

87 South Street
MOLONG, N.S.W.
AUSTRALIA 2868

13th March 2003

Howard
Dear Mr Symington

I am sorry for the delay in answering your request regarding our recollections of our time with beloved JHS in Minneapolis hospital back in 1985.

I have gone over this privileged occasion afresh, with my wife, Jeanette, and to the best of our recollections, the following is what occurred:

We travelled in from Vesta with Mr Lloyd and his family, on the Care Meeting Saturday, 01 September 1985. At first we went to J.E.H. for lunch, and there we met Mr Hales, (and also Mark Craddock). After lunch we went to the hospital, and upon entering the room where JHS was, we immediately saw him sitting up in a wheelchair by his bed; a small chalk-board on the wall behind him had inscribed upon it:

"James Symington: BLIND"

Mrs Symington was sitting upon a chair the other side of his bed. As we filed in, each one bent down and kissed JHS and told him their name; he had something to say to each of us. Those present were Mr Hales, Mr Lloyd & Sue, Ronnie, Becky, Tim & Laurinda, J.E.H., Jeanette and myself. We were last in, because Jeanette was in a wheelchair, with both legs in plaster casts. I had to lift her up and over to kiss Mr Symington, (as she could not weight-bare on her feet). Upon telling Mr Symington her name, he said "You have suffered, haven't you?. Upon me telling him my name, and then that we were from Katoomba, Mr Symington asked me to repeat where we were from; (Refer JHS Vol. 148 p17)

The nine*of us then stood in a semi-circle around the end of JHS's bed - facing Mr Symington and Mrs Symington seated on his R.H. side, across the bed. Both of us had never seen JHS up this close; it was very affecting. You could have heard a pin drop.

*Jeanette remained in her wheelchair; Mr Hales stood next to me.

The conversation then went something like this:

J.H.S. How did you get on in Westfield last week-end, Lloyd?

L.R.P. Well, we had a fine time. I'm sure Mr Russell was helped..

J.H.S. Yes - he is one of the finest; I can remember his father taking an interest in me way back when I was young. We used to go for walks, and he would hold my hand and talk over the scriptures as we walked.

(J.H.S. appears to doze briefly)

J.H.S. Jerry? I believe that at the present time, we are very very close to the position of the Assembly as convened; do you agree?

J.E.H. Yes, Mr Symington.

J.H.S. I have not a shadow of a doubt that the Lord has raised up Mr John Hales for the continuance of the testimony and the preservation of the Assembly universally.

(again, it was very quiet; there was no background noise at all - I can still remember beloved JSH almost imperceptably stiffen; Mrs J.H.S. leans across the bed, strokes J.H.S. gently on the arm, and says:)

Mrs JHS Mr Hales is here with us in the room, right now, Jim..

(J.H.S. does not answer; he again appears to doze, and his head drops down onto his chest)

J.H.S. When do you think the rapture will be, John?

J.S.H. I haven't any idea, Mr Symington

J.H.S. Ah, thats good. It is not wise to speculate; if the Lord wants to keep the testimony here another 1000 years, well that is only 1 day to him.

After this, J.H.S. head dropped down again, and he fell into a deeper sleep. We all stood around for a few minutes, with no one speaking, all looking on him. Mrs Symington then said that she thought he would sleep on now. As we were about to leave, he awoke, so we again all kissed him good-bye, and at the same time, telling him our name and locality.

Later, on 26 July 1987, we were at a meeting at Windsor, N.S.W. with Mr Hales (Re: JSH Vol. 5 p1) and afterwards, upon speaking with him in the car-park, he referred to our experience in Minneapolis, and asked me to repeat it to him as best I could recall. I said that he could surely recall it more accurately, to which he replied:

J.S.H. No. it would have made a deep impression upon you, because you were only there the one time.

I then recounted this meeting, as I have to you in this letter. When I reached the part where Mr Symington referred to J.S.H. as being raised up by the Lord, Mr Hales became very animated, leaning forward:

J.S.H. ...And Mrs Symington leant across and brushed his arm, didn't she? and told him I was there, in the room?

A.J.R. Yes, that's right..

J.S.H. And Mr Symington did not bat an eye, did he? He did not apologise, or retract one word he said, did he?

A.J.R. No.

J.S.H. Well Alec, you know, we should have been clear, at least from that time, on..

I have included the above conversation of 1987, just to demonstrate how beloved J.S.H. regarded that conversation. Also, as we had moved from Katoomba to Molong in December 1985, and through 1986 to that time in July 1987, he was ridiculed and despised by many in our area. I must bear the responsibility for this going on to the extent it did.

Well, I trust all this can be understood. Please be assured of our prayers, and could you convey our love to Mr Roy. We are sorry we missed speaking with him at Molong fellowship meetings, but I had to leave each meeting fairly quickly, to get home to help Jeanette. Anyway, we sure enjoyed caring for Lois Symington; please also give him our love.

Lois

Affectionately,
Your Brethren In Christ



Alec J RENDELL



Jeanette R RENDELL