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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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By ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern  
District of New York.

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.

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### 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.

on the occasion being preached by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, President of New Jersey College.

In November, 1802, he was married to Jane S., second daughter of Christopher Johnson, of Baltimore,—a lady of great intelligence and most exemplary piety, who died on the 2d of September 1816, a little less than four years before himself. Shortly after her death, he addressed a letter to his particular friend, the Rev. Dr. Muir of Alexandria, detailing the progress of her decline, and the triumphant exercises of her spirit, with singular pathos and power. It was published in the "Monthly Visitant,"—a periodical which Dr. Muir at that time conducted.

The degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the College of New Jersey in 1811.

Dr. Inglis' public career seems to have been, for the most part, of uniform tenor, and distinguished for the splendour and attractiveness of his ministrations, rather than for any extraordinary visible and enduring results. He died suddenly, after coming out of a bath, on Sabbath morning, August 15, 1820, leaving behind him a family of seven children; one of whom, *George S.*, has since become a minister of the Gospel.

Dr. Inglis' publications are a Sermon delivered in the First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore on a day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1808; a Missionary Sermon delivered in the city of Philadelphia, before the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1812; and a Discourse delivered in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of Baltimore, before the Lieutenant Colonel, the officers and soldiers of the First Regiment of Artillery, 1814. Shortly after his death, in 1820, a selection from his Sermons, together with some of his Forms of Prayer, were published in an octavo volume.

I saw Dr. Inglis for the first time in the spring of 1809, at Ellington, Conn., where he attended the meeting of the General Association of Connecticut, as a delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Though I was a mere boy, and only saw him in the pulpit, I well remember how much I was impressed by his dignified appearance, his fine voice and commanding manner, as well as the point and power of many of his sentences; and if I had never heard of him afterwards, I think I should always have remembered him as among the most eloquent preachers to whom I have ever listened. I distinctly recollect that his sermon, which was on the text,—“God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God,”—closed with these words—“Delay not, careless sinner, delay not one instant,—that instant may be thy last;” and the expression, though not in itself remarkable, yet uttered in his impressive and emphatic manner, sent a thrill to my inmost soul. His preaching produced no inconsiderable sensation among the ministers as well as the people at large; and I recollect to have heard of his having preached on the succeeding Sabbath at Hartford, to the great admiration of the whole community. President Dwight heard him, either during that visit to the North, or at some other time; and, in hearing a recitation of my class in College, on Blair's Lectures, he remarked to us that the most signal instance of precision in style that he remembered to have met with was in Mr. Inglis of Baltimore.

A year after my graduation, I passed a week in Baltimore on my return from Virginia, where I had been residing, and during that time had not only an opportunity of hearing Dr. Inglis preach twice on the Sabbath, and once on a week-day evening, but saw him several times in his own family. I found him exceedingly affable and kind, full of amusing anecdote, and disposed to dwell much on his visit in New England at the time I had heard him preach; and he seemed to have treasured the most minute circumstances attending it. His sermon on Sabbath morning, which was much the most striking that I heard from him, was aimed against bigotry on the one hand, and latitudinarianism on the other. It was delivered without notes, and, as he afterwards told me, was not written; but the sentences were formed so perfectly, and uttered with so much fluency and self-possession, that it might easily have been taken for a carefully written discourse. I believe he was accustomed to close his discourses in a somewhat abrupt, and often most effective, manner; and thus it was with the sermon to which I refer. "Strangle heterodoxy," said he;—"Strangle the monster till not one drop of blood remain in his poisonous veins; but spare the heterodox. Crush error; but, upon the peril of your soul's eternal salvation, touch not the errorist. My religion forbids it. My religion abhors it. My religion will not suffer it under any form or palliative whatever—the spirit of the Gospel forbids it—Let us pray."

FROM THE HON. ALEXANDER NISBET.

BALTIMORE, December 23, 1847.

My dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 22d ult., and am truly sorry that you should have thought it necessary to make any apology for addressing me on such a subject, and for so worthy an end. At the time I received your letter, my engagements in Court and otherwise were such as to prevent me from giving it immediate attention; and now that I have more leisure, I am greatly in doubt whether my recollections will be of sufficient importance to answer the purpose you have in view.

