

THE GOSPEL BANNER 1884

The following is transcribed from the 1884 edition of the Gospel Banner (page 844 onwards), from the copy held by the British Library, London.

Daniel Hale 1808-1884.

Background notes:

- *The recollections are written by H.H. who is Hannah Hale (Daniel's eldest daughter). She lived with her father and was the named executrix of his Will.*
- *Daniel's father was William Hale, who died in the autumn of 1828.*
- *Daniel's eldest son (Hannah's eldest brother) is Daniel and his wife is Sarah Anne (nee Hall) (who married and lived in Leicester.)*
- *Daniel's youngest son is Ebenezer and his wife is Elizabeth (nee Oliver).*
- *Daniel's daughter who lived in St. Albans is either Anne or Sarah.*
- *There are a number of possibilities for his niece from London, but Ruth Dover (daughter of Daniel's sister Ruth) is a beneficiary (the only niece) in Daniel's will and lived in London at this time.*

- *The church at Welwyn referred to is the Bethel Independent Chapel. In Daniel's day, the chapel building was located on Hobshill, south of Welwyn and is marked on early OS maps as 'Calvinistic Chapel'. Daniel's father lived in Welwyn for many years, and many of the family attended the church and were christened there. As yet there is no record of where Daniel was baptised.*

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RECOLLECTIONS OF A BELOVED FATHER.

My late dear father, D. Hale, was born at Balls Hill, Hertford, May 30th, 1808, in the same house that he lived and died in.

I have heard him speak of his father many times with much feeling, and I may say reverence. He was a man who feared God, and a lover of Zion. He was well known to Mr. Huntington; and such was his regard for the cause of truth at Welwyn, that by his special request he was interred in the chapel yard. His end was a blessed one.

He was accustomed to have his family around him in the evening, and while faithfully talking to them, one expression sank deep into my father's heart when very young; it was this, 'If a barn were full of thrashed corn, and a bird came once in a thousand years and took a grain of corn each time, it would come to an end; but eternity would never end.'

My dear father was the youngest of ten children, and he had a sweet hope that each of his brothers and sisters was saved by grace, and some of them left a good testimony behind.

My father never committed anything to paper, so that I can only write what I can well remember he has told us at various times; and I do hope the blessed Spirit may bring to my remembrance those things that were his delight, and of which he loved to converse about.

When sixteen years of age he was very anxious to get under the sound of the gospel, and would often walk and run, when not able to ride with his father, to Welwyn, a distance of eight miles; and when hearing Mr. Oxenham, the minister, describing the first work upon a sinner's soul he has felt much encouraged, and fully repaid for his walk. Being naturally of a retiring disposition, he kept his exercises of mind much to himself; and just as he began to feel he must speak more to his father, the Lord took his father to himself, He felt his loss

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very much indeed, and once especially when feeling anxious to know if the good work was really begun in his heart, and having no father now to speak to, he thought if he could procure a book called 'The Touchstone of Sincerity,' by Mr. Flavel, he should be more satisfied; but the Spirit of God had caused that concern, and none but he himself could satisfy it. I have heard the dear departed say at that time he had faith to believe in the justice of God, that he could by no means clear the guilty; but the point with him was, 'Will the Lord have mercy upon me, and shew me his salvation?' Thus he went on seeking, and was now and then helped with grace to hold on; the thoughts of going back, he said, were dreadful to him. He used to walk close behind some of the Lord's aged people then meeting at Welwyn, and listen to their conversation, and has many times felt his heart softened.

Once, when very much tried, the following words came with unction and power into his heart: 'The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruise of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth;' and I seem to hear him say *faith* was given him *really* to *believe* the words would be *fulfilled*. That promise was often a great support to him in after days. I have often heard him say how he used to beg of the Lord before he was married that it might be to one who truly feared God; his desires were granted, for he found our dear mother, now in glory, a truly sincere and gracious helpmeet, one that united with him in seeking the welfare of Zion.

He joined the church at Welwyn about 1844. I have heard him say that he stayed away fearing he was not a saved character, until he felt guilt upon his conscience for so doing, and was *really forced* to the Lord's table:

' 'Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly *forced* me in,' &c.

He felt the sweetest union to the few meeting there, and the same feeling abode to the end, and he was privileged with many favoured seasons in hearing his dearly esteemed friend Mr. Smart, who was then pastor of the cause at Welwyn. He felt love towards many others, but a sacred bond united those few together, for they entered into each other's trials. One week evening he was specially favoured in hearing Mr. Warburton, sen., from these words: 'Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, but a good word maketh it glad;' he came home much refreshed, and felt such a sweet hope that God would answer his petitions. Another special blessing he had at Walkern, in hearing Mr. Hazelrigg preach from 'He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?' The sweetness of parts of that sermon abode with my dear father a long time, and he has often referred to it when the dear servants of God have been staying at our house. Another special time was in November 1864, when the dear Lord so blessed him, that he thought the time was near for him to depart, and even gave advice about some of his temporal matters, thinking he had done with business things. Early one morning, feeling very ill, he called us up; when we entered his bedroom, his countenance shone from the peace which flowed into his heart, and turning to each of his family he said several times, 'No guilt, no condemnation, all is sweet peace;' and to a nephew he said, 'Seek the Lord; if you have to wait forty years, it is worth waiting for, to feel what I can say,

