

TAKEN AWAY TO GLORY

HUGH D. MORGAN

THE whole of the Principality was stunned when it heard early on Sunday morning, March 1st, of the death of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. The news spread like wildfire throughout the land. Telephones rang and the sad news was passed from minister to minister, and from congregation to congregation. A friend, counsellor, pastor's pastor, preacher and prophet had been taken away from us. Men were unable to hold back their tears. It was evident that people felt bereft and unsafe, for 'the Doctor', as he was affectionately called, had been a wise leader and a great comfort to God's people through extremely difficult days.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones was buried on the afternoon of Friday, March 6th 1981, at Bethel Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Newcastle Emlyn.

It was market day in that little town and the weather was overcast. People came from all parts of the country to pay their last respects to this wonderful man of God. The community itself was immersed in buying and selling, and appeared to be unaware that there was 'a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel', and that God's people were in great sorrow. Maybe they saw a rejoicing people because one of God's choicest servants had entered heaven with great triumph.

After Mrs. Lloyd-Jones, Elizabeth and Ann and the family had entered the chapel, it was indeed touching to see the coffin being carried in on the shoulders of the closest members of his family, including two of his grandsons.

The service, which was conducted by the Rev. Vernon Higham of Cardiff, commenced with the singing of that great Welsh hymn *Cyfamod hedd, cyfamod cadarn Duw* ('Covenant of peace, God's firm covenant'), and we were immediately reminded of God's great covenant in Jesus Christ made with His people—a favourite theme in the Doctor's preaching. We realized anew that his faith was grounded in God's eternal covenant, sure and certain, made before time.

The Rev. J. Elwyn Davies, General Secretary of the Evangelical Movement of Wales, read the Scriptures, taking that well-known passage on the resurrection

from 1 Corinthians 15, and the Rev. Hywel Jones of Wrexham led the congregation in prayer—a prayer of thanksgiving to God for so worthy a servant. The congregation then joined in singing Thomas Olivers' well-known hymn 'The God of Abraham praise', and a great sense of victory surged through the gathering as we sang

*I shall behold His face,
I shall His power adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace
For evermore.*

An awareness came to us all that our friend the Doctor was now gathered with that 'triumphant host' singing praises to 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost'—Abraham's God, and his.

Newcastle Emlyn



Photograph: Wales Tourist Board

The Rev. Vernon Higham expressed to the family the sympathy of the congregation, and indeed of the people of God throughout the world. He said that when he last saw the Doctor in his illness, he had asked him to pray that he might have an abundant entrance into glory, 'for I am a sinner saved by grace.' Such a request led him to his text: 'For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 1:11). 'If heaven rejoices when a sinner is saved,' said Mr. Higham, 'how much more when a saint

comes home to glory!' In closing his address he quoted an illustration used in Loraine Boettner's book *Immortality*:

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength, and I stand and watch her until at length she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and sky come down to meet each other. Then someone at my side says, 'There, she is gone.' Gone where? Gone from my sight, that is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side, and just as able to bear her load of living weights to its place of destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her; and just at the moment when someone at my side says, 'There, she is gone,' on that distant shore there are other eyes watching for her coming and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, 'Here she comes'—and such is dying.

During his last days Dr. Lloyd-Jones had desired to go home to glory. The family had witnessed him sailing peacefully to the horizon, and he was greeted on the distant shore with the glad shout 'Here he comes!' He has arrived in the much-desired haven, out of reach of all the storms of life, and he enjoys an unclouded vision of the Saviour whom he loved and served so faithfully.

The congregation then united to sing the Welsh hymn

*Mae ffrydiau 'ngorfoledd yn tarddu
O ddisglair orseddfainc y ne'*

An English version of this hymn reads as follows:

*In heav'n at God's bright throne of glory
The streams of our joyfulness spring;
For there has ascended the Saviour,
And there intercedeth the King:
The blood which was sprinkled up yonder,
Which full satisfaction did give,
Is there by the throne sweetly pleading
That poor guilty sinners may live.*

*And we, from the wilds of the desert,
Shall flee to the land of the blest;
Life's tears shall be changed to rejoicing,
Its labours and toil into rest.
There we shall find refuge eternal,
From sin, from affliction, from pain,
And in the sweet love of the Saviour
A joy without end shall attain.*

*From heavenly Jerusalem's towers,
The path through the desert they trace;
And every affliction they suffered
Redounds to the glory of grace;
Their look they cast back on the tempests,
On fears, on grim death and the grave,
Rejoicing that now they're in safety,
Through Him that is mighty to save.*

*David Charles, 1762-1834
vv. 2 & 3 tr. by Lewis Edwards, 1809-87
v. 1 tr. by Edmund T. Owen, 1935-*



A portrait of the Doctor in his mid 60s

The service was closed in prayer by the Rev. Graham Harrison of Newport, and the congregation then made its way to the cemetery, a lovely peaceful spot in the country a mile outside the town, where the service was conducted by the Rev. T. Omri Jenkins of London.

Among the mourners were a large number of ministers of the gospel—sorrowing, but not as others who have no hope—men who had received so much help and inspiration from the Doctor's ministry. There were also a good number present from Bethlehem Chapel, Sandfields, Aberavon, where the Doctor had known so much blessing upon his labours.

His mortal remains were laid to rest, awaiting the sound of the trumpet, and the voice of the archangel, and the glorious appearing of the great God and his Saviour Jesus Christ. The benediction was pronounced and the large gathering dispersed.

Uppermost in the minds of the people was undoubtedly the question, What will happen to the Church now that so great a leader has been called from us? However, our thoughts were transferred from the man, whom God had made so mighty and who had been such a powerful instrument for good, to his God. Had we not sung 'Abraham's God and mine', and was He not the Doctor's God and mine? Saints are called home, great saints are called home, but God is still the same, and He goes marching on.

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