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# Transactions

of the

## Baptist Historical Society.

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### A Sabbatarian Pioneer—Dr. Peter Chamberlen.

#### I.—THE LIFE-STORY.

**P**HYSICIAN in Ordinary to three Kings and Queens of England; and yet a Nonconformist, and for some years a Baptist Pastor! The man of whom we write was born in 1601 and died in 1683: hence he passed through troublous times. In fact, he added to the prevalent commotion; and yet his medical knowledge and surgical skill were jealously retained by rulers of the House of Stuart. Moreover, his religious liberty does not seem to have suffered such curtailment as was visited upon many other Baptists of the time.

To those who are acquainted with the history of British Nonconformity in the seventeenth century, this is strange reading. Certain it is, however, that the facts are so, and the exceptional issues in this particular case are not difficult of explanation. Whatever else may be put to the account of the Stuarts, we must not withhold from them the general attribute of a selfish regard for themselves and their own interests; and in the story which now occupies us, the narrow-selfishness of the Kings and those that surrounded them, accounts for a singular partiality in dealing with one who, in the sphere of religion and on grounds of conscience, assuredly caused no little annoyance to leaders in Church and State.

The subject of our sketch is Dr. Peter Chamberlen, otherwise, on occasion, Rev. Peter Chamberlen, M.D. The times were those in which every man who could write spelled as seemed good in his own eyes; and so the name is found with many orthographical

variations., e.g., terminating in—lain, laine, lan, lane, layne, and len. The form "Chamberlen" has commended itself to those who have given most attention to the point; it was the form to which the Doctor himself gave preference, and hence has received the stamp of authenticity, or propriety.

A truly remarkable man was the Peter Chamberlen of whom we write. In some senses he was far ahead of his time: that, moreover, in other respects, he was like his contemporaries, the creature or victim of his age, with its follies, limitations, and prejudices, is not surprising. Was he progressive, a man of ideas—a man actuated with problems which even to-day await solution—then in this degree he was one who lived ahead of the days in which his lot was cast. Did he, on the other hand, combine with his profession elements of superstition which in our day are held up to ridicule; did he develop a controversial disposition which in some measure hindered the progress of religious truth; did he show a somewhat boisterous and censorious spirit—then we must admit that, in these and such like respects, he was not alone, but in a large and mixed companionship. Indeed, herein, he was mightily outrun by many of his contemporaries, who at the same time were under no such control of a Godly conscience—men who, shutting their eyes to the prevailing corruption, condemned their God that they might pander to the wishes of their King.

### Parentage and Family Connections.

Peter Chamberlen was a great man descended from a distinguished family; and the distinction lay in deeds rather than words, in achievement rather than in social status. The family came from France, being derived from a persecuted Huguenot, named William Chamberlen, who sought refuge in England in the sixteenth century, when the religious wars had made life intolerable across the Channel.<sup>1</sup> Making his way from Paris to Southampton, William set up practice as a barber-surgeon. He brought with him a son named Pierre; later on, among other children, he had another son to whom he gave the same name—only in English. Hence his family included two Peters—known for distinction as

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Peter wrote on one occasion, "I boast not the Norman familie of Tankerville, nor any Lordly extraction of England." Nevertheless, in the "Herald's Visitation of London" (1634), he made proof of his descent out of France and usage of these arms by witness—"Gules, an inescutcheon argent and an orb of cinquefoils or: a label of three points"; which arms were also confirmed to his son Hugh in 1664. See arms, as on west end of Tombstone, in frontispiece reproduction.

Peter the Elder (died 1631) and Peter the Younger (1572-1626). These sons outstripped their father in surgical practice; and the fact that they both bore the same Christian name obfuscated historians and genealogists for two hundred years, and is responsible for an erroneous statement as to family relations even down to the latest edition, just published, of the "Dictionary of National Biography."<sup>2</sup> It is from the home of Peter the Younger that the hero of our present sketch came into the world.

In course of time, the Chamberlen family left Southampton, with London as their destination. Here, without delay, Peter the Elder set to work, and became a celebrated accoucheur, attending in that capacity the Queens of James I. and Charles I. Simultaneously, Peter the Younger also entered upon his life-work, and acquired considerable wealth by his profession as barber-surgeon. These two practitioners seem to have employed a midwifery forceps of which nothing was then known by the world in general. The construction and use of the instrument was a secret, and the same remained a family asset, as we should say a nostrum, for generations; and while thus equipped, the brothers made a reputation which brought them under jealous observation in the ranks of the profession in general.

### "Schools, Universities and Travels."

The Peter Chamberlen, M.D., with whom we are specially concerned, was, as we have noted, a son of Peter the Younger. He was more progressive than his predecessors, and achieved a fame which was beyond their reach; and, moreover, he passed on some of his own spirit to his sons Hugh and Paul, who followed him in the practice of physic. He was the grandson of William, the Huguenot refugee, and came into the inheritance of that worthy's Protestantism as well as the secret surgical processes employed by his father and uncle.

This Peter was born on the 8th May, 1601, and educated at Merchant Taylors' School and Emmanuel College, Cambridge. His father had practised medicine on a bare qualification, which more than once brought him into conflict with the College of

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<sup>2</sup> The writer of the article on Dr. Peter Chamberlen describes that worthy as great grandson of William Chamberlen, instead of grandson, and as the grandchild of Peter the Elder, instead of nephew. And this in spite of the fact that the relations are correctly indicated in the articles (by another writer) dealing with the two Peters—that is, these latter are shown to have been brothers, and not father and son.

