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Exhortation of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

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M'Elroy, Joseph, 1792-1876.
Address delivered at the
funeral of John Johnston .



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DELIVERED AT THE

Funeral of John Johnston,

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH M^cELROY, D.D.

APRIL 20, 1851.

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JOHN JOHNSTON,

Born at Balmaghie, in the county of Galloway, Scotland, June 22, 1781. He came to this city in the of 1804, and entered the counting-house of Messrs. Lenox & Maitland. In March, 1813, he commenced business with James Boorman, under the name of Boorman & Johnston. He retired from the firm in February, 1844.

Died in the city of New-York, April 16, 1851, aged 69 years, 9 months, 26 days.

The following Address, by his Pastor, the REV. DR. M'ELROY, was delivered on the occasion of his funeral; and at the request of many of his friends, has been kindly furnished for publication.

Address.

DEATH, my friends, is an event which awaits us all. Whatever be our rank, whatever our character, whatever our social position, and whatever difference may exist as to the duration of our respective courses, the sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," shall one day be executed upon every individual of our race. In the orderings of a wise and righteous Providence this event, the common lot of all, has overtaken the honored head of this

beloved family; and we are now assembled to pay to his remains the last offices of respect and kindness. And although I am aware, that the practice of delivering addresses on occasions like the present is liable to abuse, I am also aware, that I should disappoint the expectations of you all, were I not to advert for a moment to the character and worth of our departed friend. But what shall I say? How shall I delineate the character of one distinguished by so many excellencies, whose memory is fragrantly embalmed in the hearts of a large circle of relatives and connections, whose eulogy is proclaimed by all classes of our community, and who, doubtless ere now,

has joined "the general assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven?"

In attempting this delineation you will allow me to observe, that our friend was a man of sound and well-balanced mind. If less remarkable than some for those brilliant and striking qualities which dazzle and oft-times mislead, he was more remarkable than most for those better qualities which inspire confidence and elicit respect; and all his mental powers were expanded and improved by extensive reading and habits of reflection.

He was a man amiable and cheerful in temper, a happy spirit, who always met you with a smile. And the

happiness he felt himself he was anxious to impart to others. No man, even of the humblest walk in life, could approach him without feeling the kindness of his disposition.

He was a man of unbending and incorruptible integrity—governed by moral principle in all the transactions of life. Extensively engaged in mercantile pursuits for nearly half a century, his probity and honor have been unimpeached and unimpeachable; and he has gone from among us, with the veneration of many, and the unfeigned respect of all who knew him.

He was naturally a generous man, and for the gratification of this disposition Providence gave him ample means.

Forming a business connection of a singularly propitious character, he was eminently successful; and as riches increased, he did not set his heart upon them, but devoted them to their true uses—employed them as became a man of intelligent benevolence and warm-hearted piety. His benefactions were large, his charities were open-hearted and open-handed, embracing in their sphere the temporal necessities of his fellow creatures, the promotion of the cause of education and learning, and every object of Christian benevolence. He was always with the foremost in every good work; and never have I known a more “cheerful giver.” Nor were his liberal contribu-

tions to such objects as those mentioned wholly the result of natural generosity. They proceeded from principle. He felt himself to be a steward, and that the hour of reckoning was approaching. Most forcibly was I struck with an observation which he made to me during the past winter, when referring to an investment which he had been urged to make, and which had been represented as likely to prove exceedingly profitable. "If," said he, "I had been sure that that representation would be realized, I should not have made it. I have enough—as much as I wish to be answerable for."

In early youth our friend was called into the fellowship of Divine grace, and

his whole Christian life has been one of beautiful consistency. His religion did not appear with that unnatural prominence in one part of his character, which, where this is the case, is usually compensated by a proportional defect in the other parts; but was even and uniform, like a well-adjusted dress on a comely person, covering the body equally, and “without spot or wrinkle.” You did not observe in him any confident pretensions, or any ostentatious display of superior sanctity—qualities always to be suspected; but you distinctly perceived his love to the Saviour, his attachment to the humbling doctrines of the cross, his reverence for Divine ordinances, and his watchful

circumspection over his heart and life. And I will add in this connection, that he was a pillar in the Church of God : a man to strengthen the hands and encourage the hearts of ministers of the Gospel in all their toils and perplexities ; a man whose removal is a sore breach in the church of which he was a member, and the withdrawal of whose influence will be felt by many a good and holy enterprise.

