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## JOHN RANDOLPH—THE MAN AND HIS FAITH.

BY H. TUCKER GRAHAM, D. D.

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On June 3, 1773, near the point where the waters of the Appomattox blend with those of the James, was born one of the most remarkable men America has produced. "John Randolph, of Roanoke," the world has elected to call him, and so indeed he often wrote himself in his later years. But as a matter of fact he did not begin to reside at the "Roanoke" plantation in Charlotte County until he was nearly forty years of age. "Cawsons" was his birthplace, and "Matoax," opposite Petersburg, the home of his childhood. The perils resulting from Arnold's invasion compelled his mother to flee westward with her young children and to take up her residence at "Bizarre." This still prosperous plantation, charmingly situated on the crest of a hill overlooking the town of Farmville, was the home of John Randolph until long after he had achieved a fame as statesman and orator that reached beyond the seas. Here he lived in the midst of a people whom he loved best of all Virginians, and whom he proudly described on the floor of Congress as "such constituents as no man ever had." They repaid his admiration with a loyal and enthusiastic devotion that never failed or faltered throughout a long and stormy public career.

Mr. Randolph's life covers the most picturesque period of American history, and in those lofty and momentous struggles that marked the first four decades of the life of the Republic, he played a conspicuous and impressive part. There were

# THE LIFE OF JOHN McDONOGH AND ITS RELATION TO THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

BY JOHN CHRISTIE BARR, D. D.

*New Orleans, La.*

Let me tell you the story of a man and his money, of how the man gave his money and what has come of it.

New Orleans is a quaint historic city with a French origin and a Spanish upbringing, whose ideals are as strangely mixed as is its population. In the popular mind it is the pleasure capital of America—the home of Mardi Gras—largely given over to frivolity. Its very name is pagan, being in Latin, *Novum Aurelianum*, and carrying us back through Orleans of France to the Emperor Aurelius who, in spite of his philosophic studies, bitterly hated and terribly persecuted the early Christians. Then too, New Orleans is religiously under the sway of Romanism; not that the bulk of its population is of that persuasion, for the United States census of 1890 (the last census, by the way in which the Federal government dared to brave the Roman hierarchy and itself count the communicants of the several denominations) shows that then out of a population of 242,000, the Roman Catholics numbered only 67,000 or thereabouts in New Orleans. But by general consent, Romanism controls in religion, dominates in society, rules in politics and determines very largely manners and customs. This precedence is explained not only by the inertness of New Orleans' non-Catholic foes but also by Rome's priority on the field. The founders of the city were French Catholics and they were succeeded by Spanish Catholics who have since been largely re-enforced by Irish and German and Italian co-religionists. Until the American flag was flung over the whole Louisiana purchase Romish bigotry held undisputed sway and in 1779 cast into prison the Rev. Dr. Paul Forguard and his deacon, who came from the Huguenots of Charleston, S. C., with the gospel.

My story has to do with a man who came to New Orleans just before it became American. He was a native of Baltimore, Md., of Scotch-Irish ancestry and of the Presbyterian faith. His name was John McDonogh. He came to New Orleans to make money and was wonderfully successful, but in the making of it he did not lose his reverence and love for his God nor his devotion to the well-being of his fellowmen.

A study of this man discloses him as a tremendous business success. From the position of representative of the Baltimore house of William Taylor he rapidly rose to be one of the merchant princes of his adopted city. Seizing advantage of the business opportunities of his day he accumulated speedily a vast fortune which he later invested in real estate until at the time of his death, in 1850, he was said to be the largest private land holder in the world.

In his earlier career tradition tells us he occupied a prominent place in the city's best society. His elegant home was at the corner of Charles and Foulouse streets. During this period occurred his courtships. He first fell in love with the daughter of the old Spanish grandee Don Almonastre y Roxas, but because of his vigorous Protestantism he was rejected. The lady afterwards became, by marriage, the Baroness Pontalba.

Some years afterwards John McDonogh wooed Miss Johnson, an Irish lady of rare accomplishments and great beauty. She too was a Romanist and again because of difference in religion McDonogh could not marry. Thereupon Miss Johnson retired to a convent, whose superioress she afterwards became. It is a tradition that in his later life her old lover paid her an annual visit on each New Year's Day.

John McDonogh was always an intense American. He set his face flint-like against the machinations of Aaron Burr and helped General Wilkinson valiantly in the measures which led to Burr's defeat. McDonogh took part under General Andrew Jackson in the battle of New Orleans, serving during that great fight in Beall's Rifles. Later he ran for the United States Senate and was defeated by only a narrow majority.

