

THE SECOND OF MAY,

1882.

IT was a sad, sad day, for on it we bore him to his last resting place on earth ; and yet not himself, for he was “absent from the body, present with the Lord.” He had said on the previous Thursday, “I feel just like a bird ready to fly away ;” and the Saturday following, April 29th, at five minutes past eleven, A.M., he departed to be “with Christ which is far better.”

As many hearts in many lands will like to have some account of this day, we will do our best to give it to them ; though it will be but the *outside* of what took place, for the deeper stream flowed all silently within, and has *its* record with Him who wept at the grave of Lazarus.

At the pleasant and retired home of our dear brother and sister Hammond, at Bournemouth, (where for exactly the last eight weeks of his earthly course, beloved J. N. D. had been watched and tended with loving care) as many as could, assembled for prayer at a quarter to twelve.

As they entered the hall to gain the large drawing-room, where the meeting was held, resting on trestles, they passed the precious remains, and read :—

JOHN NELSON DARBY,

Born

November 18th, 1800,

Died

In the Lord,

April 29th, 1882.

As another has put it, “The solemn, sad fact for us was—he was gone ; a great one had fallen asleep.” God’s

chosen vessel, who had toiled and laboured to feed the flock, and unfold the truths and glories of His word and His Christ was gone to his rest—his work was done.” In this room, where his last words at a reading meeting were heard on the closing verses of Ephesians iii., “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,” the bereaved saints waited on God in silence, with much manifest sorrow, and a blessed sense of the Lord’s presence.

The sad quietude was broken by one giving out his own hymn—“Rest of the saints above.” This was followed by an aged brother leading the saints in thanksgiving to God, first for the bright glory before us, and which cannot be taken from us, then for all the sufficiency of Christ and the certainty of His blessed presence *all* the way through the wilderness. Next, a brother prayed that the removal of our beloved brother might be used to our blessing, in leading us to more occupation with Christ and devotedness to Him. Then another prayed, very touchingly, thanking God for His gift to the church; for His servant’s faithful stewardship, and his devoted and consistent life. He was so much affected that he was unable to continue in prayer. Next a brother, with much thanksgiving for the blessing that he had been to the whole church of God, prayed that his death might be used to speak to the hearts of all the saints at large that knew him; and that his writings might continue to be largely blessed to believers generally. An aged brother then prayed with lowly confidence in God, and this sweet, though sad and solemn, season of prayer and thanksgiving closed with the hymn, “Thou hidden source of calm repose.”

By the suggestion of a brother, Mr. Darby’s last written words to his brethren were then read.*

At a little after three, the body was carried to the plain hearse by eight brethren, and by this conveyed to the cemetery, which was some considerable distance from the house. There were no mourning coaches; and only a few cabs, containing some who could not well walk the distance, followed it. The majority of those who had gathered at the house walked to the cemetery by another route, so that there might be as little as possible to attract the eye of the world, our beloved brother having expressed the desire that his burial might be very quietly performed.

The body reached the cemetery gates about half-past three, where many hundreds had gathered to receive it. At a short distance outside the gates the body was taken from the hearse, and by a kind and thoughtful arrangement by means of which twenty-four brethren at a time were enabled to assist in carrying, it was borne to the grave side; the bearers being changed several times, so that the many brethren who wished to share in the privilege of carrying him "to his burial" might be enabled to have it.

About a thousand sorrowing saints, several coming from Scotland and Ireland, stood closely round the grave, and after a short time of quiet waiting on God,

" O happy morn ! the Lord will come
And take His waiting people home,
 Beyond the reach of care ;
Where guilt and sin are all unknown :
The Lord will come and claim His own,
And place them with Him on His throne,
 The glory bright to share.

* Any in fellowship desiring a copy of these can have them by sending a stamped envelope to either of the editors of "Words of Faith."

The resurrection-morn will break,
 And every sleeping saint awake,
 Brought forth in light again ;
 O morn, too bright for mortal eyes !
 When all the ransom'd church shall rise
 And wing their way to yonder skies—
 Called up with Christ to reign.

O Lord ! our pilgrim-spirits long
 To sing the everlasting song
 Of glory, honour, power ;
 Till then, when Thou all power shalt wield,
 Blest Saviour, Thou wilt be our shield,
 For Thou hast to our souls reveal'd
 Thyself, our strength and tower.”

was given out and sung with much feeling.

