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9.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

AND

Obituary

OF



**JOHN S. NEWBOLD.**



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THERE is in the Library of “the Society of Inquiry on Missions” in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, N.<sup>o</sup> J. a most interesting manuscript-work in two volumes, called “THE OBITUARY,” in which, as its name imports, the *last days*, especially, (though a brief biography commonly attends it) of all deceased persons who have once been members of that Institution—are recorded.

It is a work, which, alas! is but too certain of enlargement. It is replete, already, with affecting and useful sketches of the life and death of some of our most devoted and distinguished young Ministers, or candidates for the sacred office.

Not less than forty names are here registered among the dead; and the second volume is rapidly filling up. Who next shall be there enrolled, God alone can tell!

As a memorial of departed worth, these volumes are most creditable to the Society:—and to the future his-

torian of the American Church, will be rich in important matter.

But, in the mean time, it seemed a circumstance greatly to be regretted, that so many interesting and profitable narratives should be entirely withheld from the Christian public.

We feel this the more, from having intimately known many of the lamented subjects; from a careful perusal of the solemn contents; and from a persuasion that candidates for the Ministry, generally, might derive from them important benefit, as well as great pleasure. With these views it was, that we (having a special regard to the Candidates under the care of the Board of Education) requested permission of the Society, through a friend, to publish a portion of these narratives in the little volume in which they now appear:—and we cannot too heartily thank our young brethren of that venerable Seminary, for the promptitude and kindness with which they yielded to our wishes.

We present the following as specimens only, of the entire work, having no space in the present volume of our Annual for more. But we hope to be permitted to enrich its future pages with similar and more copious extracts.

It is due to the “Society of Inquiry” to say, that

though the pieces are generally well written, most of them are the productions of early youth, and were not originally designed for the press. We have thought it best, however, with the exception of a few verbal corrections, to publish them as they were written, proceeding as they do, from the hearts of pious youth, weeping at the tombs of departed brethren and fellow-students.

If these pages should meet the eye of surviving relatives of the deceased, we are persuaded they will approve our humble attempt to honour their memory, and to make them speak from the grave. The facts are considered public property; and having been furnished by their friends for the Archives of a public institution, there can be no indelicacy in making the *present use* of them.

May these simple and almost sacred annals do much good, as they go forth upon the minds of a great number of youth, now looking to the sacred office! May they learn from these solemn memorials, that no extent of present usefulness—or promise of it for the future, can avert the stroke of death!

THE EDITOR.

*Philadelphia, Oct. 8th, 1832.*



BIOGRAPHY OF  
JOHN S. NEWBOLD.

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JOHN SMITH NEWBOLD, was born on the 1st October, 1795, in the city of Philadelphia. He was distinguished from early youth by a disposition peculiarly amiable and engaging, an active and ingenuous mind, a memory uncommonly retentive, and a conscientious regard for truth. His deportment was cheerful, and, in his early years, even gay; yet a consistency and dignity marked his character, which caused him to be regarded almost with reverence by the youthful members of the family. After finishing the usual term of preparatory education, and with marks of peculiar approbation from his teachers, he left Philadelphia on the 8th November, 1813, for Princeton, and was admitted into the College of New Jersey, as a member of the Sophomore class.

We have been often led to admire the manifest leadings of an all-wise Providence at this time. His mother had always objected strongly to his going to college, on account of the fear of exposing her son to the temptations and dangers associated in her mind with a college life. He had endeavoured to quiet her apprehensions and sooth her fears on his account, considering them as

groundless, but her reluctance was still great at parting with him. How little did she know the rich blessings that were in store for him; that at this very place he should see his lost state as a sinner, and be enabled to flee to that Saviour who was his confidence and hope!

It was his intention, when he had finished his college course, to study medicine. He frequently expressed his sentiments on this subject with much animation, and thought the ability to relieve the sufferings of his fellow creatures would be productive of great happiness to him. At this time he seems to have had no claims to the character of a christian;—but his conduct and all his intercourse was distinguished by a dignity, joined to an affability, that secured the respect and affection of all that knew him.

