

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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District of New York.

General Washington, and the historiographer of the AMERICAN WAR. I take the liberty to insist on this. I hope you take minutes and keep a journal. If you have not hitherto, I pray do it henceforth. I seriously, and with all my little influence, urge this upon you. This may be a new and strange thought to you; but if you survive the present troubles, *I aver*—few men will be so well qualified to write the history of the present glorious struggle. God only knows how it may terminate. But however that may be, it will be a most interesting story."

The degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon Mr. Knox by Yale College in 1768; and, at a subsequent period, he was honoured with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Glasgow.

Dr. Knox died in St. Croix in October, 1790. He had a son bearing his own name, who was graduated at Yale College in 1800.

Dr. Miller states that Dr. Knox "published five or six volumes, chiefly Sermons, which are highly esteemed." Two volumes of his Sermons, printed at Glasgow, in 1772, are in the Library of the College of New Jersey. In an autograph letter of his, written in 1761, I find him expressing his intention to publish a volume of Discourses, chiefly on Infidelity, but doubting whether the volume may be most advantageously brought out in this country or in Europe.



GEORGE DUFFIELD, D. D.

1756—1790.

FROM THE REV. GEORGE DUFFIELD, D. D.

DETROIT, February 29, 1848.

Rev. and dear Sir: In compliance with your request, I cheerfully give you what facts I have been able to collect, with regard to the history of my grandfather.

GEORGE DUFFIELD was the third son of George and Margaret Duffield, who had migrated to the Colony of Pennsylvania, somewhere from 1725 to 1730, from the North of Ireland. They were of English extraction immediately, but the family originally were French,—of the Huguenots, who were forced to fly from France, and take refuge in England and the North of Ireland, on account of their Protestant faith, and in consequence of the edict of Nantz, and the persecutions that ensued thereon. The name was originally *Du Fielde*, but was anglicised, after the settlement of the family in Great Britain. George Duffield (the father) first settled in Octorara township, Lancaster County, Pa., but shortly after sought a richer soil, and established himself in Pequea township, of the same county, where his son George was born; and on grounds which remain to this day in the possession of his descendants. He died at the advanced age of eighty-four years, and was noted for his stern integrity and devoted piety.

George Duffield, the subject of this sketch, was born October 7, 1732. He received his academical education at Newark, De., where he afterwards officiated as classical Tutor. He was graduated at Nassau Hall in 1752; and having, about that time, become hopefully pious, he joined the Church under the care of the Rev. Dr. Robert Smith, of Pequea, and soon after commenced the study of Theology under his supervision. From 1754 to 1756, he was Tutor at the College at which he

was graduated. He was licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of Newcastle, March 11, 1756; having been married three days before to Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. Samuel Blair of Fagg's Manor; who, on the 25th of September, 1757, died and was buried at Carlisle, along with the infant child to which she had given birth. He received a call from the united Churches of Carlisle, Big Spring, and Monahan, now called Dillstown, and was ordained at Carlisle, September 25, 1761, by the Presbytery of Donegal.

It is well known that the Presbyterian Churches had, for some time previously, been agitated by the revivals of religion that had prevailed, and were eventually divided,—the parties being vulgarly called “Old Lights” and “New Lights.” In Pequea, Fagg's Manor, and Monahan, there had been gracious effusions of the Divine Spirit. Mr. Duffield was a zealous advocate and promoter of the revivals of that day, and was very popular as a preacher. His extemporaneous powers were remarkable, and his discourses rich in evangelical truth, and Christian experience. He sympathized with the friends and followers of Whitefield, and especially with Samuel Davies, and the Tennents, whose preaching was so effective. The church at Carlisle was one which had been recently formed in the village; the original settlers having built their church, and worshipped first in the house erected on their glebe, about two miles West of the borough of Carlisle, which became noted by the construction of extensive barracks as a frontier town. The formation of a new church in the borough, especially of one whose sympathies differed from those of the original church,—although it consisted chiefly of emigrants and settlers from other parts, who had participated in the revivals of religion of that day,—became the occasion of no inconsiderable difficulty; and there were obstacles thrown in the way of Mr. Duffield's settlement. Various reports of injurious tendency were put in circulation concerning him; and it was alleged especially that he had written a letter highly derogatory to the character and labours of the pastor of the original church. Much excitement prevailed, and he insisted that his letter should be produced, and the matter thoroughly investigated, previously to his reception and settlement. The result was a perfect acquittal from the offensive charges, after which his ordination took place.

During the pendency of his ordination and settlement in Carlisle, he was married, March 5, 1759, to Margaret Armstrong, sister of General John Armstrong, of Revolutionary memory, who was the father of the late General John Armstrong, Secretary of War during the administration of President Madison. By this marriage he had four children,—two of whom died in infancy. His youngest son, *George*, was, for many years, connected, as Register and Comptroller General, with the administration of the State of Pennsylvania, under the late Governor Thomas McKean.