A brother then read Matthew xxvii. 59, 60, 61, and said : “What a contrast between the burial of the Master and the burial of the servant, for which so many of us are assembled here this day. Joseph of Arimathæa found a place for the body of the Master in his own new tomb, where, with the help of Nicodemus, he reverently laid it ; but how few the mourners, just two lowly women. What a tale it tells us of the reality of the Master's humiliation ! We have our sorrow around the servant's grave, but how far greater was that of those few who wept around the Master's, and of a character, too, how different ! bitter desolation and unrelieved sorrow filled their hearts, for they were burying, as they thought, in that new tomb, all their hopes when they laid His body there. They had trusted that it was He which should have redeemed Israel. But He was dead, and all their hopes for the future of their nation were therefore dashed to the ground. At the moment they knew nothing of the resurrection, we get that in the next chapter, and the joy of their hearts through it ; but we are here around the servant's grave, with knowledge that the Master has

risen, that He is with us here in our sorrow, and that He is coming again soon to take us all to be with Himself in heaven. How could we possibly have come here to lay this loved one in the grave with confidence, did not we know the blessed hope of resurrection ? As we think of all that flows from His resurrection, what joy mingles itself with our sorrow !

“In the presence of death it does not become us to eulogise the dead. One name only of all who have walked this earth is worthy here to be remembered and spoken of, even His who has annulled death, and him that had the power of it, and who will, we know not how soon, call forth from the tomb the bodies of His sleeping saints, and take up His living ones to be with Himself for ever. The Master died, was buried—but He is risen. ‘Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.’ We place the body of our beloved brother in this grave, with this blessed hope ours to comfort and cheer our sorrowing hearts.”

This was followed by a very fervent prayer for the blessing of the Lord upon His own, the strengthening of our hearts in Himself and His resources for us in our present need ; closing with a touching word of thanksgiving for the long life of devoted service to His church of the one taken from our midst, and touching reference being made to his course, which, through grace, to human eyes had been unswerving.

Next came, with much sweetness and relief to our sad hearts—

“ Soon Thou wilt come again,
Jesus, our Lord !
We shall be happy then,
Jesus, our Lord !

Then we Thy face shall see,
 Then we shall like Thee be,
 Then evermore with Thee,
 Jesus, our Lord!"

A brother then said: "Let us read together three scriptures. The first you will find in the 48th of Genesis, verse 21, 'And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.'

"Tears would most naturally fall from the eyes of those who surrounded him, as the patriarch said, 'Behold, I die;' and not to have shed them would have been out of the course of nature; but what comfort was in the words that followed, 'God shall be with you.'

"So, too, to-day, beloved friends, our tears may rightly fall, as we surround the grave of this honoured servant of God. Not to feel his death were wrong; for what he has been, as God's vessel, to us all, in many ways, I need not say. Could his voice sound now in our ears, would it not be just to say to us, 'God shall be with you?' In this our hearts can and do rest. Our beloved brother is gone from earth, but our God is not gone.

"When the telegram came, kindly sent by a brother, announcing his departure, this and two other scriptures came with great power to my own soul, and—though but a young brother—I felt I should like to read them here to-day, with the hope that the Spirit of God might comfort your hearts by them, as He did mine.

"The second is in the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians: 'Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but how much more in my absence, work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' (Phil. ii. 12, 13.)

"It is the same sweet truth here. Paul was gone—shut up in prison—but God was not gone, and the imprisoned apostle counted on greater obedience, now that he was away, than when he was with them. His absence gave greater scope, so to say, for God to manifest His grace and power, and this comforted Paul's heart.

"The third passage you will find in Revelation i.: 'And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead: and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and hades.' (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

"What were these words to the apostle John? And are they not full of living power to us also, beloved brethren? Surely! In a world of death, as this is, I know of no such cheer and comfort to one's heart as this. We know, and love, and cleave to *One who can never die*. He has died for us, blessed be His holy name, and by His death we have life—eternal life. Yet still are we where death often afflicts us, as this day, and what solace and support is ours!

"'Fear not,' He says, and why should we? This one goes, and that. This tenderly loved one is taken away, and that; this support snapped, and that; but *He lives*, and lives to die no more. What is it then we learn? Our hearts may go out towards Him, and there tenderly wind themselves round His blessed Person with no fear that the rude hand of death shall ever snap them. No, brethren, He lives, and He must be more and more the object of our lives' deepest devotion; and, I believe, what our God would teach us, by the removal of our beloved brother, His honoured servant, is not only to follow him as he followed Christ, but, above all, to make the Lord Himself our object, and find all our springs in Himself. We want no more, whatever be the need of

the way, if only our hearts are in the enjoyment of the old saint's words, 'God shall be with you.'"

