculiar circumstances that have been detailed; by those who are such strenuous champions of the rights of majorities. Into such strange inconsistencies are even the best of men often tempted, by the inordinate pursuit of a favorite *scheme*. Unfortunately for Mr. Chamberlain and his

new elders, they were forced upon the expedient of outlawing the three refractory members of the existing session, in order to avoid the palpable delicacy of making Mr. C. cast his own vote as moderator of the new session, in favor of his own admission, and that too by anticipation of the right to vote.

CHAPTER VI.—*Complaints, decisions and appeals—events up to February, 1836.*

1. On the 2d of April, 1835, a memorial was addressed to the Presbytery of St. Charles, signed by Thomas Lindsay, James H. Black, and S. S. Watson, elders, and Thomas P. Copes and Eliza H. Jordan, deacons, of the Presbyterian church of St. Charles; complaining against Mr. Chamberlain, that he was attempting "to settle over this congregation as its Pastor, against the wishes of a very large and respectable minority (if indeed it be a minority) of the private members of said church, and its officers. Mr. Chamberlain was early admonished that there existed obstacles to his location over this church that could not be overcome, and was kindly and affectionately, we believe in a truly christian spirit, entreated to desist from his purpose, not only by private christians in our own and other churches, but by his brethren in the ministry." The memorial also states that "to all these entreaties, motives and principles, urged seriously upon his consideration, he (Mr. C.) has chosen to remain deaf."—And it further represents, "that the harmony, peace, and christian affection heretofore so happily existing in this church and amongst its members, has unfortunately for some time past, been materially interrupted and destroyed. That an unhappy excitement prevails to such an alarming degree, as to threaten the very existence of our church, and that our members are now divided in sentiment to a very fearful extent." This document, which is pretty long, attributes the disorders that had grown up in the church at St. Charles, to Mr. Chamberlain's perseverance in trying to force himself on said church as its minister when so large a portion of its members and officers had signified to him such decided opposition.—

And again, on the 28th April, Messrs. Lindsay, Watson and Black addressed another communication to the Presbytery complaining of the further proceedings of Mr. Chamberlain and his party, especially the intended election of new elders on the second Sabbath in May. In this letter they say that the conduct of Mr. C. and his party has "ruined our prospects of getting Mr. Gray or any one else. The old and most efficient members stand firm with the session, and never can receive Mr. Chamberlain as their Pastor—the whole proceedings are of such a character, as almost to exceed belief—our church is evidently all broken to pieces, and a spirit infused which we fear will not be easily if ever healed. Mr. Chamberlain and his party have carried things too far we fear to stop, and unless we can get speedy and efficient help from your body the consequences will be dreadful. You may have it to record, "We once had a Presbyterian church in St. Charles." The church and the party act distinctly. Few, or none, who support good order, and have stood firm by the session, go to hear Mr. Chamberlain. We were very unwilling to trouble the Presbytery with our grievances, and could hardly believe that any minister of Jesus Christ, alive to his duty and the interests of our Redeemer's Kingdom, could ever think of forcing himself in upon us under such circumstances; and we cannot think that the Presbytery will ever suffer such breaches to be committed with impunity within their bounds." Such

is the nature of the complaint addressed by the session of St. Charles church, to the Presbytery of St. Charles; and on which they asked for relief and protection.

2. The Presbytery it appears was specially convened by the moderator, with the concurrence of George C. Wood and Cyrus Nicholas, ministers, and David Clark and A. O. Nash, elders, for the purpose of considering the case presented in the memorial and sundry documents from the elders of the church of St. Charles. Its meeting took place at Greenfield on the 5th June, 1835. Rev. David Nelson, moderator, Geo. C. Wood and Sam'l. C. McConnel, ministers; Joseph Lafon, Thomas Lindsay, John McAfee and James F. Mahan, elders. The memorial and documents were read, and the testimony of Messrs. Lindsay, Black and Copes (witnesses present) was heard, and then the Presbytery adjourned to meet the next day at 4 P. M. Met according to adjournment, present as on yesterday. Brethren, George Slaven and S. M. Grant, appeared and took their seats as members. The Presbytery having duly considered the case, passed the following acts declaratory, and then adjourned.