At the time of his settlement in Carlisle and the united Congregations, each ten miles distant from the borough, the Indians were numerous in the vicinity, and often made hostile demonstrations, which required the body of the male members to arm themselves in self defence. In all these dangers he participated, cheerfully accompanying his flock to the camp, to administer to them there the consolations of religion. The Church at Monahan was in such an exposed situation, that, as a protection during the hours of worship, fortifications were thrown around it; behind which, while

those stationed on the ramparts kept watch, the congregation might, without distraction or fear, engage in the worship of God. During this period of peril, the institutions of God's house were greatly prized, social prayer was much practised, and the members of the church were knit together by the strong ties of common faith in their guardian God, and brotherly affection for each other. The late Rev. Dr. John McDowell,* for some time Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, attributed, under God, his conversion, when but a youth of eight years of age, to a sermon preached by Mr. Duffield in the church at Monahan, from Zechariah ix. 12. "Turn ye," &c.; in which he took occasion to illustrate, from the surrounding fortifications, the only safe defence which sinners can find,—namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. His deep interest in and sympathy with a population thus perilled and suffering on the frontiers, rendered him, throughout the whole of that region, exceedingly popular. So strong was the attachment to him that, in all perilous adventures, especially during the Revolutionary struggle, the men who had to take up arms for their homes, their liberties, and their lives, always welcomed his visits in the camp with the most cordial good will.

Mr. Duffield was a bold and zealous assertor of the rights of conscience, an earnest and powerful advocate of civil and religious liberty. During the pendency of those measures which were maturing the Declaration of Independence,—while the prospects of the Colonies seemed most gloomy, his preaching contributed greatly to encourage and animate the friends of liberty. He was not in the habit of writing out his discourses in full; but, having made a skeleton, and arranged his thoughts, awaited the inspiration of the occasion for the filling up. Several of these unfinished discourses which remain, breathe a spirit of the most pure and lofty patriotism, and withal are strikingly prophetic of the glorious scenes which were to open out of all that darkness in which the country was then enveloped.

During his ministry at Carlisle, he was twice earnestly called by the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, then worshipping in the Northwest corner of Arch and Third Streets, to become their pastor; and the Commissioners, with great zeal, prosecuted their call before the Presbytery. Both the Presbytery and himself, however, judged that his presence at Carlisle was of more importance at that time than in Philadelphia.

In the year 1766, Mr. Duffield was deputed by the Synod, in connection with the Rev. Charles Beatty, to make a missionary tour, and visit the families that had pressed their way along the Great Valley that stretches through Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, &c.,—commencing in the high lands in the vicinity of Newburgh, and running thence into Pennsylvania, and diagonally across that State. The object of this mission was to administer the offices of religion to those families, which had settled in what is now Franklin County, Pa., and through the range of country where Green-

* JOHN MCDOWELL, a native of Pennsylvania, was graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1771; was for some time Principal of St. John's College, Annapolis, Md.; accepted the Professorship of Natural Philosophy in the University of Pennsylvania in 1806, and was elected Provost in the commencement of the following year, which office he also accepted; but the state of his health was found to be incompatible with the duties he had undertaken to perform, and in 1810 he was compelled to resign both offices, and retire into the country. He afterwards evinced his attachment to the institution by supplying a temporary vacancy occasioned by the resignation of his successor; and, at a still later period, by a very valuable bequest of books. He received the degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Pennsylvania in 1807.

castle, Hagerstown, and other villages, now stand, as far as the Potomac, with a view to the organization of churches.