"Jesus has made my dying-bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are,

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While on his breast I lean my head,
And breathe my life out sweetly there,"

My father was much tried after this, and was brought very low in his mind, but he was raised up again to health, and passed through many trials; but he was supported and upheld through them all, and very rarely indeed did a murmur escape his lips; I do not wish to infer that he was perfect or better than others, but the grace of God was so manifest in him, for his prayer often was, 'Hold thou me up - and I shall be safe,' and, 'Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.' My father's was not a stand still religion, but exercises and trials marked his pathway.

About twelve months ago my dear father was led into sweet meditation from these words being sealed home upon his heart: 'I am the bread of life:' they proved food for many days, and he often repeated them. He was a lover of Zion, and used to try and bear the Lord's dear ministers upon his heart, especially on a Sabbath morning; and frequently we have heard him express much pleasure when they have been helped to speak in God's great name. He had many favoured seasons in hearing the ministers who supplied at Welwyn, and to whom he had a sincere union. No excuse would keep him away from chapel, although he had a good distance to travel.

My father spent some time every evening in reading the Bible, the Gospel Standard, and the Gospel Banner; and many times I have heard him say these would bear reading again and again.

Last Christmas morning he came downstairs, and said, 'I have spent a happy morning;' the latter part of hymn 776, Gadsby's Selection, was very sweet to him, especially this verse:

'Dove-like meekness graced his visage;
Joy and love shone round his head;
Soon he cheered them with this message;
Comfort flowed from all he said.
"Fear not fav'rites of the Almighty !
Joyful news to you I bring;
You have now, in David's city,
Born a Saviour, Christ the King."

About three months before his death, after family prayer at night, my dear father, according to his usual custom, stayed downstairs a short time, and felt constrained to open his Bible again; it opened upon 2 Samuel vii, 18, this passage so broke him down in spirit that he fell upon his knees and wept, thanked and blest the Lord for giving such a worthless wretch, as he felt himself to be, what he had given the inspired man of God, and walking upstairs these lines flowed sweetly into his heart:

'What cheering words are these;
Their sweetness who can tell?
In time and to eternal days,
" 'Tis with the righteous well." '

He said, 'I lay down to rest in sweet peace, believing all would be well.'

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His last illness was short. On May 31st, 1884, he came in from a ride, and complained of a numbed feeling in his hand, but after dinner he went out again, and appeared no worse. The next Sabbath he went to Welwyn and heard Mr. Thomas Marshall from these words, 'O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name' (Psalm lxxiv, 21). He was setting forth what the rest and glory of heaven would be. My dear father was so favoured whilst hearing him that the tears flowed down his face, and after the services he parted with Mr. Marshall with the sweetest union. After reaching home my father said, 'Mr. Marshall has preached a funeral sermon, either for himself or me, but *perhaps for both;*' this proved the case, for Mr. M. was very sadly, and it was his last sermon; he entered into that rest a few days after my dear father.

My father went to Welwyn the following Sabbath after he heard Mr. Marshall, although very unwell, and when- asked if he had heard, replied, 'I am past it; it was last Sabbath I heard.'

He went to visit his daughter at St. Albans for a few days, thinking a change of air might benefit him, but he returned home much weaker, and each day found him more helpless; he had gloomy fears that it might be dark with him in his last moments, and often said he felt so unworthy of the Lord's notice of him; but the Lord was pleased to remove those fears, and granted him nearness and access to the throne of grace, and he felt resignation to the Lord's will, whether for life or death. This verse was much upon his mind:

'I'll bear the unequal strife,
And wage the war within,
Since death, that puts an end to life,
Will put an end to sin,'

June 24th was the last time he came downstairs; but he was able to get from one bedroom to another until the following Sunday, when he appeared weaker, and asked for some of the family who were going to Welwyn. He sent by them his love to his dear friends there, saying that his end was near, but he felt peace: he sent a special message to his dear, aged friend Mrs. Dawson, and said if able he could speak freely to her, saying, 'What a blessed union exists between the living Head and living members of his body!' My father continued in this sweet frame of mind all day; it was truly a Sabbath never to be forgotten by those who heard the preached word and those who remained at home; this made it the more confirming, and was like the oil that flowed from vessel to vessel. The dear departed, like good old Jacob, left a blessing for each of his children. He was led, to speak of the goodness of God to him all through his life. On returning from Welwyn my eldest brother's wife said the last verse of the 176th hymn of Kent's came to her with such sweetness for my dear father on entering the chapel:

'To work for their good, all things shall conspire,
Tho' oft in the, flood, or passing the fire;
In dark dispensations, their light I will be,
For in tribulation, they glorify me.'

Also the second hymn sung:

'What cheering words are these!' &c.

Then Mr. Sollis' sermon from the words, 'Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.' The last hymn sung was also for dear father:

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'Cease, O believer, cease to mourn,' &c.