It was "Resolved, that members in full communion vote for their Pastors and officers, and that such only receive the censures of the church." "That a respectable minority should never be coerced by the majority, in any case, unless reasons exist which are vital and insurmountable. We should consider a third or a fourth part of a church, a respectable minority. During the prosecution of a call, the presiding minister, to prevent coercion of minority, should interpose timely and earnest dissuasion. We should suppose that the spirit in the bosom of the Ambassador of Peace which urges dissuasion must at the same time prohibit his acceptance of a call to a contested field. It seems to us that nothing short of actual incarceration of body would detain a minister like Paul, on litigated ground. Persecution from the world is to be sustained and disregarded; but conscientious opposition from God's covenant people, is a voice of a different tone. We have been unable to hear of the calling of any assembly, or the election of any officers which has been done (as seems to us) in compliance with the Presbyterian rule, and in strict conformity to our discipline.— That this Presbytery do, in the fear of God, earnestly request Mr. Chamberlain to retire from the troubled region; and moreover, that they do not recognise his act in electing new elders."

3. On Sabbath, June 14," says the record, "immediately after the morning service, Mr. Chamberlain presented to the congregation of St. Charles, the act of the Presbytery of St. Charles, of June 6, received by him June 11. The session presented to the congregation an appeal from said act for their consideration. Whereupon, it was resolved," &c.

It appears that when Mr. Chamberlain presented the act of the Presbytery to "*the congregation of St. Charles*" and when the session presented an appeal from said act for their consideration, that Mr. C. commented largely and severely on the several decisions of that body, and the testimony on which they were founded; complaining of injustice and oppression to himself and the church and congregation. That after he had made an end of speaking, the congregation consented to sundry resolutions declarative of the general views presented by Mr. Chamberlain in his speech, especially the determination "to adhere to, and maintain the principles by which we were governed in the election of our present Pastor, and the additional officers of this church;" and concluding thus:—"Therefore, resolved, that we appeal, and authorise the officers of this church, Messrs. Cayce, Campbell and Wardlaw, a committee to prepare in due form, and forward in due time, an appeal to the Synod of Missouri."



4. "The congregation of St. Charles," present on this occasion, was by no means numerous. A considerable portion were mere lookers on, attracted by the novelty of the scene, and took no part whatever in the proceedings. Very few, except church members, thought themselves entitled to interfere in Mr. Chamberlain's controversy with the Presbytery; and several of those members who joined in passing the resolutions, were not entitled to vote as members of the church of St. Charles. The scene exhibited, was of such a character, as to strike many of the auditors with pain and surprise; for though all the proceedings were in themselves orderly, there existed a feeling of repugnance, to some extent, to the transaction of *such business* on the Sabbath day—a day which should (as the writer humbly conceives,) be wholly appropriated by every minister and congregation to the preaching and hearing the Gospel of Peace, to the utter exclusion of secular business, and especially such as might be expected to rouse the passions and foment strife and controversy among professing Christians.

5. The appeal is dated the same day, (14th June) and is signed "in behalf of the congregation," by Alex. B. Campbell, P. Cayce and B. R. Wardlaw; who style themselves "The ruling elders, and authorised representatives of a large and respectable majority of the church of St. Charles." The document, which is of considerable length, is believed to have been drawn up by Mr. Chamberlain himself: it is certain that he has recognised as his own, its reasoning and general tenor and design, in a separate note addressed by him, on the same day, to the Synod. Every position assumed by the Presbytery in their declaratory act, is controverted in this appeal. The act is earnestly and solemnly complained of as being "most unjust and oppressive in its bearing on this society, and on the labors of a loved and cherished ambassador of Christ," and as having for its design to injure a minister of the Gospel and his supporters."—The appellants complain that they were *tried* and condemned on *ex parte* testimony, and that they were not notified of the *trial*, and had no opportunity of defence. That the decision of the Presbytery is "founded in mistake and injustice," which they, the appellants could have proved, if they had been allowed a hearing. This appeal contains some very severe reflections upon the session of St. Charles, and those who support their authority; charging against *them*, that though a *minority*, they had for several years imposed on them, the appellants, "an oppressive yoke," which they could bear no longer—that they had been guilty of misrepresentation, slander and forgery, and exercised unwarrantable power."

