

Obituary of Thomas McClurken, Sr.

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Written by Rev. William Sloane

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OBITUARY OF THOMAS M'CLURKEN, SENR.

In my youth, I had an opportunity of knowing, or hearing of, several professors of religion who were reputed eminently pious. I watched with great anxiety, to ascertain the state of their mind at death. I found, that in proportion to the tenderness of conscience which they manifested in life, was their comfort in death. I knew but one exception. I have often thought that this should be recorded for the encouragement of those who have yet to pass through the swellings of Jordan. My mind was recalled to this subject by thinking of THOMAS M'CLURKEN, Senr. of Elkhorn, Washington co. Ill., who died March 30th, 1845.

The deceased was born near Ballymoney, County Antrim, Ireland. He came, with his parents, to South Carolina, previous to the Revolution, and became a soldier in the continental army. The tories murdered one of his brothers for being a patriot. After hesitating some time between the Associate Reformed and Covenanters, he was determined to join the latter, by hearing a dispute between Rev. Mr. M'Garragh of the latter, and Rev. Mr. Boyce, of the former. He held slaves till the Covenanters passed the emancipation act of 1800. He then liberated them all; and when I became acquainted with him, he understood and abhorred the wickedness of the system as much as any man I ever knew. After the liberation of his slaves, he was so harrassed by the *great sticklers for liberty of conscience*, that in one year he was fined in \$80 for not sitting on juries! but it was made up to him in the superior excellence of his crops beyond that of his neighbours; so that his enemies concluded it was in vain to attempt to ruin Thomas M'Clurken, for God was fighting for him. On account of slavery, he and his children and grand children left Carolina for Illinois, in 1833.

I first became acquainted with him in the winter of 1839. He was a ruling elder; but at that time he was supposed to be about 90 years of age, and was unable to attend church courts or sermon: he still possessed considerable vigor, both bodily and mental, could talk intelligently on religion, and tell revolutionary anecdotes with great interest; but he was gradually declining. I called with him occasionally, as well as in my stated ministerial visits, and still found him *growing*. Conversing with him once, in the course of my ministerial visitations, he broke out into a rapture; so that I seemed to be gazing after an eagle that had soared above the clouds out of my sight. The thought of death seemed to cause him no

apprehension. His trust was not in anything he had done ; but in the atonement and intercession of his Redeemer.

Not long before his death, I called to visit the family ministerially—they told me that for some days his mind had been wandering—I went to his bed-side. He recognised me—we entered into conversation—he could not well finish his sentences, but it was evident that his soul had been on the mountains of spices gathering some of the first fruits. The family told me that a few hours before his death he told them he should *see the salvation of God!* “*Mark the perfect and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace.*”

His widow* is so infirm, that she will probably not have to wait long, till she be called to enter on that state where they ‘neither marry, nor are given in marriage ; but are as the angels of God in heaven.’ W. S.

* She is sister to Mrs. Donnelly, wife of Rev. Thomas Donnelly, of South Carolina.