He followed his remarks by an earnest prayer, that God would give us to know the full comfort of His own presence while deeply mourning the departure of His servant, and that it might lead to increased devotedness to Christ and His interests.

A brother now read: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 1-3.) "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv. 13-18.)

He said—"The precious truths contained in these and other portions of scripture, have now become familiar to thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, in the church of God. But some of us around this grave may be able to look back and remember the time when these great

distinctive truths were forgotten and unknown. Yes, we can remember the time when there was not a person in the various districts from which we have gathered this day, that knew the blessed truth of the coming of the Lord to take His church, or the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost on earth. We would acknowledge, in the presence of our God, in the presence of death, as we commit this precious body to the Lord's care in this grave: the great goodness of our God and Father, in using our beloved departed brother as His vessel to restore these and other blessed truths to the church; and what comfort and cause for thanksgiving that the Lord, who raised him up and gave him as His gift, is still with us. His word remains with us. The Holy Ghost abides with us. Let our prayer be, that the Lord may use his death to our blessing, and his writings more largely to the rich blessing of the entire church of God."

He concluded by praying that the coming of the Lord, as the immediate hope of believers, which our departed had, under God's good hand, been the means of reviving, might more than ever be a living and operative truth in our souls.

" Lord Jesus, come !
 Nor let us longer roam
 Afar from Thee and that bright place
 Where we shall see Thee face to face.
 Lord Jesus, come !

Lord Jesus, come !
 Thine absence here we mourn ;
 No joy we know apart from Thee,
 No sorrow in Thy presence see.
 Come, Jesus, come !

Lord Jesus, come !
 And claim us as Thine own ;
 With longing hearts, the path we tread,
 Which Thee on high to glory led ;
 Come, Saviour, come !

Lord Jesus, come !
 And take Thy people home ;
 That all Thy flock, so scatter'd here,
 With Thee in glory may appear,
 Lord Jesus, come !”

was now sung, the brightness and nearness of His coming being very present to many pilgrim hearts in this affecting scene.

After a short pause the body was lowered into the grave by ten brethren, and one of them commended it to the Lord's safe keeping, in view of the bright and blessed morning of resurrection, praying earnestly that we might all be kept steady in His ways till “That day.”

“ Brightness of th' eternal glory,
 Shall Thy praise unutter'd lie ?
 Who would hush the heaven-sent story
 Of the Lamb who came to die ?
 Came from Godhead's fullest glory
 Down to Calvary's depth of woe,—
 Now on high, we bow before Thee ;
 Streams of praises ceaseless flow !
 Sing His blest triumphant rising ;
 Sing Him on the Father's throne ;
 Sing—till heaven and earth surprising,
 Reigns the Nazarene alone.”

was then sung to Him, who had taken our brother to Himself, and without being given out, as from one heart and voice, welled up, in sadly solemn, yet joyful strains—

Glory, honour, praise, and power,
 Be unto the Lamb for ever !
 Jesus Christ is our Redeemer,
 Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !
 Hallelujah ! Praise ye the Lord !

One last farewell look was given by most into the grave, and we dispersed to think of him where he now rests from his labour in the presence of his Lord.

C. W.

In Memoriam.

LORD, Thou hast taken one who loved
 To serve both Thee and Thine,
 Whose every act of service proved
 "Thy will must govern mine."

Sweet is his rest, and fair the scene,
 But fairer still art Thou;
 And Thou, who his one hope hast been,
 Wilt Thine approval shew.

Who shall declare Thy counsels deep,
 Or who Thy ways unfold;
 Or who can Thine own secrets keep,
 Or who Thy works uphold?

With heavy hearts to Thee we bow,
 Our fears, our griefs to tell;
 But this one comfort, joy, to know,
 Thou doest all things well.

And shall we grieve to miss that face,
 And cease our grateful song?
 Nay, rather would we own the grace
 That spared him so long.

All, all is well, we know it, Lord,
 For Thou hast all Thy way;
 Well, now, and when we hear Thy word
 That bids us "Come away."

His joy, not like a ransom'd slave,
 Who hastens to be free;
 Or such as new-made converts have,
 Of growing ecstasy.

But joy profound,* that bids us cry,
 And loud in triumph sing:
 "Oh! grave, where is thy victory,
 "Oh! death, where is thy sting?"

Hull.

W. B. *Barfield.*

* "I have no ecstasy, but profound joy," he had said to one few days before his death.