Such is Mr. Chamberlain's appeal to the Synod. It is to be regretted exceedingly, that *such* a paper, so charged with angry vituperation and bitter recrimination, should ever have been sanctioned by "an ambassador of Christ" and submitted on the Sabbath day to his waiting congregation for their approval. Who can for a moment doubt the deleterious influence of such "preaching of the Gospel of Peace," (see Chap. V. § 3.) in a community where the torch of discord and strife had been already thrown?

6. The stated meeting of the Presbytery of St. Charles took place at Salem Grove, on the 9th day of October, 1835. "In relation to the St. Charles difficulties," the following is recorded:—"The Presbytery having learned with deep regret, that the difficulties in the church of St. Charles still continue to exist, and with no prospect (as long as the present causes of strife continue there) of being restored to peace; Resolved, 1st. that the Rev. Hiram Chamberlain be, and is hereby required to cease his ministrations among that people. 2d. That the disaffected members of said church be affectionately recommended to return to the watch and care of

the existing session. If they have any grievances they be advised to apply to the constitutional authority of the church for redress. 3d. That the session be and are hereby directed to take such constitutional steps as they may deem necessary to restore peace and order to the church.—4th. That the stated clerk furnish a copy of the resolutions to the elders of said church, to be read to its members as soon as practicable, in some public meeting. Also, that he furnish Rev. H. Chamberlain with a copy of them.”

7. The Synod of Missouri held its annual session at Marion College from the 15th to the 21st October 1835, inclusive. The appeal of Mr. Chamberlain and his elders, coming up for consideration, was “dismissed as informal, and unconstitutionally made,” because the act of Presbytery appealed from was *declarative* and not *judicial*, and therefore not an appealable case. But Mr. Chamberlain was allowed to present his whole case in another form, and then the subject was fully enquired into and judgment given.

The reader should be apprised that Mr. Chamberlain’s session had appointed Mr. Alex. B. Campbell their “delegate to Presbytery at Salem,” and that the appointment was not recognised by that body, and Mr. Campbell refused a seat. Whereupon Mr. Campbell complains to Synod, and asks redress. And also, that an appeal and complaint was laid before Synod by Mr. Chamberlain against the act of Presbytery of the 9th October, (see § 6,) signed H. Chamberlain, A. B. Campbell, William Spencer, “minister and ruling elders of the church of St. Charles,” assuming the general reasons contained in the appeal of June 14th, together with others specified by them.

8. The final judgment of synod on these several complaints, was not pronounced until after a patient and full investigation of the testimony laid before them. In addition to much documentary evidence, Mr. Chamberlain introduced several witnesses who testified in person; and Mr. G. was heard at large, and at considerable length, in support of the several appeals and complaints. The parties consented to submit all the papers relating to the several complaints, to Synod for their decision without further remark or debate. “The Synod then retired to consult and deliberate in private, previous to coming to a decision. After some time spent thus in private, the Synod decided unanimously, that the complaints be not sustained. A committee, consisting of Brethren, Brown, McAfee and Lovejoy, was appointed to prepare a minute to be spread upon the records of Synod concerning this decision. The committee reported, and their report was accepted.”

The following extracts from the report, which is quite long and impressive, will be sufficient to afford the reader all the information needful, touching Mr. Chamberlain’s persevering contest for supremacy, with the session of this church. “Synod emphatically declare, they have seen nothing in all the proceedings before them, that does in the least degree implicate the moral character or purity of motive of any individual concerned. And they desire, especially and particularly to apply this remark to the *ministerial* character and standing of Brother Chamberlain—they are both unimpeached.” The report expresses the opinion that a petition signed by a majority of the members, was presented to the session, &c., and that if the session had evidence that a majority of members *had* signed it, their duty was, to have called the meeting requested; “and in case of their refusing, the remedy of the majority was in a complaint to Presbytery.” “It is in evidence, that a meeting of the church of St. Charles was called by an individual member of the session, without the concurrence of the other three members; at which meeting it was resolved to

