

WHEAT OR CHAFF?

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE B.A.,

AUTHOR OF "LIVING OR DEAD," ETC. ETC.

"Men have their winnowing-days, and God hath His." JOHN FLAVEL. 1680.

NEW YORK:

ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS,
No. 530 BROADWAY.

1857.

Preface.

THIS sermon is published at the request of some who heard it preached, and with my own hearty consent. I feel a melancholy pleasure in bearing my feeble testimony to the grace that was in her who is mentioned in it; and I only wish I could have done it with more power and effect. I have done what I could on short notice, and if any ask why I have said so much, I reply in the words of Solomon, "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord SHE SHALL BE PRAISED."—*Proverbs xxxi. 30.*

The 25th of July was indeed a sad day in Helmingham, and a day, I trust, that will not soon be forgotten. We had to accompany the remains of one whom we all loved, from the home where she had adorned the doctrine of her Lord, to the house appointed for all living. It was a solemn and a trying scene.

The coffin was borne by twelve of the most regular attendants at the weekly prayer meeting held in my parish.

The pall was supported by twelve of my brethren in the ministry, residing in the neighborhood.*

We carried her over the path that she had so often loved to walk in on the Sabbath while living. We bore her into the little church where she had so often delighted to worship, and join in prayer and praise. We followed her to the silent vault where she was to rest, and there thanked God that she had been kept faithful unto death. And then we returned home, to sorrow,—but not as others without a hope of a joyful resurrection, and to feel how true is the saying, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

J. C. RYLE.

* Rev. C. Bridges—F. Storr—J. W. Reeve—W. Woodhouse—T. Davidson—H. T. Lumsden—T. D. West—C. Shorting—J. K. Tucker—J. B. Wilkinson—C. Holland—E. Barlee.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN HELMINGHAM CHURCH, ON THE DAY FOLLOWING
THE FUNERAL OF GEORGINA LOUISA TOLLEMACHE,¹ THE
BELOVED WIFE OF JOHN TOLLEMACHE, ESQ. M.P.

“BE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS.”

“Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”—HEBREWS vi. 12.

BRETHREN,

It is a difficult thing at any time to preach to immortal souls. Never did I feel it more difficult than I do this night. You know the subject which is uppermost in all our minds. I have to speak of one whom God has taken to Himself out of our little congregation,—one whom Jesus loved,—and one whom we had every reason to love and honour too: I would fain make the occasion profitable to you all, and the Lord being my helper I must try to do so;—but I feel it very hard.

One thing encourages me to make the attempt, and that is this. I know that she who is departed would have rejoiced if her death might be sanctified, and made useful to all who heard of it. I know her wish would have been to do good when she died, if possible, even, as we all know, she did good while she lived.

And more than this,—I feel it a solemn duty myself, as her minister, to turn to good account this day of visitation. Such opportunities are seldom given to a minister. Seldom, very seldom, can we speak so confidently about the character of members of our flocks, as I can of hers. Seldom, very seldom, can we follow those to whom we have preached, to their long home, with such real consolation, or use with such unwavering hope those beautiful words, “We give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world.”

Brethren, I wish tonight to make the character of her whom we have lost the illustration of our text. I wish to bear my testimony to the grace that was in her. I would try to show you the blessedness of living to the Lord. I would fain set before you the comfort of dying to the Lord, and leaving good evidences behind you. God forbid that the righteous should perish by our side, and we not lay it to heart! Oh! let us rather set up each of us this day a stone of remembrance; let us think, and learn wisdom.

¹ [Georgina Louisa Tollemache died July 18, 1846AD, aged 37.]

Lift up your hearts, all ye that pray, and ask that the Holy Ghost may be amongst us with power. Pray that I may be enabled to speak the truth as it is in Jesus, and that this truth may be fastened in your hearts like a nail in a sure place. Pray that we may all find it good to have come here tonight; that the death of her who is gone may be the life of many a soul, and her end the beginning of godliness in many a heart.

The text I have chosen contains five things.

I. *Warning* words, “Be not slothful.”

II. *Encouraging* words, “The promises.”

III. *Quickening* words, “They who inherit.”

IV. Words of *Instruction*, “Through faith and patience.”

V. Words of *Duty*, “Be followers.”

Upon each of these I desire to make a few remarks.

I. *First then there are solemn words of warnings “Be not slothful.”*

Brethren, the apostle has here in view that indolent, lazy, idle frame of mind about religion, which is so natural to us all. Against this he bids you be on your guard.

There are four great weeds which grow naturally in the heart of every man alive,—and they are these, pride, sloth, worldliness, and unbelief. All of us are plagued with these enemies, more or less, and shall be to the end. The roots of them are within us, however much, by grace, we may mortify and keep them under; and until the walls of the old house are clean taken down, they and we shall not be divided.

I stand not now to say which is the worst of the four. All are dangerous. But this I will say, that sloth needs as much watching as any, and unless watched will do as much harm.

The unconverted man is worse than slothful. He sleeps soundly, and we cannot awaken him. He has eyes but sees not;—he has ears but hears not;—he has mind but thinks not;—he heeds not our sermons, and our counsels—on him they are all thrown away. And he dreams too. He fancies often that he is spiritually rich, when in reality he is poor,—that he is doing well, when in fact he is doing ill,—that he is all right, when in truth he is all wrong,—that he is at peace, when the Spirit says “there is no peace.” To all such we can only keep on crying “Awake! awake!” But they do not seem to hearken. A few stray convictions,—a little fitful starting,—an occasional turning from one side to the other,—but nothing more can we see. Such men far too often sleep on till they are dead. “A little more sleep and a little more slumber,” they go on crying, and by and bye we have to meet them in their coffins at the churchyard gate; and where is their hope? Oh! ye that pray, pray for the sleeping, pray for the living dead.

But even God's believing children have only too much need to be warned against spiritual sloth. They too are fearfully heavy, carnal, earthly-minded, compared to what they should be. They too are always inclining to become drowsy, and close their eyes, and need continual reminding to keep awake. Sad is it to see how soon their heads hang down, and their knees wax faint;—how soon their love becomes cold, their repentance dull, their zeal blunt, and their faith weak. Oh! what a palsy, what a worm at the root is this spirit of slumber!

Sloth is the reason why so many believers in the Lord Jesus continue only babes in grace. They ask little, and they obtain little. They take little pains, and so make little progress. Sloth causes little prayer,—little prayer causes little grace,—little grace causes little brightness.