I removed to this place in the autumn of the year 1801. At that time Dr. Allison, the first Pastor of the only Presbyterian Church then in the city, was too ill to attend to his usual public duties. From that period until the election of Dr. Inglis, the congregation depended upon occasional supplies. After the death of Dr. Allison, the prominent candidates were Dr. Alexander, Dr. Inglis, and Dr. Glendy. The latter was strongly recommended by Mr. Jefferson, who was then President of the United States.

Dr. Alexander was first chosen by the congregation; but, owing, I believe, to some *faux pas* or tergiversation in the prosecution of the call, he did not accept. The contest then lay between Dr. Inglis and Dr. Glendy; and, after a very spirited and close election, Dr. Inglis was chosen. The supporters of Dr. Glendy broke off from the First, and formed the Second, Presbyterian Church, of which Dr. Glendy continued the active Pastor, until, in his declining years and health, Dr. John Breckenridge was called to be his assistant.

At the time Dr. Inglis first preached in our church, Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith of Princeton, being then on a visit here, conversed with me freely about him, and expressed the highest admiration of his talents. He even went so far as to say that he envied him his style of writing. I have myself always admired his style as remarkably clear, forcible and eloquent, though I have sometimes thought it too much condensed. I read his printed sermons to this day with great satisfaction; though it is not improbable that my estimation of them is



somewhat enhanced, from having heard them delivered in such a splendidly oratorical manner, as well as from the early associations in the church which they bring to my remembrance.

His occasional apostrophes were very impressive, and sometimes almost paralyzing. I have yet a distinct recollection of the effect of several of them. As an example I may refer you to one that I find in his published sermon on the text, "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you;" James iv. 8. The closing paragraph is as follows:—

"Ministers of the cross—servants of the living God—commissioned to carry to the expiring saint the annunciation of a glory that shall shortly be his—you come to teach him—how often do you learn of him—how to die. From his weakness you derive strength; from his mortality, life. You instruct—you exhort—you pray for him—you endeavour to guide his devotions,—but ere long you confess yourselves his pupils. In his soul is the earnest of immortality; the radiance of salvation beams from his eyes; and his tongue, eloquent in the agonies of nature, and touched by the fire that blazes on the altars of Heaven, proclaims—Live the life of the righteous, and your death shall be like his. Be my soul with thine, expiring believer! I had rather be that dying saint than any living sinner on the throne of empire! Be mine that requiem with which they chant their own blessed spirits into eternity,—Jehovah is my Shepherd; I shall not want, &c. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day on this earth,—and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God—whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold—therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth; for thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer me to perish in corruption—thou wilt show me the path of life—in thy presence is fulness of joy—at thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. Hallelujah—blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to HIM that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever, Amen."

The last Sermon in the volume, on "Universal Praise," would be considered by many, in some of its parts, as overstrained and grandiloquent. But, during its delivery, there was neither time nor room for such criticisms; and such was the effect upon the congregation, that, although the Doctor concluded with prayer, as usual, yet some, on leaving the church, were inquiring how it happened that he omitted the last prayer. I mention these things to show you how perfectly he possessed, and how skilfully he practised, the great art of oratory. But when I thus speak of the power and charm of his manner in the pulpit, I do not mean in any degree to detract from his judgment, eloquence, and taste, as an author. I ought to say, however, in respect to his published sermons, that I do not think the selection the best that might have been made.

It was the universal testimony of Christians of all denominations, that Dr. Inglis was unsurpassed in the fervency and impressiveness of his devotional exercises. I remember, before his election, an aged and respectable member of the church told me that he had been advised by one of our old Presbyterian fathers to choose a Pastor with reference to his prayers, rather than his preaching; and for that reason he preferred Dr. Inglis. Few, I imagine, who ever heard him pray on a special occasion, have forgotten how aptly, concisely and gracefully he combined the various circumstances having a bearing upon it, thus investing the occasion with the deepest interest, and filling the minds of his hearers alternately with emotions of solemnity and delight.

