

# Memoirs of Thomas Stracy

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These brief Memoirs of my experiences in the Lord’s work were written in the first place in response to repeated requests on the part of my dear wife, and as they have appeared helpful to the brethren to whom she has handed them, and especially to those who know little of the Lord’s work in Great Britain in earlier days, a few additions have now been made which one trusts will continue to be helpful to some. T.S.

## MEMOIRS OF T.S.

*“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee.” De 8:2*

I was born on the 22nd November, 1884, at Edith Villa, Nightingale Road, Wood Green, in the County of Middlesex, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Stracy, being of Huguenot descent on my father’s side. From all the accounts I have received, it might be said of them, as of Zacariah and Elizabeth of old: *“They were both righteous before God; walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”* Luke 1:6. Both parents died in my early years: my father when I was two, ; my mother when I had reached the age of six; and from then on to the age of twenty-one I was cared for by an aunt, for whose godly influence and instruction I can never be too thankful.

I was educated at Caterham School, and on leaving school, proceeded to the Royal Academy of Music, having decided to make the profession of music my career, taking the organ as a first study, but devoting most of my time to musical composition, being made a Sub-Professor of Harmony at that institution in the fifth year of my studentship. Some of my orchestral works were performed under the baton of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and at Sir Dan Godfrey’s Symphony Concerts at the Pavilion, Bournemouth, as well as, in later years, by Col. Vivien Dunn, M.V.O., at the time Musical Director of the Royal Marines, Portsmouth Division, at the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

In the year 1905, and within about a week of attaining the age of twenty-one, I was introduced to the writings of Pastor Russell by a Mr. Pearson, the Station Master at Penshurst, Kent, where I had been organist for a year. The result of studying these works was an entirely new outlook upon life and the future, and a realisation that a life given to the service of God is a greater privilege than the following of any earthly calling. I decided that this should be my course. Hence, in December, 1906, my work at the Royal Academy of Music was terminated, much to the disappointment of relations and friends, as well as to some of my former professors; and at the beginning of the new year (1907) I started as a colporteur in North London, under the auspices of The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, circulating its publications which had been such a blessing to my own head and heart; the sweet strains of the Harp of God providing far more beautiful and heart-cheering music than any of which I had knowledge up to that time. This step was made easier than it might have been to many, because an income sufficient to keep on in reasonable comfort had been received from my father’s estate at the age of 21.

It was my custom in this work to begin my calls with the house next door, proceeding one way, then the other, down the road or street in which I lived or was temporarily staying, even as the remnant of Israel who had returned from Babylon, under Nehemiah's direction, began to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem nearest to their place of abode.

After two and a half year's work in London, during which time I had the great blessing and encouragement of meeting with the brethren at 24, Evorsholt Street, N.W. -the British Branch of the Watch Tower, Bible and Tract Society-enjoying the ministry of Bro. Hemery and other faithful servants of the truth, being specially drawn to a few members of the church who had received "Food for Thinking Christians" in 1881, and who had been rejoicing in the Truth since that time, the way opened up for me to spend four months of the summer of 1909 circulating tracts in the small towns and villages of Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset, a part of Hampshire and a part of Devon. Some 428 places were visited, and 104,000 tracts were circulated, and a number became interested in the Truth as a result of this effort.

Sixteen or seventeen centers were used for this tract distribution, and being extremely limited for time on account of the extent of the ground to be covered during the summer months, accommodation for the week spent in each center had to be fixed up every Monday morning on arrival, very quickly. In this the hand of the Lord seemed to be specially manifest, for at each place of stay one was led to kind, pleasant people, plus congenial surroundings and good food. The only exception to this being my last place of stay-Salisbury-prior to returning to London, and this was far from congenial-an indication of how things might have turned out if the Lord's kindly providences had not been one's portion.

One interesting incident in connection with this work may be mentioned. A lady, who looked after an old aunt, lived in a cottage in a very remote part of the country, well away from the roads, across the fields. A little girl on her way home from school was given a few tracts to take to some cottages down a lane. Knowing that Miss Tattersall was interested in the Bible, she took one of these tracts across the fields to Hyde Park Cottage. Miss Tattersall read the tract-"Where are the Dead?" -with great interest; sent up to Headquarters for further reading matter, including Volume I of the Scripture Studies, and coming rapidly into the Truth, was very anxious to circulate the Glad Tidings to others. The invalid aunt, however, practically confined her to the house. After a year or two, the aunt died, and Sis. Tattersall, as she had then become, entered the Colporteur work, circulating many hundreds of copies of "Studies in the Scriptures" throughout the county of Somerset; and after years of faithful service, finished her course with joy.

After another month's work in London, in the Autumn of 1909, God's providences seemed to point to Norfolk, with Norwich as a centre, as the next scene of my activities. A day or two after reaching Norwich, I chanced to pass a small building in the city with the notice-board outside-"Christian Inquirers' Meeting Room." The notice seemed so attractive that I decided to go to the lecture announced for the next Sunday evening. I went, armed with Vol. I of the Scripture Studies and a few "Hell Towers," for distribution at the close of the meeting. The lecture, in which I was much interested, and

which contained very little with which I could disagree, related to our Lord's return to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth, and which, it was pointed out, was the only way of bringing peace to a troubled world. Mr. Harwood, the old gentleman who gave the lecture, accepted the loan of Volume I, but could not accept all its presentations as truth. However, two prominent members of this little assembly (Bro. & Sis. Chapman) were ready for the further light of the Harvest time, and came fully into the truth.

The work in Norwich proved fairly fruitful; six or seven being blessed with the light of Present Truth within the first few months of my beginning to labor there. A year and ten months work in Norfolk, including daily journeys by train to and from Yarmouth and Lowestoft, as well as cycle rides to a great many villages within the area. In total there were dispersed about two thousand volumes of the Scripture Studies and a great deal of free literature. I now felt that the time had come to move to another centre for work; and after prayers for guidance, in June, 1911, was led to go to Brighton.

Here, unlike Norwich and Norfolk, which was practically virgin soil, there was a little class of six consecrated brethren, for whose fellowship and encouragement I have always been grateful. Brighton, and a fifteen miles radius around the town, proved a much more difficult territory to work than Norfolk. However, a lesser number of books going into circulation, was made up for by a larger number coming into the Truth.

For a few weeks in the Spring and Autumn of 1910, and again in the Spring of 1911, the somewhat trying work of continually calling upon people in their homes for six or seven hours a day, or even longer, was relinquished, and I had the pleasure of helping in the advertising of the nine great meetings at which Pastor Russell spoke at the Royal Albert Hall, as well as to play the organ for these nine occasions. For the first of these lectures 750,000 tracts were distributed to advertise the meeting; and for each of the others, half a million large folders were distributed from door to door over the whole of London—a big effort, and necessitating a great deal of hard work for the brethren, most of whom had their daily vocations to attend to.