Sloth is too often the reason why false doctrines are so readily received. Some men will not take the trouble to examine whether new opinions are true. They embrace them when put forth with any show of truth, without inquiring, "What saith the Scripture?" They will often catch at any teaching which seems to save them labour of personal communion with Christ, personal growth in grace, personal sanctification, personal faith. Sloth has been the strength and support of many a heresy.

Brethren believers, if you would see good days, take the apostle's advice, and "Be not slothful." Guard against spiritual drowsiness. Watch against the beginnings of it. It is a sin that grows upon a man very quickly. "I cannot" today will soon lead on to "I will not" tomorrow. Jesus was not slothful in working the work of your salvation. The devil is not slothful in labouring to work your ruin. And why will you sleep? Oh! there will be sleeping enough in the grave,—there will be rest enough in the new Jerusalem,—but for the time present let us cast aside our slumber, let us all watch.

Anything, anything to be kept awake in a sleepy world! Count that the best preaching which keeps your soul most awake! Reckon those the best books which keep your soul most awake. Value those friends most highly who will not let your soul alone. Bless God for those conditions of life which keep your eyes most open and fixed upon eternal things. Anything, anything, I say once more, to be kept awake!

Brethren believers, all things around you cry loudly, "Be not slothful." Everything says "Sleep not, do not stand still."

Mornings and evenings come and go in quick succession; years roll on one after another; harvests grow and ripen, and are cut and carried; congregations change and alter by degrees, and face after face disappears. Friends and relations go forth, and are scattered far and wide. Grey hairs come here and there upon us, and remind us that we are getting nearer to our end. Grave after grave is

opened in our sight for those we know,—and all these things are meant to teach the same lesson, “Sleep not! sleep not! do not stand still!”

Men and brethren, Jesus stands at the door of every heart among you and knocks. In every afflicting providence,—in every cross and trying visitation,—in every startling circumstance he brings before you, Jesus is calling to your soul, “Awake, arise, and come away.” A voice from the tomb is crying to you all tonight, “Be not slothful, awake, and sleep no more.” Oh! let not that voice speak in vain!

II. *I pass on to speak of the second thing my text contains,—a word of encouragement, “the promises.”*

The promises are God’s gracious offers to sinful man of everything that man’s soul requires. The word of God is full of them. It is a storehouse and treasury of promises, and whosoever will may take of them freely. Who is there among you that doubts God’s love to sinners? Let him open his Bible and behold the promises. Come every one that is labouring and heavy-laden, come and see.

Here you will find *comfortable* promises for the life that now is. Grace for every man, woman, and child, that will have it. Pardon for the most guilty,—cleansing for the most corrupt,—forgiveness for the most ungodly;—bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, milk for the weak, wine for the heavy in heart, healing for the sick, rest for the heavy-laden, heart’s-ease for the sorrowful, balm for the wounded, peace for the rebellious, life for the dead, riches for the poor, strength for the feeble, power for them that have no might,—and all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. “Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good,”— “Eat O friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.”

Here too you will find *glorious* promises for the life which is to come. Glory for every man, woman, and child, that will have it. A sure victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the end; a better resurrection at the coming of the Lord; a full acquittal in the day of judgment; a place at the right hand, and a robe of white; a rest from labour and weariness; a freedom from indwelling sin; deliverance from care and tears; an abode in heaven, which can never be taken down; the fellowship of angels; the never-ending companionship of just men made perfect and above all, the presence of the Lamb of God himself;—and all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Surely there is encouragement here.

Here too you will find *broad* promises. God’s promises are high as heaven, and wide as the sea. All are invited in them, and none shut out. They are for the poor as well as for the rich, for the unlearned as well as for the learned,—they are for all. No man shall be able to say, “Jesus held out no promise to me, Jesus never asked me to come to Him and be saved.” The length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of the promises will make that man speechless in the day of

judgment. Think not, any one of you, to shake off your own responsibility, and say, "God never called on me." The promises alone will be your condemnation. The broader they are the more hopeless will be your case. The wider the door, the more without excuse your soul, if you do not enter in.

Here too you will find *sure* promises. God's promises were never broken—they are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus; written in Christ's blood, and sealed by Christ's Spirit. They are the word of Him who cannot lie. They are not like the world's promises, vain, deceitful, treacherous, and disappointing. They are not like the devil's promises, smooth and plausible, but, as Eve found to her sorrow, foundationless and false. Our God is the God of truth. He never failed yet to keep His word, and He never will. If He hath said a thing He will do it, and if He hath spoken He will make it good. His word is better than man's deed. When He promises, man has no need to doubt.

Brethren, this day I set before you the exceeding great and precious promises, comfortable, glorious, broad, and sure. I ask you to receive them, to come to Christ and live.

Promises have been the food of God's children in every age of the world. Enoch, Abraham, Moses, all lived upon them, and did well. Why should not you? Promises are the lights set up to guide us into the harbour of eternal life;—no man ever steered by them yet, who did not find himself at last in the haven where he would be. Why should they not guide you? Promises are the current money which supports God's people;—we have not our King Himself yet, but we have, in the promises, His image and superscription. And all this treasure of promises is laid open to you.—Oh! see that you refuse not Him that speaketh. Reject not the strong consolation that is set before you. Here is encouragement for all who want it. The Kingdom of God is very nigh you. Jesus holds out the golden sceptre to you all, and invites you to make your petition. Come then, and lay hold upon the promises this night;—ask, seek, believe, and live.

III. *Our text contains a quickening word; it speaks of those who "inherit" the promises.*

Brethren, there have been millions of professing Christians of whom we could only say with weeping, they have no portion in the inheritance here spoken of. They have gone to their own place. They have inherited the lot of their own choosing. They have reaped according as they have sown. Weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the worm; the fire; blackness, darkness, hopelessness, despair! This is the miserable cup they now drink.

Not so the redeemed of the Lord, who have heard Christ's voice, and followed Him. They sleep in Jesus, and are in peace. Of them the text says, "They

inherit the promises.” They have in hand what they had long looked for. They grasp what they had only seen through a glass darkly. They possess something substantial in place of hope. They obtain a reality instead of a thing known only by the hearing of the ear. And compared to this life all this is *inheritance* indeed.

I know well they do not yet receive their full reward. I know well their happiness will not be perfect until they are clothed in their heavenly bodies, at the coming of Jesus, and the resurrection of the just. But still I do believe they inherit a joy of which you and I can form but little conception; they reap already a degree of blessedness, of which at best we have but a faint idea.

