

Copy of letter from J.T.III dated 21-10-70 to Mr. A.J.Gardiner

Beloved Brother,

I thought you would be pleased to know something as to the last days of my beloved father's life.

The three-day occasion, Oct. 6-8, the previous week, was a most full and happy time, as you will see by the notes. Over 600 were present and there was a spirit of joy and liberty as the Ministry flowed, and an evident sense of the Lord having brought forth judgment and victory. Our beloved's own comment was that "the glory appeared" and he was full of the joy of those days. What an honour that the Lord should give his beloved servant this crowning time amongst his own brethren in New York and the many who were with us. By the end of the last meeting his energies had been visibly spent and before the last hymn he said he would have to leave, saying "Goodbye to you beloved brethren" as he got to his feet. He was very tired on the following days, Friday and Saturday, having fully spent himself over the three days, but he was with us at the Lord's supper and served in freshness and power, though physically weak, and he started two of the hymn tunes. In referring to the loaf he spoke of the great clearance there had been as being an answer to the betrayal. In his part he spoke of the strengthening that comes in the eating, and the glory in the face of the Lord.

He did not go out again on the Lord's Day. On Monday he was all ready to go to the Prayer Meeting, but found he was not strong enough. I visited him briefly on the Lord's Day and Monday and Tuesday evenings and each time he conveyed his customary clear view of things. Later, Tuesday evening, Dr Phil Truan attended him and found no particular deficiency except that his heart was weak, and a general weakness which, however, responded to treatment. Very early Wednesday morning he was up and walked, at his insistence, with help, to his reclining chair in the living room where he stayed until the Lord took him in the afternoon. My mother and Estelle were on either side of him and he held their hands almost constantly throughout these hours. Several other sisters were near also ministering to his comfort. As the morning went on he became too weak to speak except for an occasional whisper. His face brightened when he was told Florence and Consie were coming. Florence arrived early in the afternoon. He grew weaker gradually but was aware of those around him until near the end. In the morning he had given directions to the doctor, refusing additional medical aid; and also reaffirming the condition under which persons under discipline, including relatives, might see him. One came and he said to her "You shouldn't be here". She said she was sorry and asked for forgiveness, and he replied "If you say you have sinned I will forgive you (Luke 17:4, Matth. 12:37). She then said she had sinned and he forgave her. Another came in later and said he was sorry and asking for forgiveness and my father's indications were that his attitude was one of forgiveness.

His final moments will remain most vividly in the hearts of those privileged to see. He appeared strong and expectant as he suddenly looked upwards, his face and eyes shining, and his lips forming the words – though inaudibly – "I am coming". He lingered a few

minutes, his breathing at first becoming very strong and rapid and then becoming quiet, the Lord gently taking him to Himself about 3:15 pm.

We came together for the Meeting at Nostrand Avenue at noon on Friday. About 400 were present, mostly those local here and in the immediate area. We began with two hymns given out by sisters and then beloved Mr. F.N. Walker prayed, voicing the deep feelings of the beloved brethren. Then there were words by Mr. T.D. Norgroove, Mr. F.N. Walker and Mr. A. Macdonald. Several hymns followed given out by sisters, and Mr. L. Edwards closed the meeting in prayer. Those who served in Ministry and in prayer were very much helped and the spontaneity in the giving out of the hymns reflected an answer to our beloved's final Ministry as to our sisters' part in the Assembly. About 250 brethren assembled at the grave at the same spot where "the beloved", his father, was buried. We surrounded the grave as the body of our beloved was carried amongst us by loving hands and lowered into its resting place. The love of the Lord Jesus came to our minds as the body was committed to Him, how He valued the life and valued the service from start to finish, and how He loved such an one who loved Him and who did what He said – despite the cost. Many of the beloved saints entered into the completing of the burial, even aged Mr A.N. Walker, in his weakness, taking a shovel until the grave was completely filled in. Many, too, of the brothers – old and young – had a brief part in carrying our brother – our beloved one – from the house to the Meeting Room and to the grave.

How we all loved him! How we will miss him! But we continue in the sense of the Lord's victory and the Holy Spirit's victory acknowledging the Lord's perfect timing and His right to take His beloved servant after a work well done.

My mother and sisters and my wife and myself and the brethren in New York join in love to you and your wife and all the beloved brethren. It is a great comfort how the saints are feeling it together as to this great loss to the Assembly.

Affectionately in the Lord,  
James

Hymns:

424 O Lord how long ere we shall see

179 O praise the Saviour for His love

380 Hearts awaking Saviour greet Thee

140 O Lord, our hearts are waiting

43 Jesus our Saviour we gladly adore Thee

399 Master we would no longer be

398 They death and resurrection Lord

Composer

Miss J Wickens

J.T III

Mrs P R Morford

G W Fraser

H d' A Champney

J G Deck

J N Grace