Physicians.<sup>3</sup> In these circumstances, he determined that his son should stand in no such situation of difficulty. Accordingly, after leaving College, the son studied at the Universities of Heidelberg and Padua; and at the latter, which was then at the height of its fame as a centre of medical learning, he took his degree of M.D., in 1619, at the age of 18—an early age, no doubt, but we must remember that Peter came of a family of medical practitioners. The distinction of the graduate was in due course recognised in the home land; and having been incorporated at Oxford and Cambridge, Peter was able to describe himself—and assuredly with much satisfaction—as “of both universities.”

Without delay the young man had to encounter obstacles. Having command of wealth; and having travelled above what was customary in those days, he exhibited no little ambition, and apparently assumed certain airs of superiority. Settling down to practice, he applied for inclusion in the College of Physicians, though not to find a path that was altogether smooth. The authorities put the young man to the accustomed tests, but then seemed to hesitate before admitting him. In fact, previously to granting admission, the College, through its President, gravely admonished the applicant on the question of his dress, calling upon him to change his mode of attire, and not to follow “the frivolous fashion of the youth at court,” but rather to adopt “the decent and sober dress” of the members of the College! The applicant was accordingly kept waiting until he should comply with the request thus made; and at length he “subordinated himself unto his seniors,” and was admitted a Fellow in 1628—nine years after his graduation at Padua.

This incident throws some light upon the early habits and tendencies of Dr. Peter Chamberlen. Possibly he was living a somewhat “gay” life; assuredly, as the outcome of exceptional qualifications, he had entered upon a successful practice, which brought him under the unfriendly observation of those whose professional outlook was less promising. In fact, if we may accept the statement of his son Hope, on the tombstone in Woodham Mortimer churchyard, he had already been appointed Physician in Ordinary to King James and his Queen Anne. This cannot refer to a later date, for the Queen died in 1619. In view of the facts, as they come to us, it would appear that he was given the appointment immediately on completing his studies at Padua.

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<sup>3</sup> A corporate body of regular physicians practising in London, constituted in the reign of Henry VIII., and anticipating in some degree the more influential Royal College of Physicians of England, which was established in 1558.

The influence of his uncle, who held a position at Court, would doubtless be at command in such a matter. It does not follow that he was called upon to render actual service. Indeed, in those days, such appointments were sometimes nominal—simply conferring distinction, and neither involving duty, nor carrying stipend or remuneration.

### Opening of a Brilliant Career.

It was well for Dr. Peter that the College of Physicians administered that rebuke: it was better that the rebuke was received in a right spirit, and acted upon without delay. Having "subordinated himself," our hero was, as already intimated, admitted a Fellow of the College, two years after the death of his father, who had already been permitted to see his son in the enjoyment of a position full of promise for the future. Meanwhile, Charles I. had come to the throne (1625) and the young doctor had been appointed Physician to the King and his Queen, Henrietta Maria (called "Mary" on the tombstone); and an incident that has come down to us bears strong testimony to the place which the Doctor occupied in the esteem of the Court. In a word, the reputation of the young physician had attracted the attention of the Czar of Russia, who wrote with his own hand a letter to King Charles, begging him to allow Dr. Chamberlen to enter his service. Being a travelled man, and acquainted with German (having studied at Heidelberg) and with Italian (having also studied at Padua), he could not but prove an acquisition to the House of Romanoff; and the Czar was able to add that he understood the Doctor to be willing to serve him.<sup>4</sup> King Charles, however, wished to retain his Physician, and justified refusal on the ground that a native Russian, who had been studying medicine in England, was about to return home, and would therefore be capable of undertaking such service as the Czar wished to allocate. The Czar had, in these circumstances, to be content without Dr. Peter, though the keenness of his disappointment may be gathered from the fact that he had made great preparations to receive the English Physician at Archangel!

Though his practice continued to grow, Dr. Chamberlen found time, as it were between-whiles, to lecture on Anatomy to the barber-surgeons, also to formulate schemes for the public well-being. Such self-assertion as was almost inevitable in a man of

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<sup>4</sup> Writing after his father's death, the surviving son, Hope, was able to say (on the tombstone) that he "travelled most parts of Europe, and spoke most of the languages."

his force of character and exceptional ability, could not but be attended with risk and danger: hence the College of Physicians seems to have sought occasion against him in various ways. In one instance they showed a peculiar animosity. It appears that his apothecary was a foreigner, and not a freeman; and in connection with some transaction on the part of that person, the Doctor was summarily put under arrest. Surely the hour had struck for the detractors of the advancing physician! Nothing of the kind! Though the Philistines were upon our Samson, they found him equal to the situation. Claiming privilege of Parliament, as a servant of the King, the Doctor petitioned the House of Lords, and was promptly released!

### Proposed Sisterhood of Midwives.

One of the early public proposals of Dr. Chamberlen was, that the midwives of "the City of London and suburbs thereof" should be incorporated, or organised into a sisterhood. The suggestion occasioned great opposition, and for some years pamphlets were being written and letters were passing on the subject; also appeals and counter-appeals were being made to the powers in Church and State. The idea that Dr. Chamberlen was to be Governor of the corporation was specially unwelcome: it touched vested interests. Moreover, it was against him that his father before him had made a very similar proposition, also that Dr. Peter himself was still comparatively young.