They are *with Christ*, saith the Spirit—“Today,” said Jesus to the dying thief, “today shalt thou be *with me* in paradise.” “To depart,” said Paul to the Philipians, “to depart and be *with Christ* is far better.” Brethren, I may not be able to explain the state of those who sleep in Jesus, between the time of death and resurrection, but when I read they are with Christ, I feel it is enough.—Where He is there must be peace; where He is there must be comfort; where He is there must be joy. Their souls are with Christ, and I ask no more.

And then *they rest from their labour*, saith the Spirit. They have gone home. They are no longer tossed about on the restless sea of this never quiet world. They are no longer wearied with the daily conflict against indwelling sin. At length they may lay aside their armour, and say to the sword, “rest, and be still.” Fighting and struggling, watching and fearing, wrestling and praying,—all this is over. They are safe at length, and the former things are passed away.

“Comfort ye, comfort ye, with these words, all ye that mourn over departed believers. Comfort ye, comfort ye, refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears,—they “inherit the promises.” Their warfare is accomplished; their battle is fought; their course is run. They have crossed Jordan; they have begun to enter the promised land; they are forever beyond the reach of sin, the world, and the devil; they are gone to that place where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Oh! let us not sorrow over them, as those who have no hope.

Let us mourn, if you will for ourselves,— but not for them. We have still to labour, but they are at rest. We are still at sea, but they are safe in harbour. We are still in the wilderness, but they are at home. We are still carrying about a body of death and corruption, but as for them, their old house is at length taken down. Let us rather bless God that at last they inherit the promises. Let us give all diligence that we may go to them, and not allow ourselves to wish it possible that they might return to us.

IV. *The fourth thing our text contains, is a word of instruction. You are told*

the way in which men have inherited the promises. It is "through faith and patience."

This is the path that all the saints of God have walked in to this hour. There never has been, and there never will be, any other. From righteous Abel down to the last soul brought in by election of grace—all the heirs of promise will prove to have travelled by the same road: all will reach heaven by the same way.

Faith was the *strength* of all who inherit the promises. They believed on an unseen Saviour; they looked not to themselves but to Jesus, and this made them all what they were. They lived by faith,—they stood by faith,— they walked by faith—they kept the faith; and so entered into rest. Being justified by faith they had peace with God. This was the victory that overcame the world, even their faith.

This kept them from *despair* when they thought of their own countless iniquities; they saw by faith the blood of Jesus, cleansing them from all sin. This kept them from *fainting* when they groaned under their own indwelling corruption;—they saw by faith Jesus interceding for them at God's right hand,—bearing their names upon His breast and shoulders before the Father's throne. This kept them from *fear* when they looked forward to the day of Judgment; they saw by faith the white robe of Christ's righteousness around them, and the Lamb of God appearing as their advocate, and pleading their cause. This made them hold on through all the narrow way; they saw before them Him that is invisible; they came up out of the wilderness leaning on the Beloved one; they looked not at the things seen, which are temporal, but at the things unseen, which are eternal. Oh! brethren, well may the apostle Peter speak of faith as "precious faith." And patience was the *character* of all who inherit the promises. They endured and were not weary of the Lord's service. They continued patiently in well-doing. They possessed their souls in patience, being assured that by and bye they would reap if they fainted not. They were content to wait on the Lord, and have their good things hereafter.

The rushing current of the fashion of this world, which set so strongly against them, could not prevail to turn them aside. They did not wait lazily for all around to join them; they travelled patiently alone, rather than not travel towards heaven at all?

The vain pleasures of the world, which allure so many hearts, had no power to draw them out of the way. They had tasted the honey of the promises, and this made what the children of the world call happiness appear sweet no more. Like Moses, they chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. They esteemed the reproach of Christ no disgrace. They bore the cross—they thought lightly of the shame, for they had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Brethren, would you inherit the promises? This is the old path. This is the good way. If you love life, see that the faith and patience of the saints be yours.

V. *The last word I would have you remember in the text is a word of duty. The apostle says to us “be followers” of them who inherit the promises.*

Doing ought to be the fruit of hearing. Coming to church and attending, listening to sermons and admiring,—all this is a barren and unprofitable religion, so long as there is nothing done. Doing is the reality of religion; action is the only real sign of life. We preach in order that you may practise;—we speak in order that you may do;—we counsel in order that you may act. We cry “awake thou that sleepest,” that we may see you arise and repent;—we lift up Christ that we may see you arise and flee to the cross;—we urge you to grow in grace, that we may see you arise and press on. We want doing to be the result of all our sermons. Alas! that every week so much breath should be spent to so little purpose,—so much said and so little done.

Brethren, those who inherit the promises were all *doing* men,—not men of words only, but men of deeds. I want you all to be like them—I call upon you to be followers of their faith and patience. Walk in the footsteps of the flock of Christ, if ever you would be found in the true fold. Live after the example they have left behind them, if ever you would die their death. Imitate the conduct of the saints who have gone before you in this your day of grace, if ever you mean to be numbered with them in the day of glory.

They inherit. *Take comfort*—These words are written for your encouragement. Others, you see, have gone before you on the way that leads to everlasting life, and got safe home;—why should not you? They had no helps or advantages which are not freely offered to you. Their strength, their comforts, their provisions, the weapons of their warfare,—all are within your reach, and all may be your own.

They inherit. *Take care*.—These words may prove your condemnation. They were men of like passions with yourselves, but they overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the blood of the Lamb. Surely their victory will leave you without excuse, if you are not saved also. Surely if their sins were forgiven, and their hearts renewed, the same can be done for you. The Lord’s hand is not shortened—the Lord’s grace is still sufficient—the Lord’s ear is still open. The things that were possible for them are still possible for you. Oh! if you would not be found speechless and defenceless in the great and dreadful day, walk in the tried path of faith and patience, “be followers of them who inherit the promises.”

And now let me wind up all by speaking to you about her whom yesterday we carried to the grave; whose honoured remains are now waiting beneath our feet for the resurrection of the just. And let the things I have to say of her be taken home by each of you, as the application of my text.

It has pleased God to remove from amongst us one of the brightest members of our little congregation. One whom we all knew and honoured has been added to the great cloud of witnesses, and now inherits the promises. I feel I should be neglecting a solemn duty if I did not try to impress the event upon you all. Suffer me then before the bustle of this selfish world has deadened your better feelings, before the impression that this awful blow has made becomes worn and indistinct,—suffer me to bear my feeble testimony to the grace that was in our departed sister, and to say to all, “Follow her even as she followed Christ.”

Brethren, I shall speak of her who is gone without hesitation or reserve. Bear with me a little while I do it. Believe me I do it not to raise her reputation as a Christian,—she needs no praise of mine—I do it for your own benefit,—for the profit and edification of your souls.

