

William B. Johnson, 1846  
S.C.  
Richmond, Va.

The Rev. Dr. Johnson, before adjourning the Convention, made a most appropriate and feeling valedictory address, at the Convention, held at in Richmond, Virginia, June 12, 1846.

He said he was deeply impressed with the presence and special influence of God's spirit in the meeting last year at Augusta; but his impression of the presence and influence of the spirit of God in this meeting was much deeper. Owing to the circumstances under which the Convention last year met, it was to be expected that there would be unanimity of feeling and of action in its deliberations. But when we came to assemble here, we had grounds to apprehend great difficulty of bringing the whole body to unite on some of the topics which would engage our attention. It was feared there would be distraction, if not division, by which inducting discord might tend to disturb the harmony of our proceedings. For himself he had not apprehended such divisions, believing that they would be avoided by God's special interposition. And we had cause to be grateful, that through God's special interference we had indeed avoided those divisions. If God had indeed been ~~been~~ with them and had brought their minds and hearts to such a happy conclusion of compromise and a surrender of points of difference, should we not be deeply impressed with it, and urged to put our hands with increased zeal and energy to the work before us, in order to bring still further effective results? If, by God's grace, we were so united, if we were made to go together by grace and not by pressure of force—we should feel not only a deep sense of gratitude, but we should feel a deeper of our obligations, and should not permit ourselves to relinquish or neglect any portion of our duties.

The time has come, he said, to make great sacrifices-- sacrifices of individual comfort and worldly advancement--a sacrifice of members of our families to go to these new fields in our own land and in foreign lands. It was our imperious duty to practice economy and not to be looking forward to great investments of pecuniary means to make large fortunes to leave them to our families. He was seriously and anxiously impressed with the convictions that Christians often made a great mistake in making great efforts to leave large estates to their families. He mentioned a case in Georgia, of a pious uncle leaving his estate to two nephews. It had not contribute to their comfort or welfare; but had made them more wicked, more reckless in their actions. He could not but believe that if the dear saint had invested a portion of his wealth in heavenly treasures and left those nephews less, they would have been better. The reverend speaker here alluded to the divine injunctions against being absorbed in desire for worldly gain--not that it was wrong, he said, to increase our earthly store, nor that there was any sin in money. There was no sin in money, but in the love of it--the love of it is the root of all Evil. Dr. Johnson earnestly urged it upon all professors of religion as their duty, to give their means liberally to the promotion of Christianity. When Nathaniel Cobb determined to give a certain portion of his annual gains to the church, he was not less prosperous--nay, he was more so. Let us give freely and devote ourselves faithfully to the advancement of the kingdom of God.

What he had heard today, continued Dr. Johnson, convinced him that we should look out for locations, as the scene of our exertions, with respect to a sacrifice of our personal comforts. He was much struck with a remark in one of the triennial Conventions in Philadelphia a few years since, upon the difference between the piety of the early Christians and those of the present day. This remark was that the rule with The Christian ministers in the primitive ages was to go, the exception to stay; with us the rule is to stay, the exception to go. He thought we ought all to be ready and willing to go---that some of the best and ablest amongst us, that had youth on their side, ought to go. We should not select those who could be spared; but those who could not be spared ought to go to Texas and Canton, and wherever else the field was opened to them. Gladly would he be able to say that some of our most distinguished ministers, with youth on their side, had added themselves to the list of missionaries and were ready to go. Look at William Carey and Adoniram Judson---they went to their labors in foreign lands young and full of energy. God prospered their work in Hindostan and Burmah, and, oh, may it be continued, to the glory and honor of his Kingdom.

Our thought and labors should be to carrying the gospel to the heathen. He (Dr. J.) might be called on to make the sacrifice. He had a dear son at college, whom he had educated for the ministry, and who, it was probable, would become a missionary in China, or some other far distant land. When the idea was first suggested to him, it affected him very much; for it was a severe trial ~~to~~ to part with a dear son to go on such a distant errand;

but he was ready to make the sacrifice, if it pleased God to send him there. He had yet another son, whose feelings and whose education tended to the ministry. He might have to give up both. He was ready to do so, when it pleased God he should: In connection with the domestic feelings involved in this matter, he said none should regret the consecration of their sons to the ministry--he had rather his sons were ministers than to be Emperors or Kings, or to fill any other station on earth. He had endeavored to shape their education to these results, and he thanked God that both those to whom he had alluded were anxious and willing to fit themselves early for the ministry. He begged those who were called on to make the sacrifice or sending a dear son to preach the gospel, to think what an honor it was to lift the standard of the Cross where it had not been raised before; and that if they were not again to meet in this world; they would meet them in a better world, where they would be shining stars in the firmament.

It was with exceeding pleasure, continued the reverend and venerable speaker, that he would take the parting hand after such a week--after such harmony and sweet communion as he had enjoyed with his dear brethren in their deliberations, in the social intercourse, and in their devotional exercises. It was with peculiar delight he partook of the Lord's Supper yesterday--he would not soon forget the joy he felt on the occasion. Dr. Johnson alluded to some of the incidents of the scene which would impress it on his memory--among them, he said, there was his dear brother Shuck, who had come back from his mission to China bringing his sheaf with him. Such a season of joy, he said,

was worth a journey from S. Carolina--such a coming together was worth a voyage across the ocean! All that was painful was in leaving those dear brethren of Richmond, with whom we have just spent these happy days. He hoped they had done them no injury, and had been guilty of no lightness of conduct nor of speech, nor of any unbecoming deportment. He trusted their brethren of Richmond would remember them with the same affectionate regard we carry away with us for them and that they may long look back with pleasure upon their scenes. He bade them an affectionate farewell. Might God be with them and their churches and their ministers! May the blessed gospel be to them not as waters spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered again, but as the waters of life! The venerable President closed his valedictory with a fervent and happy reference to the final meeting in the Grand Convention in Heaven, which would never adjourn, and where there would be no parting!

An appropriate and devout prayer was then addressed to the throne of grace by the President. This was followed by the thrilling missionary hymn--

Hail, sweetest, dearest tie that binds,  
Our glowing hearts in one, etc.

The scene was concluded by a general shaking of hands--that token of fellowship and Christian recognition in the Church and the Convention adjourned at 1 o'clock, to meet again the first Wednesday in May, 1849, in Nashville, Tennessee.--Times.

A brother (Dr. Wheeler of N. C.) referring to these scenes, in a note to us, received last week, says: "The last day of the Convention was heaven begun below. Such a scene it were worth

a lifetime to witness--old grey-headed men melted down and weeping like children! The sensation exceeded any thing I ever witnessed in a deliberative body!." God grant that every future meeting may be characterized by an equal amount of harmony, love, and spirituality of mind.

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