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ANNALS

OF THE

AMERICAN PULPIT;

OR

COMMEMORATIVE NOTICES

OF

DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN CLERGYMEN

OF

VARIOUS DENOMINATIONS,

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FIVE.

WITH HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS.

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BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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VOLUME IV.
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ANDREW FLINN, D. D.*

1800—1820.

ANDREW FLINN was born in the State of Maryland in the year 1773. His parents, though in humble life, were much respected for their honesty and piety. When he was little more than a year old, they migrated with their family to Mecklenburg County, N. C., where his father died in August, 1785. Thus he was left under the immediate care of a widowed mother, with six small children, and with but stinted means of providing for their worldly comfort. She, however, was most faithful to her maternal obligations, and, as the reward of her fidelity, was privileged, before her death, to know that all her children were members of the visible church.

Andrew, the subject of this sketch, early gave indications of a superior genius. Being of a docile temper and active mind, his youthful developments promised well for an eminently useful life, provided he could have the benefit of a liberal education; but this the straitened circumstances of the family seemed to forbid. Some of his friends, however, observing that he was a youth of extraordinary promise, encouraged him to commence a course of study, and volunteered their aid to enable him to prosecute it. Accordingly, by vigorous and persevering application, under the instruction of the Rev. Dr. James Hall, and one or two others, he soon gained such knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and some branches of science, that he was qualified for admission into College. In due time, he entered the University of North Carolina, where he acquitted himself well both as a scholar and a Christian; and received, with considerable marks of distinction, the degree of Bachelor of Arts, in 1799.

From early childhood, under the influence of his excellent mother, his mind had taken a serious direction, and his heart had become deeply and permanently impressed with Divine truth. Hence he seems to have had the ministry of the Gospel in view from the commencement of his education; and, though he trembled in view of its responsibility, all his impulses and convictions were in favour of engaging in it. Accordingly, he placed himself under the care of the Presbytery of Orange, and, having gone through what was then considered a regular course of theological study, he was licensed by that Presbytery to preach the Gospel, sometime in the year 1800. His first efforts in the pulpit excited great attention, and marked him as one of the most popular candidates of the day. Having preached for some time at Hillsborough, and in some other places, he accepted, in January, 1803, an invitation to supply the pulpit in Fayetteville, which had then been vacant about a year, in consequence of the Rev. John Robinson having resigned his pastoral charge. Here his preaching proved highly and universally acceptable. The previous steps having been taken,—he was, in the month of June, regularly ordained to the work of the ministry, and installed Pastor of that Church. On this occasion, the solemnity of ordination was witnessed in Fayetteville for the first time, and it drew together a vast concourse of people.

* Rev. Dr. J. P. Wilson's Fun. Sermon.—MS. from Rev. Dr. Leland.—Foote's Sketches of N. C.—Manual 2d Presb. Ch., Charleston, by Rev. Thomas Smyth, D. D.

Until the settlement of Mr. Flinn, it had been common in that whole region to administer the ordinance of Baptism to children at home, or in some private house. The custom had grown out of the fact that there were at that time so few ministers, and their places of preaching were so irregular and distant, that parents felt obliged to call upon them to baptize their children, whenever they had opportunity. Mr. Flinn, regarding this as a serious evil, set himself to remedy it. On Sabbath, the 22d of April, 1804, the first public baptism of children took place in Fayetteville, in the Court House, and in the presence of a large and deeply interested assembly. The numerous relatives and friends of the parents gathered around them, and gave them the Right Hand of Fellowship, thus cordially testifying their approbation of their example. From that time the ordinance was administered in public.

Mr. Flinn was indefatigable in the discharge of his duties as a Pastor; and was obliged, besides, to teach a school, in order to make out a competent support. But in the latter part of the year 1805, his united labours as Pastor and Teacher became so oppressive, that he felt himself obliged to resign his charge. He now removed to Camden, S. C., where he was instrumental in organizing and building up a very respectable Presbyterian Congregation. After labouring there for a short time, he went to Williamsburg District, and preached for a while to the Churches of Bethel and Indiantown. But it was not long before he visited Charleston, and preached several times in the Scotch Presbyterian Church. So great was the sensation produced by his fervid eloquence, that a project was immediately formed to build a new and elegant Presbyterian Church in the upper part of the city, with the express intention to secure his pastoral services. And such was the enthusiasm evinced on the occasion, that a very large subscription was raised, and the foundation of an edifice laid, which cost not less than a hundred thousand dollars. While this new church was in process of erection, the congregation was organized, and obtained the use of a vacant Methodist place of worship, in which Mr. Flinn commenced his ministry, and continued to preach until the new edifice was completed. He was installed Pastor of the Congregation on the 4th of April, 1811. In November of this year, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of North Carolina. In 1812, he was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

As Charleston was undoubtedly the theatre of Dr. Flinn's most important labours, so it was here especially that he gained his wide and brilliant reputation. He soon came to be known extensively in the Church,—and in the North as well as the South,—as one of the most impressive and attractive preachers of his day. His labours in Charleston were attended with a manifest blessing, and both his Church and Congregation had a rapid and healthful growth. He continued in this connection till the close of his life. He died after a long and painful illness, on the 24th of February, 1820, in the forty-eighth year of his age. In his last moments he took an affectionate farewell of his mourning family and friends, and then, with perfect composure, raised his hands and eyes to Heaven, and said, "Jesus, into thine hands I commend my spirit." A Sermon commemorative of his life and character was preached, in September following his death, to the people to whom he had ministered, by Rev. George Reid. The Rev. Dr. James P. Wilson, of Philadelphia, Dr. Flinn's intimate

friend, preached a similar discourse, shortly after his death,—an outline of which, taken by a stenographer, was afterwards printed, in connection with a brief memoir of Dr. Flinn's life. Mr. Reid's Sermon was also printed.