In the conflict which ensued—and it was fierce and long—the midwives thought they carried the day when they said that Dr. Peter knew nothing but "by reading"; and not only did they describe his project as "an intrusion upon Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction"—for in those days the Bishops issued licences to midwives—but they also declared that by his act the Doctor had "trespassed against the King and State"—although it is hardly clear how this charge could be sustained. Beyond that, the women and their abettors laid to the charge of Dr. Chamberlen a multitude of sins, real and imaginary, on the part of his father as well as himself!

At length, the Doctor defended himself, by issuing "A Voice in Rhama; or, the Crie of Women and Children. Echoed forth in the Compassions of Peter Chamberlen" (London, 1647). Reading between the lines of this document, we are able to judge how determined was the attack that had been made upon its author. For thirteen years, he tells us, he had been promoting a "Charitie" which his father had attempted some thirty years before. The prevalent neglect had excited his indignation; and he spoke of a

“Deluge of Blood” as the outcome of existing conditions. Concerning his project, he said:—

A design (I thought) so full of Pietie that no man would—so full of Innocencie that no man could—so full of Importance and generall concernment that no man durst have opposed.

But the Prince of Darknesse had an hour with the Lord of Life: much more might this find enemies, though to their own hurt.

He was vexed beyond measure at the opposition shown by the profession to which he belonged, and he did not hesitate to argue the point with all whom it might concern:—

What losse had it been to increase the number of the Living, which cannot but be an increase of employment to all sorts of Trades and Professions whatsoever? yea, to the very Grave-maker, had he but patience to suspend his Harvest till the Young grew up to increase and multiply (not untimely but) more and larger Graves? What shall I conclude? Folly is as certainly wedded to Wickednesse as Wisdom is to Goodnesse.

They sold their Quiet for Trouble, their Credit for Shame, and their Gain for Losse.

The Doctor was not deterred, moreover, from meeting his detractors on their own ground. His “Fame” had, he said, “begot him Envie and secret Enemies.” Accordingly, he spoke of his professional qualifications. After alluding to the provision made for him by his parents—“education in Schools, Vniversities, and Travels”—he proceeds to say that, “ere nineteen sunnes had measured out his nativitie,” he received the “Doctorall Robes” of Padua. Then as follows: “Thus I grew up to Titles and Priviledges. But Titles give not Learning, nor Learning Experience.” Being thus “nursed up (as from the cradle) to all the Parts of Physick, and that in Asclepiad-Families”—how should he be wanting in common knowledge, as his opponents had insinuated?

The Doctor detects very clearly the secret of the opposition to his scheme:—

Meum and Tuum divide the World into Factions, into Atoms: and till the World return to its first simplicitie, or (as in the morning of the Gospel) to a Christian Vtopia, there will be repinings, and covetousnesse will be the Root of all Evil. This, This is the true Cause that fills their hearts with Malice, and their mouthes with Slanders: that what good soever I have done, or endeavoured to do is mis-construed,



or forgotten, and the evil I never did is laid to my charge, though I am not free from evil.

I am no Pharisee, yet I justify my dealings with Men before God and Man, and plead not guilty of the sacrifice of Conscience to that grand Idol Avarice.

First, My Possessions crie not out against me, they being reduced to their first Principles of mine and my wife's Portion. Onely a better Portion is added to us, of nine small children.

Secondly, the Poor cannot justly clamour against me, they having as freely enjoyed my Counsels and Labours, both in Medecines and Deliveries, as the Rich; even then when the burthen of all the Midwives in and about London lay onely on my shoulders.

Disposed still further to vindicate his honour, the Doctor proceeds to resent the suggestion that he had been hard in driving bargains before giving professional attendance. He declared that he seldom stipulated before-hand what he should receive by way of payment; though his services had been much abused, he "never arrested any for what was due, whether by bargain, promise, or otherwise." He proceeds:—

For one who hath paid me 10 li., I have delivered 100 for nothing, as many for little or nothing, and as many for lesse than nothing; such as thought it a point of wisdom to save their Purse and pay me with Lies and Scandals, insufferable Scandals, and so frequent till they caused me abhor the work it self. Yea, my very Charitie hath been often, and is to this day, retorted as an Argument against my due: as if it were a part of great Injustice to have given away or undervalued my Art to some, and not to do the like to all. Because I considered the Case of the Poor, therefore I ought not to be considered of the Rich.

Enlarging upon the disappointments which he had experienced, the Doctor exclaims:—"I am wholly tired out with the injuries, vexations, and losses of the business;" and he proceeds to inform us how little it had meant for him to be Physician at Court. He says:—

I have served the Commonn-wealth now twenty seven years, toying both early and late, not without the frequent hazard of my Life. I have spent my Youth and Industrey for Food and Raiment, never receiving any Publick Encouragement, or Gratuity, but to be valued beyond my Condition or Demerit in Taxes. I have served these many years the King and Queen by speciall Commands, and in some speciall services, receiv-

ing onely one Reward and a Diamant-Ring from her Majestie, but not any stipend at all from Either.

This man knew how to speak out! He was, in fact, oppressed in mind by a crying evil; and the pity is that he should have been left without public support in his proposal, which was evidently made with the object of protecting women and children from the results of ignorance and neglect. In conclusion, he wrote:—

I have formerly cast pearls before Swine, and found the issue. I now have unfolded my Talent from the Napkin. I have washed my hands, I have delivered my soul.

