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ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT

Funeral of Mr. F. E. Raven,
21st August, 1903.

(REVISED.)

THE funeral of our dear departed brother, Mr. RAVEN, took place on the 21st August, 1903, at Nunhead Cemetery, at 3.30. It was a fine afternoon, and nearly 1,800 were present.

Mr. REYNOLDS prayed from the steps of Chapel, and then read Acts xiii 36-37:—

"David, after he had served his generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was

laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption. But He, whom God raised again, saw no corruption."

He said that in the cases of Moses, of Aaron, and of David, there was tenderness very touching in the words: "The Lord buried Him." God's interest in His servants is the same to-day, and He carries it out through His people. He has given us the privilege of burying His servant in His Name. David had to die, but up to the last he was occupied with God's interests on the earth. We can say that this was the case with our beloved brother. He referred to the last letter he had received from Mr. Raven, in which he spoke of the love of the saints

shown to him, and of the "living system of divine affections" with which we are connected here. Passing on to Aaron, he said: "The day of his service as Priest in God's House came to a close, and he too was buried. David was occupied in preparing for God's House even in the extremity of his weakness. So with our departed brother, what he ever sought to do was to present Christ to the saints.

In view of His suffering and death, the Lord Jesus went to stay at Bethany during the last week, and spent His days at the Temple, knowing what was before Him. Yet day by day He went on in patient testimony to God's people to

the last day." Pointing to the hearse, he said: "The body that lies there is precious to us, but how much more precious to Him whose servant He was. The Lord had given the gift of our brother to the Church, and He had the right to call him to Himself. But the Lord remains, and His love to the Church remains the same, and He will supply the needs of the Church."

Hymn 208 sung, Mr. D. L. HIGGINS prayed. The coffin was carried on the shoulders of six brothers and lowered into the grave.

At the grave Dr. W. T. P. WOLSTON read the following Scriptures:—

"And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die ;

but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."—*Genesis xlviii. 21.*

"By faith, Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."—*Hebrews xi. 21.*

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—*Hebrews xiii. 5 6.*

He then said :—

"Our gathering to-day tells a simple tale. A dear servant of the Lord has been taken away; all his earthly ministry is over; and affection for this servant of Christ has gathered so many to lay his remains in the tomb.

"He was undoubtedly a 'chosen

vessel,' a remarkable vessel, whose ministry we enjoyed and profited by, and whose departure many will deeply mourn beside ourselves. That vessel the Potter formed, filled, sustained, and greatly used. Now the vessel is gone ; the Potter is not. Time was when the vessel was in the mind of the Potter, then He formed the vessel, and filled it for His service, so that instead of the vessel being in the mind of the Potter, the mind of the Potter was in the vessel. (See Jeremiah xviii. 1-6.) We have all benefited by his singular service now ended.

“ How blessed for us, however, is it to remember that, though the vessel

is broken, his service concluded, the Potter remains. Truly says the Scripture: 'Thou remainest.' (Hebrews i. 11.)

"The Scriptures which I have read illustrate very sweetly this thought, and they came to my mind to-day in connection with the burial of this, our beloved brother. How lovely is it to hear the patriarch Jacob say to his son Joseph: 'Behold, I die; but God shall be with you.' God does not die, though Jacob passes away. Can we not to-day take the deepest comfort from this thought? And whether it be the widow, the orphans, or the Church at large, how full of deep meaning are

these words : 'God shall be with, you.'

"But not only to Jacob were these words uttered. When Moses is closing his service, what does he say to Joshua, who had to take up the work which Moses was laying down? 'Be strong and of a good courage; fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord, thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; *He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*' (Deuteronomy xxxi. 6.)

"Did God fail Jacob? He did not.

"Did He fail Joshua? Indeed not. Hear his testimony when he too was passing away: 'And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts and in

all your souls that not one good thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.' (Joshua xxiii. 14.)

"But a third time we get these cheering words in Old Testament Scripture. The history of David is closing, and to Solomon how striking is it to hear him say: 'Be strong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; *He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the House of the Lord.' (1 Chronicles xxviii. 20.)

“Now we are neither patriarchs, leaders, nor kings ; but that which was their solace, support and strength we have. We are only simple pilgrims on our road to glory, and as we mourn the loss of this one and that one, specially to-day the loss of him whose coffin we have just lowered, how blessed is it for us to hear these same words : ‘He hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*’ (Hebrews xiii. 6.)

“Vessels may break, servants go, husbands be removed, and fathers be taken away from those that love them, but *God remains.*

“‘God shall be with you’ are indeed wonderful words to dwell in our hearts,

and the Spirit's beauteous quotation, '*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,*' may well be a solace to every heart here to-day.

"This being so, what should be the spirit and attitude of our souls? The Apostle furnishes the answer. If God says: '*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,*' he immediately adds: '*We may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*'

"Brethren, we may have the fullest confidence in God. Let who will die, if God be with us, we are well off. Our path is a very blessed one—if, remaining here, God will be with us; and if

we pass away, we shall be with Him, as our dear brother is, and that is 'far better.'"

Dr. WOLSTON engaged in prayer, and the first and last verses of hymn No. 30 in Appendix were sung.



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