choose three additional elders, which was subsequently done. This act Synod judge irregular and void, because the session does possess the power of convening the church; whereas, in this case, while there were four acting elders, this meeting was called by *one* in opposition to the *three*, and it is in evidence, that a majority of the church did not vote for the additional elders. It follows of course, that all the acts of these new elders, purporting to be the acts of the session of the church of St. Charles, including the proceedings had in inviting Mr. Chamberlain, are irregular. Finally, in view of all the circumstances of the case, Synod would most affectionately advise Brother Chamberlain to seek another field of labor than St. Charles." "To the members of the St. Charles church, of both parties, synod recommend forbearance, forgiveness, and earnest endeavors by mutual confessions and explanations, to come together again: and carefully avoid all recriminations; hereafter to live harmoniously, as Brethren having "*One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism.*"

Thus terminated Mr. Chamberlain's several complaints to the Synod.—That tribunal affirmed most unequivocally the judgment of Presbytery in annulling the election of Mr. C's. new elders, and all their acts; and unite with the Presbytery in the opinion that he ought to seek some other field than St. Charles, which they affectionately advise him to do.

9. But Mr. Chamberlain was influenced by other counsel. On the very next day he appealed from the judgment of the Synod to "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, to be convened at Pittsburgh, in May, 1836"—where his appeal is yet pending. This paper is of very great length, and has appended to it the names of "H. Chamberlain, A. B. Campbell, P. Cayce, B. R. Wardlaw, and Wm. Spencer," who entitle themselves "minister, in the character of stated supply, and ruling elders in the church of St. Charles." The appellants complain of grievous oppression under the judgment of Synod—that it deprives a minister of his people, and *disrobes* three ruling elders, duly and regularly elected and ordained. And they set forth their case with reasons and arguments, many and various; controverting every material position taken by Synod. A few only of the specifications contained in the appeal need be noticed in this sketch, and those only very briefly.

10. Sixteen reasons are assigned by Mr. Chamberlain for his appeal to the General Assembly; in which he constantly assumes as fact, that he and his elders are the real and only representatives of the church, regularly and constitutionally appointed, and without opposition—that they are supported in these presentations by a "very large and respectable majority"—that the old session and their adherents, are a small minority acting as a *dissident* party in the church, and in rebellious opposition to Mr. G. and the church; producing strife and disturbance, by false statements, and the array of negro slaves against them. And Mr. C. concludes by telling the General Assembly that he cannot obey the judgment of Synod without yielding the rights of a large majority into the hands of a minority and *disrobing* his new elders, which he declares ought not and cannot be done, even to gratify his earnest desire for peace, &c.; and he finally demands, that the General Assembly give directions for organising his opponents as a *new* church.

11. This is truly a most extraordinary document; and its extravagant pretensions could scarcely fail to excite the risibility of those who set them forth with such apparent gravity. As to Mr. Chamberlain's "*large majority—clear majority—very large majority,*" of which he so often speaks, it is altogether a mistake. The real truth as to that matter, as nearly as can now be ascertained, the reader will find by turning to chap. IV, § 7, 9, 10, 11—chap. V, § 4, 7,—chap. VI, § 4. Mr. C. has certainly

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been laboring under a total misapprehension of facts on this point, and has been the means, it is believed, of leading several strangers into unpleasant mistakes, as to the actual session of this church; inducing the belief that he and his new session are really and truly "the church of St. Charles," fully competent to admit members on certificate or otherwise; when as has been fully shown in the preceding pages, such never was the case; so far from it, that the Presbytery and Synod declare Mr. C. and his session disorderly, and all their acts, as such, void. And it may not here be amiss to enquire whether Mr. Chamberlain and his immediate associates (his session) have not placed themselves in an attitude very like defiance, towards the law of the Presbyterian church? The constitution of said church, (edition of 1821,) contains, in the section of appeals, page 450, the following sentence: "if a sentence of suspension, or excommunication from church privileges, or of *deposition from office* be the sentence appealed from, it shall be considered as in force until the appeal shall be issued." And yet Mr. C. and his new session, altho' the new elders were deposed by the Presbytery and Synod; or what is just the same in effect, their appointment declared void; have continued to act, and to style themselves "the session of the church of St. Charles."

