

There was a time when an obituary was a testimonial, not just informational. This particular obituary, written by the husband, is intriguing not only for its description of the woman's conversion from "duty-faith" to heart-faith, but the opposing effects on her of poor preaching ("dead-letter" legalism) vs. sound preaching (joyful application of theology). It also reveals the effect of cold fellowship vs. godly fellowship. We clearly see the importance of eternal security – what establishes and sustains it – and the effect of ongoing doubt about one's salvation when it is sought in the emotions, rather than in the promises of God. There is much to be gleaned from this for all. — William H. Gross www.onthewing.org Sep 2015.

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OBITUARY

MARIA ADELAIDE PRIOR.

Immediately after the death of my dear wife, I felt a desire to write a few lines as a memorial of her, and of the Lord's dealings with her in providence and grace. During her life of Christian experience she was the subject of many changes of a gracious kind; but she had not the ability or courage to speak much of what she knew and felt. The language of the prophet Zechariah was very applicable to her; "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The unctuous power of these words was experientially felt in her heart. She knew what it was to feel helpless in salvation matters, and for years she had felt her need of the Saviour; but could not, until the last few weeks of her life, say that she was his. She had long felt a union to God's chosen people, those whose hearts were broken and whose spirits were contrite, and who felt a trembling within them at God's word. She was anxious that they should be her chief companions, and where they went she would like to go; yet she was continually complaining of doubts and fears respecting her own interest in the merits of Jesus.

During the ten years we were acquainted with each other, we conversed together many times upon the subject of Divine grace in the soul. We could not see eye to eye, in all we conversed upon, neither was there at all times a sympathy of feeling upon the points we discussed; but there was one exception, and upon that point we could always agree. We both felt how lost and helpless we were, and how much we needed the intercession and mediation of Jesus and God's sovereign mercy in him. We felt that unless we were saved freely, we must perish for ever. We could both testify of the sovereignty of the Spirit in his dealings with the soul. Her path was very different to mine. I could state somewhere about the time when regenerating grace began to manifest itself in me and my conduct; but she could not remember the time when grace took possession of her heart. The work in her soul was secret and gradual; she had felt an inward monitor in her conscience checking her against immoral actions and conduct ever since she was a child, when she was accustomed to attend a Sabbath school in connection with the Church of England.

At a very early age she was possessed with religious impressions, believing it to be her duty to attend a place of worship on the Lord's day; and, as I have just observed, she had a great fear of offending God by anything immoral. She was a communicant at the Church of England for five or six years, during which period her soul went through many changes. She had a natural feeling against professing what she could not comfortably enjoy, and was consequently accused at times of being shallow-minded. Writing to one who thus accused her, she said, "I notice much more than you appear to be aware of; my mind, you say, does not expand. Well, I like to be kept in a righteous circle; it may be a small one; but I hope it is a sanctified one." She did not like to step any further than the Holy Spirit led her, and this spirit she manifested up to the day of her death.

As is the case with most persons when young in religion, her mind was greatly tainted with Arminianism, free-will, and universal redemption. She has told me many times that during the years 1846-7, she did her best to be saved, or to enjoy peace of conscience by a consistent walk and conversation. She tried to be religious as she possibly could, and felt determined, if possible, to obtain peace of conscience before God; but she felt an aching void in her soul, which no power of the flesh could satisfy. She confessed that she failed, and felt sorrow of heart, and at last made

up her mind not to attempt it again. At this time she was living at her native place, Cambridge, at her own home. The ministry under which she sat was a kind of duty-faith and Arminianism mixed. This system coming in contact with her spirit greatly perplexed her. Being in soul trouble she looked up to the ministry for comfort; but under this erroneous system she could not be established. She said there was a certain something always bubbling up in her soul, telling her that her eternal security could not depend upon carnal faith nor yet upon faith at all, meritoriously, for she was convinced that if ever she was saved there must be a something else; and for this something else she prayed, cried, and groaned a long time.