I will only add that, though there was occasionally some appearance of sternness in his manner, yet, in his ordinary intercourse with society, he made himself highly acceptable, and there are not a few to testify that he was a most agreeable and charming companion and friend. He had a strong relish for good society, and

greatly enjoyed a cheerful conversation, in which he always bore a conspicuous part, and shone with no common lustre.

On looking back upon what I have written, it seems to me very meagre, and I fear may prove to you very unsatisfactory. Such as it is, you must take it, making due allowance for defect of memory, and the long period that has elapsed since Dr. Inglis' death.

I remain, with great regard,  
Yours truly,

ALEXANDER NISBET.

FROM J. MEREDITH, Esq.

BALTIMORE, October 23, 1855.

Rev. and dear Sir: I regret that, after so great a delay, for which I owe an apology, I find that I have little more than a few general recollections of Dr. Inglis to communicate. For, although I enjoyed the privilege of much personal intercourse with him, time has effaced from my memory many circumstances that would have better served to delineate his character.

The possession of his portrait—a gift from himself—aids my remembrance of his personal appearance. In stature he was somewhat below the medium height; but still well formed for strength and activity. His forehead was broad and massive; his hair and complexion dark; his brows heavy; his eyes gray and piercing, but their expression weakened in the pulpit by his habitual use of glasses. His features were strongly marked, and when in repose, wore an expression of austereness. Yet in society he was cheerful, affable and courteous.

Dr. Inglis was largely gifted with many of the essential elements of oratorical power. His voice was full, clear, and capable of great varieties of modulation. His enunciation was deliberate and distinct; his action subdued but graceful; always appropriate, and seemingly unstudied. His whole manner was eminently dignified and impressive.

He was accounted a sound theologian; a good classical scholar, and familiar with the best English literature, which, with a pure and discriminating taste, he often made tributary to the adornment and illustration of his discourses.

He usually preached with his sermon before him, but did not confine himself to it; for I do not remember to have heard one in which many of the most striking and eloquent passages were not evidently extemporaneous.

I well remember, for example, the one to which you have alluded,—on Praise. It was preached to conciliate a portion of his congregation, who had protested against the introduction of the organ as an objectionable innovation upon the long established forms of Presbyterian worship. I was present; and, even at this distance of time, retain a vivid remembrance of the effect produced by that discourse. So vivid that I can almost imagine that I still hear the exultant hosannas of praise,—peal after peal echoing in every heart; that I yet see awe and admiration figured on the countenances of old and young;—that I again listen to the closing strain of that triumphant anthem,—to that sublime and wonder-working peroration which, before it ended, startled so many to their feet, as if by an electric shock.

If you have read the sermon in the published volume, you may well think this description much too highly coloured. But that is not the sermon as I heard it: the voice, the eye, the action, are not there;—the flashes of eloquence which so dazzled the mind's eye of every hearer, are not visible on the printed page;—the preacher himself, in the solitude of his closet, could not rekindle them. "Every attempt to preserve on paper the splendid efforts of impassioned eloquence, is like gathering up dew drops, which appear as jewels and pearls on the grass, but turn to water in the hand—the essence and the elements remain,—

but the grace, the sparkle, and the form, are gone” These are the words of a poet; but they are as true as they are beautiful.

The prayers of Dr. Inglis were not only remarkable for the devoutness with which they were offered, but for their method and condensation, and were frequently interspersed with well chosen passages from the Episcopal Liturgy.

In closing this brief and imperfect sketch, I will only add that, in the general judgment, Dr. Inglis was ranked—I think justly—among the great pulpit orators of his time; and is therefore well worthy of a distinguished place in your gallery of eminent divines.

I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Rev. and dear Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

J. MEREDITH.

FROM THE REV. THOMAS B. BALCH.

RINGWOOD, Va., March 16, 1848.