There are many of you here, you know well, without Christ. Alas! that it should be so. How am I straitened till I see you coming to Him by faith, and Christ be formed in you.—There are many of you here, you know well, lingering, undecided, halting between two opinions. Alas! that it should be so. Oh! that I could hear of you coming out boldly from the world, and saying to Jesus, “there is none upon earth I desire beside thee.”—There are not a few believers here, you know well, lukewarm and barren, compared to what they might be. Alas! that it should be so. Oh! that I may soon hear of you bearing much fruit.—Brethren, whatever be your state in God’s sight, this night let me try to quicken one and all by the example I have to set before you.

This night I would fain show you that Christ’s service is indeed pleasant, and that a person may be truly happy, and yet live unto God. This night I would have you all take notice that a Christian may live in this world of sin, and yet, by grace, not be of the world;—that you may be encompassed by temptation, and yet keep yourself pure.—This night I would have you learn the lesson that a soul may have every draw-back, and yet, by grace, be eminently holy; that it is possible to be surrounded by all that can make life attractive, or gild earth, or obscure heaven, and yet for all that, to set your affection on things above, give your heart to Jesus, and be unspotted by the world. She that is gone is an example of the truth of what I say. “Follow her as she followed Christ.”

Brethren, it is a hard thing to be rich, and at the same time a disciple of Christ. You that are poor do not think so. But you are mistaken: the Lord Jesus himself shall answer you. “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a

needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Cease then to desire riches. Gold and silver are heavy weights to carry, if a man would so run as to obtain. It is far more difficult to follow Jesus and be rich than to follow Jesus and be poor. It is hard to walk in high places and not become giddy. Happy the man who is there and does not fall. It is hard to carry a full cup and not to spill it;—to live amongst comforts and luxuries and not to be insensibly taken up with them to dwell in the midst of sweet and pleasant things, and yet keep your soul in right tone, in vigour, and in health. But the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God. She that is gone did all this. Oh! let us bless God for giving us such a signal proof of what His grace can do.

Come now and listen to me while I single out some special features in her character as a Christian, and call your attention to them. I wish to dwell on some particular graces which shone most brightly in her. Time would not let me speak of those general things which she had in common with all the family of God. I must of necessity confine myself to particulars; and I do it the more willingly because they are particulars in which believers are too often sadly deficient,—and because I shall thus give you a more real and living picture of what she was herself.

But while you listen, do not, do not misunderstand me. Do not go away and say that I told you about an angel and a perfect being—such as none can hope to be on earth. I do not say that she was such—I do not want you to look at her in that light. I am going to speak of a sinner, not of an angel,—a sinner saved by grace, and grace alone. I do not want to exalt her, but her Lord and master, whose Spirit made her to differ. Her gifts were not the easy-growing weeds of nature’s garden, but the precious wheat which had been sown by the Holy Ghost. She was born by nature a child of wrath even as others. She became by redeeming mercy a child of grace; and all that she was, and did, and attained to, she owed to Christ. Christ was the fountain from which the stream of her good words and works all flowed. Christ was the root from which the precious fruits of the Spirit which she brought forth, all took their rise. Christ was the foundation on which the fair superstructure of her character was all raised, and all her holiness sprung from union with Him. What she was, she was by the grace of God, and as such I am not ashamed to speak fully of her. Her faults were her own, but her graces were jewels lent her by the King of kings.; and I feel that in speaking of her as I shall do, I am not magnifying her so much as Christ.

1. *The first point that I would name in her character as a Christian was, her faith.*

I think this could not fail to strike any Christian who was long in her com-

pany. She seemed to believe, unhesitatingly, whatever God had said in the Bible. She never appeared to doubt as to what was right and duty, when once she had a plain text before her, and could see, “thus saith the Lord, and thus it is written.” She appeared to enjoy a settled confidence and persuasion that whatever God said must be true,—whatever God promised would surely be performed,—and whatever God commanded ought implicitly to be obeyed; and that to act on this belief was sure to bring a blessing and success.

Who can calculate the value of a spirit of faith like this? This is the spirit that turns mountains into valleys, and rough places into smooth. This is the spirit that expects great things, and so attempts great things,—that stops not for fear of failure, but goes on sure of success,—that goes down into the wilderness without fear, and believes it will be carried through without harm,—that halts not, saying, “the Canaanites are before us,” but rather presses on, saying, “we must be conquerors, for God is on our side.”

This is the spirit that does great exploits, and is the parent of gracious acts. It keeps a man in perfect peace,—it lifts him above the fear of evil tidings,—it makes him valiant for the truth,—it enables him to be patient in tribulation, and to feel confident “it is well;”—it gives him decision when he has to choose, —firmness when he proceeds to act,—confidence when he goes to pray. Such was the spirit, brethren, of her that is departed. She had an unhesitating faith.

Alas! for the scarcity of such a spirit. How many of us appear certain of nothing at all! We hardly seem to believe that we profess, or to be really confident and sure of what we hold. There comes a trouble, and, like Peter we look at the waves more than at Jesus, and begin to sink. There comes a danger, and, like Ahaz, our hearts are moved as the trees of the forest before the wind. Truly when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? Oh! brethren believers, it is a great grace to believe all that is written in the Bible. In this simplicity of faith, I charge you, follow her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

2. *The second thing that I will name to you, was her love to the pure doctrines of Christ’s Gospel.*

I do believe she loved the simple truth as it is in Jesus above gold and precious stones. It was sweeter to her than honey and the honeycomb. Not everything that is called Christianity in these days deserves the name:—there is often much talking about the Gospel, and yet no glad tidings proclaimed; much preaching about Christ, and yet Christ crucified not really set forth. All this she knew well, and had an uncommon jealousy about soundness in the faith. She had none of that false charity which confounds light and darkness, bitter and sweet, truth and error, and dreams that all professing Christians mean the same

in the end. Her charity was the apostolic charity, which can only “rejoice in the truth”

No quantity of learning or intellect in a preacher or speaker,—no possible amount of eloquence or reputation,—could ever win her confidence, unless she heard from that man sound speech about the leading doctrines of Christ’s Gospel. Justification by faith,—regeneration,—sanctification, Christ the only way of salvation,—the indwelling of the Spirit the only sure mark of God’s children,—these were the truths she loved to see clearly stated, and when there was a deficiency on these points, whatever others thought she was not satisfied. She was one that seemed determined to “prove all things,” and to hold fast nothing but what was good.

The false opinions of the day we live in, which have moved so many of whom we once hoped better things, never moved her. She saw the tide of fashion setting strongly in favour of new doctrines, and heard the specious reasonings of those who support them, but her own mind was never for a moment shaken.