This gifted man was intensely religious. In 1804 he wrote a set of rules for the guidance of his life which breathe a spirit of

rugged piety. A memorandum of his notable will reads as follows: "It will be well to say here in whom I place my hope, trust, belief and faith, and in the tenets of what church I have walked. My hope, trust, belief and faith are in salvation through the perfect, the all-sufficient and accepted atonement of our blessed Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. And I have walked a Presbyterian of the Presbyterian church so-called or that church the ecclesiastical government of which is conducted and ruled by presbyters." Because of his faith in Christ he loved the church. Therefore, almost as soon as it became lawful for Protestants to engage in public worship in Louisiana, we find him taking a leading part in 1805 in the movement which resulted in the establishment of a Union church which some two months later became known as Christ Episcopal Church, the oldest Protestant church in Louisiana. For a time McDonogh served as a vestryman in this congregation. At the end of his life he was a communicant in old St. Peter's Episcopal Church, not only because it was nearest to his plantation home in McDonoghville, but also no doubt because the Presbyterian Church in New Orleans had just previously been torn to pieces by the Unitarian heresy. Upon his original tomb which still stands in the cemetery in McDonoghville, La., we find the following inscription written by himself:

"Here lies the body of John McDonogh of the city of New Orleans, in the State of Louisiana, one of the United States of America, the son of John McDonogh and Elizabeth McDonogh, of Baltimore in the State of Maryland, also one of the United States of America; awaiting in full and firm faith the resurrection, and the coming of his glorious Lord, Redeemer, and Master to judge the world."

As we would naturally expect, such faith expressed itself in a life of earnest service to humanity. During his earthly career, McDonogh was greatly misunderstood. His strong personality and the earnestness with which he ever sought his aims often brought him into conflict with his fellowmen. He was reserved and conscious of the rectitude of his own motives; he cared little for the praise or blame of the world about him. As he grew older he became more isolated. His uncompromising Protestant-

ism brought down upon him the suspicion and hatred of the Roman hierarchy, who well knew in their greatest stronghold in the United States how to manipulate public opinion against him. His strong, self-reliant nature, his pursuit of aims above the comprehension of those around him, and the Scotch-Irish blood within him, made conflict far more pleasing than compromise. After consecrating his wealth to noble charities he became intense in the care of his stewardship and felt it to be but his evident duty to maintain intact what he had devoted to promoting the welfare of his fellowmen. We get a glimpse of his attitude towards the contemporary world in the following extract from his will: "I have much, very much, to complain of the world, rich as well as poor. It has harassed me in a thousand different ways. Suits at law, of great injustice have been instituted and carried on against me to deprive and take from me property honestly acquired (for I have none, nor ever would have any that was not acquired by honest industry and the sweat of my brow); and when obliged to seek justice through the courts of law, it has often and often been refused to me. They said of me: 'He is rich, old, without wife or child; let us take from him then what he has.' Infatuated men! They knew not that that was an attempt to take from themselves; for I was laboring and had labored all my life, not for myself, but for them and their children. Their attempts however, made me not to swerve either to the right hand or to the left, although to see and feel so sorely their injustice and ingratitude made me often to lament the frailty, the perverseness, and the sinfulness of our fallen nature. I preserved an onward course, determined (as the steward and servant of my Master) to do them good, whether they would have it or whether they would not have it."

The seventy years which John McDonogh ended in 1850 were replete not only with faith in God but crowded with a rare service to men.

Out of all his labors there are two matters which catch and hold our attention and which will forever give him an honored place among the benefactors of mankind.

The first of these was his unique plan for freeing his slaves. McDonogh was early convinced that slavery could not continue.

He abhorred the theory of the so-called abolitionists of his day. He was led finally to adopt measures by which his slaves could buy their own freedom. In order that they might properly keep the Sabbath, he had previously given them half of Saturday in which to do their own necessary work and prepare for the Holy Day. When he was ready to make his experiment he called all his slaves together and they consenting, he entered into a contract with them by which, using this half Saturday as a basis, they were to buy all their time from him. It was agreed that all the slaves he owned, whoever wished, might enter into this bargain and that all their children should share in its benefits. The scheme worked splendidly and at the end of fifteen years all his blacks had earned their freedom. In the meantime he had sent two of their most promising young men to college in the North and had them trained, one as a physician and the other as a Presbyterian minister. He had also acquired a large strip of land for the colony in Liberia, Africa. When the appointed day arrived, he placed them on a ship which he had also chartered with part of their earnings and sent them with rejoicing and yet in tears back to their native land. He quaintly tells us that one of the interesting features of his experiment was that his share of the profits enabled him to go to South Carolina and buy twice as many negroes as he had sent to Africa. He made the same contract with these and ordered in his will that at his death had the time of the contract not fully expired they too should be freed and transported to Liberia.