In the October vacation of 1814, he was remarked by his family to be more serious than usual, but they could not account for it then. At this time he said, (referring to what he supposed would be his future profession) that he wished to be a *Physician to the soul* as well as to the body, and asked, privately, to have a Bible put into his chamber. He returned to college, and continued, without any particular indications of seriousness, until the 14th January, 1815, when his family received a letter stating the change which he hoped he had undergone. Addressing his mother, he says: “Although I shall not have time to write much, I thought I had better write to you in order to communicate to you a circumstance, which I hope will make you and the rest of the family sincerely glad. You have heard me speak



sometimes of the excellent preaching we have here. I have now to inform you, that through the blessing of God upon it I have been made to have some serious impressions in regard to my situation, which I hope and trust, through the mercy of God, will not be extinguished, but will continue to increase and accompany me through my whole life, and finally gain for me a blessed immortality. I do not doubt, my dear mother, that this information will give you sincere pleasure; at least, it has had this effect upon some pious young men in college;—how much more, then, upon you, who, I am certain, take such a deep interest in my welfare. It gives me pleasure also to mention, that there are appearances of several others being inclined soon to follow the same path which I am endeavouring to follow; and God grant that I may be enabled to persevere in following it. How happy should I be made, if, at my return home in the vacation, I should find a like change had taken place in all at home: that you had all been made to know your best interests! It is my daily prayer that this joy may be mine; and oh, may my prayers be heard!"

From this time we shall make frequent extracts from his weekly communications with his family, which afford the most faithful transcript of his religious views and feelings, and the most interesting outline of his noble character. Although this change in his sentiments appears to have been very sudden, yet in his next letter he mentions, it was not so much so as was supposed—"Serious impressions were made upon my mind

in some degree towards the close of the last session, which were considerably interrupted during the vacation, but revived with double force on my return to college this fall. I did not know that there was any body similarly affected in college, which, of course, kept me from declaring my sentiments until I thought they would, through the Divine blessing, be lasting."

From this time it was his constant endeavour, by the most faithful and affectionate exhortations, to interest those who were nearest his heart, in the concern of their soul's salvation. This will be exemplified fully in the following extract of a letter dated March, 1815: "I have written you so often on the subject of religion, my dear \* \* \* \* \*, that I do not know what more I can say. But I do hope I have not written altogether in vain. Have you not felt sometimes that what I told you, however feebly expressed, was nevertheless true, and of the utmost importance? Have you not felt sometimes half inclined to be religious; and do you not intend to be so yet some time or other! Surely you do not intend to die without making some preparation for eternity; then why delay? What hinders you but want of inclination! Why don't you, then, strive, my dear \* \* \* \* \*, while God is inviting you so tenderly, and promising that if you will strive you shall obtain it? When Jesus Christ died to save you, why will you destroy yourself? This short and sorrowful life will soon, very soon, be past, and our spirits will return to God who gave them; and oh, how awful will that return be for us, if we should be called away in an unprepared state!

The time must come, and however it may seem to linger, it is approaching with dreadful rapidity. Can you look forward without being dismayed? Can you look into the grave, that cold and silent mansion for all the living, and to which we are all hastening, and not shudder? Can you look forward to the morning of the resurrection, and not almost think you hear the archangel's trump summoning you to appear at the dread tribunal of an offended God? Remember that the same Jesus whom you might have for an Advocate and Saviour, will otherwise be your Accuser and your Judge; that as his mercy is infinite, so also is his wrath. Oh, then, while you have time and opportunity, make him your Saviour; try to obtain an interest in his death and inconceivable sufferings. Do not think me too harsh in what I have written; indeed, it is a subject not to be trifled with. Oh, may God make us all trophies of his redeeming love and grace!"

Of these letters, one of his sisters says, "I trust, with him that these affectionate remonstrances have not been in vain. All that this dear brother said and did, deeply interested us; and if any of us have a hope, through grace, of eternal life, it is entirely through his instrumentality."

In the spring vacation of 1815, (the first he spent at home after the revival in the college,) his whole deportment was impressively solemn and affectionate. He took the earliest opportunity to converse, and "I think," says his sister, "piety never shone in a more amiable, yet forcible light, than in him; bringing every power into subjection to Christ Jesus, without the least appearance

of ostentation or gloom. Yet it could not but be observed, that his face, generally pale, was now more than usually so, and a slight pain in his breast caused us some apprehension on account of his health."

