

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.

BY WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D.

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seen him often, and he says.—‘All is well, and all *will be well.*’ Of the physicians he said,—‘Yes, yes, it is very well, they are useful men in God’s hands. They may be useful in patching up this tabernacle a little. If it be raised to usefulness, I am content. If not to usefulness, I do not desire it. I feel no concern about the issue of this: the will of the Lord be done.’

“Sabbath Evening.—I have again seen my dear Pastor, and discern the clay dissolving fast. The words of dying saints are precious; and his are few. He thus accosted me:—‘I am just awaiting the will of God; for the present, I seem a useless blank in his hand; I can say very little; be not too anxious for my life, but transfer your care to the Church; my life or death is but a trifle; if the Lord have any use for me, it is easy for Him to raise me up still; and if He do, it will be agreeable to observe his hand distinct from men; if He should not, you will all be cared for; leave all to Him and seek his glory.’ He could say no more, nor will I to-night, but address myself to our Lord on his behalf, yours, my own and our dear concerns.

“April 23, Monday.—It is finished. My dear Minister’s dying scene is over. On Thursday, the 19th of this month, a quarter before ten o’clock, A. M., the Lord received his spirit and laid his weary flesh to rest. He had a sore conflict with the king of terrors, who seemed allowed to revel through every part of his mortal frame. His legs were mortified to his knees. He had not been able to lie down for four weeks, and died in his chair. Like his Master, he groaned, but never complained. He had a draught of his Master’s cup; but the bitter ingredient, *desertion*, made no part of it. I had the honour to close his eyes, and to shut those dear lips from whence so many precious truths have proceeded, and to mix with the ministering spirits who attended to hail the release. \* \* \* This is a great work finished. Dr. Mason was a city set on a hill. He was with the army during all the War, after the evacuation of New York; had great influence over the soldiers; preached the Gospel of peace uniformly, but never meddled with politics, though he was fully capable. In every situation the Lord supported him in uniformity and consistency of character; and carried him through without a single spot or stain.”

I have written under great infirmity, being now in my eightieth year; and I only regret that you have not found one more capable than myself of performing the service you have asked of me.

Wishing you success in all your labours of love,

I remain, Reverend Sir,

Yours, with Christian respect and regard,

JOANNA BETHUNE

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## ROBERT ANNAN.\*

1761—1819.

ROBERT ANNAN, a son of Robert Annan (his mother’s maiden name was Landales) was born in the town of Cupar, Fife, Scotland, in the year 1742. Of his early history nothing definite can now be ascertained. After pursuing the usual course at the University of St. Andrews, he commenced the study of Theology under the venerable Alexander Moncrieff, one of the original Seeders. Among his fellow-students were Messrs. John Mason and James Proudfit, who afterwards became fellow-labourers with him in this country. He was licensed by the Associate Presbytery of Perth, when only about nineteen years old, and was, shortly after, appointed by the Synod to visit the American Colonies in the capacity of a Missionary. He was little inclined to accept the appointment, but it seems to have been scarcely at his option whether or not to do so, as the Synod, from their earnest desire to supply the waste places of the New World,

\* Christian Instructor, 1845.—MS. from Samuel Annan, M.D.

had passed an Act, prohibiting the name of any probationer appointed to America from being proposed to any vacant congregation in Scotland.

Mr. Annan arrived in New York in the summer of 1761, and, after labouring as an itinerant about four years, was ordained and installed at Neelytown, N. Y., in 1765. Here he remained fourteen years, having charge at first of what are now the congregations of Hamptonburg, Little Britain, Graham's Church, and Bloomingburgh, though, ultimately, he confined himself to one of them.

When the War of the Revolution broke out, and through its whole progress, Mr. Annan showed himself a most earnest patriot, and not only in his private intercourse but in the pulpit vigorously defended the American cause. The following incident may serve as an illustration of his patriotic ardour:—In the fall of 1775 the people of Boston, being reduced to great straits in respect to provisions, sent over to the State of New York for aid; and, accordingly, a public meeting to respond to this application was held in the town of Hanover, (now Montgomery.) As no other person could be found who was able to speak to advantage in vindication of American rights, Mr. Annan, finally, though reluctantly, consented. The discussion, after a while, began to wax unduly warm, when, to prevent its becoming a bitter strife, Mr. Annan suddenly cried out,—“As many as are in favour of assisting the people of Boston and the cause of liberty, follow me.” The effect was well-nigh electric—as he moved out of the house, nearly the whole assembly followed him.

