

Rev. Ninnian Bannatyne (- 13 Aug 1849)

The National Intelligencer, August 15, 1849

In the joyful anticipation of Heaven; on Monday, the 13th instant, at five minutes past two o'clock P.M., the Rev. NINIAN BANNATYNE, junior pastor of F street Presbyterian church, in the 34th year of his age, and fourth of his ministry. He was a good man, an eloquent preacher, a faithful pastor, an affectionate relative and friend. He has departed in the morning of his usefulness, and will be long cherished in the affections of all who knew him.

His funeral will take place this day, at half-past four o'clock P.M. The services will be conducted in the church, and the interment will take place in the yard at the south end of it. The members of the congregation, the friends of the family, and his brethren in the ministry are respectfully invited to attend.

The National Intelligencer, December 12, 1845

At Easton, (Pa.) on the 3d instant, by the Rev. Dr. Gray, the Rev. Ninian Bannatyne, co-pastor elect of the F street Presbyterian Church of this city to Amelia A., daughter of the late Rev. David Bishop of the former place.

From Frank E. Edgington, History of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church (1961):

1. The Rev. Ninian Bannatyne came to the F Street Church as co-pastor to Dr. James Laurie on May 13, 1845. "He was a native of the Isle of Bute, Scotland, and a licentiate of the Presbytery of New York. Having been unanimously elected, he was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Baltimore May 24, 1845. His tenure was very short. He died of tuberculosis August 13, 1849, in his thirty-fifth year, and was buried in the F Street Churchyard. Later his body was removed to the Congressional Cemetery. Dr. Laurie, as well as the congregation, were greatly saddened by this bereavement." (page 14)

2. Dr. Peter Parker returned to Washington in 1857 after a long term of service as a medical missionary to China. In 1862 the Youth's Missionary Society of the New York Avenue Church accepted his challenge to support the mission program in China. "Early in the year the Youth's Missionary Society decided to educate two little Chinese lads who were promptly named James Laurie and Ninian Bannatyne." (page 137)

From the Rev. David X. Junkin's eulogy on James Laurie in The Presbyterian, May 7, 1853: "Several ministers of the gospel were associated with Dr. Laurie, in the pastoral office, during his last and feebleness years, and it is just to say that, in that somewhat delicate and difficult relation, he bore himself in a manner at once paternal and considerate; so as to perpetuate a state of affection and intercourse with his colleagues much more happy and sweet to remember, than is apt to exist in similar circumstances. The lovely Bannatyne preceded him to the tomb, mourned by him as a son by a father. He almost literally fell with his harness on."

From the research of Elaine Foster, Sept. 2003:

This "father-son" relationship between James Laurie and Ninian Bannatyne may have had roots in a common religious tradition in Scotland. James Laurie had been trained in the Associate, or Secession, church of Scotland, which had split off from the main stream Covenanters over the Lay Patronage Act in

1746. Lay patronage allowed patrons or wealthy landholders to control the appointment of ministers in defiance of congregational approval, which is the heart of representative Presbyterian government. Such a system allowed a few large property owners to appoint the pastor of a church. In 1733 Ebenezer Erskine led a group out of the Scottish Kirk in protest: "What difference does a piece of land make between man and man in the affairs of Christ's kingdom?" Erskine questioned. "By this act we show respect to the man with the gold ring and gay clothing, beyond the man with vile raiment and poor attire." This group of Seceders, as they were known, organized themselves as The Associated Synod of the Secession Church.

In 1747, these Seceders divided again over a clause in the oath tendered to city officials (burghers). Out of this schism came the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers. James Laurie was trained in the Anti-Burgher tradition. Since there were no wealthy Burghers on the American frontier, there was no reason to maintain this distinction in the Associate Reformed Church that called James Laurie to Washington in 1803. In Scotland, however, the problem continued.

Sir James George Frazer, in *Creation and Evolution in Primitive Cosmologies* (London, 1935), p. 139, describes what was called the Great Disruption of 1843 when, after years of conflict over the appointment of ministers and state interference in church affairs, some 470 ministers (out of about 1200) and almost 40% of communicants withdrew from the Kirk to form the Free Church of Scotland. The dissident clergy trooped out of the General Assembly Hall in Edinburgh with the Assembly's Moderator at their head. Second in the line of that "audacious exodus" was Sir James Frazer's paternal great-uncle, Ninian Bannatyne who, as private chaplain to the Marquis of Bute, then the Queen's representative at the Assembly, took precedence over all the other clergy. This was a courageous act of conscience, for Ninian Bannatyne had served as pastor of the parish of Cumnock, in Ayrshire County, since February of 1830. In resigning, he gave up his emoluments as minister of the established Church as well as his chaplaincy to the Marquis of Bute, the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly. Frazer recalls that in later years he "paid a visit to the good old man at his manse in Old Cumnock, where he lived alone, for he never married. I remember him vividly as a courteous gentleman of the ancient school with ruddy countenance, finely cut features, clean shaven, and a most gracious and benign manner." But there has to be some connection to the Niniam Bannatyne whose remains lie close to James Laurie in the Congressional Cemetery. For how many Seceders could there have been named Ninian Bannatyne in that decade from 1843-1853?