From that time till he left Princeton, he was more or less subject to this pain; and dated its origin, it is believed, from the time when his mind became *occupied so much, as he said, with things of a higher nature, that bodily exercise was for a season almost entirely neglected.*\* On his return to Princeton, he was led to more frequent exercise, and in consequence was much better, and more free from pain than when in the city. At the close of the vacation spoken of above, he was confirmed, and afterwards made a public profession of religion in the Episcopal Church. From the time that he was first religiously impressed, his views, which had formerly been towards the study of medicine, were directed to the Ministry. He graduated 25th September, 1816, highly distinguished for talents, scholarship, and piety, having received the first honours of the class. On the 7th of November he entered the Theological Seminary in Princeton.

In his first letter from thence he says, "I hope and pray that it may please God to bestow upon me the necessary qualifications to make me a useful and faithful minister of the Gospel. My wants are very great, but in Jesus there are inexhaustible treasures of grace, from which I hope to be supplied. Oh, that I were more sen-

\* How often is the Church of Christ called to deplore this sad indiscretion in some of her most promising sons!—*Ed.*

sible of the greatness of my necessities, and more earnest seeking to have them supplied !”

“From the tenor of two or three letters during his last session,” says his sister, “our friends were in some measure prepared for a conversation we had with him in January, 1817, in which he mentioned the probability of his going, at some future period, as a Missionary to the heathen. In the first of these he mentions the frequent and pleasant walks he had with one of his most intimate friends, and that the subject of their conversations was of a nature very interesting to them; and of which, perhaps, he would give us some account in the vacation.” In another, a short time afterwards, he writes, “We do not know how widely we may be separated in this world; and we ought to be ready and willing to make every sacrifice which our duty may require. This remark does not apply so immediately to the case in hand, as to what may be the case a year or two hence. We do not know, however, but that some separations of a more solemn and interesting kind may take place before that time, and for these it should be our constant and assiduous endeavour to be prepared. For this purpose we should study to have our affections very much loosened from earthly objects, we should walk in communion with God, in the faith of Christ, and in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost.” In a third, (one of the last he wrote from Princeton,) after mentioning how much we had been separated for the previous eight years, he says, “But there are many who spend a longer time than that without being at home at all, and many

whom distress, or the love of wealth, and a few whom the love of Christ and of perishing souls, lead to spend their whole lives in foreign lands. How many and how different are the causes which separate the members of the same family from one another; yet if they are also members of the family of Christ, they ought not grieve. Though in this world they are debarred the pleasure of each other's society, yet they have a mansion where they shall dwell together forever. It is a truth, there *remaineth* a rest for the people of God. Do we think seriously and frequently enough of this consoling truth? I know, that for myself, I do not; and I believe this is a common fault among Christians. If we did, we should not live such cold, unprofitable lives as we do; we would not make so much of every trifling object of time and sense, and be so much concerned about the ease and comfort with which we should pass through life. Our time of continuance here is short; our rest is sure and glorious; it has been bought with blood; it is bestowed on the unworthy; shall we not labour then to fill up our time in that way which was our Saviour's constant aim? O, let us pray for the grace of his good Spirit to mould our hearts into perfect conformity to his will." He afterwards speaks of the Missionary Society in the Seminary, and says, "It is to be lamented that a missionary spirit does not prevail more amongst us. It seems as if one might say, if a missionary spirit does not glow in *your* breasts, where are we to look for it? I do not believe a single one amongst us is resolved for this work;

and there are not more than two or three who think seriously about it!"

From the time that he became deeply sensible of the value of his own soul, he manifested a deep concern for the Heathen; and it is not recollected that he ever addressed a throne of grace without mentioning them.

The frame of his mind on entering the last year of his life may be known by the following extract from a letter dated January 2d, 1818: "This is the first time I have made the figures of the new year, and as this is the first letter of the year, I begin with sending you the compliments of the season, my sincere and hearty desires that you may have many and happy returns of it; and that every succeeding one may find you more engaged in religion, more devoted to the service of God, and experiencing more of the blessedness of it; that Jesus may become more and more precious, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit more constant, purifying, and comfortable. How much reason have I to be thankful to the Lord for his continued goodness and mercy to me. Indeed, we have all cause for thankfulness; and now, at the beginning of this year, it becomes us to enter upon it with humiliation for the sins of the past, and with purposes of new obedience for the future. Whether we shall be permitted to see the end of it, is known only to the Lord; but we should endeavour so to live, that whatever may be his will concerning us, we may be prepared for it."