Mr. Annan's fervid patriotism, and especially his denunciation of the British Government, during the period of the Revolution, made him a man of mark, and attracted the attention even of the Father of his country. On one occasion, while the army was in winter quarters, Washington, accompanied by Colonel Hamilton, the Marquis Lafayette and General Knox, paid him a visit. On their arrival, they found him engaged in teaching two of his sons the Greek Testament. They stayed a considerable time, Washington taking the lead in the conversation. Colonel Hamilton, after the other three had left the room, took up the Greek Testament and looked at it as if he were familiar with it. Mr. Annan supposed that he was the only one of the illustrious party that could translate a word of it.

Of the union by which the Associate Reformed Synod was constituted Mr. Annan was an earnest and efficient advocate. He was deeply impressed with the idea that the Providence of God had, by the Independency of the United States, so reduced the difference between the two parties that there was no sufficient reason why they should remain any longer asunder; and the final effecting of the Union, which was, in no small degree, through his instrumentality, was a consummation which he welcomed with devout joy. At a later period (in 1802) he expressed himself decidedly favourable to a Union between the Associate Reformed Synod and the General Assembly.

In 1783 Mr. Annan removed from Neelytown to Boston, having accepted a call from the congregation worshipping in Federal street. This was originally an Irish Presbyterian congregation, and was, for many years, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Morehead. Although the congregation was composed, originally, of very thorough Presbyterians, yet, in the course of years, as the emigration from Ireland and Scotland to Boston declined, it had so far yielded to the surrounding influences of Independency, that, when Mr. Annan took the pastoral charge, it was scarcely more than nominally Presbyterian. During his residence in Boston, which was for about three years, he had a high reputation as a Preacher,

and was not altogether unknown as a man of scientific research. In the first volume of the Transactions of the American Academy of Science (Boston) there are several interesting papers written by him, one of which contains the earliest published accounts of the Mammoth remains discovered in Orange County.

In 1786 he received and accepted a call from the Old Scots Church, (Spruce Street,) Philadelphia. His relation to the Church in Boston had not been otherwise than pleasant; but as the Synod had made it imperative that he should "admit the Psalter used, and the mode of singing practised, in the Church of Scotland," and as he foresaw that this could not be done but at the expense of dividing the congregation, and as he had found it extremely difficult withal to maintain Presbyterian discipline in Boston, he thought it best, in view of all these circumstances, to avail himself of an opportunity to enter another field of ministerial labour.

Mr. Annan's removal to Philadelphia was little favourable to his personal comfort; as a portion of the Spruce Street Church, headed by the former Pastor, Mr. Marshall, had seceded in consequence of the union, and were, at this time, engaged in a legal prosecution for the recovery of the property; in which, however, they were unsuccessful. The contest between the parties was carried on in an earnest and even bitter spirit, and it is said to have operated, more than any other circumstance, to retard the growth of the Spruce Street Congregation.

Mr. Annan continued in this charge until 1801 or 1802, when he removed to Baltimore, to take the pastoral oversight of a congregation which had been then recently formed in that city. Here he remained until 1812, when he resigned his pastorship, and was shortly after succeeded by the Rev. John M. Duncan. He retired now to a place which he had purchased in York County, Pa.; but, though he never took another pastoral charge, he was usefully employed in supplying vacant churches in that region. He kept up his habits of study, and his powers of mind remained in full vigour, to the close of life. His death was occasioned by his being thrown with great violence from his carriage. He had preached on the previous Sabbath from Romans v, 2: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Not being able to finish the discussion, he had appointed the next Sabbath to complete it, and was on his way to the church when the fatal disaster occurred. He was taken up and carried home in a state of insensibility, and never rallied sufficiently to recognize any member of his family. He survived only two or three days, and died on the 5th of December, 1819. His remains were interred in the Octo-*rora* burying ground, now connected with the Associate Congregation.

The following is a list of Mr. Annan's publications:—An Overture illustrating and defending the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith: prepared by appointment of the Associate Reformed Synod of North America, 1787. A Concise and Faithful Narrative of the various steps which led to the Unhappy Division among the members of the Associate Body in the United States, 1789. Animadversions on the Doctrine of Universal Salvation, 1790. The Connection between Civil Government and Religion, 1790. Mr. Annan had a long controversy with Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia, on the subject of Capital Punishment, in one of the newspapers of that city, in 1790.