The torrent of dangerous books which has of late years overflowed our country, books containing enough religion to attract but not enough to do good—books which please the eye, but do not profit the heart—books in which the first things are put last, and the last things put first,—books in which Christ has not his rightful office, and faith has not its rightful place;—all these which have carried so many Christians off their feet had never any influence on her. She loved simple Gospel truth,—and everything else she counted unprofitable and vain,—unsaving, unsatisfying, and un sanctifying to man’s soul.

Alas! for the scarcity of such a spirit as this!—Jealousy about sound doctrine appears almost unknown. Poison seems allowable if taken in small quantities. Errors of doctrine may now be overlooked, it seems, if only mingled with a certain quantity of truth. Brethren, take heed what you are doing. The absence of *one* single ingredient may neutralize your medicine and make it even hurtful. The presence of *one* single portion of arsenic may turn your whole loaf of bread into a deadly poison. Oh! in this godly jealousy for Bible truth, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

3. *The third particular point that I will mention in her character, was her love to all true Christians.*

She had a hand and a heart for almost all, and many of you have reason to know this,— but those who held the highest place in her regard, were the household of faith. Her delight was in the saints and the excellent of the earth; she honoured them that feared the Lord. To be in the company of bright and eminent Christians seemed her chief enjoyment. She loved all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, whatever might be their rank or calling. She really seemed

to feel that believers are all one family in Christ Jesus,—and like the early Church at Jerusalem, ought to have one heart and one soul,—and like members of one body to take a deep and lively interest in each other. You might say of her, as was said of an old Reformer, she “loved all in whom she saw *something of Christ*”

And, brethren, ought not grace to be the chief thing in our esteem? Is not that the one thing, which God regards? When the eyes of the Lord behold the earth, this is the only thing that he can see with unmixed satisfaction, for it is a part of Himself. The Lord seeth not as man seeth. Man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart. He cares not for rank, and title, and wealth, and greatness; He values men according to their grace. A cottage where the fruits of the Spirit are brought forth is a more honourable place in His sight, than the most splendid palace where Christ is not magnified, and His name above every name. Surely we ought to be of the same judgment too.

And, brethren, is not this the frame of mind which will best fit us for an abode in heaven? Grace will be everything in heaven, for it is the only door by which any one can pass to glory. Surely grace should be everything also with you and me on earth. We should love all men, but especially the brethren.

This was the mind of her I speak of. She was a lover of grace. Nothing, I think, gave her more real pleasure than to hear of a work of grace having begun in any soul; and if that work went back she truly sorrowed, and if it went forward she truly rejoiced.

You who belong to my own congregation have little idea how well she was acquainted with you all by character, as well as by name. She took a deep interest in your spiritual condition. If there was at any time a soul among you in which there appeared to be some good thing beginning,—if any man or woman among you became unusually diligent about means of grace, or showed by your manner of life symptoms of some inward change,—no one, I really think, felt a more sincere interest about that person than she did. She would inquire about him constantly. She would often ask how he was going on,—whether he was making progress,—whether he had any peculiar difficulties,—whether he was really growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,—whether he was indeed coming out from the world.

You little know how she took notice of all among you who were true Christians. Your names, your history, your trials, your circumstances, your character, all were familiar to her. She seemed to have in her mind a book of remembrance for all who feared the Lord, and thought upon his name. The joy of angels over one sinner that repenteth is a kind of joy, I believe, to which she was no stranger.

Alas! for the scarcity of this habit of mind in these days! How few even of

true Christians appear to realize it at all. How many believers hedge themselves in with suspicions and jealousies, and seemingly believe nothing, and hope nothing about others!

How little open-handedness and open-heartedness can be found! How many fasten down upon the faults of brethren, and refuse to see their good things! How few have an eye ready to see true grace in a neighbour, and a heart ready to cherish it and help forward its work! What abundance there is of reserve, and coldness, and shyness, and silence! What a dearth of communion, and confidence, and brotherly kindness and response!

Brethren, in this love to true Christians, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

4. *The next point I will notice in her character was, her unworldliness.*

You all know she might have had as much of what is called worldly happiness as she pleased. She did not give up the world because she could not keep it, nor turn away from it because it forsook her. Oh! no! She came out from the world by choice and not by necessity. Truly, if she had been mindful of the country from whence she came out, she might, like the patriarchs, have had opportunity to have returned. But she desired a better country, that is a heavenly. She might any day have joined in the world's pleasures, walked in the world's path; lived in the world's excitement. But she cared for none of these things. Oh! let us not forget this. Separation from the world is easy work, comparatively, when you have nothing to tempt you to go into it, or your position makes it impossible;—but to keep clear of the world when there are no natural barriers to check you, this is indeed hard.

Seldom did I ever see one who thought less of the world, to all appearance, than she did. The love of the world, and the fear of the world,—the secret liking to go along with it, the secret dread of going against it,—neither of these seemed to have any effect upon her mind. She was no slave, as many are; she called not the world her master, but God. The world's ways,—the world's fashions,—the world's customs,—the world's opinions,—all these were nothing to her. She was free in the highest sense of the word; for she was one of those whom the truth of Christ made free.

Let no one misunderstand me on this point. She never gave unnecessary offence, or sought to carry more crosses than God called upon her to bear. She was tenderly afraid of throwing stumbling-blocks in the way of others by needless eccentricities. She was one of all others who walked in wisdom towards them that were without, and tried as far as was lawful to win the world.

But this I say, she did not make the world her guide and counsellor. She did not live by its rules and standard, and wear its chains. She was not one who was

ever asking that melancholy question, “What does the world do? What is most usual? What will people say? What will be *thought* if I do such and such things?” The world’s sayings and doings and thinkings were but a drop of water in the balance to her; her grand question was, “What is the Lord’s will concerning me? What is written in the word of God?”

And when she found her duty plainly marked out in Scripture, she did not stop, as many, till the world should come up and join her. She did not wait for all the world to become decided before she became decided, she would set her face steadily towards Jerusalem, even though she went alone. Truly she was independent of man’s opinion in religious things. The Bible was the map by which alone she steered, and she seemed to say to it as Ruth to Naomi, “Whither thou goest, I will go.”