He had been admitted a candidate for holy orders in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, October 28, 1817; and on

May 20th, 1818, he left the Seminary with the expectation of finishing his theological course in Philadelphia.

Here his affectionate fellow-students would record their testimony to that uncommon worth, which is so deeply engraven on the hearts of all who knew any thing of the humble and vigorous mind,—the noble, and disinterested, and holy spirit of this exemplary Christian. The memorials of his excellence are not confined to a few intimate friends who knew him best. All his fellow-students, as they were the objects of his love, and the subjects of his fervent prayers, were sharers in the influence of his godly example, and will affectionately remember NEWBOLD, their departed brother, to the end of their days. In the circle of private friendship he was cheerful, entertaining, faithful, and edifying. In societies for doing good he was always extremely active, taking a leading part in every scheme for the glory of God that was within his reach. The plan of Sabbath School instruction, which promises do so much for the world, was commenced in Princeton by him. He possessed an uncommonly penetrating mind, well stored with the most useful information; and one spurred on to fatal diligence by the best of motives, which, while it was accumulating with surprising activity the best of all knowledge, was laying it at the feet of Jesus. Yet he was well known, too, among the numerous poor whom he visited, instructed, and comforted; and even the stranger whom he met in his private walks, was soon apprised by his pious exhortations that he was a disciple of Jesus. In a word, his whole character was such as



this world had rarely known, even amongst those who have devoted the longest lives to its attainment.

Soon after he left the Seminary, it was observed that he had a slight cough, but it did not excite in us any alarm, till on the evening of the 27th, when, having coughed harder than usual, he said with great composure, "I am spitting blood." This was the beginning of his fatal disease. The family physician was sent for, but *he* appeared to look to the great Physician, for, as he afterwards said, he knew not what might be the immediate result. His mind seemed occupied the remainder of the evening in meditation. Bleeding, and a low regimen, were prescribed for him, and he was prohibited much conversation. At each return of hemorrhage, which was frequent, his strength was gradually reduced. It was, therefore, advised that he should spend as much as possible of the hot weather in the country. He left home on the second of July, attended by one of his sisters, and visited several of his relations residing in New Jersey. In the minds of all who saw him during this little tour, he excited a deep interest. Many of them viewed him as much nearer eternity than he really was, and already ripe for heaven. So perfect an example of patience and submission was he, that he seems to have left, in these, that proved, indeed, farewell visits, impressions that will never be effaced. "Perhaps you will be surprised," says his sister, "that but little conversation on the subject of the removal of this dear brother passed between him and us. The fact is, to us the suggestion of the idea was agonizing; he knew how we loved him,

and, when he remotely hinted at it, he saw the pain which it occasioned. This was the reason why so little was said. But often he took occasion to speak of the happiness of the saints in light. One Sunday evening in particular, when we were sitting alone in our little room in the Pines, how sweetly did he discourse on the privilege of being called home in the season of youth, of the blessed employments of Heaven, and of the sinfulness and selfishness of immoderate sorrow for the loss of those whom we did not doubt were before the Throne of God."

He returned from the excursion on the 12th September, and, through the pleasant weather of the fall, his health was thought to be certainly improving, and a strong hope was entertained, that his passing the winter in a warmer climate would, with the Divine blessing, improve, if not entirely restore it. "Accordingly, on the 5th of November, he left home for Savannah. The parting was most painful to us all. Our trust was in God alone, to preserve and restore us again to each other. All this time my dear brother preserved the utmost composure. He seemed to indulge a faint hope that his journey might be of benefit, and with that hope, wished rather to go than not, though he said, perhaps it *would be better for me, as Dr. Alexander once observed of persons surprised by an ill-turn, to set my house in order, and prepare to die, instead of travelling abroad seeking health.* He took with him some suitable books, but never opened them. The Bible alone, of all books, interested him. While he had strength, nothing

prevented him from perusing it daily with meditation, and often it was read to him at his request. At these times his remarks were most edifying and beautiful. On religious subjects he continued to the last to speak with animation. His *missionary views* did not decline with his health. He frequently expressed regret that he was leading so useless and inactive a life, and that he did not feel that zeal for God that he once felt. It was observed to him, that he was now incapable of active exertion from weakness; but that if he had strength, he would, no doubt, be as ready to engage in it as ever; which he admitted might, perhaps, be the case.