In the autumn of 1911, Pastor Russell came to Brighton, and we had a meeting at The Dome, with an audience of 2,000. Thirty-five thousand tracts and a great many posters—fourteen feet by nine—were used to advertise the meeting. This lecture gave the place a remarkable “shake up,” so that when Pilgrim Bro. James Wilson came a few months later, for a Sunday lecture, four hundred attended the Atheneum Hall of The Brighton School of Music—the result of comparatively small amount of advertising. The brethren, including myself, were so surprised at these numbers and interest shown, that we felt we must announce another meeting for the following Sunday. This we had in a smaller hall in the same building, and which I was asked to address. This was not advertised beyond the announcement at the close of Bro Wilson's lecture that a lecture would be given the following Sunday on the subject of The Day of Judgment. To the surprise of all the friends about a hundred turned up to this meeting. To speak to so many was rather an ordeal as I had never before addressed more than fifteen or twenty people. Such a number coming to hear the Glad Tidings compelled us to announce another meeting for the next Sunday, when to our further surprise, between seventy and eighty again attended. These numbers forced me to the conclusion that the Lord wished for a regular Sunday evening meeting to be held at the Atheneum School of Music, and the brethren

heartily concurred with this proposed arrangement.

During the remainder of my stay in Brighton, of nearly a year, the number at our Sunday evening meetings seldom dropped below thirty-five or forty; and one can gratefully say that they were months of continual growth in grace and knowledge on the part of all the friends.

During the last few months of my stay in Brighton, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society inaugurated a new work called "Church Extension work." This arrangement was to hold a series of six lectures in a town or large village and then endeavor to form a weekly class for Bible study, providing sufficient interest had been aroused. Series of lectures of this character were held at Lewes, Uckfield and Portslade.

Having worked as much territory as could be conveniently reached from Brighton, my next center of work was Portsmouth, a town of 250,000 population. Here, for twelve months, Church Extension work was to be my principal occupation. The town was divided into three sections, and six well-advertised lectures were given in each section, with 90,000 tracts, as well as other means, being used to advertise these meetings. The little class of seven or eight brethren entered whole-heartedly into this work, and our efforts were rewarded by seeing a company of thirty or more gathered into a regular Sunday evening meeting, plus various week-night studies.

The remainder of this year was taken up with series of lectures at Gosport, Fareham, Southampton (Freemantle), Eastleigh, Winchester and Havant, with as much colporteur work and tract distribution as I could find time for. Several of these series of lectures resulted in a regular class of Bible Students. The class at Eastleigh should be singled out for special mention. There, six lectures in the Council Chamber resulted in a little class of twelve beginning to attend a Bible Study in the home of a Mr. and Mrs. Boait, kindly offered for these meetings. With the help and encouragement of one or two brethren who went over from Southampton to lead the meetings, a properly organised ecclesia was soon established. Mrs. Boait had a shop on a corner and sold sweets, but appreciation of the Lord's message so captivated her heart that the sweets had to go, and the shop was used as the regular meeting place of the brethren. This little company soon began to sound forth the word of the Lord on their own account (1 Thes. 1:8), and years of faithful service for the Lord, the Truth and the brethren have been the result of the original lectures in the Council Chamber. At the time of writing, the meeting is still held at the home of Bro. & Sis. Boait, and the same meeting room is used, but only four of the original class now remain (the others having been removed by death) -still holding to the "*things which they heard from the beginning.*" (1 John 2:24).

Following my stay at Portsmouth, came six months work at Southampton, with further series of extension lectures. Then, back to Portsmouth in June, 1914, for four months, with further series of lectures in Portsmouth and Chichester. Further activity of this nature was, however, cut short by the bursting of the first world war.

In October, 1914, instead of attaining the heavenly phase of the Kingdom, as many expected, I went to Bath, to work the city and surrounding districts. Here, were only a little company of five, favored with the light of Present Truth; but this number was increased by five or six more during my stay of twelve months.

As an illustration of the fact that a few consecrated Christians were still to be found among the clergy, particularly in the “low” section of the Church of England, during the Harvest period, I relate the following:-

One day in the Summer of 1915, I worked the village of Monkton Combe, in Somerset, and called upon the Vicar of the parish last, as was my custom. On being ushered into his study, I found an earnest man who had been a missionary in China, but who had had to return to this country on account of his health. He believed in the nearness of our Lord’s Return and in his Millennial Kingdom, and seemed quite pleased to have a copy of Vol. I. On being about to leave, he said, to my surprise, “We’ll just have a word of prayer before you go.” We knelt down, and this dear brother prayed to the Father just as one would expect a child of God to do; asking “a blessing upon our brother and upon the book.” After a few days I wrote this friend, enclosing a magazine, which in those days we called the “Hell Tower,” containing an explanation of every text in the Bible in which the word “hell” is found. In his reply he said, “I am very interested indeed in “The Divine Plan of the Ages,” and have since ordered several other copies.

By October, 1915, financial resources having been used up rather rapidly during the previous nine years, on account of our expectation of the early “change” of the last members of the body of Christ, I began to wonder whether it would be necessary to take up some secular employment. Bro. Hemery, the British representative of The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, happened to come to Bristol during the last month or two of my stay in Bath, so I talked to him about this. Within a week, three invitations for further service came from the brethren in Bristol, three classes in the Isle of Man, and from Portsmouth; financial assistance in each case being offered. Having been privileged to help the church in Portsmouth for twelve months, and feeling they were in considerable need of further assistance, and having received a very warm invitation from Sister and Mr. Westell, of Gosport, to take my home with them during my sojourn in the Portsmouth area, I concluded it to be the Lord’s will that with his assisting grace, this part of the Harvest field should be the scene of further labors. The combined class of Portsmouth and Gosport then numbered not more than thirty; but with the Lord’s blessing, during the next four or five years, this number had increased to about a hundred. Most of these dear brethren came into the light of Present Truth in middle age, and at the time of writing, probably between forty and fifty have finished their earthly course. These it will indeed be a pleasure to meet in the Father’s house of many mansions.

Six months after coming to Gosport (April, 1916) the world war continuing to rage with increasing fierceness, the Military Service Act necessitated an appeal on conscientious grounds against going into the army. In spite of letters from the Portsmouth church signed by the elders and deacons, and from Bro. Hemery, one of the managers of the British Branch of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the local Tribunal only accorded me non-combatant service. However, the Appeal Tribunal gave me much more sympathetic consideration, reversing this decision; and although I was claiming exemption as a conscientious objector-in view of having been engaged in Christian work for nine years, and, at the time, serving the Portsmouth Church and other classes of Bible Students-I was granted, to my surprise, exemption from Military

service “as a Minister of a religious denomination within the meaning of the act” -to quote my exemption paper received from Winchester. This exemption from Military service was a cause of great thankfulness, and left me free to continue to devote myself to the Lord’s work, so long as he saw fit to keep the door open. I might say that my case was the only one in England in which the Tribunal granted total exemption to a full-time worker associated with the Watch Tower Society. Bro. Scott of Edinburgh was the only one in Scotland to receive the same favor, from which we see the very strict procedure of the Military Tribunals throughout Great Britain.