What, in a word, was the Doctor's aim? It was to bring about a measure of reform for which a long-suffering community waited until the year 1905! "The Compassions of Peter Chamberlen" made a bold stand for a good cause, but he was 250 years ahead of its realization: that reform, however, on a larger scale than was then contemplated, has been enacted in our own time. The "Voice in Rhama," and the movement to which it gave expression, was designed to assert as urgent the simple proposition "that some order be settled for the instruction and civil government of midwives"; but it would appear that, under the frown of the medical authorities, and in the face of other difficulties, the project came to nothing at the time.

### Other Public Proposals.

During the period now under review, the Doctor divided his interest somewhat, making prolonged visits to "the Low Countreys"; and when at home he was so pre-occupied with various schemes of a social and political order, that he neglected the meetings of the College of Physicians. This went against him in that quarter. In 1648 he petitioned Parliament to institute a system of hydro-therapeutics—giving him privileges and rights as to public artificial baths and bath-stoves. In reality, even in the seventeenth century, he put in a plea for public baths; and therein he spoke of their ancient use and modern need. He held that, by a system of baths, much would be done to eradicate disease, relieve pain, and promote convalescence on the part of the sick; and when opposition declared itself, he did not hesitate to suggest that some practitioners might be afraid of losing their occupation in the event of diseases being prevented or reduced! He delivered himself thus:—

Other Doctors have them as well as I: Why have they not been as zealous to serve the Common-wealth with them as

I? They cannot deny them to be good,—that were to contradict their Masters. They will not confesse they fear a Diminution of their own gaine. That were to obtrude a strange Maxime to the State; That Sicknes must be provided for Physitians, not Physitians for sicknes; so Sinners for Preachers, and Malefactors for Judges.

The man's ire was raised, and in one of his pamphlets he spoke of "Doctors in Physick who only pretend to be so." The College, to whom the subject was referred, suggested obstacles; and in these circumstances, the breach between Dr. Peter and the presumed leaders of the profession in London grew wider, and at length he ceased to attend the functions of the College. As a result of this, in 1649, he was dismissed from his Fellowship—a measure which does not seem to have caused him the slightest distress.

About this time, the Doctor issued a pamphlet entitled "The Poore Mans Advocate: or Englands Samaritan Powring Oyle and Wyne into the wounds of the Nation." The Epistle Dedicatory—"To the Representatives of all the Authority and Power of England, the High and Honourable House of Commons. Assembled in Parliament"—is dated April 3, 1649. This was a veritable "tract for the times," replete with warnings on the one hand, and with practical suggestions on the other. The Doctor says:—

Note the man that dippeth with you in the dish, whose Lips still ready for the guilty sop of new Assesments, or sanc't with Birdlime Gelly of DELAY, kisseth you with the seeming tendernesse of Bul-begger caution, and blindeth your wayes with a prudential Forehead of politick Diversion..

Among the propositions of this pamphlet was—a Public Bank, by means of which the lot of the poor would be lightened, and soldiers would receive their pay more promptly. Being at this time in full sympathy with the Parliament, the Doctor was for applying the "remains" of Kings and Bishops, Deans and Chapters, for the good of the people, also for dealing with woods and forests, wastes and drowned lands, in the interests of the poor. He urged Parliament to heed his voice:—

None more fond of a King then the English, yet they departed from him to ease their purses and their Consciencess.. If they forsooke their King (I spake it to some of your House in the beginning of this Session) will they not forsake their fellow Subjects for the same Causes?

The Doctor spoke of making trade free, though he had not our conceptions of Free Trade. He said, in effect: "Take customs.

off unwrought materials and food imports, and lay them on such articles when exported." And again: "Take taxes off export manufactures, and put them on import manufactures." Moreover, he said to the Parliament:—

Provide for the poor, and they will provide for you.

Destroy the poor, and they will destroy you. And if you provide not for the poor, they will provide for themselves.

These views were expressed in the middle of the seventeenth century; and their bold exponent was vigorously denounced as a "pamphlet-monger."

### Embarking on Religious Controversy.

Already we see the Doctor to have been a man of self-reliant calibre; moreover, we find him, on occasion, quoting Scripture with peculiar aptness, and as a man who regarded its authority as equal to the settlement of all disputes. His standing was essentially Puritan, and so, in "A Vindication of Artificial Baths," he suggested that the opposition of the College of Physicians to such schemes as he had promoted, was prompted by lack of sympathy with Puritan ideals. Though, as we have seen, he gives us definite information as to the time in which his public work began—"I have served the Commonwealth now twenty-seven years"—yet he seems not to have left precise information as the religious experience which made all the difference in marking off his early life from that of the more strenuous years in which we now find him. Suffice it to say, however, that, in 1648, having left the Independents, he was baptized as a believer; and that, in 1651, he joined the Seventh-Day Baptist fraternity. These facts are set out on the tombstone, already referred to. Henceforward we find him taking part in new controversies; and these remained his prime concern until his death in 1683.

To estimate such a man, we must not only know his words and deeds, but take account of the thoughts and actions of his enemies in regard to him. It is when thus surveying the situation—appreciating as it were the very atmosphere in which the man lived—that we realise somewhat of the temperament of Dr. Chamberlen. A letter "To my Beloved Friends and Neighbours of the Black-Fryers," issued in February 1649-50, raised questions of Faith, which excited keen controversy. Among others who "answered" the Doctor was one Thomas Bakewell, who issued a pamphlet entitled—"The Dippers plunged in a sea of absurdities, or an Answer to Dr. Chamberlaine concerning sprinkling the baptized." The Doctor replied in—"Master Bakewell's sea of absurdities concerning sprinkling driven back by Peter Cham-

berlen." Another pamphlet by Bakewell was entitled— "Doctor Chamberlain Visited with a Bunch of his own Grapes, Gathered out of his own Packet of Letters: To know whether any Answer to his Question gave satisfaction, and that by his Reply to partake of those rare Gifts of the Spirit, which he proffered to publish in Black-fryers Church. Also an Answer to Dr. Chamberlains Reply, concerning Sprinkling the Baptized." Presumably the expression "Sprinkling the baptized," as thus employed, means "the use of sprinkling in the ordinance described as baptism." The point of the discussion is thus clear and well defined. The controversy exhibits the Doctor as a veritable champion of the Baptist cause.