“He sailed from New Castle November 7th, and was favoured with a mild, short passage. At sea he was subjected to many inconveniences, of which, however, he never complained; but which, as an invalid, he must have felt sensibly. He arrived at Savannah on Sunday evening 15th, and went to reside in the family of a friend and physician. He appeared to have taken no cold at this time, from which favourable conclusions were drawn, much as he had been unavoidably exposed on board, and in landing, and the weather had been cool and rainy. In a day or two, however, he raised a small quantity of blood; from that time he was subject to hoarseness and some degree of oppression at the breast in damp weather, from which he always recovered as soon as it became clear. Every fine day he either rode or walked out, and though all saw how weak he was, it was still hoped he would soon become stronger, as his symptoms had assumed a favourable appearance. The

week preceding the last of his life, he walked out with more pleasure and less fatigue than he had since our arrival. At this time the weather changed most unfavourably; it was very damp and cold, such a season as had not been known there for many years. This was too much for his weak frame to endure. He soon complained of a pain in his side, and a difficulty of breathing. On Tuesday morning he came down stairs, while the family were at breakfast; appeared to be weak, and ate but little. His mind, through the whole of his *last day upon earth*, seemed quite abstracted from the world. He spoke with great difficulty; not without drawing a breath between every word. He asked Dr. K. when he came in, to look at what he had expectorated. He before said that he thought it was ulcerated matter. The Dr. told him it was; he heard this without the least change of countenance, and seemed to think the time of his departure near. He said to his sister, as she sat by him, *It seems as if the Lord's blessing has not attended our coming here.* It would be almost impossible to give an idea of his appearance and manner through this day. He suffered great pain; but unless he had been asked, none of us would have known it. Not a single complaining word escaped him, nor any expression of suffering. Several times through this day he took medicine. At dinner and tea he occupied his usual place, though he eat but little. It was evident through the whole day that his illness had increased. In the evening the family all retired. During this time he said but little, but did not sleep. He sometimes inquired the

hour, and between one and two, asked if it was not time for the Doctor to come in. The Doctor was called. His patient was evidently worse, and did not appear to have sufficient strength to raise the phlegm which oppressed him. As his sister leaned over him, he said in a low, inarticulate tone, "*I hope it will please God to release me soon.*" How hard was the struggle to part with such a brother! But strength and resignation were given. She told him she hoped he would soon be *relieved*. He said I do not hope that, but that I may be *released*. She asked if it was because he suffered so much. He replied, I am afraid it is. He was told that he had no cause to think so, that he had always been resigned to the Lord's will. I was not prepared to die so soon, said he, that is, from the nature of his symptoms, he had not been prepared to expect his removal so speedily. When the Saviour, the Rock of Ages, on which he had rested, and the glories of that world to which he was soon to be introduced, were mentioned to him, and he was asked if he had not a good hope of acceptance through Christ, "Oh, yes!" he replied. On being asked if he had any thing to say to his dear family at home, he answered nothing very particular at this moment; give my love to all the dear children, and tell them to prepare for death. He then said, *give me time to pray*. For several moments he was engaged in earnest prayer. His voice was so low that his sister could understand but little of what he said; the tenor of it was in humility, confessing himself to have been unfaithful and sinful, unworthy of mercy, but hoping for it through the blood of

his Redeemer. At this time his eyes were closed, but the serenity of his countenance was not for a moment disturbed. He sunk rapidly, and spoke no more, nor opened his eyes again upon the world. "I would not," says his afflicted sister, "interrupt (by speaking to him) the peacefulness of his departing spirit." During the last fifteen minutes his breathing was scarcely perceptible; and it was difficult to say whether he was an inhabitant of this or a brighter world. On Wednesday, A. M. at quarter before 4 o'clock, the 23d of December, *he was released*. He fell asleep in Jesus. Truly "the righteous hath hope in his death." We can adopt for him the language of his favourite hymn,

" Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
While on his breast I lean my head,  
And breathe my life out sweetly there."





















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