Mr. Annan was married (it is believed in the year 1764) to Margaret, daughter of William Cochran, of Carrollsburg, York County, Pa. By this marriage there were two children, *Robert Landales* and *William*, both of whom became

physicians—the former and the elder settled in Emmittsburg, Frederick County, Md., and died 1827; the latter settled in Philadelphia, and died in 1797. Their mother died on the 13th of October, 1793. The next year Mr. Annan was married to Elizabeth, daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Hawthorne, who lived near the village of Strasburg, Lancaster County, Pa. She died in Lane County, Pa., on the 23d of July, 1813. The children of this marriage were six,—three sons and three daughters. *Samuel*, the second child, studied Medicine, partly in this country and partly in Edinburgh, and has been a medical practitioner successively in Emmittsburg, Baltimore, Lexington, Ky., and St. Louis, Mo. *John Ebenezer* and *William* were both graduated at Dickinson College in 1824; both entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church; and the latter is now the Rev. Dr. Annan, of Pittsburg.

*John Ebenezer Annan* was born about the year 1803; and when he was in his ninth year removed with his father from Baltimore to his farm in Lancaster County, Pa. From early boyhood he was remarkable for his love of reading, though, up to his sixteenth year, he was principally occupied with the labours of the farm, enjoying no other advantages for education than are usually furnished by the common schools in the rural districts. Shortly after the death of his father, he entered the Classical School at Gettysburg, Pa., then under the care of the Rev. Dr. McConaughy, afterwards President of Washington College; and so rapid was his progress that, in about eighteen months, he was admitted to the Sophomore class in Dickinson College, then under the Presidency of Dr. Mason. In 1822 he became hopefully the subject of a revival of religion in College, and, some time after, made a public profession of his faith. He graduated in 1824 with the highest honours of his class. Notwithstanding he was now only in his twenty-first year, the uncommon vigour and maturity of his intellect, as well as his acknowledged rare acquirements, led the Trustees of Miami University, Oxford, O., to appoint him to the Professorship of Mathematics in that institution. Here he remained for several years, and, during this period, was vigorously engaged in the study of the higher branches of Mathematics, and wrote elaborate articles for several of the leading Scientific and Literary Reviews, including the "North American," and "Silliman's Journal of Science and the Arts." At this period also, he published *Strictures upon Raymond's Political Economy*, and *Brown's Philosophy*, which were written with great care and ability. But, as he was resolved to devote his life to the Ministry of the Gospel, he gave up his Professorship after a few years, and, having attended the Theological Seminary at Princeton during one session, was licensed on the 16th of May, 1829, by the Presbytery of Baltimore, to preach the Gospel. His first efforts in the pulpit were received with marked approbation. In July succeeding the period of his licensure, we find him on a missionary tour in Ohio, and labouring with great diligence and acceptance at Somerset, in Perry County, and throughout the surrounding country. He remained here until December, when he was ordained, by the Presbytery of Baltimore, as an Evangelist. Shortly after this he was invited to preach by the Presbyterian Congregation in Petersburg, Va., and, after supplying their pulpit a few Sabbaths, received a call to become their Pastor. He accepted the call, and was installed on the 10th of July following. He commenced his labours here under circumstances of great promise; but, in less than two months, was stricken down by the fever which is common in Southern latitudes, and especially dangerous to the unacclimated, and, after a very severe illness

of a few days, closed his earthly career, on the 29th of August, 1830. He had gone to attend a Ministers' meeting at Lewisburgh, Greenbrier County, in the interior of the State, and it was there that the summons to depart met him. In his character were united a noble intellect, a warm and generous heart and a devoted Christian life, giving promise of the highest usefulness in the ministry.

FROM THE REV. JOHN McJIMSEY, D.D.

MONTGOMERY, ORANGE COUNTY, N. Y., July 12, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir: In compliance with your request, I will now endeavour to give you a brief and faithful statement of my recollections and impressions in regard to the character and usefulness of the Rev. Robert Annan, one of the eminent fathers of our Associate Reformed Church. It was my privilege, early in life, to become personally acquainted with him, although it was a long period after his arrival in this country, probably thirty years,—the place of my birth and education being remote from the field of his ministry. He was, at the time I first saw him and heard him preach, at about, if not past, the meridian of life. He occupied the Moderator's chair when I was examined and licensed by the Presbytery, and addressed to me a solemn and affecting Charge on that occasion; and a letter of his, still in my possession, urging me to accept a call from Neelytown Congregation in Orange County, of which, in connection with Little Britain Congregation, he had himself been the Pastor, had no small influence in determining my choice; although I entertained a preference for Kentucky as the future field of my labours, which I had previously visited as a Missionary. As a Christian, he stood high with all who were acquainted with him; and the purity and integrity of his character as a Minister of Christ were never called in question; although, in particular instances, some might have thought that he scarcely paid sufficient deference to public opinion.