In addition to my other activities during the years 1917 and 1918, I published a series of booklets containing short expositions of the Twelve Minor Prophets. Although very brief and immature, and doing scant justice to these gems of divine grace and wisdom, they seemed, from many letters received, to have been a blessing to numbers of the Lord’s people. About 20,000 of these were circulated, principally in Great Britain and the United States. One of the circumstances which led to the publishing of these brief comments may be related. After one or two of these prophets had been published, and being in doubt whether to further venture into print, I one day received a wire from a Brother in Glasgow, saying he had heard that I contemplated publishing some comments on the Minor Prophets, and wished to donate £100 towards the cost of printing. Although I felt I could not accept this unexpected offer, I did take it as a pointer that I should go forward with this little service for the Lord’s people. I replied, thanking him, and saying that if he would allow me, I would accept a loan of £80 towards the printer’s bill; paying him back as the booklets were sold. This was agreed to, and I was thankful to be able to return the money in a matter of a few months.

In 1920, the first of the lectures “Millions Now Living Will Never Die” was given on a week-day in a Council School in Southsea; followed by similar lectures in a number of Council Schools in different parts of the city of Portsmouth. This was followed, in harmony with the general plan of The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of having these lectures on stated Sundays in as many towns as possible throughout Great Britain-by a number of well-advertised Sunday lectures in the cinemas in various parts of the city. These meetings were usually attended from four to eight hundred people-a much larger number than had ever before been induced to attend our Bible lectures. During the winter months of the years from 1920 to 1925, similar lectures to the foregoing-with “Millions Now Living Will Never Die” always used as a sub-title-were given in the villages of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight-usually one being arranged for each week. So successful were some of these village lectures, that a distribution of three hundred folders advertising a meeting has sometimes brought along as many as sixty people to the village hall.

A lecture held on a dark winter’s night at one rather scattered village saw many of the people arriving with a lantern which had guided their way probably through rough, narrow country roads. On arriving, each deposited his lamp as a part of a long row along the back wall of the hall. Seeing this unusual sight, of a long row of lamps, became an additional incentive to make, with the Lord’s help, the lamp which guides our path to shine out brightly.

Another well-advertised and well-attended lecture with the title "All Nations Marching to Armageddon, but Millions Now Living Will Never Die," was given in the Congregational Church Hall, Hayling Island. Permission to use this hall was gladly given by the Church Secretary, Mr. West, a retired Architect. A very fine old gentleman, Sir Charles Crawford, Bart., who was blessed by having a son in the Truth, came to this meeting. On arrival, he handed the brother at the door 5/- towards the expenses of the meeting, with a note addressed to the chairman asking to be allowed to support the vote of thanks; intimating that he felt he could say something in harmony with the subject of the lecture which would be helpful to those present. I explained that it was not our custom to have anything in the nature of a vote of thanks to the speaker, but as he seemed to wish very much to say a word, I said I would look to him at the close of the lecture to speak for a few minutes. He availed himself of this opportunity and made a few appropriate remarks to the effect that everything in the world pointed in one direction, viz., that we were at the end of the present dispensation, and exhorted those present to be like the wise virgins with lamps trimmed and burning, ready to go forth to meet the Bridegroom; and flushed with the effort of speaking these kindly words of exhortation, sat down. As he was a well-known man on the Island, I believe the influence for the Truth was quite good.

Twelve months after this, I wrote to Mr. West asking for the use of the Church Hall for another lecture. This he was quite prepared and pleased to grant. However, after the second meeting, Mr. West said, "I got into hot water for allowing you to use the hall last time." He, however, defended his action, saying he was present at the lecture, and, to use his own words, "It was the most devotional meeting I have ever been in." When the matter of letting the hall for another lecture came up, probably at the Deacons' Meeting, in spite of opposition, Mr. West carried his point, and later mentioned to me what had apparently influenced him so favorably towards our work. He said, "In 1910 I was one of the Deacons of the Congregational Church, Craven Terrace, W., when your people bought the Church edifice and premises from us." After this it, of course, became the London Tabernacle, and was used as the principal meeting place of the brethren in London. From what Mr. West said, he was evidently so favorably impressed by the way Pastor Russell carried through the whole business of the transaction, and the atmosphere of the one or two business meetings he had to attend, that the good impression lasted until, many years later, he had an opportunity, as related foregoing, of giving our work a helping hand, even at the cost of some sharp talk and perhaps loss of popularity.

At the close of a lecture at Lee-On-the-Solent, Hampshire, a voice with a well-known clerical tone, was heard at the end of the Hall. At first one naturally thought that the gentleman was making a protest against something which had been said in the lecture. The audience, which had begun to move, was soon quiet again, when they recognized that the Vicar was speaking. To the surprise of the brethren present, he was, to the contrary, proposing a vote of thanks, and asking if another similar lecture could be arranged, with an opportunity for questions at the close; with the promise that he would announce the lecture from his pulpit and generally make it known. So, after a few months, another meeting was arranged, with a short address, leaving plenty of time for questions at the close. The vicar asked several, and seemed quite satisfied with the answers. Other members of the audience had brought their questions written out on

pieces of paper, and about an hour was taken up in this way: most of the questions being of the usual, simple kind, such as the meaning of the Rich Man and Lazarus; Jesus' words to the thief on the cross; preaching to the spirits in prison, etc., etc. The Lord thus used one of Babylon's unwitting servants for a good witness to be given. The reverent gentleman came to the platform at the end of the meeting, helped down with the chart, and showed himself genuinely affable. On drawing his attention to the six Volumes, he said he had a friend who had all the books, and that he had access to them whenever he wanted. I was interested to hear, through a friend, that this clergyman, a year or two before this, had taken Vol. I as a text book in his Sunday afternoon Bible Class.

At another "Millions" lecture in a Hampshire village, when the Vicar of the Parish was present, one was a little nervous as he rose from his seat at the close of the meeting. However, instead of uttering any protest at what had been said, he addressed the audience as follows:- "I want you all to go home and tell your friends and neighbors how much they have missed by not being here this evening;" and then remarked how much more profitable and really enjoyable many would find it if they would allow themselves to be persuaded to attend meetings such as the present one, instead of going to places of entertainment. We arranged another meeting at the same place a few months later, but by that time the old gentleman had finished his course.

While engaged in a little Witness work on Hayling Island, just before the bursting of the first World War, I remember calling at a house where the maid, who came to the door, informed me that the lady of the house was out, but would I like to see the Colonel? Of course, I had no objection to seeing the Colonel. The gentleman soon came running down the stairs, and on seeing what I had called about, said, "Come in," and I followed him upstairs to his "den." On entering the room and seeing a large Chart of the Ages covering almost the whole of one of the walls, I immediately felt I was among friends. The result was an interesting conversation with Bro. Sawyer, in which he appeared very positive that we had the Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Bro. Sawyer kindly inquired about the "Archbishop" (his way of referring to Bro. Russell) and the "Bishop of London" (Bro Hemery), and one was thankful to say that so far, all was well. This interview reminded me of two previous occasions I had met Bro. Sawyer. One was at a Sunday afternoon Bible Study in the Eversholt Street days, some seven or eight years before this, when after the meeting I found myself sitting for tea with this brother at a little table large enough for two. He referred me to one or two awkward passages in the Book of Revelation, asking for an explanation. Being very young, also young in the truth, I was sorry not to be able to give him satisfaction. The second occasion was when Col. Sawyer took the chair for Bro. Russell at the first of his nine large meetings at the Royal Albert Hall.