The church of St. Charles consists of its officers constitutionally appointed, and its members regularly admitted through the session; and no others. Those of the church, who employ Mr. Chamberlain, attend his preaching, and encourage him to stay at St. Charles, contrary to the known sentiments of their session, Presbytery and Synod, are without any doubt acting disorderly and unlawfully as *Presbyterians*; and can only be considered a dissident part or party of the church—even if they are "a large and respectable majority," as it is pretended they are. And Mr. C. himself can properly be viewed in no other relation, than as an unsettled minister striving to force admittance into and *over* this church, contrary to the repeated advice, entreaties and remonstrances of many of his brethren in the ministry, of private members, the elders individually, and as the session; the Presbytery of St. Charles, and Synod of Missouri; and in the full knowledge that there are not less than fifty respectable individuals in this little community, who consider his *stay* here as intrusive, and as tending to promote the strife that his *coming* here was the cause of engendering. It is very true, that several respectable and worthy citizens of St. Charles, have until recently, contributed to the support of Mr. Chamberlain, who think highly of him and of his preaching—but they are not Presbyterians, and but few of them professing christians. Some of them are in truth open and violent enemies of the Presbyterian church, and are not sorry to witness the shameful confusion that has for the last two years been kept up in this church. In his ministerial labors and ordinary intercourse with the people, Mr. C. is believed to be quite void of offence. But there is no denying the fact, that his presence in the community, his determined perseverance to establish himself here as our Pastor, his known hostility to the existing session; and affecting constantly to consider himself and his new session *the church*, and actually usurping powers corresponding with such strange pretensions; have encouraged and still do encourage and foment a spirit of disorder and wild confusion in the church, that are ruinous to its peace, and fatal to its important interests. More than two years have now been spent in these sinful contentions—the time and talents of Mr. C. have been worse than wasted *here*, whilst there are so many destitute places where he would doubtless have been cordially received, and where his presence might have greatly promoted his Master's service, instead of its being "the occasion of much strife and disturbance" here at St. Charles. It is greatly to be hoped that

the General Assembly will speedily and decisively act on Mr. Chamberlain's appeal. He seems to consider himself not only at liberty, but under some kind of moral obligation to protract his stay here whilst there remains any right of appeal; and it is utterly impossible for the church to recover its peace and to prosper, whilst he allows himself to arrogate and exercise rights and powers forbidden by the constitution and the Synod.

12. There does not appear to exist the slightest evidence to justify Mr. Chamberlain's charge against this church, that its colored members who are slaves have ever voted or been in any manner arrayed against him. Those members are unobtrusive, and not at all apt to claim the right to vote, and have never done so, or been urged to do it, during the troubles of the last two years—indeed no occasion has been presented within that period to require any expression of their sentiments in relation to the affairs of the church. Mr. C. claims for the members of his congregation, who are not members of the church, the right to vote for a minister—and on this point, he and the Session and the Presbytery are fairly at issue. To the General Assembly it belongs to decide upon this question, and to pass an Act declarative of the true construction of the law on the subject. The last, though not the least extraordinary, of Mr. Chamberlain's lofty views, is his proposition to organize his opponents at St. Charles as a *new church*, with the *right to enjoy their privileges*. To the very last, he perseveres in holding himself and his elders up as *the church*, although the Synod had told him of his error, only the day before he wrote his last appeal. It is believed that on Mr. C's departure this unfortunate little church will recover its peace, and that its members, with perhaps a few exceptions, will be re-united. And in that event, its increase *may* at some future day justify a peaceable division. There is nothing however in the existing circumstances of its affairs, to call for, or warrant such a measure.