His ministry was highly acceptable, and there is reason to believe eminently useful, in the several congregations of which, for a longer or shorter period, he was Pastor. Although I took the pastoral charge of the Neelytown congregation long after the close of his ministry among them, I still found there abundant evidence of the happy effects of his labours. His memory, as an able, eloquent and faithful Minister, was still held, especially by aged and devout Christians, in the highest veneration.

As a Pastor, he was very instructive and very impressive. Erect and portly in his person, rising considerably above the common stature of men, with noble countenance and piercing eye, his whole appearance was commanding. He was not in the habit of fully writing out his sermons, and his speaking seemed extemporaneous; but he was always perfectly self-possessed, often rising to a high pitch of eloquence, his subject so animating and irradiating his countenance that one who was accustomed to hear him told me that it seemed to him that his face sometimes shone like the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount. The matter of his preaching was thoroughly evangelical, admirably uniting doctrinal instruction and practical Christian duty. He had a musical and well-regulated voice, and spoke with great ease and fluency; and though his gesture was not very abundant, it was natural and effective. While he delighted in preaching the evangelical doctrines, they were always so exhibited as to have a direct practical bearing. I heard him preach a sermon before the Synod from the text,—“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned”;—the object of which was to illustrate the nature of evangelical obedience, which he said was emphatically charity; love to God and to our fellow-men; and he expressed his regret that the original word

had not been translated *love*—that being its most proper and comprehensive sense: while the word *charity*, as now commonly used, is of a more vague and limited meaning. He mentioned to me, some time after, as a matter that deeply affected him, that one of his brethren came to him shortly after the delivery of his discourse, and inquired whether he had *him* particularly in his eye in some of his statements. This showed that his sermon had taken hold of at least one conscience.

It is admitted by all who knew Mr. Annan that he possessed uncommon ability and address in effecting reconciliation among brethren who were at variance, and in healing differences between ministers and their congregations. His speeches on such occasions were admirable, and breathed the most Christian and forgiving spirit. An instance of this kind occurred in the congregation of Salem, Washington County, during the ministry of Dr. Thomas Clark, he having been settled among them while Salem was yet a frontier settlement. Mr. Annan, after addressing the congregation on the subject of their difficulty in a tender and impressive manner, requested that all who wished the continuance of Dr. Clark's ministry among them would signify it by going out of the church at the East door, and those who felt differently to go out at the West door: the result was that the whole congregation, with the exception of one individual, went out at the East door, thus expressing, in the most public manner, their wish that their worthy minister should remain with them. Mr. Annan then, in no measured terms, administered a merited reproof to the individual who alone, and in the presence and against the express wish, of the whole congregation, could come out in this manner, against his Pastor, and a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ.

In the Judicatories of the Church Mr. Annan always took a prominent part, and exerted a powerful influence. He urged and defended his measures with great ability, and, as his natural temperament was warm and quick, he would sometimes, under a deep sense of the rectitude of his cause, be betrayed into expressions which could not be justified; but, as soon as he had taken time to reflect, he was always ready to acknowledge his error. With all his lofty bearing on some occasions, and severe as he was in his reproof of the conduct of wicked men, he cherished habitually a spirit of humility and meekness, and acknowledged to some of his Christian friends that the sallies of his temper gave him occasion for deep humiliation.

In his intercourse with his more intimate friends, his conversation sometimes betrayed a vein of pleasantry and wit, but in general it was marked by great dignity, and much of it was of a decidedly spiritual character. He seemed habitually to act under the influence of the Divine injunction,—“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” When dining one day with the late Dr. Mason, in company with several of the younger brethren in the ministry, the question was asked him, whether he had not been in the ministry half a century? He replied, “There about,” and then said, with great gravity, “When I had been in the ministry forty years, that passage of Scripture came very forcibly to my mind, ‘Forty years was I grieved with this generation.’” Dr. Mason, who was remarkable for repartee, immediately answered,—“I know not how that may be, but I believe that you have grieved some of this generation forty years.”

With much regard,

I am sincerely yours,

JOHN McJIMSEY.

FROM THE REV. J. M. MATHEWS, D.D.

NEW YORK, August 6, 1861.

My dear Dr. Sprague: It costs me no self-denial to record my recollections of the Rev. Robert Annan,—for I remember nothing concerning him that will not well bear the light; and little effort,—for my impressions of him are so distinct that I can have no doubt of their correctness. My acquaintance with him began while I was a student in the Theological Seminary—he was one of the Superintendents of the Institution, and, on account of his age and standing, generally acted as their Chairman. Though I was a young man and he pretty far advanced, I became quite intimately acquainted with him at that early period, and our acquaintance ripened into a friendship which continued till he was called to his reward.