The year 1925 saw the attendance at these lectures in Portsmouth, as well as most other parts of the country, very considerably decline, and soon after they were discontinued; this particular way of proclaiming the good news of the coming Kingdom having doubtless accomplished its purpose.

The following year (1926) I was asked by the Society to lecture in the small towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Believing this to be the Lord's will, it meant rather a sad parting from the dear brethren in Portsmouth and Gosport, whom I had been



privileged to serve for the past ten years, as well as for one year in 1913. These lectures in Yorkshire also proved quite fruitful, and regular classes were formed at Cleckheaton, Birstal, Heckmondwyke and Brighouse.

My next move, after six months in Yorkshire, was to North Kent, to engage in a similar work; series of lectures being given at Herne Bay, Whitstable, Queenborough and Sheerness. Then came six months colporteur work in Dorset, followed by six months in Gloucestershire, with centres at Chipping Campden, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Bredon. A month or two before this territory had been fully worked, I had the misfortune to lose my voice, and after struggling on until the Christmas of 1928, returned to Gosport for a rest, expecting that after a few weeks the voice would be fully restored. But, alas, No: it continued very weak, and I was forced to relinquish the work after twenty-two years whole-time service, and my narrative bringing me to the beginning of the year 1929.

In the Spring of 1930, on account of serious departures, doctrinal and otherwise, of the Watch Tower, from the faith once delivered unto the saints, and the message of truth Bro. Russell had the privilege of opening up, the severance from the Watch Tower Society of a number of the brethren in Portsmouth, including myself, took place.

Still suffering from a very weak voice, which precluded much activity in the Lord's work beyond a Sunday evening address and a week-night study, I began to try to pick up the threads of my music, dropped twenty-two years before. This was no easy thing to do, but a few compositions performed by the Portsmouth Municipal Orchestra at the Guildhall, conducted by Col. Vivian Dunn, M.V.O., and the Royal Marines Orchestral Band, under the same conductor, and two short choral works-settings of words from Whittier's Centennial Hymn and his short poem, "Hope of the Ages," also performed at the Guildhall by the Portsmouth Bach Society, brought me a fair amount of publicity; the result being commissions to write a few songs, and a few pupils for Harmony and Composition, which, in the Lord's providences, supplied the things needful for the body.

After nine or ten years (and with great thankfulness to the Lord), one found it no longer necessary to be thus partially occupied with mundane things, specially in a calling inclined to absorb one's whole thoughts, and in which one's enthusiasm for the subject must be sufficient to similarly enthuse others.

In 1931 I concluded it to be the Lord's will that I should begin to run in double harness, and in August 1932, was married to Sister Phyllis Davies, who for many years had been a member of the Portsmouth Class; and, for the past twenty-three years, a true helpmeet in spiritual as well as in temporal things, has been in this way provided. *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."* (Jas 1:17). Taking this step meant leaving Bro. & Sister Westell, with whom I had had, in every sense, a home for seventeen years. Their faithful service throughout this time can be expressed in nothing short of Paul's words when referring to Aquila and Priscilla-*"Who for my life have laid down their necks."* (Ro 16:4). All that they did during these years in order to co-operate and enable me to be as free as possible from all earthly cares, that I might be entirely devoted to the Lord's work, is a service never to be forgotten, and above all by Him who is not unrighteous to forget any service faithfully performed in his name.

Taking the step of marriage also meant finding a house, and again I saw the Lord's hand directing me aright. A suitable domicile was found in Strathmore Road, Gosport; and as soon as receiving his address from the builder, a Mr. Bonage, I remembered he had attended a public lecture in Gosport a few years before and had bought a set of Scripture Studies. Mentioning this, caused him to speak of the Restitution. Of course, this resulted in an invitation to our Sunday evening meeting, to which he came with his wife. Bro. and Sister Bonage both began to drink in the Truth with much appreciation; consecrating themselves to the Lord; and since that day have continued to faithfully serve the interests of his Truth and his people.

As a result of the bursting of the second world war, there came a great deal of bombing and destruction in the Portsmouth area; and in the Summer of 1940, so sure were many that the Germans would attempt an invasion on the South Coast, that all who could possibly do so were advised to leave the district. As a result of this, only two or three brethren remained behind in Gosport, and two of these were graciously taken by the Lord just before the very worst of the bombing began. As for ourselves, the way providentially opened up for us to come to Yeovil, a quiet country town in Somerset, and a place I had tracted thirty years before and where I had given three public lectures in the Spring of 1914. Here, during the war years, as well as since, we still have been able to enjoy the fellowship of some of like precious faith, although, as a result of firmly holding to those *"things we heard from the beginning"* (1Joh 2:24), those with whom we could have fellowship were but few.

In 1917 "The Finished Mystery" was published, purporting to be the long-looked-for Seventh Volume. Although at first disappointed with this book, the various studies of Revelation in class, making use of the help provided, were accompanied by so much blessing-opening up to our understanding the great bulk of the visions of the Revelator-I was sincerely disappointed when the Watch Tower Society ceased to print this book, and at the same time even treating the other volumes of Scripture Studies in the same way. In the Autumn of 1942, knowing that so many of the brethren had not had the benefit of the information contained in "The Finished Mystery" -some, the result of prejudice, refusing to read the book; others not doing so because of sincere objections to the way it was written and published, and still others because of having come into the Truth after the book had gone out of print, I decided to put together a short exposition of the Revelation, in line with the general application of the visions as presented in "The Finished Mystery," believing this application to be, for the most part, the correct one. A small edition of two thousand copies (now exhausted) was published in the early months of 1943, and soon began to circulate among the Lord's people of Great Britain and America, as well as in other parts of the earth. Many letters of appreciation have reached me telling of blessings received as a result of the study of this little book, and to date, strange as it may seem, only one adverse criticism has come to hand.

### **More Experiences in Association with the Lord's Work**

During my early years in the work in London and elsewhere, it was most interesting to meet a number of elderly people who had received "Food for Thinking Christians" in A.D.1881. Although not all of these had fully accepted the Truth, they seemed, for the most part, a class of ripe old Christians to whom the Lord of the Harvest had

directed his message, and from which they had received some comfort and blessing. One old gentleman said, "Yes, I got one as I came out of the church one Sunday morning—a man at the door had a sackful and was handing them out."