Some time after, Mr. Duffield was called to the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, where he officiated during the sessions of the Colonial Congress, anterior to and during the Revolutionary struggle. That church had been originally a branch of the First Presbyterian Church, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Ewing. A controversy arose between them and the parent church relative to their independence. Both the Presbytery and Mr. Duffield judged that it was his duty to accept the call, and remove to Philadelphia. The circumstances under which he was translated to that charge, in connection with the old feuds that had divided the entire Presbyterian Church,—not yet fully healed,—although the parts had again united, retaining their separate Presbyteries,—threw obstacles in the way of his labours at the commencement of his ministry. He was greatly admired as a preacher, and was well known as a bold, animated and decided Whig, resolutely contending against the encroachments on civil and religious liberty made by the government of Great Britain. On one occasion, shortly after his appearance in Philadelphia, the large church edifice, then standing on the corner of Third and Pine streets, which the First Church claimed to have under its control, was closed, and barred against his entrance, by their order, notwithstanding an appointment had been made for his preaching in it for the congregation accustomed to worship there, and by their direction. The house was opened by the officers of the Third Church, and Mr. Duffield was assisted through the throng that had assembled to hear him, and introduced through a window. News of the people assembling on Sabbath evening spread, and application was made to Mr. J. Bryant, the King's magistrate, to quell what was called a riot. The magistrate proceeded to the spot, and, shortly after the commencement of public worship, pressed his way into the aisle of the church, and before the pulpit,—on the very spot where, afterwards, Mr. Duffield's remains were interred, and where they yet sleep, commenced, in the name of the King, to read the Riot Act, and require the people to disperse. The congregation was composed of zealous Whigs, who could not endure Tory influence or authority. The principal officer of the congregation, a Mr. Knox, rose and ordered the magistrate to desist. He refused, and went on with his reading. A second time, the zealous champion of liberty, in the hearing of all the congregation, with loud voice, demanded that the magistrate cease from disturbing the worship of God. He still refused; when, without further ado, he seized the magistrate, who was a small man, and lifting him up, carried him through the crowd out of the house, and ordered him to begone, and not come back there to disturb the worship of God. The magistrate bowed to the stern asserter of popular liberty, and Mr. Duffield went on with his preaching. But the next day he was arrested and brought before the Mayor's Court, and was required to plead to the charge of aiding and abetting a riot, and give bail for his appearance for trial. He politely and respectfully refused to put in any plea, or to give bail, averring that, as a minister of Christ, he was performing the duties of his office and was no way accessory to a riot, of the existence of which there was no proof. The Mayor,—the late excellent Mayor Willing, said that such a procedure would greatly embarrass the Court, who would be compelled to send him to prison, if he did not plead and offer bail. His brother, Samuel Duffield, M. D., or other of his friends whomsoever

he might name, would be accepted by him as his bail. He still, with the utmost courtesy, declined. After some entreaty, the Mayor offered himself to be his bail, not wishing to remand him to prison. He cordially thanked his Honour for his unmerited kindness, but protested that he stood on the ground of principle, that he was called in the providence of God to assert the rights and liberty of a minister of Christ, and of a worshipping assembly, and denied the legitimate interference and cognizance of the King's government in such matters. The Mayor delayed, for several days, deciding in the case, and requesting him to take the subject into consideration, suffered him to withdraw to his own house, under the assurance that he must again appear before the Court, and give his definitive answer. The occasion and procedure were productive of great excitement. The news that the King's government were going to put Mr. Duffield into prison, spread through the city, and into the country, until it reached the region where he had formerly lived. Here the excitement became so great that the volunteer forces called the "Paxton Boys," to whom he was well known and by whom he was much beloved, assembled, and resolved to hold themselves in readiness to march, though distant a hundred miles and more, to the city of Philadelphia, if he should be imprisoned, and set him at liberty, in opposition to the King's government. The occasion and opportunity for their valour were never afforded; for he was never again brought before the Mayor's Court. He was allowed to pursue his ministerial duties, unmolested, and the First Church settled their matters with the branch, and recognised their right to call the minister of their own choice, without dictation or control.

Attempts, however, were made to prevent his introduction into the Presbytery to which the First Church and their pastor belonged. He insisted on his right, according to the social compact, to be received by them, refusing to commence his ministry in Philadelphia, with allowed implications of his character and orthodoxy. Eventually, when he had been so received,—that his presence might not molest men who did not sympathize with him in ecclesiastical matters, he voluntarily applied for, and received, a dismission to the other Presbytery, with whose members he had more especial affinity.

During a part of the session of the Colonial Congress, he was employed, with the Rev. Mr. (afterwards Bishop) White, as Chaplain to that Body. John Adams attended regularly on his ministry, and communed with his church, during the sitting of Congress in Philadelphia.

Mr. Duffield was eminently a man of devotional feelings and habits, and was instrumental in establishing the first prayer-meeting in any Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. It continued long after his death, and was held in the humble dwelling in which it was first instituted. So much did he value prayer, and so important did he feel it to be to excite and encourage the men that had left their homes and perilled their lives in the cause of freedom, to look to God and put their trust in Him, that he would occasionally, in the darkest hours of the Revolution, leave his charge, and repair to the camp, where the fathers and sons of many of his flock were gathered, and minister to them in the public preaching of the word, and personal converse. When the enemy were lying on Staten Island, and the American troops were on the opposite side of the Sound, on a Sabbath day, he preached to a portion of the soldiers gathered in an orchard, having ascended

into the forks of a tree for his pulpit. The noise of their singing arrested the enemy's attention, who directed several cannon shot to be fired towards the place whence it proceeded. As the shot came rushing through the trees, he suggested that they should retire behind a hillock, not remote from the spot where they were,—which was done under the enemy's fire, without injury, and there they finished their religious exercises. He was with the army in their battles and retreat through Jersey, during that dark and nearly hopeless period of the Revolution, and was almost the very last man that crossed the bridge over the stream immediately South of Trenton, before it was cut down, by order of the American General. For this preservation he was indebted to a Quaker friend, whom he had essentially aided in his hour of trial,—though of politics opposed to his own,—and whose deliverance he had been the means of securing. The British officers had put a price upon his head, and were particularly anxious to destroy him, because of the influence he exerted among the soldiers of the American army. After the retreat from Princeton, he had retired to a private house in Trenton to seek repose, and was not aware that the American army had taken up their line of march, and had nearly all crossed the bridge, until his Quaker friend, having ascertained that he was in the town, sought him out, and gave him the alarm, just in time for him to escape, before the bridge was destroyed by the retreating army of Washington.

