

Rev. Squire Harvey

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Joseph Grieves

SQUIRE HARVEY, son of Thomas and Hannah Harvey, was born at Commonside, near Brierley-hill, Staffordshire, March 24, 1822. From his boyhood he was sober, industrious, and moral, but knew nothing of the converting power of God until the twentieth year of his age, when he was brought to a saving knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of the Primitive Methodists. His leader says, "I well recollect him giving his heart to God and joining my class. With much boldness he stood forth and declared what God had done for his soul. I always esteemed him as an eminently pious young man, fully devoted to his Master's work, aiming in all things to 'adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour.' " Another of his early religious associates says, "I remember being present in our chapel at Shuttend when brother Harvey offered up his first prayer in public. There was a large congregation; and I shall never forget with what fervency he poured out his soul to God for himself and all around. He was soon appointed an assistant leader, and proved a blessing to many. He was the means of bringing many young men to the chapel and to the class; and whilst he was speaking to them many of them wept, prayed, and were saved. His zeal, usefulness, and improving gifts, led the church to appoint him to speak in public. The first sermon he preached was to a large congregation from the words, 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' He spoke with great liberty and power, and many were brought to God under that sermon. I have frequently witnessed similar effects while he has been holding forth the word of life. Many can bless God that they ever heard him."

After being a member seven years, and a very successful local preacher about four years, he was called into the itinerant work by the Dudley circuit in March, 1849. Being now freed from the cares of the world, he gave himself fully to the work of God, and his profiting appeared to all. He was in labours more abundant, praying, fasting, visiting, preaching in doors and out, using various efforts to save souls. The following is a statement of his labours and success in the Dudley circuit, being the first five quarters of his itinerancy: "I have preached 443 sermons, visited 2,072 families, walked about 2,000 miles, and have seen 362 souls brought to God. Hallelujah!" In 1850 he was stationed for the Tunstall circuit, where he laboured for two years with acceptability and success. He was well received and esteemed as a holy and useful man. In a letter to a brother minister, soon after he entered this field of labour, he says, "I have seen twenty souls converted on my first round. I see that *entire holiness* is an essential qualification for usefulness; I mean to *live* in it, and I hope to *die* in it." Brother J. Guest, who travelled with him in the same circuit, says, "S. Harvey was of a close, reserved turn of mind, which made him appear to some persons unsociable and rather repulsive; but this was the effect of his constitutional temperament. He was a man of deep-toned piety, fully devoted to God. As a minister, he was much respected, and his preaching was very acceptable. He was also very studious; he took great pains in preparing suitable and telling discourses, which he delivered with great frankness and earnestness. His word was frequently followed by great effects; hundreds of rocky hearts were broken under his ministry, and many penitents brought into the possession of salvation. His next station was Dawley branch of Wrockwardine circuit. Being stationed in the same circuit, I had frequent opportunities of being in his company. His telling ministry, prudent conduct, business habits, and devoted life, rendered him a truly valuable colleague."

As a Christian, he is spoken of in the Dawley branch in terms of the highest respect. As a minister, his preaching was universally accepted, and was attended with considerable success. Brother J. Langham, who was his colleague in two circuits, bears the following testimony to his piety and usefulness: "It is now more than four years since the late S. Harvey became my colleague in the Tunstall circuit. At that time he was blunt in his manners, and to some appeared harsh and uncourteous; but he improved in this respect, and

became more complaisant and agreeable. As a Christian he was very prayerful, and he prayed in faith. He went the nearest way to the throne of grace; there he would wait and urge his plea; nor would he usually let go his hold of God till he had obtained his suit.

As a minister he was diligent, faithful, and persevering. He laboured, by reading and study, to become a 'workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth' He was found at his books when others were asleep. His ministry was an earnest and faithful one. He felt the tremendous responsibility which rested upon him, and sought with all care to discharge himself of the momentous trust. He saw the wretchedness in which man is involved through sin, and with Paul could say, 'The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then are all dead.' He entered the pulpit clothed with Divine authority, and his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, causing believers to rejoice and sinners to tremble. He did not live to shine, but to bless: he was no speculatist, but a man of practice: his preaching was truly Primitive Methodistic: he endeavoured to tread in the steps of its early labourers, whose movements were always aggressive. He was perhaps the most successful of any young man of my acquaintance. There are many living epistles of his useful ministry."