Also, during my early days in the service of the Truth my relations, among whom I seemed to have many well-wishers, not being able to see the light of Present Truth, naturally felt I was wasting my life by spending it in circulating the Scripture Studies; or worse, spending it in the preaching of error, a message so different from the time-honored creeds of the Free churches; and earnestly hoped that as a result of their persuasions and possibly disappointing experiences would—after a few months—either tire of the work or, as they would put it, "See the error of my way." But as there seemed no indication that anything like this was going to happen, a cousin of mine who had a friend, the wife of a prominent Congregational Minister, and who herself was one of the Sisters at Dr. Campbell Morgan's chapel at Westminster, quite unknown to me, wrote to Bro. Russell (I think on the occasion of his visit in 1908), asking if they might have an interview with him. This, of course, was granted; Bro. Russell probably expecting to meet two earnest enquirers, wishing to know the way of the Lord more perfectly. This interview, however, was for the purpose of putting my case to Bro. Russell; telling him what had been my prospects, what an unfavourable effect the work was having upon my health, etc., expecting him to agree with their viewpoint, and hoping then he would advise me to take a more rational view of life and not to neglect my earthly calling; feeling, doubtless, that Bro. Russell's word would carry weight where theirs had failed.

Bro. Russell apparently quickly sensed the situation and (as Bro. Hemery, who then had charge of the work in this country, told me very briefly some time after) skillfully veered the conversation round to the subject of consecration and what it meant to follow in the footsteps of Jesus; giving a presentation, which in view of the privileges of forgetting the things which are behind, and running for the prize of the High calling of God in Christ Jesus, made their ideas of an earthly calling and present advantage appear very thin and transitory.

Meeting Bro. Russell on the occasion of his next visit to this country (quite twelve months later, perhaps more) his first remark was a reference to this interview; accompanied by words of comfort and cheer. I have ever since been impressed by his deep sympathy for one in a situation which he seemed to think was more trying than I felt it to be; for in the early days of one's walk in the narrow way, the words of the prophet often have marked fulfillment, "*He shall carry the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*" What at the time might be a great trial, under certain circumstances may be only light affliction.

While living and working in North West London, I attended a small week-night meeting at the house of a brother who for years had been a London City Missionary, and who had not yet cut loose from his quite select corner of the nominal church systems as a whole. On one occasion, this brother related a striking instance of the Lord's kindly providences in answer to prayer, which may be here related.

As the remuneration the brother received as a worker in the London City Mission was very small, he at one time took a house considerably larger than he needed for his

own use, for the purpose of letting a part in order to give him an increase in income a little more adequate to his needs. On account of things not working out as well as expected, the brother one time found himself considerably in debt. By a special effort, all bills were met but one for £5. which it was most important should be paid by a certain date. The brother made it a matter of earnest prayer, and while doing so, the Psalmist's words were much impressed upon his mind, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.*" (Ps 50:15). To be constantly reminded of such a Scripture was, of course, a comfort, but until the very day the money had to be paid, he had no idea from whence it was to come. However, when the day arrived, a letter was delivered by the first post containing a single sheet of paper with no name or address, but only the Scripture written across the paper, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee,*" and carefully folded in the paper was a £5. note. And, as the brother said when relating the story, from that day to this he had no idea where the money came from and who there was who even knew of his particular need, apart from the Lord.

The first grain of wheat I was privileged to find was at Potter's Bar, in the county of Middlesex—a boot-repairer, who preached at a number of village chapels for several of the denominations. This brother, on being called upon, told the familiar story of having so many books on the Scriptures; and quite a lot of talking failed to persuade him to buy Vol. I. Thinking him a very likely subject for the Truth, and having with me a Vol. I. in "Watch Tower" form, I said, "I will leave this with you if you will read it." His reply was, "Oh, I don't want you to do that," and he threw the 5d, the cost of the book, on the counter. The next I heard was that the brother had devoured Vol. I and wanted the others. Bro. Osborne continued to preach, and being a wise man, tried to put forth the Truth a little at a time. In spite of this his endeavors to exercise serpent-wisdom, one chapel after another ceased to renew its invitation to him to serve them. As his ministrations had been very acceptable to many, and now missing them, the people used to say, "When is Bro. Osborne coming again?" Not the people, but the rulers had done this thing!!

Brother Osborne had a great friend, a Police constable in the city of London, who used to spend his free week-ends in Potter's Bar. This friend soon heard and embraced the Truth, and became a runner in the heavenly race. Bro. Wills, on some of his night duties, used to meet another Police constable at a point near Charing Cross, who, during the hours of darkness, heard and was enlightened with the message, and Bro. Evelyn soon became an attendant at the London meetings.

Another interesting incident, shortly after this, resulted from a call at a catering establishment at Finchley, in North London. I found that the proprietor, who held a Young man's Bible Class at a Baptist Chapel, had Volume One, of which he had read little. He had possibly been "put off," as we say. I naturally urged him to read the book, but had to leave him without getting any assurance that he would do so. Being in the neighborhood about twelve months later, I had occasion to go in for some tea. Happening to see the proprietor again, I handed him a "Where are the Dead?" tract as I left. The next thing I heard was this friend had come into the Truth; and as it was at the time of Bro. Russell's first meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, the Brother had the advertisements for these meetings very prominently displayed both outside and inside

his establishment. The interest which Vol. I failed to arouse was accomplished by "Where are the Dead?" In this day of the great battle between Truth and error, the Lord has graciously provided his people with weapons of various kinds, shapes and sizes, so that if one will not penetrate Satan's armor, another very often will. Bro. Sylvester soon had charts (The Plan of the Ages, The Tabernacle, etc., etc.) displayed all round the dining rooms, and would from time to time "come in to view the guests." If he saw anyone, as he ate his meal, manifesting curiosity or interest in the unusual wall decorations, the unsuspected watcher would draw near and endeavor to find an opening for the Word: a little spiritual food to go with the natural provender!

This brother for years had charge of the catering arrangements at the London Tabernacle, when from Sunday to Sunday, large numbers of the brethren were present for lunch and tea. Where could have been found a better choice!

Recognizing Bro. Russell as the Watchman chosen of the Lord to announce the dawn of the Millennial morning (Isa 21:6, 12), as the one fulfilling the Scripture which speaks of "*that servant*," and the Seventh Messenger, the Messenger of the last or Laodicean period of the Christian church, it was with feelings of unusual interest and perhaps a small amount of curiosity on the part of a young brother, as Zaccheus like, he looked forward to seeing and hearing the one the Lord had so honored in connection with the Harvest work-the consummation of the work of the Kingdom, particularly the work of proclaiming the message in all the world for a witness. And the humility, and ability so entirely consecrated to the Lord was all one could expect in the choice made by our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus, the Lord of the Harvest, of the one to fulfill such an important position.

This first privilege of meeting and hearing Bro. Russell was at the Memorial held at South Place Institute, Bishopsgate, London, in 1908-the first time Bro Russell had kept the Memorial outside of Allegheny-four hundred brethren being present on that occasion. Bro. Russell was by no means well, having just come from the boat in time for the meeting. However, he was soon lost in the solemn enthusiasm of explaining to us the meaning of the Memorial; what it means to be dead with Him that we might live with him, to suffer with him that we might reign with him. From the time of this first meeting to the year 1914, it was my privilege to have the inspiring and uplifting experience of hearing Bro. Russell just forty times.