He continued the pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church until the day of his death, and was greatly respected and beloved by them. His death was occasioned by an attack of pleurisy, which ensued upon exposure at a funeral,—having officiated on one Sabbath in his pulpit in full health, and the next lying at the point of death. He died in Philadelphia among the people of his charge, February 2, 1790, aged fifty-seven years, and was interred in the middle aisle of the church which had been the scene of his labours. His Funeral Sermon was preached by the Rev. (afterwards Dr.) Ashbel Green, from Revelation xiv, 13.

There is, it is believed, a universally concurring testimony to the fact that he was an eminently devoted Christian, and an eminently faithful minister. In his natural temper he was buoyant and playful. He was the original of the "hot mush story," and one or two others of a similar character, when he was in College; and, at a still later period, he would sometimes have his joke, even at the expense of putting in jeopardy the feelings of a friend. He lived, however, habitually under the influence of invisible and eternal realities. He was perhaps not more remarkable for any thing than the strength of his faith. Frequently he was left without means to supply the immediate necessities of his family; but his faith failed not, and his gracious Lord never forsook him. On one occasion, his son had apprized him, on Saturday night, that the family were nearly destitute of provision, and that it would be necessary to repair to market early on Monday morning. He was absolutely without means, and knew not where to look for aid, as his people also were in a suffering condition; but he dismissed the subject from his mind for the Sabbath, remarking to his son,—“The Lord will provide.” During that day, a sealed letter was put into his hands, which, according to his custom, remained unopened till Monday morning. On opening it, it was found to contain a sum of money sufficient to sustain his family, till they were otherwise relieved from embarrassment. But whence it came, or through whom it was sent, he never knew. The faith which, on

Saturday night, prompted him to say to his son,—“The Lord will provide,” he found, on Monday morning, had been most signally honoured.

He took an active part in the organization of the Presbyterian Church after the Revolution, and was the first Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. He published an Account of his tour with Mr. Beatty, along the frontiers of Pennsylvania, and also a Thanksgiving Sermon for the Restoration of Peace, December 11, 1783. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Yale College in 1785.

I am truly yours,

GEORGE DUFFIELD.

SAMSON OCCOM.*

1756—1792.

SAMSON OCCOM was an Indian of the Mohegan tribe, and was born at Mohegan, an Indian settlement on the river Thames, between Norwich and New London, in the year 1723. His parents, like the rest of the Indians, led a wandering life, and supported themselves chiefly by hunting and fishing. None of the tribe could read, and none had any better dwellings than wigwams. When Occom was a boy, the Rev. Mr. Jewett,† minister of the parish that is now Montville, was accustomed to preach to these Indians once a fortnight; and, after a while, a person went among them to teach them to read. During the great religious excitement that prevailed about the year 1740, the Indians were brought somewhat under a religious influence by the visits of some of the ministers in that region, and a number of them were induced to repair to the neighbouring churches. Occom, among others, became deeply impressed by the truth which he heard, and, after some six months of anxiety and distress, believed himself to have gained “the good hope through grace.” This change occurred in the year 1741, when he was in his eighteenth year.

From the time that his mind became enlightened, and his heart, as he hoped, renewed, he had a strong desire to become the teacher, especially the religious teacher, of his tribe. He applied himself diligently to learn to read, with such helps as he could command, and was soon able to read the Bible. In December, 1743, he obtained admission into the school kept by the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock of Lebanon; and he remained with him four years, evincing, during the whole time, the utmost docility and diligence. In 1748, he taught a school at New London; but soon left it, and was engaged in a school among the Indians, at Montauk, on Long Island, where he continued ten or eleven years. At first, he was there simply in the capacity of a teacher; and he devoted himself with great zeal and fidelity to the instruction of both children and adults; but having, after some time, received license to preach from the Windham (Conn.) Association, he joined to his office as teacher, that of preacher; and he preached not only to

* Buell's Ord. Sermon.—Dwight's Trav., II.—Mass. Hist. Coll. IV, V, IX, X.—Allen' Biog. Dict.—Doc. Hist. New York, IV.

† DAVID JEWETT was graduated at Harvard College in 1736; was ordained pastor of the church in Montville, Conn., October 3, 1739; and died June 6, 1783, aged sixty-nine.