During the time in which she was exercised in this manner, some friends with whom she was acquainted lent her Christopher Ness's *Antidote against Arminianism*. This book she tried to read, but having never heard such strong arguments before, and being entangled at the time with free-will and duty-faith, she could not proceed with it, and told her friend the next time they met that she could not get on with Ness, for she could not comprehend his arguments. Her friend told her not to trouble herself about it, but to lay it on one side for the present, and after a while she might feel disposed to take it up again. She told me that day and night she thought of the book, and she felt determined, if possible, to understand more of it. She took it up again and again, sometimes early in the morning before any of the family were awake. At last Divine light sprang into her soul, her eyes were opened, her understanding was enlightened, and by this book, instrumentally, she was led to see and feel what the salvation of her soul entirely depended upon, viz., the eternal and sovereign love of God the Father, the life, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the sanctifying influence of the blessed Spirit. When this light first sprang into her soul, she said her spirit leaped for joy. She could not open her heart to any of her family, she being the only one that felt any desire to serve God and to fear his name. She was frequently ridiculed by her brothers and sisters on account of her religion, and was styled by them at times a chapel-trotter. For several months she was in the habit of attending a Sabbath morning prayer meeting, at 7 o'clock. She would get up and attend the meeting, return home, and attend to her domestic duties and the principal part of the family would not know that she had been out.

I would just remark here that I was in the habit of attending this meeting at the same time, but I did not then know her personally. She opened her feelings to those friends who could sympathise with her, and she felt a union to all those who loved the same glorious truths, whether they attended the Established Church or dissenting chapels.

In 1847 she was removed in providence to a situation at Richmond, in Surrey, in a clergyman's family. Here she was compelled to attend the church at which her master officiated; but she used to tell me that it was a barren ministry to her. Her only religious comfort at this time was when she sat alone in her own room, meditating upon the Scriptures of truth, and reading the "Gospel Magazine" and the "Gospel Standard." Her master frequently spoke to her in a jeering manner. He knew her principles and the books which she read. He was what is commonly termed an evangelical clergyman, yet he manifested a very great hatred towards the doctrines of discriminating grace. Her mistress was in the habit of holding Bible classes, which were attended by several young women. Of course the servants of the household were expected to attend, which Maria did. But she was a speckled bird amongst them. The kingdom of God was set up in her soul, and she could not help speaking of the things which, by faith, she had handled and felt. The manifestation of the spirit of discriminating grace, in answer to questions put to her, appeared to mar the whole of their meetings; but principles were serious matters with her.

In 1851 she returned to Cambridge, and resided with her mother-in-law, and again attended Christ Church for some time, but could not find rest or comfort under the ministry. The perpetual note in the pulpit was, "Believe, only believe;" but how to believe to the satisfaction of her soul she knew not, neither was she informed by the minister, but was greatly puzzled, and felt an inward inclination in her conscience not to attend the Church of England any more, but to seek a home

under a ministry where she had reason to believe Bible truths were defended and the people of God comforted and built up. Hence she was led to attend Eden Chapel. The first time she entered the chapel, a prayer meeting was being held. She said that she felt a sweet union to the sentiments which were expressed by the brethren, and when she heard the preaching she said it was what her soul had been longing for, and that she had found a home at last. At this time I had attended Eden Chapel about 12 months. I knew she attended there, but still did not know her personally. In the course of a few months I was unexpectedly brought into her society, at the house of a friend.

Although my wife was a constant attendant at Eden Chapel, she could not see the propriety of baptism by immersion, and that of believers only. The subject of baptism was one of the first topics upon which we conversed. She confessed that she loved the Strict Baptists, but could not conform to the ordinance herself. After a little while, however, her meditations were blessed, and she was baptized, with several others, in April, 1852. She was baptized by Mr. Marks, pastor of the church at that time.

She did not continue long with them as a member, being called away in the beginning of July to a situation at Croydon, in Surrey. Here she had the privilege of hearing Mr. Covell, to whose ministry she always felt very much attached. After residing at Croydon about nine months, she came to London, and we were afterwards married.