In some ways one of the most interesting of these occasions was a meeting for the Jews in the Shoreditch Town Hall, situated near the poorer Jewish Quarter in London. Having a share in the circulation of the advertising matter for this meeting in this neighborhood of London, resulted in the only experience I ever had, to my knowledge, of being robbed; but fortunately only to the extent of a single coin-a golden sovereign-a coin hardly remembered by the present generation. From what I remember, a handkerchief was shaken in one's face, resulting, it would seem, in a momentary loss of consciousness. On arriving back at 24, Eversholt Street at tea-time, I related my experience, and, for some reason or other, Bro. Hemery and the other brethren treated the matter as though it was a joke, and laughed. Fine comfort! But I suppose they saw I was not very cast down!

The Shoreditch meeting brought together a very considerable number of East-End Jews. In they came in their greasy frock-coats, accompanied by their ladies, with all the orthodox marks of the Jew about them; looking very suspicious, and wondering, of course, what they were going to be “let in for.” The meeting was opened with a minute’s silent prayer, and then Brother Russell began; talking to them like a father, outlining very simply the Scripture story of God’s dealings with Israel, and the passing over the first advent, led them up to the coming of the Messiah, and the making with Israel of the New Covenant.

The effect of this heart-to-heart talk upon the audience—apparently slightly hostile and prejudiced to begin with, was most interesting to watch (I was fortunately so situated as to have a good view of the audience. First their eyes seemed to open, then their mouths; then there was a slight tapping of feet upon the floor, indicating their approval of some point in the discourse; then came a louder tapping of feet; then a spontaneous clapping of hands as the interest increased. The meeting closed in a state of remarkable enthusiasm and pleasure.

In keeping with the foregoing, may be mentioned the experiences of a brother in the North of England, who needed to see an official of the Jewish synagogue (one in the Manchester area, so far as I remember, where on one occasion Pastor Russell had a large meeting for the Jews) concerning the hiring of a hall for a Bible lecture. He interviewed the gentleman in the vestry of the synagogue, and to his great surprise saw a picture of Brother Russell on the wall facing him. He remarked about this, and the gentleman replied, “Yes, Pastor Russell is a great man, and a great friend of the Jewish people. We esteem him very highly.”

The announcement in the November, 1916 “Watch Tower” of Brother Russell’s death, produced some very serious and solemn thoughts concerning the Lord’s work and the experiences of those of the church still this side the veil. (Personally, I was not surprised at the news, as I had been at the time figuring out a chronological calculation which I thought indicated that it would take place about Christmas, 1916.) God buries his workmen, yet still carries on his work; and the work in the Portsmouth area, where I was then situated, and in Great Britain generally, continued on with little interruption. And it has been most interesting to see, as a result of a little more emphasis being laid upon the Restitution features of the Divine Plan of Salvation, the numbers who were able to grasp these features of the Plan, and to look forward to the blessings of the earthly phase of the Kingdom.

Faith tells us that this, as well as every other phase of the Lord’s work will, in spite of unexpected turns and His-appointments (as the Lord’s people like to spell disappointments) go forward to a successful completion. All his purposes shall be accomplished, for “*Known unto the Lord are all his works, from the beginning of the world.*”

Among the many questions and requests, both moving and amusing, received from those called upon, the following was perhaps the least expected and most surprising. At one house, after a few minutes conversation, the young lady who came to the door suddenly interjected, “Please sir, will you christen my baby?”! It transpired that the Parish had recently had a new vicar, and it was a case of mistaken identity on the part of

the young mother.

During my stay in Portsmouth, I heard that the Marguis of Tavistock (who later became the Duke of Bedford) held a weekly Bible Class at the Y.M.C.A. Having heard favourable reports concerning this gentleman, I, in company with another brother, decided to attend one of these studies. We found a little company of not more than half a dozen in a small upper room with the Marquis, who seemed very pleased to see two additions to his meeting. In what way I do not exactly remember, he discovered what we were associated with, and then said he had been reading "The Harp of God." He proposed that they relinquish their usual study (John's Gospel) and discuss some points in the book, "The Harp of God." This being agreed to, he began by saying how glad he was to find that the writer did not believe the doctrine of eternal torment to be taught in the Bible; also that he was very pleased to see that the book tried to show that all who do not have an opportunity for salvation during the present life, will have an opportunity for salvation during the future. This, of course, was all to the good, but further remarks revealed that he had a difficulty in accepting some of the Old Testament stories of slaughter and apparent cruelty, as a part of the inspired Scriptures. His words were, "Jesus revealed God as having the character of a father. Now, whatever is not in accord with this in the Old Testament, I cannot accept." Further talk at one of his country seats, and correspondence over a number of years, concerning various features of the Plan of God, including the High Calling in Christ Jesus, failed to convince this very earnest man that what we had was the Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. At the time, and on various occasions since, one was forcefully reminded of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus, but who, on hearing of the divine requirements for discipleship, "*went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.*" The family name of the Duke (now deceased) is Russell.

The elder of the little scattered company in the part of Kent where the Truth found me was a Bro. Evans—truly a patriarchal character. He received one of the first copies of Vol. I Scripture Studies to reach this country, which in the Lord's providence came about as follows:-

Bro. Evans had a natural brother who emigrated to the United States as a young man. On one occasion he wrote saying he had recently listened to a most remarkable preacher he had ever heard in his life, and that shortly he was bringing out a book which, when published, he would send his brother a copy. This was "The Divine Plan of The Ages," which Bro. Evans realized to be "*meat in due season*" as soon as it was studied and compared with what is written. In this way the Lord reaped a grain of wheat growing in a very obscure and isolated part of the country; the sickle of truth reaching out from Allegheny, nearly three thousand miles, separated this ripening grain.

The first convention I attended was the one arranged by the Glasgow church, in September, 1906. A general convention was held annually in Glasgow in those days. Bro. Pearson of Penshurst, who all through that year, 1906, had been endeavoring to interest me in the Truth, and who, after some months had elapsed, I am afraid was beginning to get a little discouraged at my slow progress—He experienced the same objections to various items of truth being brought up time after time—said one day, "I want you to go to the Glasgow Convention." This suggestion came as a surprise; for to travel all the

way from the South of England to Glasgow, in order to attend some religious meetings, did not at all appeal to me. I said to myself, "What! Go all that way to Glasgow to attend a few meetings!" To begin with, this did not strike me to be at all reasonable. However, Bro. Pearson kept pressing the matter, reminding me that I would again hear Bro. B. H. Barton, whom I had heard during the summer of that year at Sevenoaks; being at the time very much stirred by his faithful ministry, as well as much impressed by such a small (humble) but exceedingly polished jewel of the Lord's own choosing. Half afraid that I would not go to the convention, Bro. Pearson said one day, "I'll pay your fare if you will go." I told him that I did not want to do that; but such a kind offer, I think, helped me to decide that I should go. I traveled to Glasgow with Bro. Mullens of Sevenoaks, who faithfully shepherded me during the three days of this, my first convention, and we were most hospitably entertained by Sis Laird, who, with one of her younger sons, were the only ones of a large family blessed by the light of Present Truth.

The Scotch brethren, and the general unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace and love of the brethren, who had come from all parts of the British Isles-many of whom had never met before-was a revelation to one who, up to this time, had a knowledge of little beyond the cold formalism of the Church of England.