### Letter to Oliver Cromwell.

In the troublous times of the Interregnum, no less than in antecedent years, the Doctor was sadly exercised on moral and political questions. Hence we find him writing to Lord General Cromwell as follows:—

My Lord,

Were there the same integrity with us at home as with you abroad; surely the Lord would bless us, but a secret envy divides us into jealousies, and nothing but a mutual guilt keeps us together. Your counsels, at this distance, are soon forgotten; every man seeks his own; and no wonder, for what good without faith? and how can men believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not (through obedience) the honour of God that cometh from above? (John v. 44.) What will the end of these things be? ships taken, trade decayed, taxes increased, soldiers unpaid, hated abroad, not loved at home, trusting of enemies, distrusting of friends; it will shortly be a bad choice if extremities afford you other counsels, but either to tax where it is not to be had, or not to pay the soldier the price of his blood. Might it not be accepted now, if one poor despised man could save the city? (Eccles. ix. 15.)

Oh! my lord, there are yet terrible things decreed against this nation, if we turn not unto Him by unfeigned repentance, and a more entire obedience. Truly, my lord, the helps which I (unworthy I) have offered will rise up in judgment.

This opportunity I have now taken to see whether the many suggestions against me have not, at least, blotted me out of your Excellency's favour, and to find you at so much leisure in absence to read these few lines, whom I despair to speak withal here by reason of the multitude of visits and

intrusions that will and did oppress you. This messenger, who hath once had the sweet influence of an attendance nigh your lordship, hopes to be reinstated again into the like favours.

I am still, My Lord,

Your Excellency's most humble and most faithful servant,

PETER CHAMBERLEN.<sup>5</sup>

14th Dec. 1650.

"For his Excellency the Lord General Cromwell."

From this it is obvious that, at one time, the Doctor was held in favour by the Lord General—had, as he says, "the sweet influence of an attendance nigh his lordship." Now at length, he had been passed by and neglected; and, presumably as the consequence of derogatory "suggestions," he was "blotted out of favour." He speaks of the future with the consciousness of a prophet and the concern of a patriot, and concludes by seeking a renewal of former favours; but it would appear that such official consideration was for the time denied him. On April 10th, 1651, he issued a broad-sheet "Plus Ultra: To the Parliament of England"—a protest against taxation. As the years passed, and the Protector rose in power, the Doctor became increasingly opposed to him, and other pious men of Baptist principles occupied a similar ground. Their hopes of a Commonwealth on a theocratic basis were disappointed; and, at length, they rejoiced at the accession of Charles II.

### Pastor and Teacher.

Those were days in which a number of questions were being discussed in the Baptist community: consequently, we find Dr. Chamberlen (1) considering the "Fourth Principle," or laying on of hands—in the baptism of believers, the ordination of ministers, etc.; and (2) taking sides, without halt or compromise, on the Sabbatarian issue, the sanctification of the seventh day of the week instead of the first, in the acts of public worship. An educational value which is no longer given to it, was then conceded to public debate. Hence we have records of a debate between Dr. Chamberlen and Mr. Cranford in 1652, on the Ministerial Orders of the Presbyterians, and the right of private men, or tradesmen, to preach without ordination; of a "discourse" between Dr.

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<sup>5</sup> From "Confessions of Faith," pp. 318, 19 (Hanserd Knollys Library).

Chamberlen and Captain Kiffin (in 1654) in regard to the Imposition of Hands; and of a dispute on the Sabbath question, early in 1659, between Dr. Chamberlen, Mr. Coppinger, and Mr. Tillam, on the one part, and Mr. Jeremiah Ives on the other, conducted in the Stone Chapel, by St. Paul's, London, and lasting four days.

Thus the distinctive position implied in worshipping on an exceptional day of the week, on the seventh instead of the first, had come to mark Dr. Chamberlen, and claimed him till the end of his life as an unwearied advocate. As we learn from the inscription on his tombstone, he became a Sabbatarian in 1651, and it would appear that he was speedily recognised as a leader among the community; but while designated a minister, in the sense that the society with which he was associated was known as "the church that walketh with Dr. Peter Chamberlen," there is no reason to conclude that he exercised a "one-man" officialism. It was no uncommon thing in those days for a small church to have two or more ministers—pastors and teachers—in addition to sending forth messengers and evangelists to labour in other parts of the country.

