

THE LATE REV. SAMUEL F. JOHNSTON.

[CONCLUDED.]

WE have before us a considerable number of Mr. Johnston's private letters. From the date of his first leaving home till his death he was a faithful and attentive correspondent, not only with the members of his father's family, but with many other friends. These letters are fine exhibitions of affection and piety. We would not be doing justice to our subject without giving specimens, though we regret that our space will render it necessary to curtail them.

On the 13th December, 1857, writing to his parents in reference to a very painful event, the death of two near relatives on one day, he says:

"I received yours of the 10th inst. to-day. Truly it conveys sad, melancholy intelligence. This makes a wide breach in the family, and is surely a loud call to those who are left to prepare to meet their God. May this dispensation of God's Providence be sanctified to all who remain. This stroke, so heavy, severe and mysterious is not without a design. Let us endeavour to learn this design and thus to derive that lesson from this affliction which God is, in infinite kindness and goodness, designing to teach those who are left. Think not that because I am absent from the scene of affliction I will not feel the stroke or be interested in it. True I am absent—as it is probable I shall be on all such occasions in future—but my thoughts are not absent, and my sympathies are with you. Your sorrows are my sorrows. * * * * *

"Truly it must be trying to you to part with those who have been with you in all your innocent childish sports, and with whom since the days of childhood you have lived in the bonds of perfect *unity* and tenderest affection. But as you beheld the cold earth covering them from your view did you not turn your thoughts to the mansions of glory to which they had gone, and where you in a short time at most will meet them with songs and everlasting joy? With such thoughts, and such a glorious prospect before you, were you not comforted and enabled to rejoice in the spoiling of your goods? But farther, when you were thus comforted with these delightful anticipations, did you not think of those who have no such consolation—no such hope—no such prospects in the future—where friends separate to meet in everlasting burning? Should not our hearts, on such occasions particularly, yearn with compassion for those who are in such a condition, should not each thoughts move us to *earnestness* in our endeavours to extend to them the blessings which we enjoy? Oh! what base selfishness to enjoy these unspeakable blessings and not labour earnestly to extend them to those who have them not!

"In the death of every friend I hear a voice, *still*, silent, earnest, appalling, crying, 'Go preach the gospel to every creature.' Let us attend to it as it now comes with unusual earnestness—let us beware that we do not mistake its import.

"I feel that the time is fast approaching when I must either shrink back or assume responsibilities, great, numerous and trying. The nearer they approach the more weighty do they appear. Yet, at times I could, were it not that such work is enjoined on human instrumentality, willingly lay myself in the silent tomb. For who is sufficient for these things? I sometimes fear that you will not give credit to such strong expressions of a sense of responsibilities because you may hear no such expressions from my lips. This is my nature, and I cannot help it I love to keep my thoughts, troubles, &c., to myself, hidden within my own bosom, and only to pour them out in retirement to one who knows how to sympathize."

The following is an extract of a letter to his parents dated Philadelphia January 15, 1858:

"Since I came on here my mind has been little occupied with thoughts relating to my country and its dear and tender associations. These are gliding from my