For some time we attended no particular place of worship. Sometimes we went to one place, and sometimes to another, until we settled down at _____. My wife appeared to be quite at home there for some time, and then she became in a measure dissatisfied, sometimes complaining of the ministry, at other times of the coldness of the people. Her complaints were frequent, and I felt at times very angry with her. The minister was what is termed a doctrinal preacher, and at the close of nearly every sermon which she heard, she would come home and complain of what she had heard. She would say that she had no doubt whatever about the truth of the sermon, but she thought the preacher's aim was not to comfort those who were hungry and cast down, and who were panting after an experiential knowledge of their interest in God's salvation, but that it was more designed to establish those who were resting in carnal security. God had not at that time taught me the difference between fleshly attainments and spiritual growth; in fact, I quite reversed them, and spoke of intellectual attainments as growth in grace. It was evident the Lord was exercising her soul, and convincing her that joy in the heart was not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. What she felt predominant in her soul was doubts and fears. The cause of doubts and fears, and godly deliverance from them, she could not hear from that pulpit; consequently it was a barren season with her while at that chapel; and when she came home she received very little sympathy or comfort from me. I knew but little of those things which constituted her path. I was evidently at that time left to backslide into an intellectual system of Bible truth, although insensible of it. Since then, the Lord has spoken to me, and said, "Return from your backslidings." And, thanks be to God, I have returned, with shame and humility. He has caused me to humble myself before him, and to guard against going out of my depth in spiritual matters, presuming to be where the Spirit has never placed me. He has also caused me to feel ashamed of myself for grieving his tender-hearted children — those who are afraid to move until he leads them.

But a little about her remarks upon the ministry at _____. I very rarely attended chapel myself in the evening, but my wife did; and when she came home after service, I was in the habit of asking her how she had heard Mr. _____. Her remarks were, "Well. the sermon was all about faith in the promises, and a great deal about bars and bolts being drawn, &c., but nothing to the comforting of cast-down soul — no living testimony traced out, so that an exercised soul could lay hold of it." She would say there was no cordial for those who were battling with flesh and spirit in

their souls.¹ As I did not then feel towards the ministry as she did, of course we could not agree. I used to tell her that Mr. _____'s ideas were very grand, and also very clear; and I thought it very strange she could not see and feel as I did. She would tell me that it was not ideas she wanted. She had known ideas long ago. Such language as this I could not understand. I was ignorant of her case. The ideas suited the intellect, or brain, but did not comfort the doubting, God-fearing soul. My answers to her grieved her very much; so that frequently she would not tell me at all how she had heard, but kept the matter to herself. Only a few weeks before she died, she told me that many times she had wept bitterly while coming down the road from chapel. But why did she weep? Because she was in a measure obliged to sit and hear such barren sermons Sabbath after Sabbath, and that she was afraid to mention these things to me, because I spoke so angrily to her. She told me that she was constantly praying that I might feel differently some day. I did not think at the time that I should ever have to repent of what I said to her. I could receive the truth into my judgment, and I took that for heart work. She used to tell me that I had a great deal to learn, and that I should one day be humbled.

In 1859, circumstances turned up which called all my powers into vital exercise, and I began to feel what vital religion is. The lot fell upon me to feel a barrenness in the ministry at _____. There was at that time a great controversy going on amongst doctrinal preachers concerning the sovereignty of God in loving Jacob and hating Esau, and I was by this controversy partially awakened out of the sleep in which I had slumbered for about seven years. I complained of myself and also of the ministry to my wife. My complaints to her were more than she had ever complained to me. Her heart appeared to leap for joy that I began to feel something, and that my soul was beginning to have a little exercise. She remarked that I should soon have a little feeling for her. She was right again; for I was brought to acknowledge my fault, and to express my sorrow that I had ever saddened her spirit. We then began to walk as it were in newness of life. We communed with each other in such harmony, and in such a manner, as we had never done before. It was evident to her, and also to myself, that God the Holy Ghost was gradually opening my eyes and enlightening my understanding in spiritual matters. I had not so keen an appetite for carnal or literal interpretations of Scripture. It was the spiritual hidden, mystery and power of them that my spirit aspired after. I began to hunger after life instead of a name to live, after the substance instead of the shadow, after the spirit instead of the mere letter. Consequently, I became dissatisfied and barren at _____, and, of course, I could not help giving vent to my feelings to my partner in life. She felt a degree of pleasure to think I was harassed about the same things of which she had been complaining for nearly seven years. God had certainly laid hold of me, and brought me to a proper sense of humility and godly sincerity. I could then feel for his broken-hearted saints and contrite spiritual children.