13. It ought to have been mentioned before this, that in the spring of the year, 1835, the Session personally visited the members of the church generally; and especially such as they considered to be in need of their counsel and official advice, touching the choice of a minister. This they no doubt believed to be their solemn duty in reference to the disturbance then becoming seriously alarming in consequence of Mr. Chamberlain's exertions to obtain the pastoral office. For this act they are very severely reproached by Mr. C., and are charged with being tyrannical and oppressive. But really there would seem to be much better cause for complaint, if the elders had neglected this peculiar and very important duty; and it is much to be lamented, that such was already the influence of the spirit of confusion, over the minds of *some* of the members, as to produce a degree of unkindness towards their friendly visitors, that was incompatible with even the ordinary forms of civility.

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CHAPTER VII.—*Visit of Rev. W. P. Cochran—Proceedings of St. Charles and Missouri Presbyteries—Conclusion.*

1. The Presbytery of St Charles thought proper to delegate one of their body to visit this church with the view of ascertaining the precise nature of the existing difficulties with Mr. Chamberlain, and of assisting the Session in carrying into effect their *third* resolution of the 9th October, (see ch. VI. §6.) and also to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Their commissioner, the Rev. Wm. P. Cochran, made his visit early in February, 1836, and spent about ten days in the execution of the du-

ties assigned to him. His reception at St. Charles, was kind and respectful, except by a few of the most zealous of Mr. Chamberlain's supporters; by some of whom he was treated with studied incivility; for which they had no other reason or apology than Mr. Cochran's assisting the Session as Moderator, to call up two members to answer charges of improper conduct, and for passing sentence of suspension from church privileges against them on their contumacious refusal to answer. The reasons given for their refusal, as officially communicated by Mr. Chamberlain and his Session were, that the charges alluded to, had been already answered, and judgment given thereon, in Mr. C's Session, and that the members were not lawfully amenable twice for the same offence. It ought to be recollected, that this action of Mr. Chamberlain, in direct opposition to the authority of Presbytery, took place *after* the Synod had *deposed* his new elders from office, and dissolved his connection with them as a *Session*; and was consequently an act of usurpation, and in violation of the settled law of the Presbyterian church. Of course then Mr. Cochran and the elders of the church who acted with him in these unpleasant scenes, could not regard Mr. Chamberlain's decisions and interferences in the cases before them, as any justification, were they to neglect their own duty in the premises. They therefore proceeded, as has been already stated; not however without some personal danger to the commissioner, as appears from the testimony of Mr. Chamberlain, who takes occasion in one of his publications to allude to Mr. Cochran's visit and to these acts of his; which he says "caused so strong a burst of public indignation, that many fears were entertained of his personal safety" The danger to which Mr. Chamberlain here alludes, was a reported threat that some of the friends and supporters of his church and session, intended to administer to Mr. Cochran the popular remedy of *Lynching*, for what had been *already* done in the two cases mentioned, and to *prevent* his further action in them. There is too much reason to believe that such a threat had actually been uttered, with serious intentions of attempting its execution. Mr. Cochran was warned of it; but either disbelieved or disregarded it. Fortunately for the credit of all concerned, no movement was made to interrupt the Session in their proceedings: they met agreeably to appointment, finished the unpleasant business before them, and adjourned. As Mr. Chamberlain appears to have been apprised of the danger that threatened Mr. Cochran, and was in St. Charles at the time, it is doubtless a fair and reasonable inference, that he interposed his influence to suppress it: for how could a Presbyterian clergyman refrain from exerting all his powers to prevent so gross an outrage on a Brother who was in the discharge of duties as the representative of the Presbytery of St. Charles?—duties that interfered with no man's lawful rights.