Alas! for the scarcity of such a character as this! I fear there is far more worldliness among some of the children of God than we see upon the surface. It creeps out and bubbles up in many little things that they do. It oozes out in their entertainments and way of living,—in their apparel,—in their conversation,—in their employment of time,—in the education and dress of their children,—in the management of their households,—in the society they tolerate,—in the way they conduct their business or earthly callings.—In all these things the evidence of something rotten within may often be traced. Oh! the deceitfulness of our hearts! Many really live in such a way that the world would seem to be the first thing and to fill the best chamber in the heart;—and as for religion, it only has the vacant places,—lies on the top,—occupies the spare room,—is treated as a lodger and a visitor, and no more.

“Keep in with the world, as far as you can, and *afterwards* have as much religion as you can,” that seems the rule by which many walk. Oh! the deceitfulness of our hearts!—Few, very few, make the world bend to the Bible,—many, far too many make the Bible bend to the world.

Brethren, in this freedom from a worldly spirit, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

5. *The next point that I will mention in her character was, her zeal to do good to others.*

It is not her carefulness in doing good to the bodies of others that I speak of now—though many of you know I might dwell on this—I mean her carefulness to do good to souls. Neither shall I speak of what she was in this respect in all the varied relations of life that she filled, as a wife, a mother, a daughter, a mistress, and though last not least, I could testify, as a faithful friend. I might do it, but I forbear.

Her zeal to do good to souls was indeed unceasing. It was not merely shown in giving money to Societies, or subscribing to assist religious objects. Such zeal

no doubt deserves our thanks, but we must not forget it neither requires time nor trouble from the giver. Her zeal was a far higher, nobler zeal than this. She was always trying to win *individual* souls to Christ. It seemed a constant employment with her. By word of mouth or by letter, by speaking or by writing, by warning or by encouragement, by exhortation or by advice,—by one way or another she appeared always trying to lead others to heaven. The salvation of souls seemed never out of her mind. Her life was a constant endeavour to draw others to Christ, to prayer, and to the word. Verily she had the true spirit of a Missionary, she had found the Gospel precious to her own soul, and she would have liked all the world to know its value too, and taste its comforts.

It is written of our Lord Jesus Christ that, “He went about doing good”—so also in a measure, you might say of her that is departed. She was like Dorcas—”full of good works.” Few I believe, were ever for any period within her reach, who could not testify that what I say is true. High and low, rich and poor, old and young, masters and servants, all who have been for any time near her know what I mean;—it will not be her fault if they never think of their souls. I suspect she never was long with anyone without saying a word for God, or showing her interest in their salvation, by the gift of a tract or book.—All men could see she did not wish to go to heaven alone: the words of Moses to Hobab seemed a living principle in her mind, “Come with us and we will do thee good.”

And think not her zeal was a zeal without *wisdom*. She was wonderfully taught by the Spirit how to speak a word in due season.—She was not one who would cast pearls before swine, or give that which is holy to the dogs; she had a very quick discernment of the time to speak, and what was best to say, and how it ought to be said;—her words were indeed “fitly spoken.”

Her zeal too was a zeal always mingled with *kindness*. Some people, unhappily, put on such a tone and manner when speaking to others about their souls, that they raise a dislike to the truths they want to enforce, and do as much harm as good. It was not so with her. Like the wise woman in thirty-first of Proverbs, “The law of kindness was in her lips.” The persons to whom she spoke would never feel that she was a harsh reprover whatever they might think of her opinions, they would have a deep impression, I think, that she was an affectionate well-wisher of their souls.

But her zeal was always accompanied with a holy *boldness*. She really seemed to fear the face of no man when she had God’s work in hand;—nothing made her afraid to speak out. I do believe she would have realized the saying of David—(Psalm cxix. 46)—“I will speak of thy testimonies before kings and not be ashamed.” I do not think she ever shrunk from confessing Christ before men, whatever her company might be;—the words of David seemed engraven on her

heart (Psalm lx. 4), “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.”

Brethren, who shall calculate the amount of good that zeal like this does even in this dark world? Who can tell what might be done, if we who believe would speak, as she who is departed did, every one to his neighbour about his soul?—All men have consciences. Many are only waiting for us to begin, and wondering that we hold our peace. It is a line of conduct that God loves, and God will honour. I declare to you my firm persuasion, that the judgment-day will tell us of numberless souls that are saved by this means. Many, I doubt not, will meet her of whom I am speaking, before the throne of God, and bless her for her faithful words.

Alas! indeed, for the scarcity of this grace! Seldom indeed do we find believers who are forward to speak to others about their salvation. Surely if our hearts were more full of Christ, our tongues would be more ready to speak of Him. If we felt the value of souls aright, we should not let them travel onwards towards destruction so easily. Oh! you who are silent in your own homes, and before your friends, as if you had not a word to say on Christ’s behalf;—Oh! you who live on as if Christ had never died, and behave in society as if there was no such book as the Bible,—take shame to yourselves for your half-heartedness, and resolve to lay it aside. Beware of cowardice under the name of prudence: beware of laziness under the cloak of humility.

Brethren, in this burning zeal for the souls of others, follow, I charge you, her that is departed, even as she followed Christ.

6. *The next point that I will mention was, her cheerfulness.*

She was a Christian, and so she had her trials, and those not few. All God’s brightest children are trained in the school of suffering,—they are sanctified and purified in the furnace of affliction. She had the daily plague of her own heart, as you and I have. She had the constantly recurring cross of ill-health to bear. She witnessed sickness frequently, and deaths of, among those she loved best. And yet for all this a stranger might almost suppose she had never known what trial was, and never had cause to shed a single tear.

Of all the Christians I ever did see, she certainly was the most bright and the most cheerful.—Of all I ever saw she seemed to have the most enjoyment of her religion. Many perhaps were more advanced than she was, but none, I am sure, were more truly happy in their Master’s service. She never appeared to see clouds above her, but only blue sky. She *looked* like one who really felt she was going to heaven,—who really felt that she was washed, sanctified and justified,—who really felt that there was no condemnation for her, that her iniquity was all forgiven, her sin all pardoned, her name written in the book of life, and

her mansion in heaven prepared.—Some Christians it does one good to *hear*, but she was one of the few that it even does one good to *see*.

And, brethren, let me tell you plainly, I think this rejoicing spirit is one that we are all bound to aim at. Some people may believe it very proper and scriptural to be always sad and cast down. I cannot see this in the Bible. I find that joy is a fruit of the Spirit,—we should pray for it as we do for meekness and temperance.—I find St. Paul telling the Philippians three times, to “rejoice in the Lord” always. I find St. Peter speaking of heaviness as the exception, and rejoicing as the rule.—Surely these things cannot be gainsayed.

