C 8 6 7

Md. Caspar Morris incoming Letters Biddle-C 1994

THE LATE MRS. ISAAC BRAITHWAITE.

Mrs. Isaac Braithwaite, whose death is chronicled in our obituary of this day, was a lady of so remarkable a character, and so well known in this town and neighbourhood, that we should be wanting in our duty as public journalists were we to omit a passing tribute to her memory. She was a member of the Society of Friends, and was the daughter of Charles Lloyd, Esq., of Birmingham. In 1808 she was married to Isaac Braithwaite, Esq., of this town, who still survives.

Most of our readers are aware that the Society of Friends consider that the ministerial office is conferred by Christ without distinction of sex. Early in life Mrs. Braithwaite believed herself called to this high office, and being filled with a holy earnestness of purpose, and possessing superior abilities, she became an eminent and persuasive preacher in the body to which she belonged.

Notwithstanding the cares of a young family, which was fast rising around her, she devoted much time to visiting the Friends in various parts of the Kingdom, holding many meetings also for those of other persuasions. In 1823 she believed herself to be Divinely directed to visit the United States of America. The voyage from Liverpool to New York (ocean steamers being then unknown) occupied six weeks. She returned to England in 1824, but conceiving her mission had not been accomplished, she, in company with her husband, revisited America in 1825, and again in 1827.

In those days, before the existence of railways, the traveller in the Western and Southern States of America had to encounter difficulties and hardships which to the present generation seem almost fabulous. On her return in 1829, Mrs. Braithwaite considered that she had fulfilled the commission of her Divine master in that country, and henceforth devoted her energies to the discharge of her duties at home and amongst the Friends of her native land.

In pursuance of this she paid religious visits at different times; and till within a few years of her death was a constant and assiduous attender of the Friends' yearly meeting in London, in the proceedings of whose female members she took a prominent part. All these labours were undertaken amidst great bodily infirmities occasioned by an injury to the spine from which she suffered to the end of her life. In the fulfilment of her various engagements Mrs. Braithwaite's vigour of character was conspicuous. Possessing the happy art of throwing herself into the interests of others, she made every one feel at home who shared her society. Though warmly attached to the religious principles of the body to which she belonged, she had a truly catholic spirit, and visitors at her husband's hospitable dwelling of all classes and persuasions found in her, one who could enter into their views. In this way Mrs. Braithwaite endeavoured, as she had opportunity, to drop a word of counsel to the young, to encourage the faint-hearted, and to minister consolation to the wounded spirit.

Though often in pain, Mrs. Braithwaite's cheerfulness and patience were a constant theme of admiration, and showed in a remarkable manner how a mind sustained by faith and prayer can rise superior to bodily infirmities. Her society was sought by the educated and literary, before whom she never hesitated to confess her Saviour; but though thus resorted to by a large circle of acquaintance, she never neglected the minute domestic duties of her station. The poor around her always had a large share of her sympathy, and she delighted in quietly and unostentatiously relieving their wants.

Mrs. Braithwaite's religious views were eminently evangelical and practical. Deeply convinced of the sinfulness of man by nature, she delighted in directing her fellow creatures to the power and grace of the Holy Spirit to convince them of sin and lead them to Christ.

She unhesitatingly set forth the doctrine of justification by faith, and strenuously maintained the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

To the last the powers of her mind were unimpaired. Her removal was unexpected by her friends. She was much overdone by a short journey about ten days before her death, but on the Saturday previous her family hoped that the cessation of pain which then took place betokened a restoration to her ordinary health, but it was otherwise ordered; she gradually sank and peacefully expired on the morning of Sunday, the 18th, in the 71st year of her age.

Mrs. Braithwaite leaves a numerous family to deplore her loss.