2. At the stated meeting of the Presbytery of St. Charles, in April, 1836, Mr. Chamberlain renewed the application that he had once or twice made before, to obtain admission into that body as one of its members: but he was not successful; the Presbytery for reasons that to them appeared sufficient, did not think it fit to admit him. Among the reasons assigned for this refusal, was Mr. C's alleged disturbance of the peace of this church. This, with several other allegations against Mr. C. in the form of charges, was submitted to the Missouri Presbytery, to which Mr. Chamberlain still belonged, for investigation and judgment. As those *other* charges have no immediate relation to the subject of this narrative, it will be out of place to speak of them here. The charge of disturbing the peace of this church, does not appear to have been so thoroughly investigated by the Presbytery as was requisite to enable them to pronounce

a just judgment upon it. This defect, it is believed, was the consequence of the omission by the other Presbytery, to designate and furnish all the testimony in their power, and to appoint some fit person to attend to the case whilst under examination. On the part of the Missouri Presbytery, there was certainly manifested every disposition to discharge themselves faithfully of their duty, to the extent of their ability, but for the reasons already stated, they were unable to elicit many of the existing facts having a very material bearing on the subject. The Presbytery have pronounced and published their judgment on this charge, which is probably just such a decision as might reasonably have been expected under the existing circumstances; and just such an one as cannot be satisfactory to either party. It has been promulgated in the following words:—

“It is clearly in evidence that the peace of the St. Charles church is disturbed, and *very much* disturbed. We are of opinion too, that the *going* and *being* there of the accused, have been the occasion of much strife and disturbance; but it is not in proof that the accused is the *guilty* cause of all or any of these consequences. The Presbytery have sought industriously for that act of the accused from which *guilt* in this particular can be inferred, but have sought in vain. An examination of the immense mass of testimony, which we have with labour, and much expense of time and trouble taken, will convince any mind capable of investigating such a subject impartially, that there is no such solitary act.”

3. This decision of the Presbytery, whilst it fully affirms the fact charged against the accused; not only omits to offer any remedy for the *admitted* evil already inflicted, or any security for the future; but on the contrary, it virtually consents to the continuance of the disturbance through the same agency, by exonerating from all blame, the brother who *confessedly* occasioned it.

Admitting the accused to have been perfectly blameless; that he neither did or said any thing whatever to originate or foment the strife and disturbances complained of, except allowing himself to *go* and *be* at St. Charles; still it does, at least to the writer of this, seem quite reasonable and just, that the Presbytery should have *required* or at least *requested* their wandering brother “to retire from the troubled region,” where his *mere personal presence* is by them admitted to be the occasion of so much trouble in the church. For it might be rationally enough apprehended, that one so unfortunate as to *create* strife, merely by *going* to, and *being* at the St. Charles church, would be quite likely to *increase* that strife very much, if he should at any any time be thrown off his guard, and be betrayed, however innocently on his part, into some overt act against the constituted authorities of that church. Or should a being so obviously unwelcome, allow himself, through persuasion of others, tho’ entirely repugnant to his own quiet and passive disposition, to be invested with office, and to usurp powers in defiance of Presbyterian law, and in contempt of the special decisions of the higher tribunals; what else than utter *confusion* with its usual attendants, strife and disturbance, *very highly aggravated*; could be expected from such *passive* indiscretion? Such acts as are here (*suppositiously*)

instanced, would, if perpetrated by one enjoying unbounded popularity; whose mere personal presence was usually persuasive of peace and concord, instead of being the innocent occasion of strife; would most assuredly ruin the peace and unity of *any church*, and utterly destroy the influence *for good*, of *any minister* who should suffer himself to become thus involved.

The reader will remark, that the Presbytery, and the writer of this sketch, are not precisely agreed as to the fair and just inferences to be drawn from the testimony upon which the judgment of the Presbytery is founded. The writer believes, that after the full admission that Mr. Chamberlain was disturbing this church, the Presbytery ought to have used their authority in our behalf; whether any guilt or criminality, or blame might or might not attach to the conduct of Mr. C., was not a question presented. The church of St. Charles, the writer has every reason to believe, do not entertain one sentiment or feeling of personal hostility towards Mr. Chamberlain. They are perfectly well convinced, that their lost peace and unity can never be restored, whilst he persists in his mistaken course; and therefore they earnestly desire his withdrawal. They are sincere in the opinion that Mr. C. can never effect any good *here* in his ministerial character, but have no doubt there are many destitute places, where his labours would be welcome, without opposition, and might be greatly blessed; and therefore they desire him, in the language affectionately addressed to him by the Synod of Missouri, "to seek another field of labor than St. Charles."