My wife would sometimes talk to me about a law work. She was afraid she had not been through what was termed a law work. I endeavoured to assure her that she had, because she acknowledged that she had done her best to save her soul by good deeds, &c., which only brought misery and bondage into her soul, so that she was obliged to give it up, and leave the matter entirely in the hands of God. Such a spirit as this, I assured her, was the spirit of a law work in the soul. Some experience it more deeply than others. It is the spirit which profits. She replied that if such was the spirit of a law work, she had been through it, and was certainly living under the influence of faith.

We were constrained eventually to leave the ministry and people at _____. The controversy respecting the Eternal Sonship of the Saviour was in a great measure the means of bringing us to a decision. We were both ashamed of the ridiculous and contradictory statements made by the

¹ A gracious heart is not a blab of the tongue, but rests and rejoiceth silently in the conscience of a secret sincerity. Those vessels yield most sound that have the least liquor. — *Bishop Hall*.

ministers with whom we were connected, and whom we thought were men of sterling truth, but who appeared in our estimation mere formalists.

This part of truth she loved dearly, and would tell those who conversed with her that the truth was God's, and that we had no right to tamper with it. She thought it a great scandal and slander in those ministers who publicly asserted that those Christians who contended for the true Sonship of the Saviour were led by Mr. Philpot.² She said that if others of the Lord's family felt in the matter as she did, they would know that such slander was false, and that it displayed great ignorance. It was a doctrine that she felt by experience to be dear to her, whatever others might feel. She also was thankful that God had raised up such a man as Mr. Philpot to defend her principles. She felt that there were many of the Lord's dear family in the same state of mind as herself on the subject. I tried at the time to speak a little in favour of one minister in particular, who made himself very conspicuous upon the occasion. I happened to take home a pamphlet, written by Mr. Palmer, entitled, "The Reviewer Reviewed Again." She read a little of it, and was soon convinced of the fleshly arguments brought forward. She said that she could not look over his sarcastic expressions; but not only that, she was ashamed of his lawyer-like language, as she termed it. She felt assured he did not know what he was talking about, and felt confident that no one else knew what he meant; or if they could understand and feed upon such chaff, they were quite welcome. She looked upon the author of the pamphlet as a carnal minister; and she felt that she could not have anything to do with any class of persons who would invite such dead and fleshly ministers to preach or speak for them.

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My wife's mind in religious matters varied but little during the last seven years of her life; certainly she was better established in divine truth. She scarcely read anything with delight except the Scriptures and Hart's Hymns.

The last time she attended _____ Chapel was Sunday evening, December 16th, 1860. She was at the time very unwell with a bad cold, which was the commencement of her last illness. After she left, she went once or twice to Gower Street, and heard Mr. Smart. She said, when she came home, that she was sorry she had neglected so many precious sermons. She also went two or three times to hear Mr. Shorter, and made the same remarks. I believe these were the only ministers she heard from December to July.

The disease which caused her death was consumption. I think the commencement of it may be dated from the year 1854. She was taken ill in that year soon after her confinement. Every year she got worse and weaker. She was in the habit of going into the country every summer for the benefit of her health; but the last attack appeared to break her constitution entirely.

I must just say a little more about Mr. Shorter's sermons. After she had heard him, she felt very much attached to his heart-felt expressions; they appeared to come home so close to her. She frequently expressed her sorrow that she had lived so near to Wilderness Row for eight years and neglected to hear such godly sermons. She said, "I have wasted my Sabbaths in listening to dry doctrinal, intellectual sermons, instead of hearing the life, power, and unction of the blessed gospel. I might have been comforted many times when I was wounded." She felt that she wanted a ministry the aim of which was to feed the new man of grace in the hearts of God's little ones. She had heard from the pulpit that God's little ones might have their hearts enlarged if they were not so idle, moping at home. This expression, from the pulpit, cut very deep into her spirit, and I believe it was about the last sermon she heard at _____. She told me, when she came home, what

² Joseph Charles Philpot (1802–1869) was known as "The Seceder". He resigned from the Church of England in 1835 and became a Strict & Particular Baptist. While with the Church of England he was a Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. After becoming a Strict and Particular Baptist he became the Editor of the *Gospel Standard* magazine and served in that capacity for twenty years.

she had heard, and I must say that it grieved me as well as it did her. I felt that what she told me of the sermon was true, because I had heard the like from the same pulpit myself.