She that is departed appeared to understand something of this. She was a constant witness to all who saw her that it is a happiness and not a burden to serve God;—that His commandments are not grievous;—that there is great peace for those who love God’s law;—that the ways of Jesus are indeed ways of pleasantness, and His paths, paths of peace. She was like a sunbeam, bright herself, and making others bright too.

Believe me, we ought to bear this in mind far more than we do. We ought to recommend our religion by our demeanour, and to make it beautiful as well as clear; we ought to show men that we have joy and peace in believing, and that it is a comfortable thing to walk with God. It may not be fair to judge of the Gospel by the appearance of those who believe it, but so long as men do so, we should be very careful to throw no stumbling-blocks in their way. Let us beware lest we give men a disagreeable impression of religion by unnecessary sadness of countenance, and so bring up an unfavourable report of the good land, and cause offences to come. She that is departed has indeed left us a bright example in this respect: she was a living proof that “a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”

Alas! indeed, for the scarcity of this grace, even among true Christians! How few seem to feel the harm that the absence of a rejoicing spirit must do to the world! Oh! you who are always nourishing a gloomy frame of mind, as if it was essential to true religion;—Oh! you who live as if you were attending eternal funerals, and felt it a duty to be sad and melancholy;—Oh! you who look as if you were dissatisfied with your Master, your livery, your wages, and your work, and did not mind the world knowing it;—learn, I beseech you, to look on gloominess as a wrong thing, and learn of her who is departed, to rejoice in the Lord. Why should the children of a King go mourning all their days? The Bible is not removed from you,—Christ lives, though all else die,—the love of the Father does not change, though all else fade,—the Spirit is not withdrawn, though all else be taken away. Why should you help the devil? Why should you give the world occasion to say, “the Gospel does not bring peace?”

Brethren, in this cheerfulness, follow her that is departed, I charge you, even as she followed Christ.

7. *The last particular point that I shall name in her character was, her consistency.*

Brethren, when I speak of consistency, I do not mean to tell you that she was a perfect, faultless person. I never heard of a literally perfect person. I do not believe there ever was one.—Abraham, the father of the faithful, was not perfect: David, the man after God's own heart, was not perfect: John, who leaned on the bosom of our Lord, was not perfect: and if anyone told me of a child of Adam who had attained perfection, I should not believe him. Doubtless, she who has been taken from us was not perfect;—she was a sister of Abraham, and David, and John, and she had her faults.

But this I will say, she was one of the most equable Christians I ever met with. She was one in a thousand for being nearly always the same. She was always ready for the Bible, and the things of God. Christ and the word seemed always welcome to her heart. There was a wonderful freshness about her religious feeling: it never seemed faded, and old, and dry;—it was ever green. You could never speak of Scripture and the things of the world to come, without finding her ready to meet you.—And she would enter into it all so warmly, that a man might think she had never heard of the Gospel before that day.

Most Christians we meet with are sadly variable. They are seldom long the same. They are like the moon, sometimes waxing, sometimes waning. They are like the tide, sometimes high, and sometimes low. We cannot feel quite sure that we shall find them ready for spiritual conversation,—the door of their heart open, and their minds in a religious frame. But it was not so with her. Her heart seemed never quite out of tune. The cold damp weather of this world appeared to have little effect upon it. It was like a well-tuned instrument of music, generally in harmony with divine things: and seldom indeed would you fail in finding some string, at any rate, which would respond to the touch of religion. She was one that you could meet after a long absence with confidence, and feel sure that she had not altered,—that she was still the same.

Alas! indeed, for the scarcity of this grace! How many Christians are uncertain in their frames! We have no assurance that we shall find them ready for communion about eternal things. One day we knock at the door of their hearts, and are at once admitted. Another day we stand knocking in vain until we are tired. There is no voice nor answer to our call, and we find to our sorrow, that to spiritual things our brother is *not at home*.

Brethren, in this consistency and equableness of spirit, follow her that is departed, I charge you, even as she followed Christ.

Such then were the leading points in the Christian character of her whom

God has taken from us. I have purposely avoided those general features of character which she had in common with other children of God. Time would not allow me to touch on them, and even now, though I have said much, I could easily say far more.

But what were the roots from which the fair fruits I have been dwelling on, took their origin? What was the hidden underwork—the unseen foundation—on which the building of her character all rested? The things I have spoken of were the things seen—the face and hands of the clock:—what was the machinery out of sight, which influenced and moved the whole? Suffer me, brethren, to dwell for a moment on this matter. Believe me, these things are of first importance. Write them upon the table of your memory,—lay them to heart if you would really follow her,—mark them down, for they are indeed worthy to be had in remembrance.

Know then, *for one thing*, she had a very deep sense of the sinfulness of sin generally, and of her own sinfulness in particular. She was truly remarkable for real humility and self-abasement. And this was not put on like a cloak for walking abroad, and merely talked of without being felt,—it was an every-day garment, it was sincere.

With all her good works she never appeared to have any high thoughts of her own usefulness. With all her spiritual attainments she never gave one the idea of being proud. She seemed to have an abiding sense of her own unworthiness, and to feel that at best she was an unprofitable servant. Nothing, I think, annoyed her more than to hear herself flattered and praised. Like Moses, her face shone and she did not know it. I really believe, if asked who was the chief of sinners she would at once have written down her own name. Often have I heard her say that no man knew his own heart, if he would not willingly confess that he saw more evil in himself, than in any one else in all the world.

Oh! mark this, all you that are spiritually rich and increased with goods and think that you have need of nothing. He that humbleth himself is the man that shall be exalted. You must begin low if you would build high. Humble yourself if ever you would enter at the strait gate.

Know *for another thing*, that she was one who was ever looking to the Lord Jesus Christ.—Faith in Christ and communion with Christ, these were the main-springs of her life and made her what she was. She lived by faith in the Son of God;—Christ and His finished work, her confidence against the guilt of sin,—Christ and His grace her strength against the power of sin.—Christ and His second coming, her hope of deliverance from the presence of sin.—Christ was indeed all things to her. His blood, His atonement, His death, His resurrection,

His mediation, His intercession, His love that passeth knowledge, His willingness to receive, His power to save, His second advent, these were the things which were her soul's delight.

Verily she did realize the mighty doctrine of the fifteenth of John, that "Christ is the vine and we are the branches"—that to abide in Him is the way to grow, to go forward, to bear much fruit. She did seem to feel that looking to Jesus is the way to become like Him, and be filled with the Spirit;—that union with Him was the way to be strong, that without Him we can do nothing,—that through Him we can do all things,—that in ourselves we have nothing but weakness and sin,—but that believing on Jesus all things are ours.