Mr. Sollis took the same text in the afternoon, and spoke each time of the future rest and the glory entered upon after the child of God had passed the dark valley: he also read the chapter of Jacob's blessing his children. When they told dear father, he burst into tears, and said, 'I cannot forget that night when I was obliged to open my Bible the second time, and upon 2 Samuel vii. 18: "Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"' Father continued in this sweet frame of mind all night, and sat up in bed and talked so feelingly to us all.

On Monday he said, 'I feel a desire to speak to my family again,' To his youngest ` he said, 'True wisdom will be worth far more to you than pockets full of gold.' Then turning to his son's wife he said, 'Write this down for my sons to read "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The more this is carried out, the more it will increase; then abiding in faith, we know not what his will is, but beg for submission:

"His Spirit all the motion gives
With springs of fear and love."

He then said, 'My mind the last few weeks has been led to hope we all might be *doers* as well as hearers of the word, and have a desire to suffer for his sake:

"Jesus gives us pure affections,
Wills to do what he requires."

The way gets narrower.' He again repeated,

'Thy whole dependence on me fix;
Nor entertain a thought
Thy worthless schemes with mine to mix,
But venture to be nought.'

And then said, 'The Lord bless all my daughters, and he alone can; reward them for all their love and unceasing care for me,' Mr. Sollis called to see him, and was received by him warmly. Mr. S. said, 'You are getting very near the end, dear friend, it will soon be all over.' Father replied, 'Death has been much upon my mind, and these words have caused me many anxious fears as to how it would be with me at the last "There shall be a cloud upon thy tabernacle;" but He has dispersed the cloud, and given me sweet peace. One night I was asking the Lord, in my poor way, to be with me in that solemn hour, when these words came with such power that I was speechless, and could not utter another word "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I felt, Why should I ask for what my dear Saviour was denied?' Mr. S. said, 'You will soon be in heaven.' Dear father answered, 'I hope so; and if I do get there, I shall have cause to sing the loudest, as I said to my dear friend Mr. Knill.' Then thanking Mr. S. for coming, he said, 'We have had some good times together, and I hope we shall spend a long eternity with each other;' he then blessed him in the name of the Lord.

During my father's illness he often said that that passage of scripture which speaks of Jesus spending whole nights in prayer had often been a great comfort to him in the night

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seasons of trial; 'it is a conflict,' he said, 'but what a mercy to have done with sin!' He repeated,

'Tis that blest hope which never dies,
Beyond the reach of hell it lies;
'Twill flourish and immortal be
When death is lost in victory.'

On Wednesday he said, 'Give my love to my eldest son, and tell him I should like to see him once again. I feel peaceful, and hope it will be peace in the end.' In the evening, when seated in the chair, he looked and smiled, and then said, 'Will you read two chapters, St. Matthew xi and St. Mark iv?' When we came to the latter part, my dear father said, 'O what an almighty power there is in that voice, only for him to speak and then what a calm!' We asked, 'Do you feel this calm, dear father, you look so peaceful?' 'I do, I do,' he replied, and then repeated,

'Happy songsters I when shall I your chorus join?'

He then closed his eyes and was in prayer, and remained quiet for a short time; when in a moment he was seized with a fit of apoplexy. This took place about eight o'clock in the evening, and dear father lay sleeping until eight o'clock the next morning, when he became conscious; and although he could not see, he kissed each of us several times, shook hands, and said distinctly, 'Happy, happy; perfectly happy!' One of us said, 'Father, you have now a sight of heaven!' he replied with such a smile, 'Beautiful:' these lines were repeated,

'What cheering words are these;
Their sweetness who can 'tell?' &c.

He was then asked to raise his hand if it were well with him. He immediately did. Another said, 'Dear father; this is the time to prove the reality of religion.' He replied with emphasis, 'Yes,' raised his hand upright, and said several times, 'Happy, happy!' Some of his words could not be clearly understood, the voice being paralyzed.

On Friday afternoon, between four and five o'clock, he opened his eyes once more, and finding all his children around him, he held out his hand to his eldest son, and said, 'Learn of Him, who is meek and lowly Take his yoke upon you,' &c. Then taking the hand of his youngest son, he said, 'Get wisdom, get understanding.' He then kissed all his children most affectionately, and said, 'Strength equal to the day,' and, with a smile upon his countenance looked upwards. A niece came from London to see him; he knew her, and sent his dying love to her mother. He again closed his eyes, and slept until Saturday morning, when his lips again moved, but we could not understand him, which grieved us. Thus he continued, the breathing becoming shorter and shorter, until Sunday morning, July 13th, 1884, when about a quarter to four he opened his eyes, and, looking upwards with a heavenly smile, said, with his last breath, 'It is well!' and his redeemed spirit joined that favoured throng,

'Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths never end.'

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We each felt our desire was granted, in that our much loved parent was able to speak, with his last breath, of the Lord's goodness to him. Thus passed away a most affectionate and kind, but faithful and decided father. May our last end be like his.

H. H.

Transcribed by Robert Hale
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