This brings me to April 1st, 1861, when my wife left her home for Cambridge, never to return again. I was instructed by her medical adviser to get her out of London as quickly as possible. Many prayers had ascended from my heart up unto God that he would open up a way for me to act. My dear wife had also prayed after the same manner. We were living witnesses that God heard and answered prayer. He had provided extraordinary means for blessings and comforts to soothe us in our afflictions, and we realised by experience the truth of the words that "for all things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." She talked very sweetly about these things. She felt so confident that God had heard and answered her prayer, and we felt our hearts so full of God's goodness, that we did not know how to be thankful enough. I can speak for myself in this matter. I often appeared, as it were, to have a whole Bible of my own, God so blessed me in the day of trouble. To prove that my wife's heart felt the same as mine in these matters, I will make a quotation or two from her letters which I received at different times during the few weeks she lived at Cambridge. In the first letter after her arrival she said, "How good the Lord has been to me! o how I wish I could thank him! My spirit is as the poet describes:

"I want a loving, thankful heart
Thy praises, Lord, to sing."

On April 23rd, I received another letter, in which she said, "On the whole I think I am a little better; but all our trying to get better is of no use unless the Lord bless the means. It is to him I am looking, and for him waiting. He has only to speak the word, and his servant shall be healed. I want to lie passive in his hands, and know no will but his; and I am sure, my dear, your feelings are the same as mine. You are watching and waiting at the door, wondering where the scene will end; but you know that it is all well that the Lord does." In another letter she said, "I have had the pleasure of seeing and also talking with Mr. M. He spoke very nicely to me. He said that he did not think I should be in this world long; but he was sure I should have a happy death." She said, "I am very weak, and there is very little I can do." On the 8th June, I went to Cambridge and remained with her ten days. I was, of course, very glad to see her, but did not expect to find her so ill. She was extremely weak — obliged to sit all day. It was a great trouble to her to get up and down stairs. She got weaker every day, and the Tuesday evening following, when she retired to bed, her bodily strength entirely gave way; she walked, with assistance, up two flights of stairs, which completely overpowered her. I told her she should not walk either up or down stairs any more while I was there; therefore I carried her down stairs in the morning, and up stairs in the evening until the day I left. A bedstead was then fixed in the parlour, in which room she remained the rest of her life. She never went up stairs again.

During my stay with her, I endeavoured to speak as little as possible to her about temporal things, and endeavoured to comfort her with the precious promises of the gospel. Our conversations on these matters was very pointed, and it was evident that godly fear predominated in her soul. She wanted a whole Christ and a whole gospel and all the blessings attending them; yet she was afraid to take hold of anything, for fear it was not for her. She confessed that her whole soul was hanging upon Jesus, and that she felt she must be lost for ever if he did not save her. She requested me to find that passage in Isaiah which says: "And they shall all hang upon him." She said. "The assurance that Jesus died for me is all I want to know. If the Lord the Spirit would but say to my soul, 'I have loved you,' or words to that effect, I should be satisfied; but I must have the words from the Lord himself." I told her that I was as confident she was a saint of the Lord as I was of my own existence. She said, "I know that a mere intellectual conviction of the truth is not sufficient. A bare head knowledge or carnal reverence for the grand doctrines of the Bible will not do to die by; neither will it speak peace to the soul. It is the Spirit's witness I want."

She frequently referred me to those precious chapters where the apostle speaks of the witness of the Spirit, and walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh. She would then refer me to the whole church of God upon earth. Though they may differ in gifts and abilities, "yet," she said, "they manifest the same spirit;" and she said, "These passages convince me that there is a great deal of letter preaching and teaching, and dead-letter profession in the present day. This is evident by the spirit which some manifest." She next called my attention to that portion of Scripture which says, "We are all baptized into one Spirit." "I feel," she said, "that this passage is much perverted by some ministers. I feel assured that the unctuous power of it is lost sight of, and that preachers and hearers generally are ignorant of its true meaning. It means that there is but one spirit manifested by all the church militant upon earth, when they are in their right mind. I know that my creed is a Bible creed; but I want the Holy Spirit to witness with my spirit whether I am his or not. I also know that God will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them. I know he does not put new wine into old bottles; but makes an aching void in the heart, which nothing but mercy can fill up. I also know that it is more easy to imagine what the aching void is than to feel it personally; it is more easy to talk about it than to mourn under its burden. I feel assured that ministers and professors generally do not know what they talk about, or they would manifest more union to God's exercised children." The carnal state of some Calvinistic churches had great weight upon her mind. She said over again, "I feel assured that there would not be so much talk if there was more of the unctuous power of the Spirit felt in the heart." I listened to every word she said, and then asked her if she thought she was one of those who would sing the praises of redeeming love above. Here she was stopped again. She said, "I hope so; but I am afraid positively to say, Yes. This I know, I am broken-hearted, and my soul appears to have nothing to hang upon but Jesus. Take away his preciousness, I am lost for ever."