His next field of labour was Worcester branch of the Ludlow circuit. Mr. Stafford, his successor, says, "Brother Harvey set himself to work with a determination to be useful, and persevered with undaunted courage, sparing no pains to save souls, and benefit those whom the Chief Shepherd had committed to his care. He frequently poured out his soul to God in strong cries and tears, and He owned his pious labours. As a minister, he was sound in doctrine, faithful, pointed, and clear. He was very industrious, rising early and labouring hard for mental, moral, and spiritual improvement. In his conduct he was prudent and cautious: he regarded the ministerial character as a very sacred thing, and would not allow it to be contemptibly treated. Towards the close of his labours in the branch he seemed to become still more earnest and devoted. His pious and evangelical labours have embalmed his memory here; and the name of Squire Harvey will long remain precious to many."

His next and last station was the West Bromwich circuit. On June 26th, 1854, he was united in marriage to her who is now called to mourn her loss, and in July came to reside in Tipton. This field of labour was peculiarly adapted to his talents; and, had his life been spared, to all appearance he would have been a great blessing to the circuit; but the all-wise Disposer of events ordered otherwise. The cholera had broken out at Tipton; many had fallen victims to its ravages, and considerable alarm was excited in the town and neighbourhood, in consequence of which extra religious services were appointed, in which our departed brother took a leading part. In his journal, under date September 16th, being the last he ever wrote, he says, "My soul feels a nearness to God; I have been much in prayer the last week, and have been greatly blessed. I long for more success; Lord help me! The cholera is raging fearfully in this neighbourhood; people are dying daily, and generally the unconverted; yet many appear little concerned; neither judgment nor mercy seems to move them. Led a fellowship meeting this evening at Tipton; a large company was present, and every one appeared filled with the Holy Ghost. It was an overwhelming season. Glory to God for ever!" Next morning, being the Sabbath, his voice was heard in the streets, warning sinners of their danger, and exhorting them to "flee from the wrath to come."

On Monday our circuit quarterly meeting was held at Tipton, when, according to his urgent request, he was allowed to remain in Tipton for the week (with the exception of Tuesday night) to carry on extra services. At the close of the meeting he gave an affectionate address to the brethren, exhorting all to live fully to God, and concluded with a powerful prayer for the Holy Ghost to be poured upon the assembly. We all felt it good to be there. On Wednesday he preached a most faithful and impressive sermon at Tipton, and published that he would be there again on Thursday and Friday evenings. On Thursday he went to see a

young man who had been taken with the cholera; when he returned his wife gently spoke to him on the impropriety of exposing himself so much. He held up his hand and said, "Hush! this is soul-saving ; I must do my Master's work." At seven o'clock he went to the chapel and commenced the service; but had not spoken long before he was taken ill. He went home immediately, and it soon became evident that the awful scourge had seized him. For some time he was in great pain, but bore it all patiently. He then became somewhat easier, and dozed or slept a little, and when he awoke he smiled and said softly, "Oh! oh! ranks of angels shining bright. Oh! the glory, the glory!" He then said, "Where am I? where am I? Am I on earth?" to which his wife replied, "Yes, you are on earth." "Is it possible?" he said; "oh, unhappy disappointment!" The cramp now seized him, and he gradually sank into the arms of death. Perceiving the last enemy approaching, he said, "Death! death! death!" He then turned on his side and said, "Lord, bless my wife, parents, brothers, sisters, and all friends." He then said to his mother, "Tell my four brothers I have warned them, and am clear of their blood; but tell them 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.' " The last words he was heard to utter were, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." About half-past four o'clock on the afternoon of October 22nd, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus. Thus suddenly and unexpectedly terminated the short probation of our dear brother in Christ, leaving a disconsolate widow and many surviving friends to lament their loss.

References

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