It pleased God to try him long and severely by bodily pain and infirmity, but he suffered patiently, and quietly submitted himself to the will of his heavenly Father. There was with him no murmuring, no repining ; on the contrary, he

cherished, amidst all he was called to endure, a lively and a grateful sense of the mercies still vouchsafed and continued to him, and often and fervently with his lips did he offer up praise from a thankful heart. Many, many times have I heard him observe, "My afflictions are light compared with my mercies, and gratitude ought to be my prevailing feeling."

Were it allowable to intrude into the family circle—now sacred by the freshness and intensity of its griefs—I might show you that his demeanor as a son, a brother, a husband, a father, was in perfect keeping with the rest of his character; and I might picture to your minds the warmth and tenderness of his domestic attachments,

and how deeply he was enshrined in the affections of those who knew him best.

Now, as might be expected in the case of such a man, his end was peace — not transport, not rapture, not ecstasy — this would not have accorded with the structure of his mind, his constitutional temperament; but *peace*, a calm serenity of soul, a holy composure, resulting from the firm belief of his interest in the Divine favour. As death approached there was no slavish fear, no shrinking; he looked upon that event as a *deliverance*, and so expressed himself. And although during the closing scene his inability to articulate prevented our learning from his own lips his feelings, and hopes, and

prospects in that solemn hour, his placid brow and sweet smile, on having repeated to him the precious promises of the Gospel, clearly indicated that the Lord was with him, and his rod and staff comforting him. O, what a testimony have we here to the reality and efficacy of our holy religion! And how delightful and how sublime the spectacle of a man, who, having resisted the temptations of years and scores of years, and stood faithful to his God in the midst of a world that has thrown off its allegiance to him, thus calmly and peacefully falls asleep in Jesus!

Every period of life has its peculiar temptations. There are temptations peculiar to youth, to manhood, to old age;

and it has often happened that they who have resisted the temptations of youth have fallen before those of manhood, and they who have withstood the temptations of manhood have fallen before those of old age. Many, had they not lived so long, might have died with the reputation of being Christians ; and others, whom we must still hope to be Christians, have certainly added nothing to the evidences of their piety by a length of days. But how pleasant and how refreshing to contemplate a man, who, having surmounted the difficulties which youth throws in the way of religion, conquers those of manhood, and having conquered those of manhood, subdues those of old age, and then

being ripe for glory, and having served God in his generation, comes to his "grave in a full age as a shock of corn cometh in his season." So it has been with our departed friend—a riper, fuller shock, I verily believe, has seldom been gathered.

To the afflicted family of the deceased I would say, you cannot err in appropriating to yourselves the advice and direction of the Apostle: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Weep, indeed, you may under this bereavement.

Nature pleads for it, and Christianity does not forbid it. But indulge not in excessive grief—a grief that unfits for duty and repels consolation. Nay, while you deeply feel the bitterness of your loss, be thankful that the blessing now withdrawn has been so long continued to you. And only walk with God as did your departed husband and father, and soon you will meet him again—meet him under circumstances much more auspicious than ever surrounded you here—and where God himself will put the seal of eternity on the bond of your re-union.

To you, my respected friends, who, in the exercise of a Christian sympathy, are here to-day, let me say,—Be concerned to apply

this providence to yourselves, and to extract from it the instruction which it is calculated to yield. Bear in mind that to every one of you death is inevitably certain. Bear in mind that you know not the day nor the hour of its approach. "Be ye therefore also ready." And particularly would I thus address those of you, who have long been the companions of our friend, and who are, as he was, approaching your threescore years and ten. Your day is far spent, your sun is but little above the horizon, and the darkness of death will soon close upon you. Give, then, O give your few remaining days to your souls, to your Saviour, and to your God.

My private griefs and sorrows on this

mournful occasion, I have no right to obtrude upon you. But "the heart knoweth his own bitterness." *I have lost a friend.* One who has been to me a wise counselor, who was pleased to honor me with his confidence, and give me many proofs of his affection, and on whom I could at all times rely to any fair and reasonable extent. To part with such a friend, in a world like this, is no small matter. But I dwell not on this topic. May God bless you all, and by his grace prepare you all for your closing hour, and for a glorious immortality.



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