My dear Sir: My earliest recollection of Dr. Inglis goes no farther back than the autumn of 1809. At a meeting of the Presbytery of Baltimore, which was then held in the church in Georgetown, D. C., he officiated in the afternoon of the Sabbath that was included in the sessions of that body. Being a youth at the time, my admiration of him as a pulpit orator was possibly excessive; but there was something about him which well nigh entranced me. His stature was indeed rather low; but he stood up with a bold front, and spoke with an air of authority, inspired by a perfect mastery of his subject. He seemed to have measured exactly the space that was to be filled by his voice. His intonations were remarkably fine, and his general manner simple, though it afterwards became more showy and imposing. I recollect that his text on the occasion referred to, was from the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews:—“Forasmuch then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death.” The discourse, though very comprehensive, was very brief: no man loved better than he the *multum in parvo*.

At the next meeting of the Presbytery, which occurred in my father’s congregation, Dr. Inglis had become so popular that his services in the pulpit were put in requisition more than once. One discourse, I well remember, on the text,—“Who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.” It was a grand display of the power of eloquence; but, as I just intimated, it was evident that a change had passed upon him. His gesticulation was more copious, his intonations more studied, and his general manner more lofty; but he was still wonderfully attractive and impressive.

Dr. Inglis uniformly read his discourses; but his reading was very perfect. He wasted no time in introducing his subject. He made liberal use of the Bible in all his sermons, quoting appropriately from every part of it in confirmation of his positions. He was a preacher admirably suited to occasions of public interest, and such occasions called forth some of his finest efforts. He read Massillon, Bourdaloue, and Bossuet, in the original, and admired them greatly. He studied the Psalms profoundly and devoutly. He was a great lover of music, and liked particularly a fine performance upon the organ.

Besides the volume of his sermons printed after his death, there were several in pamphlet form published during his life time. One of these I regard as particularly eloquent. It was delivered before the Military of Baltimore, in commemoration of the Battle of North Point; but I suppose that it has gone down to the grave, where this class of productions generally find an early resting place, though it certainly deserved a better fate.



Dr. Inglis had many excellent moral qualities, and fine domestic traits, upon which it is needless to enlarge. He also evinced a truly devout spirit, though I do not claim for him, as he certainly did not claim for himself, an exemption from the infirmities of our common humanity. By his congregation, as well as by his more immediate friends, he was tenderly and deservedly beloved. I will only add that

I am yours as ever,

THOMAS B. BALCH.

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## CONRAD SPEECE, D. D.

1801—1836.

FROM THE REV. WILLIAM BROWN.

AUGUSTA COUNTY, Va., April 26, 1856.

Dear Sir: You have kindly requested me to send you a brief memoir of my immediate predecessor, REV. CONRAD SPEECE, D. D. His name is well worthy of a place among those whom the good would love to remember. He was a true son of Virginia—was born, lived, and died in her bosom. He was great among the greatest of her preachers,—few proclaiming the Gospel more abundantly, or more powerfully. A man too of acknowledged genius and learning, of sincere piety, of warm friendships, of attractive social qualities, all together making him the life of every company he entered.

Many will think at once of his almost herculean frame, six feet and two inches of height, and, in its prime, about two hundred and thirty pounds of weight—rawboned and muscular withal. Without the slightest pretensions to gracefulness either of person or manner, his presence was very striking, and once seen, he was never forgotten. The lapse of twenty years still finds thousands in our churches with vivid impressions of his sermons—chaste in style—laden with massive matter—here and there a turn of thought or expression surprisingly original. In manner plain and solemn, save an occasional remark of outbreking oddity,—a thing not without regret to his best friends, as well as to himself, but so much a part and parcel of Dr. Speece as to place it fairly beyond all help. And how many of us seem yet to hear the deep tones of his German voice, as it swelled out from the pulpit in the bass of his well known favourites, Mear, St. Martin's, and Old Hundred!

His father's name was Conrad Speece, the son of Conrad Speece, who migrated to this country early in the last century from Manheim, a town of Baden in Germany. The name of his mother was Ann Catharine Tournay, whose ancestry was from Deux-Ponts in France. He was born in the town of New London, Bedford County, Va., November 7, 1776. While his parents had but little of this world's goods, they were of excellent character for honesty and industry. His mother was a woman of approved piety. His father was not a member of any church, but before his death, which was in 1820, gave full expression to his entire trust in Christ as his Saviour.

In 1781, the family removed a few miles from New London, where the subject of this notice was employed in agricultural labours till 1792,