4. Mr. Chamberlain appears to labor under an impression that his "opponents" in the St. Charles church, are an organised *party*, and that they have, in that character, made charges, and circulated them, with the intent to injure and destroy his private character. This is believed to be an entire misconception; there is no proof that any such attempt was ever made, or wish harbored to do injustice or injury to Mr. C. When he came to St. Charles, there were already in circulation, certain reports against him, and as is usual, there was some diversity of opinion expressed about them—the *facts* were not known, and Mr. Chamberlain had purposely omitted to refute the stories reported. There were some two or three individuals it is true, with whom Mr. C. was in personal controversy, (against one of whom he even published very bitter aspersions,) who openly expressed opinions unfavorable to him as founded on those reports, and most probably believed them true; and there were others, who inclined to credit them. But there is no reason to believe that there is a single individual member of the church who would not rejoice to be fully convinced of Mr. Chamberlain's perfect purity of character in all things. Such reports as Mr. C. suffered to circulate against him unrefuted, for years before he came to St. Charles in 1835, were certainly enough of themselves, to startle christian strangers when called upon to form a close and hasty connection with him; and if they shrunk from the contact *for that reason*, it was evidence of an honest impulse; and *not proof* of an uncharitable spirit. The relation that a Pastor bears to a church, collectively and individually, is of a nature *that absolutely requires mutual confidence*, and it is even more necessary, in order to



effect the important objects of such a union, that the minister's personal character should not only be pure and irreproachable in fact; but believed to be so by those who are about to commit their best interests, so much to his keeping. But it would be a hopeless undertaking, ever to reconcile this church to Mr. Chamberlain, even if there were no extraneous influence operating: there exists an inherent, mutually repulsive, influence; so positively immovable and insurmountable, that were Mr. G. believed by all to be as pure as Caesar's wife, and to possess the learning and talents of St. Paul, it would prevent the union.

5. The writer has endeavored to avoid unnecessary prolixity in this narrative; and has studied to present the reader a true and faithful view of facts, in their natural order and connection; and he thinks it probable that the most of those who are interested in the subject may be able to satisfy their minds, and to determine in the fear of God and their consciences, what they ought individually to do, in order that peace and unity and christian fellowship may be speedily restored to the church of St. Charles; and to do it.

The "immense mass of testimony" from which this relation has been chiefly compiled, is of a nature so confused and irregular; so utterly void of arrangement, and withal so burthened with matter irrelevant, that it ought not to be at all surprising to any one, that the Presbytery should have been unable to reach the true merits of the whole subject; the more especially, as much important testimony was withheld, and some excluded.

The writer, who is also a member of this church, positively disclaims any party connection or party feeling whatever, in these affairs; and every motive capable of misleading his judgment in any degree; and he assures the reader, that in the course of this narrative, prepared amidst many interruptions, he is unconscious of having

'Aught extenuated, or aught set down in malice.'

St. Charles, Missouri, April, 1837.

*The following cut from The St. Charles Clarion of 24<sup>th</sup> April 1837.*

Mr. PATTEN,

An anonymous pamphlet, just printed at your office, has been put into my hands. It purports to be a faithful narrative of facts; but seems calculated to mislead the minds of some, in relation to important particulars, which may be made to appear from the *Record itself*. The name of the real, responsible, Author is therefore respectfully called for.

H. CHAMBERLAIN.

[The Editor understanding that Mr. Chamberlain would leave the State, on his way to the Presbyterian General Assembly, at Philadelphia, before the publication of the next Clarion, offered to the author of the pamphlet the privilege of replying to the above, in the present number. The following is his answer:]

Mr. PATTEN is hereby authorized to answer Rev. Mr. CHAMBERLAIN's request, by informing him that I am the real and responsible author of the pamphlet he alludes to, and that I shall be ever ready to acknowledge and to correct any errors therein contained, when made sensible of them, inasmuch as it is my sole aim and desire to establish and set forth the simple truth in regard to the matters discussed in said pamphlet.

G. C. SIBLEY.

Friday morning, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1837.