Christ was the bread of her soul,—the bread on which she daily fed and became strong.

Christ was the light of her soul,—the light after which she walked and was not in darkness.

Christ was the fountain of her soul,—the fountain in which her conscience was daily washed and made clean.

Christ was the sun of her soul,—the sun in whose beams she walked and was made bright.

Christ was the shepherd of her soul,—she came up out of the wilderness leaning on Him, and so was more than conqueror.

The preaching she delighted in was the preaching which contained most of Christ. The ministers she valued most were those who spoke fully and freely of Christ. The texts she loved were those that said most of Christ. The books she liked best were those that exalted Christ. The friends she thought most highly of, were those who had most communion with Christ. Christ was the criterion by which everything was valued,—the standard according to which everything took its place in her mind,—the measure to which everything was referred. Brethren, Christ is all in Scripture, and Christ will be all in heaven and she seemed to think He ought to be all in her heart.

Oh! mark this, all you that are content to give Christ a little honour, and no more,—who think to use Him as a make-weight to supply your deficiencies, but not as the corner-stone of your souls. Believe me, Christ must be everything in your life, if ever death is to be your gain.

Know *lastly*, brethren, that she who is departed was one of unwearied diligence in using private means of grace. Think not, I beseech you for one moment, that spiritual eminence was ever attained by any soul without spiritual diligence.—Such a notion is a delusion of the devil.—"There are no gains without pains," is the proverb of the world, and it holds good too about the soul. There never will be growth in grace without private labour and toil.

She of whom I speak was most diligent in the study of the Bible. She was such a one as David describes in the first Psalm, “Her delight was in the law of the Lord, and in His law did she meditate day and night.”—She loved the Bible, and she searched it like one digging for hid treasure. Her reading was not a mere formal reading of a certain portion a day, as it often is, and then the book is put out of sight and out of mind. Her Bible seemed the meat and drink of her soul, more precious than her necessary food, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. And the word of Christ did “dwell in her richly.” It dwelled in her,—not merely as a visitor or a lodger, but as an inhabitant; and it dwelled in her richly too: shone out in all the windows of her conversation. Like David, “She hid the word in her heart and this was one great means of keeping her from sin, and making her “thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

And besides this, she was most diligent, I believe, in private prayer. I suspect we little know how much she prayed, and this I am inclined to think was one great secret of her Christianity. Our public life will generally bear the impress of what we are upon our knees. I believe that prayer was the key that obtained her such abundant access to the treasury of grace that is laid up for the saints in Jesus. Prayer gave her power to walk straight forward through the world, not turning to the right hand or the left. Prayer enabled her to be, as she was, “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

I believe she knew what it was to pray without ceasing,—to watch unto prayer,—to continue instant in prayer, to pray always and not to faint. I believe she realized something of the Spirit of adoption, and that just as a little child will go to its earthly parent, so did she go to her Father in heaven, and cast all her cares from the greatest to the least upon Him, saying, “Abba Father, this or that thing disturbs me; Father, give me help, strength, grace sufficient for my need.” Brethren, the praying people, the men of desires, these are the people that obtain the best gifts, these are the Christians that are strong.

Oh! mark this, you that are lazy and careless about means of grace, and yet wonder that you do not get on. Remember the word I give you this day, “The soul of the *sluggard* desireth and hath nothing, but the soul of the *diligent* shall be made fat.”—Prov. xiii. 4.

And now, beloved brethren, in conclusion let us all give God hearty thanks that he hath delivered our sister out of the miseries of this sinful world, and taken her home. Let us thank Him unfeignedly for the grace bestowed upon her, and for having mercifully lent her to us so long, that we might see what His grace can do.—Truly we have had amongst us an epistle of Christ,—we have seen a bright and shining light,—we have beheld a real Christian.—Let us bless God for such a privilege. The Lord grant that we may all follow her,—that we

may all go to our homes tonight better for what we have seen and heard.

Oh! unconverted people in this congregation! Oh! worldly men and worldly women, who mind earthly things and have not yet thought of turning to God!—Oh! lingering souls who once did promise well, but now are hanging back and giving no sign of life!—Oh! undecided souls who are halting between two opinions, having too much religion to be happy in the world, and keeping too much of the world to be happy in your religion!—Listen, I pray you, every one, to the appeal I make to your consciences this night;—listen, if ever you mean to listen to counsel in your lives.

See what a blessed thing it is to live and die a decided Christian! See what a blessed thing it is to leave behind you great broad evidences; to have made it plain whose you were, and whom you served, so that your friends can bury you without doubts, and speak and think of you with joy! See what a crushing answer you have tonight to all your excuses and pretences! It *is* possible to have many temptations and yet be a bright Christian. It *is* possible to be happy,—yea far happier than you are,—and yet walk closely with God. She that has gone has left you all an example. Have you difficulties? So had she.—Have you an evil heart? So had she.—Have you the world to conquer? So had she.—But she overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and so may you. Grace was sufficient for her, and it is also sufficient for you.

Oh! that this day might be a turning point in your lives! Oh! that it might be a time of awakening from spiritual sloth, a time of beginning a new life and a walk with God. Oh! that the events of the last few days might convince you that this world is but a shadow and the world to come the reality,—that the things seen are all passing away, and Christ and the word the only portion which will never change!—Oh! that you may each go to your own chambers when you leave this house, and there pray as you never prayed before.

And you too, believing brethren, learn a lesson this night. See what the grace of God can do for flesh and blood like yourselves, and learn to be ashamed of your shortcoming, and your negligence, your unprofitableness, and your little fruit. Oh! let the time past suffice you to have been cold and selfish! Oh! let the time to come prove to the world that you really have the mind of Christ! Why should not each one of you be an epistle of Christ, an epistle so plain that he who runs may read it? Why should you not be bold? Why should you not be zealous? Why should you not be useful? Why should you not be light and salt in the middle of this dark, corrupt world? The Lord's arm is not straitened.—The free grace which made our departed sister what she was is still the same,—and Jesus says to you, “Ask and ye shall receive.”

Awake then to a sense of your responsibilities,—awake to a sense of the

happiness you are missing, and the good you are leaving undone; awake and sleep no more. Shake yourselves from the chains that Satan would fain cast around you. “Lift up the hands that hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet.”—Think not what others are doing, think of Christ, and heaven, and souls, and sin:—let the dead bury their dead; let others slumber if they will;—do you seek first the kingdom of God,—go forward, go up, go on, and sleep no more.

Brethren, if you loved her that is departed, walk in her ways; if you loved her, follow in her steps. This is the true way to honour her—to follow her, even as she followed Christ.