

Saturday, January 22nd, 1859

**Obituary – Margaret L. Bishop
The Street Preacher
Died 24th November, 1858.**

Many of our readers will remember the circumstance of a lady preaching in our streets and public places, at various intervals within the last 15 year. That ardent spirit, which was so inflamed by religious zeal as to cast aside the usual reserve and apprehension as of her sex, is at last at rest. A brief notice of her life and exertions will be acceptable to her co-laborers in the Church of Christ.

Margaret L. Bishop on her father's side was of the Thompson family, of Musselboro, Scotland, who were chiefly engaged in mercantile pursuits. On her mother's side she was of the Aitchenson family of Climers Wells, the male members of which were principally barristers or ministers of the established church. Queen Victoria, in one of her visits to Scotland, conferred the honour of knighthood upon one of them.

Margaret lost her mother when she was only about four years old. Impatient of the strict discipline observed at the English school, and also at her father's house, she resolved, when very young, to emancipate herself from these domestic restraints. About the age of seventeen she accomplished her object and sailed for France the year after the battle of Waterloo. She made rapid progress in the acquirement of the French language, and retained it through life so as to converse with perfect ease when in French society. Effort were made by certain persons in France to get her to join the Roman Catholic Church, which design seems to have been prevented, according to her own confession in after life, by one circumstance only, namely: that she could not forget that her mother was a Protestant. After spending about two years in France she returned to her native land. Her faith in the creed of the church of her fathers caused her much trouble and concern in mind, from the idea that whether she was one of the lost or saved, was a decree over which she had no control. This was the reason of her occasionally found seeking religious consolation in dissenting chapels. In 1829 she became a member of the Christian Israelites, a church of that order being established in Edinburgh. She had written many poetical and miscellaneous works, which she destroyed from religious motives or scruples.

In 1835 she was left a widow with two children, and in 1836 she set out on a missionary tour, preaching in the highways and byways, squares and market-places of the cities and large towns from Scotland to Liverpool, where, on Prince's dock and other places of public resort, she addressed assembled thousands.

In Bristol some ministers talked of appealing to the civil authorities to prevent her preaching on the public squares, because she did not possess the authority of a licensed clergyman. On hearing of this she went to the Mayor's office, and called for the act passed in the fifty-second year of George the Third, with the accompanying oaths and declarations, informing the gentlemen that she was ready to subscribe to these oaths, in order to receive a minister's credentials. One person thought that the bishop would be displeased, and another that St. Paul had something on the subject, but the act of Parliament said "Person or persons", and she gained her license. She made her tour to the last town in Cornwall, visited Plymouth, Exeter, the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, sailed for Southampton, and proceeded to London, where she preached in Smithfield market, in the parks, at the West End, and in different assembly rooms; then she proceeded towards Yorkshire and Lancashire, where she married a second time; traveled through Wales and Ireland, then sailed for New York, where she landed on the

21st of June, 1841. Here she laboured with her usual ardour and zeal until the close of her life, on the 24th November, 1858.

Perhaps the most remarkable incident in this devoted woman's life is a circumstance which occurred in Europe. A young man, who had deserted from the army, presented himself to a minister, desiring to be received as a member of the church. The minister refused him unless he would consent to go and deliver himself up to his Colonel. The tears flowed from his eyes, and everyone was moved by his distress. Margaret Bishop offered to take him herself to the Colonel. He mustered up resolution and accepted her offer. They arrived at the town where the regiment was stationed. Margaret requested him to conceal himself until she had seen the Colonel, who was at that time in the drawing room of one of the hotels. She informed the waiters that her business could only be communicated in person, and succeeded in obtaining a personal interview with him, at the close of which the Colonel said the deserter must be tried according to military law, but that in this case the punishment would be remitted. Margaret had the satisfaction of restoring the man to his regiment and of enabling him to escape the penalty of his offence.

At various intervals in her life she wrote poems on the doctrines of the church in which she laboured as a missionary, from one of which her friends selected the following stanzas, and had them engraved on a marble monument erected over her grave at Cypress Hill Cemetery:

*Methinks I hear the mighty trumpet speak,
The graves do open, souls to life awake,
In angel's image every one doth rise,
Who owned their Saviour ere death closed their eyes.*

*But ah! A glory above these shall stand
On Zion's hill, brought forth by God's own hand:
A church in white, with Jesus in their midst:
The marriage makes them one – decrees are fixed*

*The curse shall be removed, the earth be blest,
All nature shall enjoy the promised rest;
Yea, everything that breathes the voice will raise
To Father, Son and Holy Ghost in praise.*

A Bible, sculptured out of marble, is to be placed at the base, with the inscription: "Search the Scriptures".