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I. LITERARY.

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DR. LATIMER AS KNOWN BY UNION SEMINARY  
STUDENTS.

PROFESSOR T. C. JOHNSON.

OUR Seminary has sustained a great loss in the death of Dr. James Fair Latimer. His long illness terminated mortally March 31st. This fact will have ceased to be news to the general public long before this page reaches the reader's eye. And our religious weeklies, as well as daily papers, will have given accounts of the important events in Dr. Latimer's life, as well as various characterizations of him.

Accordingly, we confine ourselves to what *we* saw in the man, as a teacher, as a preacher, as a friend of students, as a member of the community, in his family, and as a man with a life to live for God and man.

In what we shall say of him regarded in these several particulars, we shall try to avoid exaggeration of Dr. Latimer's excellences on the one hand, and failure of appreciation on the other. We shall speak as far as possible, not simply out of the experience of one student, but of many, and those not of any one class, but of five or six classes.

1. *As a teacher* Dr. Latimer was remarkable for power to enthuse the student with love to the branch of study which he taught, for sympathetic adaptability to the individual student's standing-point and ready appreciation of the student's difficulties, for both breadth and depth of acquaintance with the subjects which he treated, for the confidence which he inspired in

## THOMAS CAREY JOHNSON.

R. L. DABNEY, D. D., LL. D.

THE students and friends of Union Seminary naturally feel an interest in the antecedents of this gentleman, who has come to teach there. His parents were of Scotch extraction, his father being a large landholder, farmer and grazier upon the Greenbrier river, in Monroe County, West Virginia, near the railroad village, of Alderson. Here Dr. Johnson was born July 19th, 1859. His childhood passed as is customary in such families, except that a disease incident to childhood greatly interrupted his literary education. The years of his boyhood up to seventeen were largely spent on horseback in the occupations incident to a large estate and field sports. This wise precaution of his parents produced the best results. At seventeen years of age he had acquired a tall and vigorous frame, and if behind-hand in his classics had become an efficient business man. The coming of the Rev. H. R. Laird to Alderson as Presbyterian pastor and classical teacher, made the first important epoch in the youth's mental life. His real literary progress began when he was seventeen years old. At eighteen he entered Mr. Laird's classical school at Alderson. Preceptor and pupil speedily became friends and the later imbibed from the former those honorable aspirations and that honest thoroughness in study which has distinguished him ever since. In two years he was prepared for college and when twenty years old, September, 1879, resorted to Hampden-Sidney, where he graduated as Bachelor of Arts in three years. Almost from the first he led every class which he entered and consequently graduated with the first honor. In 1882 he returned to his home and spent one year teaching the Alderson school which Mr. Laird had founded. Even here he began to manifest that power of controlling and inspiring the minds of his pupils and that thoroughness of scholarly work which have marked him ever since. Out of this school came several prominent distinguished men, who acknowledge their indebtedness to his impulse.

In his second year at Hampden-Sidney Mr. Johnson had confessed Christ and joined the Presbyterian church. Thenceforward the ministry began to claim his attention. Conse-

quently in 1883 he suspended his work as a teacher and went to the University of Virginia in order to perfect his own scholarship. He devoted one year to Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, gaining graduates' diplomas in all three. This has always been regarded in that University as a great exploit, which few have the courage to attempt, and in which very few indeed have succeeded. These three schools make something less than half a Master's of Arts course; but to finish them in one year is regarded as a more brilliant feat than to win a Master's degree in the three or four years usually expended for it.

In September 1884 Mr. Johnson began the regular three years' course of theological study in Union Seminary. It is enough to say that his conduct and success there were just what his previous character warranted his friends to expect. Not only did he lead his classes in scholarship but by example and diligence he exerted an unusually good influence over his fellow students. He devoted the Summer of 1887 to Harper's Summer School of Hebrew in the University of Virginia until a perilous fever came near depriving the Church forever of his services. No sooner had he become convalescent than he followed Prof. Harper to Yale, where he devoted a year to a study of the Semitic languages under him, and of Psychology under Prof. Ladd. Here the soundness of Mr. Johnson's judgment and faith and the independence of his spirit were thoroughly tested. He found himself immersed in the atmosphere of the new criticism and the rationalistic theology. But the result of the ordeal was to convince him of the weakness and worthlessness of their methods and to confirm him in the old faith.

In the Autumn of 1888, upon the invitation of Dr. Dabney, he went to teach Greek, Hebrew, Biblical Introduction and Exposition in the Austin School of Theology, Texas. He also rendered Dr. Dabney some assistance, which his failing eyesight now began to require, in the University classes of Psychology and Logic. Besides this, and an amount of work in the school of Theology sufficient to fill any man's hands, Mr. Johnson studied the whole University course of Philosophy in the Junior, Senior, and Post Graduate classes of the Texas University, the first year. He also went again over this whole work the second year. His proficiency would have easily entitled him to the honors of the Master's course; but, with a characteristic preference for the substance over the shadow he did not

trouble himself with the formalities requisite for such an endorsement. In the session of 1890 Dr. Dabney's severe illness threw upon Mr. Johnson for three months, in addition to his regular labors, the whole University courses in Philosophy and the course of Systematic Theology in the school of Divinity. These were months of literally gigantic labor, which he performed without exhaustion or flagging and with commanding ability. Neither the class of Theology nor the most advanced University classes had occasion to say that they lost anything by the absence of the Senior. Mr. Johnson's scholarship had been fully approved in the older parts of the Church. It was during his two years in Austin that he demonstrated the possession of (what many laborious scholars do not possess) eminent didactic ability. His watchword was ever manly, thorough, bodily work. He inspires by example and precept noble aims and conscientious industry. He displayed his native talent of command by his success in wielding the University classes with a vigorous, but courteous and prudent hand under the difficult circumstances of his temporary position. His preaching was best appreciated by the most cultivated hearers for its scholarly, logical, and spiritual qualities. He had left the Seminary inexperienced and constrained as a public speaker. His improvement was constant and rapid. It scarcely need be added that his private life was that of a Christian who followed the Lord fully. The two years of his work in the Austin School of Theology were its best years. His removal from it, resulting from causes beyond his control and that of Dr. Dabney, was the severest blow it has ever received reducing its attendance one-half. The reputation thus created in Austin, notwithstanding distance, naturally permeated the whole Southern Presbyterian Church. After one year of humble, diligent and acceptable pastoral labor in Louisville, Ky., it resulted in his election to the Stuart Robinson professorship of Biblical and Pastoral Theology in Union Seminary.