

16

MRS. HARMON S. GRAVES
72 Bradley Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401

Rec'd 1/11/230-1

9

Dear Mr. Paton,

Last evening I read your book "For You Departed". I am sure that at any time I should have found it moving. But at this time, a short six months after the death of a dearly loved husband of nearly forty years, your book struck a particularly responsive chord and put into words many things over which I have pondered, fought against and rejoiced in and which I am not articulate enough to express.

It would not have occurred to me to write to you, a complete stranger on the opposite side of the world, grateful as I am to you, except for your mention of the prayer, beginning "O God, the God of spirits and of all flesh". It is one long known and cherished in my husband's family and was written by an Anglican clergyman on the occasion of Prime Minister Gladstone's death. I regret that I cannot tell you the man's name - I have a copy of the prayer here at home but its complete history is in my summer cottage, now buried under four feet of snow, making it impossible to open doors.

In the late 1890's, my husband's grandfather, a missionary Episcopal clergyman in Vermont with six children to educate and a very small income, was able to buy a quarter mile of property on the shore of Grand Isle, an island in Lake Champlain, and divided it into seven lots, one for each of his children and the seventh for common use on which a tennis court was eventually built. He and his oldest son-in-law, John Henry Hopkins, also a clergyman, the grandson of the first bishop of Vermont, the nephew of the

John Henry Hopkins who wrote "WE Three Kings of Orient Are" and himself the composer of the rousing and delightful children's Hymn "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God", built a small log chapel on the place. It holds not more than forty people though we have a walled garden which takes care of overflow. We have services there every Sunday during the summer months and it has been the scene of the baptisms of several generations of children, the place where many of the daughters of the family have married and in which we have said "farewell" to those who have died. The place has been used for over seventy years and the youngest ones in the family, the fifth generation, are third cousins. But the bonds continue strong and all of us manage to spend part of nearly every summer there, no matter how far away many live. I realize occassionally that in this age of scattered families and an "every-man-for-himself" attitude so prevalent that our place is unusual and good for our youngsters who have strong bonds with their cousins and have learned that even their great-uncles and great-aunts are people and can be fun and interesting. The boys, as they reach the proper age, serve as acolytes in the chapel and the girls help with the "house-keeping" chores. Our morning service is open to anyone who chooses to come but the evening ser~~x~~vice is for the family only. We always end with the "Gladstone" prayer, followed by the names of those of the family who have died.

It was read, of course, at the memorial service for my husband last summer. It was an occasion of great joy to me as well as sorrow, not only because of the presence of all the young ones in the family (many of whom came from great distances) in whom he took pride and joy and whose careers he followed with loving interest but because of the outpouring of warmth and admiration that poured in from all over

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our small state for the work he has done here. He was a quiet and unassuming man who suffered uncomplainingly for many years from a serious heart condition and even knowing that any day could be his last, he enjoyed life to the full and gave a tremendous amount. Vermont is a very small and obscure corner of a very large country and a very large world and what is done here is unimportant in comparison to the larger issues which have concerned you and your wife. But the knowledge of how much my husband ^{must} to so many people is helping to save me from self-pity and complete absorption in my own grief and making me realize I had better make some contribution myself.

Forgive these personal details from a far-off stranger. I started out merely to tell you the origin of the prayer and to express my gratitude for your book.

Most sincerely yours,

Audrey Town Graves

January 14, 1970: