

S. U. Thompson

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"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth, peace, good will toward men."

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OBITUARY.

NOTICE OF THE DECEASE OF MRS. ELIZABETH BISHOP,
OF THE SANDWICH ISLANDS MISSION.

(Concluded.)

Mrs. B. was one who ever felt the most lively concern for the welfare of her children, situated in this land of strangers, and witnessing the corrupt manners that surrounded them. It was one great burden of her daily prayers, that they might be preserved from the influence of pernicious examples. It can well be imagined, therefore, what must have been her feelings, in the prospect of leaving them in their infantile state. Many indeed were the tears which she shed, and the prayers which she offered up on their behalf, that if possible, her life might be spared for their sakes. But God was gracious to her in this also, and gave her strength to resign them into his hands, and assurance, that he would raise up kind friends to provide for them, when she was no more. I was both much surprised and comforted, to find her, who had scarcely been absent from them one hour, so willing to commit them to the future care of others whom she knew not, assured that God would be their protector and better portion.

It was a source of great grief to her mind, that she could find no one of all that visited her in her sickness, who seemed to think with her, that she would not recover. The subject of death was one upon which she desired to converse often; but those with whom she spoke on the subject, felt that such an event was improbable; and instead of sympathising in her feelings, would usually request her, for the sake of her health, not to indulge in those reflections, for there was no probability that she would die under this complaint. "It is trying," she would reply, "that none can be found who feel with me that death is nigh; but," she would add, "it is all right: I must pass the Jordan of death alone: there none can bear me company, and why not learn the way alone, since it is the Will of my Heavenly FATHER." Indeed it was our ignorance of the full extent of her disorder, supposing it was dyspepsy merely, that induced us all to think that her sickness, though severe, would eventuate in her restoration to health. But no assurances from physicians or friends could alter her views of this subject: she would lay her hand upon her heart and say, "Here it is; I feel that death is near and has begun his work. The sensations of my own breast tell me that I shall not recover."

She would often express the liveliest gratitude to those who attended upon her to administer to her comfort. "May the Lord bless you," she would say, "I am not worthy of your kindness, nor can I ever repay you; but I pray God to bless you, and reward you. Should I ever recover, I am sure I should be willing to wash the feet of you all." At other times she would say, "O you know not how it humbles me to see your concern for one so unworthy: if you knew but half of my sins, you would not, I am sure you could not, waste your precious time upon me so undeserving." But the greatest grief of all, and that which caused her deep humiliation of heart, was, that I should be called from my appropriate work to attend upon her. "When souls are perishing for lack of knowledge," she would say to me, "is it right that you should forsake your work of preaching and translating the Word of God, to attend upon me, who have merited nothing but displeasure from the hands of my Heavenly FATHER? I fear I am answerable for all this." When I assured her it was not so; that she was no more answerable for my attendance upon her, than she was accountable for her illness, she replied, "I fear that it is my own imprudence that has brought me here; and if so, am I not accountable for the consequences?"

In all her religious views, even in the darkest hours, I observed that her faith in the Word and Providence of God, in the fullness and all-sufficiency of the Saviour remained unshaken. She felt no doubts concerning the truth of what God had revealed; there all was clear, and the only difficulty that remained was, the inability to appropriate the promise to her own case. During the hours of her

spiritual darkness it was truly edifying to see with what earnestness she sought after the evidences of a true faith, and with what jealousy she watched over her heart and conscience, lest she might mistake the shadow and lose sight of the reality. "This," she would say, "is not an hour for me to sit down satisfied with past attainments, and past experience: I must go back again to the first principles of faith: I must feel something more than the hope arising from what I have done: I must have stronger evidence of acceptance than that arising from love to the brethren. My love to them may have been only natural affection, common to all towards those with whom they associate, and with whom they are in the interchange of kind offices. I must feel the Spirit of Christ within me, subduing my sinful heart and implanting holy affections, and an overcoming faith."

These seasons of doubts and fears, and expressions of great concern lest her religion had been hypocritical, used regularly to return with the paroxysms of her disorder: but as these passed away her mind would again become tranquil, and hope would again revive. Still there was no ecstasy, no assurance that her foundation stood strong; it was the trembling hope of one who felt that pardon was wholly unmerited, and granted solely for the sake of Christ.

After her return from Oahu to Kairua, and while sinking fast towards the grave, her mind was more at rest. The fears and doubts that had so distracted her mind, passed away, and a cheerful hope succeeded in their stead. She would often say, "I feel that Jesus is mine; that he has accepted me and will take me to himself, when I go hence." She spent much time, during the intervals of pain, in prayer for herself, her husband and children, her brethren and sisters of this mission, and for the whole Church of God. It was at this time, that the pains which heretofore had been confined to her body and limbs, attacked her head, and at times almost deprived her of reason. She had often expressed her thankfulness, that in all the pain she endured, her head had been quite free; but now the trial of her patience was come. Agonies to which she had before been a stranger, racked her brain. We bathed her head in cold water night and day, and some one constantly held it with both hands, "to keep it," as she would express it, "from falling to pieces." She had often expressed to me a desire to remove into the country, where she thought the cold air and bathing her temples in the mountain water would give her some relief. We felt the difficulty of making the attempt: for at this time she was exceedingly reduced, and could not even turn herself in bed. She was accustomed to be laid upon a litter every morning, and evening, and carried out by two men to take an airing. One morning, during her usual airing, she ordered her bearers to ascend with her towards the mountain. They did so, bore her nearly half the way thither, and then returned. On her arrival she expressed herself refreshed by the excursion. The next morning, therefore, we undertook to remove her on her litter; and much to our satisfaction, she endured the excursion with little fatigue. She remained in the country six days, but she suffered almost incredibly from the effect of the cold nights upon her emaciated frame; so that the object after which we sought, was defeated.

It was while in the country, separated from the society of every brother and sister, and in the near prospect of eternity, that she seemed to gird on anew her armor to meet the coming foe. I had until this time indulged hopes, that by the Blessing of God, she might eventually recover, but these hopes had for sometime been diminishing, and now they were quite gone. The pallid sunken cheek, the hollow eye, the diminished pulse, and wandering reason, convinced clearly to my mind, that death was near. When I informed her of my apprehensions, she seemed almost relieved in her mind, and replied, "It is well: death has no terrors: it is what I have looked and waited for, as a release from the pains that assail my frame. I have long given up all thoughts of recovery, and death only appears desirable. And you my

dear husband," she added, "the Lord will comfort and bless you under your bereavement, and give you many souls for your hire. Remember the promise, 'they that go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall return again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.' Take care to continue faithful, steadfast, and abounding in the work of the Lord, and this promise is yours." A little after, having lain some time with her eyes closed, she opened them and said to me, "I have been praying for an overcoming faith, that I may come off a conqueror in the hour of conflict. Pray for me, O pray for me, that the everlasting arms may be my support, when heart and flesh shall fail." She then desired me to sing to her the words of the dying Christian, "Vital spark of heavenly flame," &c.

I had scarcely commenced, when she interrupted me by saying that her nerves could not bear singing, and requested me only to repeat it. After I had finished, and asked how she felt, I found that her reason was again wandering, and I said no more.

At another time, during an interval of pain, she spoke to me of her children now about to be left orphans. She said she had resigned them into the hands of God; charged me to be kind to them, and to leave no suitable means untried to procure for them a good home in America. "I, also," she added, "was once an orphan, and know too well the ills of orphanage not to be solicitous for my dear children." It was about this time, as near as I remember, that I asked her whether she had any message to leave in my charge to her friends, either here or in America. "Yes," she replied, "tell my brethren and sisters of the mission, that I love them unto the end; that I have nothing to bestow in return for their kindness to me, but my thanks and my prayers for their prosperity in their labour of love. Tell my dear American friends, that they will neither see, nor hear from me again in this life, but that I hope hereafter to meet them again, to part no more forever, and tell my dear pupils at Kairua, that after a few days, they will see me no more; that it was my hope to live long, and to have met with them for many days to come. Tell them to forgive whatever they have seen in me, that they thought amiss; to listen to the words of their teachers, and above all, to seek earnestly after the word of life and the way of salvation; to hold fast to the right way unto the end. Charge them to remember my dying words that we may all meet again in heaven."

About one week before her death, when revived a little, after a season of great exhaustion and fatigue, she called for her children, when they were brought, she laid her emaciated hands upon the head of each and said, "The Lord shield this defenceless head underneath the shadow of his wings." She then kissed them and wept.

Each day now presented some new symptom of approaching dissolution. Three days before her departure, she became entirely bereft of her reason, and ceased to know her friends and attendants. About the middle of the night, when the afflictive event took place, I seated myself by her. The pulse was by this time scarcely perceptible. I held her cold hand in mine for some time, when I heard her say, in a broken, inarticulate voice, "Let me depart in peace." Thinking she might wish me to leave her a little to quietude, I removed my chair to the door, and thought upon the glories that would open on her soul, when released from its crumbling tenement. In a little time, I inquired of the female attendants how she appeared; and they motioned to me that she was asleep. I immediately caught a lamp and hastened to her; but she was gone. Without a struggle or a groan, she gently breathed forth her spirit into the arms of her Saviour.

The funeral services were attended on the Saturday morning following, when a numerous procession of females all dressed in mourning followed her to the grave. She rests in peace, in the church-yard, there to await the joyful summons of the last trumpet.