The addresses were all of them inspiring, specially those of Bro. Barton. But there was one address that I did not like; feeling most uncomfortable upon my seat throughout. It was that of Bro. John Edgar upon the Harvest work; the importance of which he ably stressed, specially emphasizing the Colporteur work as being probably the most effective way of thrusting in the sickle of truth, for the purpose of separating the wheat from the tares.

During the Summer of this year I was experiencing a great desire to have some direct service in the Lord's Harvest field, but the Colporteur department of the work I felt I could not manage-hence this very good and helpful address was not enjoyed. However, the Lord knows all about us, the circumstances of each one, and in response to the language of one's heart, "*Here am I, send me,*" the way was made plain, and took the appearance of being "not too difficult," so that the following Christmas I started in this work, resulting in many happy years in service and cheering experiences, which would never have been my portion unless I had followed on to know the Lord.

Seeing Bro. Barton off by the night train for his next appointment, I noticed Aunt Sarah (a very well-known Glasgow character) handing the engine driver-an elderly man-some tracts, and telling him to drive carefully for one of the King's sons was on the train. In the Lord's providence, this engine driver came into the truth, and was present at my next Glasgow Convention, in September, 1908, when Bro. Russell spoke to, what appeared to be, a specially intelligent audience of five thousand, in St. Andrew's Hall-the largest audience in Great Britain up to this time who had listened to a simple outline of the Divine Plan of Salvation; although for this Scottish audience, the message was quite a Hailstorm; and the old Calvinistic belief that all who die outside of Christ, and who, therefore, being of the non-elect, were doomed to eternal perdition, was shown up in all its Satanic hideousness. After this effort, Bro. Russell appeared very worn, as he looked from the carriage window upon numbers of brethren who saw him off by the night train for Liverpool.



At this Convention, I had the privilege, in company with a number of others, of symbolizing my consecration to the Lord by water immersion: Bro. Johnson of the Glasgow Church performing the ceremony, and Bro. Barton offering the closing prayer—a most touching petition, which seemed to cause the very heavens to open. Bro. Johnson, a few years after this, went to South Africa to take charge of the work there. So far as I remember, he left this country soon after Bro. Russell’s first meeting at the Royal Albert Hall; assisting at 24, Eversholt Street for a short time before leaving. I remember going up one day when everything was stir and hustle, in preparation for the first meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, when 8,000 heard about the good tidings of the coming kingdom, and Bro. Johnson said to me, “Well, Bro. Stracy, it’s to be your privilege to play the organ at the Royal Albert Hall meetings. Let it be a wave-offering unto the Lord!” This passing remark has remained vividly with me ever since, and has, like many another chance remark, helped to put the Lord’s service, or whatever it might be, into the proper focus.

The Lord’s providence did not open the way for another attendance at a Glasgow Convention until 1925, which—in spite of an interval of seventeen years—saw little change in the personnel of the truth people, the majority of the brethren still holding fast to the things we “*heard from the beginning*” of the Harvest period (1 John 2:24). However, severe shakings produced some sad divisions and departures from the faith, not many years after this.

My last attendance at a Glasgow Convention was in 1927; Bro. Rutherford expressing a desire that all engaged at the time in the Country Witness work (These were lecturers who confined themselves to the holding of public meetings in small towns and villages of Great Britain) should endeavor to be present. Expecting that this work was to be extended, we were surprised when, shortly after this, the message came that this work was, instead, to be closed down; dwindling audiences and the continuing high cost of keeping this phase of the work going, being no doubt the reason.

Before bringing this brief memoir to an end, I would like to add a word of appreciation of the work of The Dawn Bible Students’ Association. In 1932 the first issue of “The Dawn” magazine reached me; and since that time its faithful testimony and exposition of the Word has quite taken the place of the timely messages of the Watch Tower in Pastor Russell’s day. Since 1932, until the time of this writing, the straight course of this magazine has pursued, and its faithful reminders of the “*things we heard from the beginning*” of the unfolding of the Harvest message, have been a real comfort and inspiration. May its pages continue to be used by our Master toward bringing to a completion the good work he has begun in us, The Dawn’s reprinting of the Scripture Studies has been a work specially appreciated by the writer.

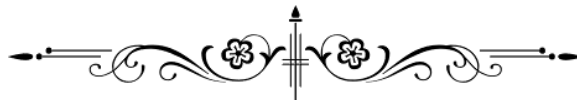
While the Lord’s people constantly urge others to read these volumes, it is sometimes true that we do not read and study them ourselves as much as we should do. I have been surprised to occasionally hear brethren say, in reply to a question about reading the volumes, “I have read them all through once, and now I just use them for reference.” Personally, I have read the six volumes 15 to 20 times during the past 40 years, in addition to a great many class studies, using one or another of the Scripture Studies as text books; and must confess that at each re-reading, one has seen and been encouraged

by points of truth which in all previous readings escaped one. And having been blessed with moderately acute discernment and a retentive memory, I feel, judging from one's own experience, that in the case of those who have given the message the Lord has specially provided for his people during the Harvest period, only this amount of consideration, a great deal of the food placed upon the table has not yet been appreciated. (Lk 12:37).

My personal testimony is to a life-long experience of the Lord's faithfulness, directing my path, abounding toward me in all wisdom and prudence, providing for my needs, both temporal and spiritual; encouraging me with some success in his service, and in spite of many personal weaknesses and shortcomings, continued to lead me by his hand, and to uphold me by the grace and mercy that is in Christ Jesus. My desire is to continue to "rest in his love though storms prevail," *"looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."* (Jude 21).

"The east path in the lowland hath little of grand and new,  
But a toilsome ascent leads on to a wide and glorious view;  
Peopled and warm is the valley, lonely and chill the height,  
But the peak that is nearer the storm-cloud is nearer the stars of light."

(F.R.H.)



T.S. 4th Nov. 1948 (Revised, with further additions, 5th July, 1955).

### **Bro. Thomas Stracy: An Addendum to his Memoirs by Sr. Phyllis Stracy**

#### THE JOURNEY'S END.

After a very active life, with very little illness, for the last fifteen months of my dear husband's life, he was almost entirely confined to bed. He had, during the glorious summer of 1969, enjoyed brief periods on the swing hammock in the garden which I had bought specially for him and which gave him much pleasure, but, as the doctor said, he had literally worn himself to a standstill; and, as I know, in the Master's service. I always felt that his Birthday "Manna" text, *"The zeal of thine house hath consumed me,"* was particularly apt in his case, for his was a life of self-sacrificing service. He used to say that the brethren should sacrifice until it hurts. But whatever "hurt" he himself felt, the new creature was always rejoicing; and in the words of our beloved Bro. Paul, he could say, *"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ ... And I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung (or I believe the thought in the original could be translated, "bones for the dogs"), that I might win Christ and be found in him."*

About twelve months ago, Brother had had an ex-ray, which showed fluid on the base of both lungs, having had, it was expected, contracted pleurisy at some time. Late, prostate gland trouble developed which, although this eventually improved with treatment, towards the last stages of his illness, carcinoma of the prostate gland was suspected; and then it was feared it had spread to the lungs and bowels; the kidneys

ceased to function and our dear one lapsed into a coma for the last three days of his earthly life.