There is abundant testimony to prove that McDonogh's plan was successful in every direction. Had it only been widely adopted, would it not have spared our beautiful Southland the horrors of the Civil War and also relieved us permanently of our negro problem? In this noble effort, which as far as it lay within his own power, he carried to a successful and happy issue, John McDonogh stands before posterity as a wise and statesman-like benefactor who applied the Christian principle with great success to one of the most vexing problems of his time.

John McDonogh's supreme life purpose, to which we now call your attention, though, noble and Christian and lived up to by himself with incredible faithfulness and zeal has also as yet been

completely thwarted. I am a native Orleanian and I love my city with all my strength; but the telling of this tale always makes me blush with shame. Through a wonderful Providence, which I will not stop now to relate, it was given me some seven or more years ago to discover and proclaim some amazing facts which cannot be denied and yet whose existence constitute a terrific indictment against the honesty and good name of the greatest city of our Southland.

John McDonogh evidently realized the danger of Romanism to his beloved country. He spent no time railing against it, but went persistently to work on a plan which if successful, would have wiped Romanism out of existence in its then two mightiest fortresses in the United States. His plan though had in view even more than the extirpation of Roman Catholicism in New Orleans and Baltimore. It compassed the training "in the knowledge of the Lord" in free schools, the children of both these cities.

For a generation before his death John McDonogh had been a practical recluse. As has been hinted above he was greatly misunderstood and terribly traduced. When he died it was made plain by his will that through obloquy and suffering he had cherished in a heart of love a splendid purpose. His will directed that for fifty years from his death, his vast estate was to be carefully husbanded and increased. Then when the voice of contemporary scandal had been hushed it was to be sold, some minor bequests paid and half of the remaining estate given to New Orleans and the other half to Baltimore for the erection and support of free schools to which the children of the poor were to be admitted. The supreme condition was made to read as follows: "*Always understood and provided, however, that the Holy Bible of the Old and New Testament shall be at all times and forever made use of as one (and the principal one) of the reading or class-books which shall be used by the pupils therein, as the first object of every school, and of all teaching of the youth of our country should be to implant in their minds a knowledge of their duty to God and the relation of men to their Divine Creator.*"

As soon as McDonogh died, his will was attacked. It was fought over in the courts for twenty years and became one of the

most celebrated cases in American jurisprudence. Finally, the supreme court of the United States spoke, upholding the will in all of its essential particulars, except that its immediate execution was ordered. This threw the McDonogh lands on the market when they were at their lowest valuation because of the recent Civil War. Nevertheless they brought more than a million and a half dollars—a princely sum in those days for public education. New Orleans and Baltimore received each \$700,000. With her share, Baltimore built one industrial school in which the Bible has always been used.

In some strange manner, New Orleans lost \$500,000 of her share of the estate. The balance, I am told, was saved by a timely decision of the Louisiana supreme court validating some bonds in which it had been invested. With the interest of this money, in the course of the years, thirty-three splendid school houses have been built. These are operated in connection with New Orleans public school system. *In none of them though has the Bible ever been used.*

Since 1906 the Protestant Ministers' Association of New Orleans have repeatedly called the matter to the attention of the New Orleans school board, the McDonogh commissioners, the mayor and city council of New Orleans, and the governor of Louisiana. The facts as stated above, have been clearly set forth, and shown to be undisputed and indisputable, but with a moral callousness that makes one tremble for the perpetuation of our boasted institutions of freedom and truth they have been completely ignored or else shamelessly dodged.

But let us not for one moment think that John McDonogh lived in vain. His ideals are glorious and imperishable. His faith, and suffering, and service have entered into the very scheme of things. His Lord is keeping watch and will certainly bring to pass the confusion of all enemies of His Word and in the hour of their seeming victory wreak on them a vengeance which it has not entered into the mind of man to conceive. More than that, His truth will be proclaimed and His Word set free.

The school children of New Orleans who as yet are deprived of the Bible, have built a monument to John McDonogh which



faces the city hall, which on Founder's Day in the month of May, they annually cover with flowers. That atonement though is not sufficient. Who can tell but that the story of this man McDonogh and his thwarted will, when rightly told and widely heard, may so stir and startle and thrill the whole American people that, in fear of God's wrath, that in just indignation at Romish chicanery, and that in a full realization of all it means for their future welfare, they will rise in their might and in tones of thunderous power demand that "the Holy Bible of the Old and New Testament shall at all times and forever be used as a reading or text-book (and the principal one)" in every public school in the land?

When this comes to pass (as it surely must if America is to persist as a free and righteous nation) it will be recognized by all that such as John McDonogh have not lived in vain.