From the manner in which she related this, I could not help telling her that I was confident she would be in heaven, let her death come when it might. She said, "I am afraid it will not be so, because the Lord has not blessed me with the enjoyment of the promises; and how can I enter heaven without knowing where I am going?" I told her, as well as I could, what I understood by the promises, such as, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." "Yes," she said, "but I am not pure in heart." I assured her that by the *faith* which she manifested, she *was* pure in heart. She looked at me with a piercing eye, and said, "How can you tell me that I have faith?" I replied, "Do you not feel that you are a lost and ruined sinner in yourself? And do you not feel at the same time an aching void, and a begging spirit, that the merits of Jesus and the intercession of Jesus were yours?" "Yes," she said, "I do; and that is my prayer all day long." "Then," said I, "that is divine faith." I said, "Would you not feel satisfied if God himself were to speak with power to your soul, and assure you that you are one of his?" "I should," she replied. I said, "That is an evidence of divine faith, and also an evidence of purity of heart. All the promises in the Old and New Testament are for such as you." She replied, "It is all very well for you to say so. You have had assurance of faith brought home to your soul."

I tried to assure her that my faith was no better than hers, but that her faith very greatly confirmed mine, because the very things that the blessed Spirit had brought home to my soul with sweet assurance, and with which my soul was greatly comforted, and the testimonies to which my soul clung, were the very things which her soul longed for; and she felt there would be no satisfaction until she got them. I said, "If I never see you again in this world, I am sure you will enjoy them; if not in this world, you will the moment you enter eternity. God is sure to be faithful. Those that fear the Lord shall be blessed."

About this time one of the visiting ladies connected with the parish called to see her and talked with her about soul matters. The lady asked her if she trusted in Jesus. She answered very quickly, "In whom else can I trust?" On June 18th we parted, never expecting to see one another in this world again. On June 25th I received a letter from her. She appeared to be very weak in body, and, according to her handwriting, in a trembling state, and evidently very low in mind, and in great

soul trouble. She said, "I have had a good night's rest last night, but I seem as though there was no thankfulness in me. My heart is as hard as a stone. I feel wretched. I have no desire to pray, nor can I pray. This is my greatest trouble." I replied, "I think you made a mistake when you said you had no desire to pray or to be thankful. If there were no desire, it would not be your greatest trouble. If these things distress your soul, it is very plain that you would pray if you could. I feel confident that you are monument of grace — free grace! What a blessed testimony you are leaving behind that all human ability is vanity. You are a living witness that salvation in the heart is and must be the work of God, as well as salvation on the cross."

The following is an extract from the last letter she ever wrote to me. It was dated July 1st, seven days before she died: "I am thankful to say I am a little better in my mind. I have had Mr. M. to see me again. Do send me that sermon of his. Mrs. S. will read it to me, as she comes to see me sometimes. I like her much. Give my love to Miss P., and tell her I would write, but cannot. I am much the same, but weaker. My appetite gets worse; my cough remains the same. I had a bad night last night. I don't wish to complain, seeing the great things the dear Lord has done for me, and how gently he is taking the body down; but I do want to feel him in my heart. That is all I crave. I felt a pleasure in reading what you said respecting my hard heart. I should like to say more, but I am so done over."

On the Wednesday morning there was a great change in her for the worse. It was evident to those about her that she was fast sinking, and that her time in this world would be short. Her friends waited until Friday morning, and as she still got worse, she thought it advisable to let me know of the change, and I received the following letter: "Mother wishes me to send you a line to say your dear loving partner is very much worse. Her doctor and those around her think her time will be very short in this world of suffering. You will be glad to hear that she continues to be very patient, and is quite calm, and willing to depart when the Lord sees fit to call her, to be with Jesus. She is happy. Nothing troubles her mind. All is peace. What a mercy! Your dear children are both well. Should there be any change to-morrow morning, we will let you know." After receiving this note, I felt very anxious to see my wife once again, if possible, and obtained permission to go to Cambridge the next day, Saturday, intending to return on the next Tuesday. I found her very ill indeed, but cheerful and sensible. She was not able to talk much; nevertheless, we conversed a great deal together at intervals.

