

Transcription of Obituary of Mary Leighton – wife of William Brogg Leighton
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“The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” My beloved wife, Mary Leighton, whom the Lord hath so suddenly called away to the “rest which remaineth for the people of God,” was at the time of her death in the fifty-second year of her age, having been born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, on July 6th, 1814.

For a long time she attended, while only a girl, the Wesleyan Orphan House Sunday school, and at the age of about fifteen years she became a hearer of the Gospel in our Silver Street chapel, in the services of which she became deeply interested, and was soon brought under the happy saving influence of the Gospel, which believing, she felt to be “the power of God unto salvation.” Henceforth for several years she went on her way rejoicing, although she had the ordinary temptation and difficulties of a young convert to contend with; for none of her family, except a younger brother, who shortly after joined the society, attended the same place of worship.

To the Church which she was united she was strongly attached, and as far as she had ability, contributed towards the welfare of both the ministers and the members. At the age of eighteen, she became a teacher in our Ballast Hills Sunday school, in which she labored acceptably, as both teachers and scholars can testify.

At the age of twenty she signed the total abstinence pledge at the first lecture that was delivered at Newcastle, by a deputation from Preston, and she thus became the first female pledged teetotaler in this town. To the temperance cause she continued a steadfast adherent to the day of her death, and both by example and precept (where she prudently could) sought to promote the good cause.

Along with a few more Christian females she assisted to organize the Lady’s Temperance Association, which for many years employed a missionary, and rendered much aid to the temperance reformation.

At the age of twenty-two she became my wife. While we highly valued each other’s company before marriage, we never neglected the means of grace, or the performance of any duty, for the sake of enjoyment, in fact during our courtship, and in our after-life, we endeavoured, as Sunday school teachers and members of a Christian Church, to do all things in the fear of the Lord; and truly we have experienced much of “the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Having sought “first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,” all other things have been added unto us. We have proved that “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life now is and of that which is to come.”

The incidents in the life of a private Christian are generally of so ordinary a character that they need not be registered; suffice it to say of my late partner, that she was an unostentatious Christian, loving working rather than talking, preferring deeds to words. Where she could render help she was always willing to help, and especially to help those who strove to help themselves. Many will miss her kind aid. If others were happy she was happy; she seemed to live for others more than for herself.

During the thirty years of our married life we have had as much of happiness as we could almost desire, and much more than we deserved; yet we have had to endure both personal

and relative afflictions, losses in business, and the trials and temptations common to all Christians. Although my dear partner possessed robust health for many years, yet latterly, from not attending to herself as she might have done, she was liable to sudden attacks of illness, and each attack left her much weaker; yet the week before her departure, except complaining of fatigue, she appeared to be in the enjoyment of her usual health.

On Good Friday, March 29th, she had all our family assembled at our house – children and childrens' children, - and we spent a happy evening together. The next day she attended to business, and discharged her duties with pleasure, until nine o'clock in the evening, when feeling unwell, she retired to rest; but at midnight we had to seek medical aid. Getting my daughters to retire to rest, I attended to my dear partner all the night, administering hourly the medicine ordered. In the morning the physician saw no sign of any danger; but thought she was much better. He called again at four in the afternoon, and thought the symptoms were not so favourable. At six o'clock we ourselves saw a change for the worse, and sent for the medical attendant, who came immediately with his assistant, and the case had become so serious, that he called in another doctor to consult with him. While they were consulting in an adjoining bedroom, my dear partner was rapidly sinking, and a Christian lady and I were talking to and praying with her, and promising to follow her to the skies, whither she was only going a little before us to the presence of the Saviour whom she loved. We summoned the doctors to attend; and in about five minutes my dear wife had ceased to suffer, and had entered into life; she sank gently into the arms of death, to enter into the presence of her God, whom she had striven to serve from her youth. And then, in the solemn moment of parting, I felt it was the Lord's doing, and in my utmost heart could say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

My dear partner felt during the day that this was to be her last attack of sickness, but said as little as possible respecting it, being unwilling to cause us grief.

How solemn is the parting hour! How near the spirit world appears; the presence of God being sensibly felt. "God be merciful unto us, and save us evermore."

Her anxiety for her family's welfare was rewarded by her seeing her three daughters brought in their youthful days into the enjoyment of personal religion, and becoming members of the Church of their parents' choice. To them her example of industry, frugality, temperance, and piety, has been of great service, especially so to the families of the two who are married.

So truly may "her children arise up and call her blessed;" for she feared God, and he blessed her. And lastly, of her acts of kindness to the needy, we shall say nothing more than that she acted on the Saviour's injunction: "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."

Wm. B. Leighton