He was beautiful in his illness and his smile seemed to come from a heart and mind at peace with his Heavenly Father and all men. This was remarked by many. It was my privilege to care for him to the end; the district nurse only assisting with him on three or four occasions; for, whenever he needed attention, and that was almost continuously, he was never left for a moment. It was my joy to tenderly care for him night and day. Although for the last three days he could not see me (his eyes showing no reflex movement when a light was passed over them), I gently spoke words of comfort to him, feeling he might be able to hear me. If I left him for a few moments, he would turn his head as though missing my voice.

Brother had just had his 85th Birthday, but it was another birthday I had in mind, when I whispered to him that he was going to have a wonderful birthday. The only heartbreak was that I would not be there to share it with him.

Looking back, although the doctor must have given me many warnings that the end might come at any time, somehow I felt that dear brother would be with me for a little while longer in spite of his weakness. It was on Sunday, the 23rd November, the day after his birthday, when I had to call in another doctor, our own doctor being off duty, that I was told plainly that he was so ill he might pass away that very night. I could hardly impart the news to the two brethren waiting in another room. But they were a comfort to me. We re-entered the room where dear brother lay, so peacefully now, having been given morphine and another injection to help his breathing. Although I tried to speak comfortingly and cheerfully to him, my heart was full. He may himself have felt that he was nearing the end of his earthly course; and this, I believe, was his real farewell to me, for he continually raised my hand to his lips and kissed it, saying not a word. As he fell into a sleep, dear Bro. White read the 14th to 17th chapters of John's gospel. The remembrance of that night will always have hallowed memories.

When our own doctor called the next day he was glad to see Brother looking very much better and sitting up in bed. The following day he seemed to have improved still further, and when I got him his breakfast, inquired when all the brethren were coming in. (He was often confused like this.) I explained that he hadn't been very well, so perhaps we could just have one brother instead, and how about calling up Bro. Brealey from downstairs. He then called out, quite loudly, "Bro. Brealey! tea's made!!

False hopes were therefore kindled in my mind, but the next day his condition again deteriorated, and on Friday the 6th December, a kind neighbor and a brother watched with me throughout the night. By 9:30 a.m. the next day he was washed and looked beautifully comfortable and peaceful, and, as the nurse said when she called just after, so well-cared for; but just before 10 o'clock the change came and by 10 o'clock dear brother breathed his last, and thus passed my dearest earthly treasure. The labored breathing suddenly ceased; he leaned his head towards my shoulder, and he who had been more than life to me was gone from me. Never more in this lifetime would I feel his tender caress or see his smile; never more feel the grasp of his hand or hear his voice, which was sweeter to me than all the music which ever flowed from his fingers. What I felt then,

I find it difficult to describe. It was first of utter desolation and loneliness, with the thought, “Where, O where, in all our Father’s great universe, is my loved one now? What is he doing? Surely he cannot be conscious of my grief, as this would sadden him? At night, Brother often prayed that we might be brought safely to the beginning of a new day. I believe that for him this has now dawned, and what an awakening! *“I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness.”* But for me, I felt how true the sentiment of the hymn [98]:

“How vain is all beneath the skies!  
How transient every earthly bliss!  
How slender all the fondest ties  
That bind us to a world like this!”

I performed the last offices myself, having, I feel, been given special strength to do this.

The day of the funeral, Wednesday, the 10th December, was bright, and the sun shone brilliantly, almost, I felt, like a benediction, as the mortal remains of my most dearly-loved husband were committed to the grave. The whole ceremony was, as he would have wished, extremely simple, yet with dignity; dear Bro. Terry Nadal conducting the service at the house and graveside.

“Thou ever present aid [hymn 305]  
In suffering and distress,  
The mind which still on thee is stayed  
Is kept in perfect peace.  
  
Sorrow and fear are gone,  
Whene’er thy face appears;  
It stills the sighing suff’rer’s moan,  
And dries the widow’s tears.  
  
It hallows every cross;  
It sweetly comforts me;  
Makes me forget my every loss,  
And find my all in thee.”

From the day after the funeral until the 27th December, I stayed with my sister, but my heart was back in the little sanctuary of my own home, which to me was hallowed ground and which had been the place of prayer and fellowship, where the Lord’s dear people had so often met and the communion had been sweet; where, indeed, “heaven came down our souls to meet.”

That this home might still be consecrated to the Heavenly Father’s use is my earnest prayer.

I have said that I longed to be home, but it was when I looked around “our” bedroom and realised that it was not “ours” any longer, but just “mine” that the full impact of my loss came upon me and I wept at the sight of the empty bed beside mine. Forgive the weakness, and remember that “Jesus wept in sorrow over one who trusted in his name.”

“O Love divine, that stooped to share,  
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!  
On thee, we cast each earthborn care,  
Feeling at rest while thou art near.” [hymn 209]

I could not help contrasting this past Christmas with the Christmas of 1968. Brother was, of course, confined to bed. I spent most of my time in the room with him. On Christmas eve we listened to the Nine Lessons and Carols which were broadcast from King’s College, Cambridge. The carols seemed to be particularly well sung and the portions of Scripture so well read. Then, on Christmas day we sang, not very melodiously, I am afraid, but from the heart, many well-loved, hymns, including “As with gladness men of old,” “Hark the glad sound, the Lord has come,” etc., and read portions of Scripture dealing with the story of our Lord’s birth, which never grows old, and one or two articles from the “Reprints.” At the end of the day, flushed and happy, Brother said he thought it had been our happiest Christmas ever. It was for me, and will be to the end of time.

The immediate sorrow at parting was, I suppose, inevitable, but it is with thankfulness I can say that I soon felt the healing touch of our Father’s hand and experienced an overflowing joy that one of the Lord’s dear flock had “gone home,” and entered into the glorious reward promised. Some of you will remember Brother’s beautiful setting of one of the Poems of Dawn, “Bringing Home the Flock.”

During his illness, the hymn which dear Brother so often quoted was:  
“When all thy mercies O my God,  
My rising soul surveys,  
Transported with the view I’m lost  
In wonder, love and praise.” [hymn 324]

I want my thoughts to specially dwell on the Lord’s tender mercies; his loving kindness for having spared my dear one to me for so long. We want his will to be done, which means that we have an increasing desire that it shall be done in us, by us, and through us. May the spirit of love—the spirit of our Heavenly Father and our dear Lord himself continue to so possess each one of us that it might flow out as a source of strength and power to all who come within that sphere. Thus our joy will be the greatest when we realise that others are being reached by it. J. B. Phillips’ translation of John 7:38-39 reads: “*The man who believes in Me,*” as the Scripture said, “*will have rivers of living water flowing from his inmost heart.*”

“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer’s ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.  
It makes the wounded spirit whole  
And calms the troubled breast;  
‘Tis manna to the hungry soul,  
And to the weary, rest.” [hymn 96]