Our conversation was chiefly upon soul matters, and the faithfulness of God. Before I left her, three weeks previously, I requested her that if the Lord should speak peace to her soul, so that she should be able to feel sure of her interest in his salvation, to let me know, if possible. She said that she would tell those who might be with her at her death to let me know. But having another opportunity of seeing her alive, of course this was about the first question I put to her, whether the dear Lord had manifested himself to her or not. She was enabled in those dying hours to tell me in a clear and intelligible voice that God had been merciful towards her. She said, "If I was greatly comforted a night or two ago by the Lord applying many precious promises to my soul; at least I felt the sweetness of them. One in particular seemed uppermost in my heart, and it is so now, and it is upon my lips: 'Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more.' Therefore, how can I doubt?"

She begged of me many times during Saturday and Sunday to pray to the Lord to give her ease in body. She was evidently suffering great agony. I told her that I was continually praying that the Lord would ease her pains, so far as it was consistent with his will. I read to her the sufferings of Christ in the garden and upon the cross; what agony he endured, and how he cried, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from me;" yet he said, "Not my will, but thine be done!" These words appeared to console her a little. She remarked that when the dear Saviour was in agony and thirsted, they gave him vinegar, mixed with gall, to drink; "but although I thirst very much, I have not such drink given me." In this she felt highly favoured. I told her that many had to endure great

agony of body in their dying hours; but what was worse than all, they had great agony of soul also. But she felt no soul trouble. And this she felt to be a great mercy.

It was only at intervals that she could speak, and at times she could not bear to be spoken to; it wearied her too much.

On Sunday night I was sitting by her bedside, when the thought came across my mind that she was realising all the blessings for which she had often sighed and prayed, but doubted and feared she would never get.³ I said to her, "What a mercy, in your dying hours, you do not have to give up the religion which you possessed and professed while in health." She answered, "I did not pick it up."

It was evident at this time, about 9 o'clock, that she was taken for death. I read a little of the Scriptures to her; but she could not endure much. I sat by her side till nearly 12 o'clock. She many times wished me to go to bed; but, as I thought her end was very near, I did not feel inclined to do so; but, in order to pacify her, I went to bed about 1 o'clock in the morning, her sister promising to call me if another change should take place. I was called about 5 o'clock. Her end was fast approaching. When I entered the room, she knew me. She could not converse at all, but she felt pleased to hear anything about Jesus. I felt too full to say much. I told her that I did not think Jesus would be long before he took her away. She looked at me very hard, and said, "Dying! I am dying!" She appeared to be in very great agony, and almost immediately after went off in a kind of convulsion, breathing very hard, and in great bodily pain. Her sister thought she was in agony of mind also. I remarked that I firmly believed it was only bodily pain, that her spirit was happy; and this proved to be true to demonstration.

I did not think she would ever come to herself again; but, to my surprise, she did, and all her pain appeared to leave her for a minute or two. She looked at all in the room, and then said to me, "I am so happy!" She really looked happy. I had not seen such a pleasant smile upon her countenance for many months. After this, she went off again in much the same manner as before. This was about 6 o'clock. She did not recover herself again. She was evidently dying very fast. I went down stairs to have some breakfast, about 8 o'clock; but I had not been down many minutes before I was called up again. I was just in time to see her breathe her last. She breathed three times very hard after I entered the room, and then her spirit departed. I felt that her sufferings were all over, that she was gone to her everlasting home. She died on Monday, July 8th, 1861. — **J. P.**

³ PAUL means that the Spirit of God gives such a testimony to us, that (he being our Guide and Teacher) our spirit concludes our adoption of God to be certain. Our own mind, of itself, independent of the preceding testimony of the Spirit, could not produce this persuasion in us. For while the Spirit witnesses that we are the sons of God, he at the same time inspires this confidence into our minds, so that we are bold to call God our Father. — *Calvin*.