Though bold in controversy, it would seem that the Doctor was singularly gracious in the circle of fellowship which he cultivated. Among the messengers of the Church in Coleman Street, London, with which the Doctor was connected in 1653, and thereabouts, was one Thomas Tillam, who had been labouring, with much success, at Hexham in Northumberland.<sup>6</sup> This good man, "the unworthiest of the ministers of our Lord Jesus," while on a visit to London, wrote a long letter to "the beloved saints in Christ, walking in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel at Hexham." In the course of his communication, which, though actually undated, was certainly sent in 1653 or 1654, he wrote:—

My dear ones, in the spirit of truth and love, you will not surely be offended, yt the hand of my Father hath drawn me to ye great city, to obey him in those pretious truths, which he pleased to make known unto me, and which he hath filled brimfull of mercy in ye practice of. For after I had enjoyed heavenly communion with my pretious brethren of Coleman St., and had acquainted them with my purpose to obey Xt

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<sup>6</sup> It is difficult to trace with certainty all the church movements of the worthies named. It would seem that up to this point Doctor Chamberlen and Thomas Tillam were connected with the church presided over by Hanserd Knollys; but the Sabbatarian and other practices involved changes, in other words, new associations, which, with the information at present available, cannot be located with precision.

in ye 4th principle,<sup>7</sup> and had received this gracious letter to ye sts. in Cheshire, from them,<sup>8</sup> I departed in much love, to ye melting of my hard heart, and having found many congregations in ye practice of the ordinances I wanted, I was, by a blessed hand, guided to my most heavenly Br. Doctor Chamberlen, one of ye most humble, mortified soules, for a man of parts, yt ever I yet met with, in whose sweet society, I enjoyed ye blessing of my God, by the laying on of their hands, and after a love feast, having washed one another's feet, we did joyfully break bread, and concluded with an hymn: in all wch the singular majesty of Xt shined forth to ye mighty conviction of some choyse spectators.<sup>9</sup>

**"The Church that Walketh with Dr. Peter Chamberlen."**

About the same time, in 1654, as a protest against the civil administration that prevailed during the Commonwealth, there was issued "A Declaration of the Several Churches of Christ and Godly People in and about the City of London: Concerning the Kingly Interest of Christ, and the Present Sufferings of His Cause and Saints in England." The signatories number 150, and among them appears a group of names representing the Sabbath-keeping Church, as follows:—

<p>" In the name of the whole church that walketh with Dr. Peter Chamberlen "</p>	}	<p>Peter Chamberlen John Light John Spittlehouse John Davis Richard Ellis Richard Smith Robert Feak<sup>10</sup></p>
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Thus we see Dr. Peter Chamberlen as a leader of the Seventh-Day movement, and in active support of "the Fourth Principle" and other observances that could not but make him, on the one hand, a "tower of strength" to a despised party, and, on the

<sup>7</sup> The laying on of hands, a practice introduced into the Baptist body in 1646. (Heb. vi. 1.)

<sup>8</sup> From other records it appears that Mr. Tillam and another brother were commended to Hill Cliff, Warrington, by this church, on April 3rd. 1653.

<sup>9</sup> From Douglas's "History of Baptist Churches in the North of England," p. 57. See also "Records of Churches of Christ—Fenstanton, etc.," p. 323 (Hanserd Knollys Library).

<sup>10</sup> From "Seventh-Day Baptists in England," by W. M. Jones, D.D., in "Jubilee Papers" 1892.



other hand, a butt of scorn to the fashionable and thoughtless crowd around. One detractor, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Philolethes" (sic) was particularly bitter in criticism and insinuation. He concluded one indictment by declaring that "amongst all that have disturbed our peace none have troubled themselves more to lesse purpose than that learned gentleman Doctor Peter Chamberlaine"; and subsequently, issued a broadsheet, entitled "A dose for Chamberlain and a pill for the Doctor, being an answer to two scurrilous pamphlets written against the author of 'The Asses' Complaint.'" It is beyond question that the Doctor made many enemies by his bold propagandist methods. When, for instance, he asked "Whether is the sprinkling of infants an ordinance of God or of man?" offence was naturally given in various circles where there was little disposition to discuss the question.

Even as, throughout the Interregnum, Dr. Chamberlen was very active, so also on the eve of the accession of Charles II., he continued to raise his voice, by issuing—in June 1659 "A Scourge for a Denn of Thieves," being a proposal to raise money wherewith to pay up army arrears; and in December, the same year, "Legislative Power in Problemes." In the latter he propounded seventy-eight problems, having for their object the conferring of temporal benefits on the people. In a word, he proposed that the laws of man should be brought more into conformity with the laws of God. The issue was thus indicated:—

Then shall the oppressor cease and no more complaining be heard in the street. Taxes shall be no more, and Trade and industry should abound more than in our neighbours blessed Bee-hive. The poor should have bread and the army no more arrears. The youth and flower of our nation instead of being infected with the crabbed nonsensical study of the laws, or drawing straight lines by crooked rules raise up their noble fancy to the wisdom of Arts and Arms. The depths of Nature and knowledge of the whole world to the honour of God and themselves and not imbesling but enriching of their estates and prosperity. Then peace and safety, plenty and prosperity, should overflow the land.

For I, P.C. as a servant and witness of the Word of God do testifie with my right hand lift up to heaven that if our present parliament and army shall hearken to the Word of God and fulfil the humble desires of his servant, that all these things shall immediately ensue, but if they despise and harden God will overturn and make them desolate as in the twinkling of an eye, and will raise up another authority and power more

wise and glorious on whom he will pour his spirit and they shall do these great things and more. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Isa 1. 20 and 40, 5; 58. 14.

*“Read and believe, or read and tremble.”*

Having reached the age of fifty, the Doctor maintains the prophetic rôle—as he had already done when writing to the Lord Protector—and with great boldness he denounces the sins of his age. Had he been a minister of the ordinary kind, assuredly he would not have been endured: but he was a physician, a man with skill, mental and manual, such as could not be dispensed with in society, and so he was tolerated, and allowed to say his say.