Dr. Flinn's publications are a Sermon occasioned by the death of the Hon. Judge Wilds, delivered by the desire of the gentlemen of the Bar of Charleston, 1810; a Sermon preached at the Dedication of the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, 1811; and a Sermon commemorative of the Rev. Dr. Keith, 1814.

Dr. Flinn was twice married. His first wife was Martha Henrietta Walker, who died in 1808,—the mother of one daughter, who was married to the Rev. John Dickson.* His second wife was Mrs. Eliza Grimbball, widow of John Grimbball, by whom he had no issue.

FROM THE REV. A. W. LELAND, D. D.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
COLUMBIA, S. C., June 8, 1853. }

My dear Brother: I had no personal acquaintance with Dr. Flinn, previous to his settlement in Charleston, in 1810. But, as I became Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in that city, in 1813, I was in habits of such close intimacy with him that I could not fail of being well acquainted with his character as a Man, a Christian, and a Minister. Such impressions as I received in respect to him, I cheerfully communicate to you.

In his personal appearance Dr. Flinn was both attractive and commanding in a high degree. Dignity and mildness characterized his whole deportment. Though rather below the ordinary height, his presence always commanded profound respect. His voice, his manner and countenance, were most pleasing and persuasive. Probably his powerful eloquence in the pulpit hardly produced more salutary impressions, than the kindness of his manner, and the charm of his social intercourse.

As a preacher, he was distinguished by earnestness, solemnity, and pathos. He maintained and vindicated the doctrines of grace with singular boldness and ability. He was thoroughly a Presbyterian of the Old School. The all-absorbing object of his ministry was to awaken the consciences of men, and lead them to the Saviour. The Cross and the Judgment Seat were ever prominently presented. In his pastoral labours, in private lectures and prayer meetings, his whole heart was evidently engaged to save the souls committed to his charge. Hence, as might be expected, the attachment of his flock was most devoted; while his affection for them was manifested, not only by his untiring labours to promote their spiritual good, but by a prompt rejection of several overtures to induce his removal to most advantageous situations.

In his attendance upon the judicatories of the Church, Dr. Flinn was faithful and exemplary. Whether he was found in the General Assembly, or in the meetings of Synods and Presbyteries, his personal influence, his judicious counsels, and his glowing zeal, were always highly appreciated.

I may say with confidence that Dr. Flinn was exceedingly endeared to all who were brought near to him. He was a most sincere and faithful friend, and would

* John Dickson was born in Charleston, S. C., November 4, 1795; was graduated at Yale College, in 1814; pursued his theological studies partly in private and partly at the Andover Seminary; was licensed to preach by the New Haven West Association; and, as he was prevented from settling as a regular pastor, by the state of his health, he engaged in teaching, and was for some time Professor of Moral Philosophy in Charleston College. Having supplied many churches, at different periods, especially the Third Presbyterian, First Baptist, and Mariners', Churches in Charleston, he removed to Asheville, N. C., where he founded both a Male and a Female Academy, the latter of which was the germ of the present Methodist Female College. He died in Asheville, September 28, 1847. He published a volume of ten Sermons, entitled, "Essentials of Religion."

always be on the alert to serve you by any means in his power. In his relations to the community, he was benevolent, public spirited and actively useful,—making it evident to all that he had learned to live not for himself alone. He was particularly distinguished for his liberality and zealous advocacy in sustaining all the benevolent institutions of the Church. His efficient labours and pecuniary contributions in the early endowment of some of them were worthy of all praise. And of his ministry it may be said with much truth that “he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people were added to the Church.”

I will close these fragmentary recollections of my beloved and lamented brother by an illustrative anecdote, which I received upon such authority, that I am sure of its truth. On one occasion, a rebellion broke out among the students of the University of North Carolina, who became so enraged that they actually offered personal violence to the Professors. Mr. Flinn, being on the spot, and disapproving of the procedure, came in for a share of their indignation. While they were actually pursuing him with a view to deal their blows upon his person, he mounted a stump, and appealed to the infuriated mob in so persuasive and eloquent a strain, as not only utterly to disarm them, but to change their raging menaces into shouts of delighted admiration. This incident, as I have reason to know, first disclosed to him his extraordinary powers of eloquence, and thus had an important bearing upon his subsequent course.

I am affectionately yours,

A. W. LELAND.

JAMES INGLIS, D. D.*

1801—1820.

JAMES INGLIS was born in the city of Philadelphia in the year 1777. His father, James Inglis, was a Scotchman, who came to this country in early life,—about 1760. His mother, who was of Huguenot ancestry, was born in Ireland, but came also to America in early childhood,—about 1748, and passed the period of her minority chiefly in Philadelphia.

The subject of this sketch was about three years old, when his father removed to the city of New York; and there he (the son) was reared and educated. He was graduated at Columbia College in 1795. Shortly after, he commenced the study of Law under Alexander Hamilton, and, having passed through a regular course, was admitted as a practitioner, and for a short time actually practised at the New York Bar. His mind having become deeply impressed with the subject of religion, he resolved to abandon the profession on which he had entered, and devote himself to the ministry. He studied Theology under the direction of the venerable Dr. Rodgers of New York, and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New York in the autumn of 1801. He visited Baltimore soon after, and in February, 1802, was called to succeed the Rev. Dr. Allison as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in that city. He accepted the call, and was ordained and installed the last Sabbath in April following,—the Sermon

* MSS. from his son,—Rev. G. S. Inglis, and Rev. Dr. J. C. Backus.