

[Brown, John S.]

Death of Rev. John S. Brown

Br. Austin:-Perhaps you have learned before this, that Rev. John S. Brown, formerly of Perry, N. Y., and lately of Taunton, Mass., has passed to the spirit land. He died at the residence of his mother and brother, in Richmond, N. Y., on Friday March 23. His funeral was attended by a large number of sympathizing friends, at the same place, on Monday March 26th, when the writer of this made a short address and prayer. Br. O. F. Brayton, of Lima, was present, but being an intimate friend of the deceased, he chose to be a mourner rather than to attempt to control his feelings by taking part in the service.

Br. Brown was taken sick with bleeding at the lungs, and also, with a severe difficulty of the bowels, about the first of August last. Convinced that he had overtasked himself, he left Taunton, the Society there kindly consenting to such an arrangement in the hope that he would soon return to them again with restored health, and came to visit his friends in Western New York. He did not at this time, it is presumed, fully realize the danger of his situation; at least he was not willing to place himself under the care of a physician, believing that a proper attention to diet, daily exercise in the country air, and a brief respite from mental labor, would be sufficient to give the system its wonted tone. It soon became evident, however, that disease had taken a fast hold of him, that his system had nearly lost its recuperative energies, and that nothing but the most active and skillful means could bring permanent relief. In view of these facts, he was, at last, induced to visit the "Water Cure" establishment at Elmira, N. Y. A regular course of hydropathic treatment finally overcame the bowel difficulty, I believe, but the lungs successfully resisted all human skill. Though he rapidly declined in strength and flesh, he maintained his usual cheerfulness, punctually observed the physician's orders, took daily exercise in the open air, and left no means untried which could possibly assist nature to repair its loss. As we might reasonably expect from one naturally so amiable as Br. Brown, from one whose spirit had been thoroughly disciplined in the Christian virtues, he never complained. Warmly grateful to his physician, and to all his friends, for every favor conferred, he lost none of his child-like trust in God. Indeed, as the outward man perished, the inner man was renewed day by day. He seemed anxious to dispel the fears of his friends. Still, his appearance, his conversation, the heavenly serenity and tenderness which pervaded his mind, told but too plainly that he was fast nearing the eternal shore. Oh, how kindly and affectionately he spoke of his Society in Taunton—of the Sabbath School, the Bible Class, and especially the Conference meetings there, all of which seemed so nearly after his own heart. He prayed often for the devoted flock he had left, and thanked God that although he [w]ould see them no more in this world, he [w]ould meet them all face to face in Heaven. He did not also forget his friends in Perry, among whom he labored very successfully, for eight years. To all who shared this friendship, he left some tender token of his generous sympathies.

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When the fact was no longer doubted that his life was drawing to a close, he left the "Water Cure," and arrived at the residence of his mother, two or three days previous to his death. Richmond was the place of his birth, and he desired that it should be the place of his death. Here, therefore, among the hills that cradled his childhood, and where he wandered in youth, here, surrounded by sisters and brothers, watched and nursed by the same dear mother who rejoiced at his birth thirty-eight years ago, to the very month; here, under the ministering love of his bosom companion, he breathed his last. It is not in the power of my pen to paint that parting scene. Like the sun which looks brightest at its setting, the spirit of our brother grew more radiant as it approached the final moment... He passed away as he had lived, a Christian. He urged his devoted wife, who had never left him for a single hour during his sickness, his mother, sister and brothers, not to mourn for him; for said he, "I am happy. I shall soon meet my friends in heaven. I trust in Almighty God and his son." Thus he conversed till death came gently...

The duty of laying before the denomination a more ample history of Br. Brown's life and character will devolve on some abler pen than mine; but I wish here to express my conviction that one of the purest and one of the most talented ministers of the Restitution has just taken his leave of us. Like goodness and true greatness, everywhere he did his work quietly—but he did it. He was a warm, generous friend, an affectionate husband, a sound theologian, an able preacher, and a practical Christian. Few preachers have succeeded in getting around them a greater number of friends, or have left the world with a better name.

J. H. T. [Rev. James H. Tuttle]

Rochester, March 27, 1855

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