On the accession of Charles II., as we have already observed, the Doctor once more found himself Physician in Ordinary to the King. He now issued letters and pamphlets from his “Cottage in Coleman Street.” At that time Coleman Street seems to have been a veritable centre of Nonconformist meeting-houses, of various denominations; but, as there is no evidence of a Seventh-Day Chapel having been among them, it seems quite likely that the brethren of that order met in the Doctor’s house, and thus, in a very definite sense, constituted “the Church that walketh with Doctor Peter Chamberlen.” Once more, the Doctor was in close association with the “Low Countreys”; and among other schemes formulated during residence among the Dutch was one for an invention whereby ships and carriages might be propelled by wind, “navigating with all winds in a straight line”—he was for harnessing natural forces in the interests of locomotion! Another was for a system of writing and printing phonetically; and for both these pieces of enterprise he obtained patents under which material benefit might accrue.

### Appeal to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Nevertheless, with all such show of versatility, the Doctor could not be shielded from the sneers and jeers of those who resented his religious teaching, which, as we have seen, was not merely Puritan, but such as connected him with one of the smallest of the sects that could find a place of shelter under that name. Hence, like his contemporary John Bunyan, and many other earnest men in all generations, he was denounced as “mad”; and like Francis Bampfield, a leader in his own denomination, about the same time, he was called “Jew” by way of contempt for his Sabbath-keeping consistency. He was not for taking all this “lying down.” The scornful epithets aroused his indignation, and he was not slow to say so. Accordingly, in 1662, he published,

“A Sober Man’s Vindication.” Therein he spoke of the evils that had come upon the nation; and confidently suggested that the schemes which he had advanced (though to no purpose) would have saved many lives—an allusion to his proposal in regard to the Midwives; would have dealt with the diseases and distempers of the people—an allusion to his project for the setting up of Public Baths; and would have relieved the wants of the poor—an allusion to his appeal for a Public Bank. He wrote from “My Cottage over against the Low Conduit by the Church in Coleman Street.”

Later still, smarting under the wildest calumny, he wrote to Archbishop Sancroft as follows:—

My Lord, I understand that I have lately been traduced to Yor Grace as a Jew by a Combination of Ale Hous Gossips, some Mechanick Church Wardens, with their pettifogging Solicitor; of a Name that is not to be found in all his pretended Dwellings. . . . To be a Jew as the Apostle writes to the Romans is a Crown and Honour to any Christian. But as they intended it, in opposition to the Name & Faith of Jesus Christ, I abhor them. Nor can all they are worth make Reparation for the Slaunder and Scandal, & for the Prejudice they do me in Practice. If therefore Yor Grace would give me leav to compell them to appear before Yor Grace, to make good their Words: I desire no better Judge to approve my self as Good a Christian, as the 19th Article of the Church of England can require. Which none of my dirty-mouthd Adversaries can prove of them-selves.

Written in the style of the time, this letter is dated July 21st, 1680, three years before the old man’s death. And, if the Archbishop had been so disposed he could have given redress, for in those days Bishops had civil powers that are no longer vested in the hands of spiritual functionaries. It does not appear, however, that the Archbishop was drawn in the direction intended.

### Disputations with Jews.

Though objecting to be styled “Jew” by way of contempt, Dr. Chamberlen took a real interest in the scattered nation which that name properly designates. Observing as he did the same Rest-day as the Jews, he felt himself to be in a position of special advantage when approaching them in regard to the Messianic claims of his Master and Lord. He had disputations with some of them, and wrote a pamphlet entitled “The Sons of the East” (1682). This opened as follows:—

Greatly Beloved Nation and People most Honoured of God . . . I have heard that some (of the most worthy amongst you) have made some Enquiry after a few Christians, who keep the Sabbath of the Lord your God, and Ours. Wherefore (by the Providence of God) having been the First that endeavoured to rescue that Commandment from the Triple-crowned-little-Horns Change of Times, and Laws, as was foretold by your prophet Daniel, (chap. 7. 25). . . .

I am in some hope that God may provoke you to jealousy by a People that were not then called his People. (Deut. 32. 21) And having been conversant with several of your Nation in Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, I think my self the more engaged to salute you in mine own Native Country. . . .

Peculiar interest attaches to this action of the aged servant of Christ. It reminds us of another such incident, evincing a concern for the Jewish people, which took place a short time previously. Then, in 1657, Henry Jessey, of Swan Alley Baptist Church, hearing that there was famine in Jerusalem, by reason of a war between the Swedes and the Poles, collected in London the sum of £300, and sent the same with letters on the Christian Faith; seeking thereby to draw the attention of Jews in Jerusalem to the Messianic claims of the Lord Jesus.<sup>11</sup> May we not discern in the action of both these men a ministry which, in spirit and object alike, anticipated such Missions to the Jews as, in the past century or so, have grown up in our midst as well as in other countries?

### Address to the Governor of New England.

A few years before this, it came to the knowledge of the Sabbath-keepers in London that certain of their brethren in the Colony of Connecticut were suffering persecution. This brought out another side of the character of Dr. Chamberlen, who promptly wrote letters of encouragement to the Seventh-Day Baptist Church at Newport, in the Colony of Rhode Island, of which the Connecticut Sabbath-keepers were members, and likewise enclosed an address to the Governor of New England in the following terms:—

Peter Chamberlen, senior Doctor of both Universities, and first and eldest Physician in Ordinary to His Majesty's person, according to the world, but according to grace a servant of

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<sup>11</sup> Calamy's "Nonconformist's Memorial" (Palmer's Edition, 1802-3), vol. I. p. 131.

the Word of God—To the Excellent and Noble Governor of New England:

Grace, mercy, peace and truth, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you, that you may abound in heavenly graces and temporal comforts.

