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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.

his clerical duties with a particularity that was truly astonishing. He could recall the texts from which he had preached, and the places where he had preached from them, and the mode of treatment and the persons present, and the effect produced, with an accuracy that seemed almost incredible. He was perhaps more opposed to reading sermons than almost any minister of any denomination during the period of his ministry. He believed the subject of every sermon so important, that the man who feels a proper interest in it, and has the requisite furniture for the sacred office, will make such preparation, and will go into the desk with such emotions, as will enable him to speak, and speak with freedom and power, extempore. He was not opposed to writing sermons, but utterly opposed to their being read. On one occasion, when a distinguished Doctor of Divinity was preaching, and the house became so dark that he could not read his sermon without much difficulty, and was finally obliged to cut it short and show an abrupt conclusion, Dr. Waddel, who was sitting by me in the church, unconsciously exclaimed loud enough to be heard by myself and others in the same pew,—“he is served right.” He believed every minister was under obligations to preach where an opportunity was offered;—that he should not refuse to preach because he might not have expected to be called upon, or because others were present who ought to preach and would not. “If no one else will preach, I will try to,” was his motto. He loved his duty as a minister of the Gospel—he was ready, at all times, as far as in his power, to discharge that duty. He rejoiced to see the work of the Lord prosper,—no matter by whose instrumentality it might be carried forward. He was greatly beloved by the common people of the country, who visited him with freedom, and were ever received with the welcome which so much endears a minister to his flock. In the Southern States, he needs no monument but the recollection of those who knew him; and so long as they shall survive, his praise will be in all the Churches *where they survive.*

Very truly, I am yours in the Gospel,

A. CHURCH.



GEORGE BUIST, D. D.*

1793—1808.

GEORGE BUIST, a son of Arthur and Catharine Buist, was born in Fifeshire, Scotland, in the year 1770. His father was a respectable farmer. Having gone through his preparatory course, he entered the College of Edinburgh in 1787, where he enjoyed the instruction of some of the most distinguished men of the age, and gained a high reputation both as a scholar and a man of original genius. He was remarkable for his proficiency in classical learning, and especially for his minute and thorough acquaintance with the Greek language; and Professor Dalzell is said to have shown his high estimate of his attainments in this department, by employing him as his assistant in preparing for the press a part of his *Collectanea*. He was thoroughly versed also in the Hebrew, French, and Italian languages. Indeed, there was no branch of knowledge included in a thorough Scotch education in which he was not a proficient.

* Memoir prefixed to his Sermons.—MS. from Hon. Mitchell King.

In the year 1792, he was admitted an honorary member of the Edinburgh Philological Society, and about the same time published an Abridgment of Hume's History of England, which was favourably received, as was indicated by its passing to a second edition. He contributed also some important articles to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

The Presbyterian Church in Charleston, S. C., being vacant, and wishing to obtain a pastor, addressed a letter to Principal Robertson, Dr. Blair, and the Rev. Alexander Hewat, their former Pastor, who had returned to Scotland, requesting that they would "send" them a "gentleman bred in the communion and principles of the Established Church of Scotland to be" their "minister." They add—"We hope we may be allowed to say, without the imputation of vanity, that he will preach to a polite, well informed congregation, and that he will appear at the head of the Presbyterian interest in this State." Mr. Hewat being absent, Doctors Robertson and Blair complied with the request of the Church, and offered the vacant place to Mr. Buist. He consented to their proposal; and the following is an extract from the letter of Doctors Robertson and Blair, by which he was introduced to the Church:—"After much inquiry and several consultations, we have pitched upon Mr. George Buist, preacher of the Gospel. We are both acquainted with him, and know him to be a good scholar, an instructive preacher, well bred, and of a good natural temper. We have no doubt but he will prove an acceptable minister to the Congregation, as well as an agreeable member of society."

Mr. Buist arrived in Charleston in June, 1793, having received ordination previous to his leaving Scotland. He was received with great cordiality by the Church which had called him, and was regarded, from the first, both as a minister and a man, with very general favour.

In March, 1794, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of Edinburgh,—he being at that time less than twenty-four years of age. It was procured at the suggestion of some prominent individuals in his Congregation, and through the instrumentality of Doctor Blair.

In the year 1805, Dr. Buist was appointed Principal of the Charleston College. He accepted the appointment, and continued to hold the office as long as he lived, though he still retained his pastoral charge. His liberal acquirements, as well as his sound and well matured views of college discipline, eminently qualified him to be the head of a literary institution.

Dr. Buist was cut off in the full vigour of life, and in the midst of his usefulness. He died suddenly on the 31st of August, 1808, after an illness of three or four days, in the thirty-ninth year of his age. His Funeral was attended by an immense throng,—the service on the occasion being performed by his intimate friend, the Rev. Dr. Furman, of the Baptist Church.

Dr. Buist was married in 1797 to Mary, daughter of Capt. John Sommers. She was a native of South Carolina, though her father was from Devonshire, England. Mrs. Buist died in 1845. They had six children,—four sons and two daughters. Of the sons, two became ministers of the Presbyterian Church, one a lawyer, and one a physician.

In 1809, a selection from Dr. Buist's Sermons was published in two volumes, together with a brief sketch of his life.

FROM THE HON. MITCHELL KING.