Mr. Annan had an uncommonly commanding personal appearance. He had a large, full, well-set frame, and was slightly inclined to corpulency. He had a bright, piercing eye, and his whole countenance was expressive of high intellectual powers and great strength of purpose. His manner was as commanding as his person; though there was nothing stern or forbidding in his demeanour, there was a dignity that always secured respect, even veneration. He had fine powers of conversation, and his presence was always recognized as a leading element of interest in any company. His mind was decidedly of a superior order, clear, logical, discriminating, comprehensive; and it had been subjected to the highest culture. His feelings were eminently kind and genial, and though I think he was naturally excitable, and was capable of saying severe things, and did sometimes say them under the pressure of exciting influences, he generally exhibited great self-control.

As a Theologian and a Minister of the Gospel, he held a very high rank, not only in his denomination, but in the Church at large. He had been all his life a diligent student, and, with such powers as he possessed, it was impossible but that he should have made immense acquisitions. He preached with great power, and scarcely any clergyman came to the city of New York who attracted larger congregations. The fact of his having been one of the original formers of the Associate Reformed Body from the Associate and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, had made him very extensively known, and contributed to greatly increase his influence; though, independently of this circumstance, his acknowledged high ability as a Preacher would have made him much sought after. His sermons were a model according to the old Scotch standard—they were full of Scripture truth, brought out with great clearness and force, and delivered with a simplicity and boldness and fervour that made them well-nigh irresistible. His voice was clear and strong, his intonations free and natural, and his action abundant and full of significance. I have heard sermons from him that would not have dishonoured Dr. Mason in the days of his greatest strength. I ought to add that he was capable of great tenderness as well as great boldness and force; and sometimes the exhortation with which he closed his discourse would be in the highest style of the pathetic.

As a Writer, Mr. Annan was probably distinguished above any other minister of his communion, during the period in which he lived, unless Dr. John M. Mason were an exception. He had great tact and ability in controversy, and I think also he was not wanting in polemical taste. He always met his antagonist with great fairness as well as force, and his friends generally had little doubt as to the issue of any contest in which he might engage.

I call to mind the interviews which I used to enjoy with him, with heart-felt pleasure. With a memory which retained almost every thing that had ever been lodged in it, with an exuberance of good-humour and kindly feel-



ing, with a graceful facility of communication on every subject, and a most happy talent at adapting himself to every variety of character and condition, he seemed to me one of the finest specimens of intellectual and moral nobility which I had ever seen. He has impressed himself indelibly on the character of his denomination.

Very truly and affectionately,

J. M. MATHEWS

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## THOMAS CLARK, M. D.

1764—1793.

FROM THE REV. JOHN B. DALES, D.D.

PHILADELPHIA, June 24, 1849.

Reverend and Dear Sir: The position which the Rev. Dr. Clark long and usefully occupied in some of the most interesting portions of our country, I think, justly entitles his name to a place in your proposed work on the American Ministry. He was a faithful Minister of the Gospel, and a far-seeing and indefatigable labourer on behalf of the best interests of the community at large.

Of the particular time or place of his birth I have no certain information. That he was a native of Scotland, however, there can be no doubt; and that he early enjoyed the instructions and prayers of godly parents may be inferred from the fact that he always venerated the pious advantages of his youth, evinced a remarkable tenderness of conscience, and laboured in the ministry as if he had been thoroughly taught how to redeem the time by discovering and improving opportunities of doing good.

After a thorough course of study, he graduated at the University of Glasgow, and, during the War against the Pretender, in 1745 and 1746, did faithful service in the army.

According to a practice which was common with the young men preparing for the ministry a century since, Mr. Clark pursued a thorough course of Medical study also in the University, and took the degree of Doctor of Medicine. In this way he was often afterwards able to minister to the wants of the body, and thus more effectually reach the soul with his spiritual medicines. It was from this he obtained his usual epithet in this country,—“Dr. Clark.”

The earliest public mention made of him is in connection with the first meeting of the Associate Burgher Synod at Stirling, Scotland, on the 16th of June, 1747. At this meeting Congregations and Societies in various parts of the country made application to the Synod for advice “in their present circumstances,” and for a supply of preaching. In the unsettled state of things, and in the painful destitution of ministerial help, the Synod could give no immediate reply to these applications, but directed the Presbytery of Glasgow to take Thomas Clark and two other students of Theology, whom they also named, on trial for licensure. This the Presbytery did, and after pursuing his studies at Stirling, the next winter, under the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, who was the first that had charge of the Burgher students, he was licensed in the following April, (1748,) to preach the Gospel.