I have always had a love for the intended purity and unspotted doctrine of New England; for Mr. Cotton was of the same College and University, of Emmanuel in Cambridge, as I was; and so was Mr. Hooker, and others, with whom we were all contemporary; and I never knew them, but of a holy life and conversation. I also knew Colonel Humphrey, Sir Richard Saltonstall, and Mr. Peters, who were of note among you, and Sir Henry Vane, who all had some share in the foundation of your government. But certainly the first intentions were never to debar the truths of Scripture and liberty of conscience guided thereby; but to suppress sin and idolatry, and prevent all the adulteries of Rome, to whom all things are lawful, especially lies and hypocrisy, to promote their damnable doctrines, covetous superstitions, and blasphemous supremacy. It is great wisdom to suppress sin, but not the liberty of a good conscience; and whilst men grant liberty of conscience, not to admit liberty of sin. All magistrates have not attained to this wisdom; else England had been long since freed from popery and perjury. Whatsoever is against the ten commandments is sin, (Rom. 3, 20; 1 John 3, 4.) and he that sinneth in one point is guilty of all, because he that spake one word of them, spake all, and he added no more (Jas. 2, 10, 11, Ex. 20, 1.); while Moses and Solomon caution men so much against adding to or taking from, (Deut. 4, 2; Prov. 30, 5, 6) and so doth the beloved apostle (Rev. 22 18, 19), what shall we say of those that take away of those ten words, or those that make them void and teach men so? Nay, they dare give the lie to JEHOVAH, and make Jesus Christ not only a breaker of the law, but the very author of sin in others, also causing them to break them. Hath not the little horn played his part lustily in this, and worn out the saints of the Most High so that they become little-horn men also? And if you are pleased to inquire about these things, and to require any instances or information, be pleased by your letters to command it from your humble servant in the Lord Jesus Christ,

PETER CHAMBERLEN.<sup>12</sup>

Most Worthy Governor, Sept. 1, 1677:

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<sup>12</sup> "Seventh-Day Baptist Memorial," vol. 1 (April 1852).

For the times, this must be pronounced a singularly judicious letter. The author claims friends among those who had been, or still were, on the spot. His denunciation of the Papacy is in terms that were well understood among Protestants; and the days were those in which such as were against Rome were finding it dutiful to say so.

### A Plea for Christian Union.

Later on, at the very close of his life, the Doctor was in correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury, urging measures for the reconciliation of all who held the Faith of Christ. He thought the time had come when they should find, "not how far they can Differ and Quarrel Each other, but How Close they can Unite and become all of Christ." In view of the advance of Popery—he asked who it was that "was killing and wearing out the saints of the Most High" and "thinking to change times and laws" (Daniel 7.)—he insisted that in the absence of reformation there would be "certain desolation." Once again the Doctor was prophet, and once again his tidings were of coming woes. The letters were numerous, and though not rising altogether above the prejudices of the times, they showed a beautiful spirit. Moreover, they foreshadowed in the seventeenth century a highly-cherished realization of the nineteenth, when, in 1846, the Evangelical Alliance was formed in London, and now embraces in its membership, in all parts of the world, Christians of many denominations—"One Body in Christ."

The more intimate Church movements of the man and his circle cannot be indicated in the absence of material setting forth, with precision and in detail, those concerns of his life. There is no doubt that, in spite of the petty wrongs which he suffered, he was a man who found great joy in the worship of God among his own people. It would appear that, from time to time, the church with which he was connected, equally with others of the same order, came under changeful influences. There is no doubt that one of these bodies gave rise to the meeting in Mill Yard, Goodman Fields, which has become historic in the denomination in Great Britain. This church, moreover, claims that Dr. Chamberlen was its leader at the time of which we have been speaking—possibly co-leader with John James the martyr. Since that time, Mill Yard has had many migrations, and its present centre is at Canonbury Lane, N.

### Death and Resting-Place.

Peter Chamberlen died in 1683. His family relations, other

than those already given, cannot be better presented than in the inscription on the altar tombstone which covers his remains as they rest in the churchyard of Woodham Mortimer, near Maldon, Essex.<sup>13</sup> In that village, situate some seven and a half miles from the county town of Chelmsford, he resided during his later years, and lived in the Hall, a property adjoining the churchyard. He is said to have erected the building which now occupies the Hall grounds; and he must in his day have admired the noble cedar tree which for centuries has graced the front.

Like many another mansion in the neighbourhood, the Hall had its secret room—a welcome place of refuge in times of persecution—which in this instance was immediately over the porch. There, in 1818—that is, 135 years after the death of the owner—were found, packed away in a box concealed beneath the floor, a number of midwifery forceps and other instruments, some family trinkets, and, wrapped in a piece of paper, a solitary tooth. It was evidently the wife who saved this last relic, for the paper bore the words “My husband’s last tooth.” The various articles were described in the “Transactions” of the Medico-Chirurgical Society (Vol. XXVII).

J. W. THIRTLE.

[To be Concluded.]

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<sup>13</sup> See copy of inscription in frontispiece, page 7.