CHARLESTON, S. C., 17th July, 1852.

My dear Sir: I do not feel myself at liberty to decline a compliance with your request that I would furnish you with my recollections of the late Dr. Buist; for there is probably not now alive in South Carolina another individual whose relations with him were so intimate as mine, especially during the latter years of his life. Before he was called by the unanimous voice of the very distinguished gentlemen, then forming the Board of Trustees of the College of Charleston, to take charge of that institution, I, then a very young man, had made his acquaintance, and sat under his ministry. I was then keeping a school on my own account. He soon invited me to accept a situation in the College. That invitation I accepted, and remained in the institution for a considerable time after his death. Indeed I did not finally leave it until I had been admitted to the Bar, and was about to enter on the practice of my profession. Our intercourse was intimate and confidential. In his very short absences from the College, his communications in respect to its government were generally made to me. He owned a farm about four or five miles from town, at which he frequently spent his Saturday holiday. Thither I sometimes accompanied him as his sole companion, and almost every Sunday I dined with him. No one could have fuller or better opportunities of knowing his opinions, his character, his love of letters, his intense desire of improvement, his devotion to the principles of the Church to which he had dedicated himself—no one, out of his own family, I believe, more sincerely lamented his loss.

Dr. Buist was a large man, about six feet high, with strongly marked features, expressive of what he actually possessed,—much determination and strength of character. His shoulders were very broad, and his whole frame muscular and active. His appearance was well calculated to command respect. His manners were kind and conciliating, and, without being in the slightest degree obtrusive or dogmatical, he had none of the bashfulness or awkwardness of the mere scholar. Indeed, he was eminently a man for society,—fond of conversation, and able and willing to take his full share in it without engrossing it.

His style of preaching was very impressive. By great diligence and attention he had almost wholly overcome the Scottish peculiarities of pronunciation, and only a practised and acute ear could have discovered that he was a native of Scotland. He read admirably. He very rarely ventured on an extemporaneous discourse; and the graces of his delivery won the attention and conciliated the favour of his hearers. He was much respected and beloved by his Congregation, and had great influence with them. His church was well filled,—generally crowded; and for a number of years before his death, there were always many more applicants for pews in it than could be accommodated. In his sermons, he belonged more to the school of Blair than to that of Wither-
spoon or Chalmers; more to what, for want of a more appropriate appellation, has been called the “Moderate,” than to the “Evangelical” portion of the Church. He loved to explain and enforce the morality, and to strengthen, and animate, and extend the charity and love, of the Gospel, more than to preach its profound and sublime mysteries, or to awaken and awe by the terrors of the Law.

From early life he was a great student; and his love of learning and knowledge seemed to increase with his increasing years. When he was first called to the ministry, he composed a great number of sermons, which, after his marriage, and with the cares of an increasing family, and the labour of conducting an important literary institution, he was in a great measure obliged to continue to use. His excellent delivery still recommended them to his hearers. Had he

been spared, and enabled to give himself to the composition of new sermons, it is confidently believed that, with his increased learning, and experience, and knowledge, he would have left works behind him, which the world would not willingly let die. The sermons which were published after his death, were among his early productions, and are by no means to be regarded as adequate specimens of his attainments and abilities in the later periods of his life.

It is hardly necessary to say that Dr. Buist, with his very decided literary tastes and great diligence in study, was a proficient in various departments of learning. While he was a student at the University, as well as afterwards, he was passionately fond of the study of Greek. I have heard him say that, during his college course, he was accustomed frequently to start from his sleep, and find himself repeating some favourite Greek author. He was also a thorough Hebrew scholar, insomuch that when he was examined by the Presbytery for licensure, the fluency with which he read the Hebrew Bible was a subject of remark with the venerable clergymen who heard his examination. With the French and Italian languages he was also at that time critically acquainted. Indeed there was no language or science which he did not seem ambitious to master. With such extensive acquirements, in connection with high natural qualifications, he was, as might naturally be expected, an eminently successful instructor. Many have passed away, and some still survive, who were much indebted for their early intellectual discipline to his faithful and well directed efforts.

I am, with great respect, Rev. and dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

M. KING.

SAMUEL BROWN.*

1793—1818.

SAMUEL BROWN was, on the father's side, of English extraction; on the mother's side, of Scotch. His paternal grandfather migrated to this country before the middle of the eighteenth century, and settled first in Pennsylvania, where he remained for a few years, and then removed to Virginia, to the neighbourhood of Big Lick, in what is now Roanoke County. His father, Henry Brown, settled on a stream called Otter, at a place about seven miles from New London, in Bedford County, where this son was born, November 18, 1766. His mother's name was Alcy Beard—she was born in Scotland, and her relatives in this country are understood to have resided in Delaware. His father was, for many years, a member of the Presbyterian Church; but a few years before his death, joined the Baptists, while his mother still continued a Presbyterian.

The subject of this sketch, at a very early period, discovered a decidedly intellectual taste, and easily mastered, in the way of study, whatever he undertook. He was particularly fond of the mathematics, and indeed of every branch of learning that kept his mind in the attitude of close and vigorous investigation. But so straitened were his father's circumstances,

* MSS. from Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander and from Mr. Brown's family. Foote's Sketches of Va., 2d Series.