

Charles Jackson

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A true minister of Christ possesses his Master's grace, has received his Master's call, does his Master's work, bears his Master's yoke, aims at his Master's glory, and then goes to receive from his Master the reward of being faithful, which is "a crown of life." The possession of such grace, the enjoyment of such a call, the performance of such a work, the bearing of such a yoke, with an aim at the glory of God, are traits which were strikingly exemplified in the character and deportment of the late Rev. Charles Jackson.

He was born on the 8th of September, 1819, at Statham, which is a small hamlet, in the county of Chester. In speaking of his early life, he says, "As I throw back my recollections on the past, memory treasures the fact of a kind mother speaking with me on serious subjects, and teaching me, my brothers, and sisters the necessity of prayer to God. After the lapse of forty years that kind mother yet survives, and the love of her soul for the spiritual well-being of her family is as strong as it was when she nursed her children at her breast. She now pleads with God on behalf of her afflicted son Charles, and I believe her prayers will conduce to the salvation of the souls of the whole of her eleven children." Here we have a proof that proper maternal training is owned of God as a means of promoting true piety, good morals, and great usefulness in the church of God.

The house of Mr. Jackson's parents was frequently visited by some of the Primitive Methodist worthies, such as Messrs. John Smith, Joseph Preston, Thomas Jackson, and Miss E. Smith, who were some of the first ministers stationed in Preston Brook Circuit. Although Charles was then very young, their example and teaching impressed him with the worth and importance of true religion. On this subject he says, "I remember when very young our house was frequently blessed with the visits of some of our first ministers, men of God, and as I then correctly thought, carrying about with them a sacred influence. At that time I frequently carried the magazines which they brought, to the subscribers, though I was then too young to deliver them with fluency of speech. I was often permitted to attend the services they held at Lymm, which was about a mile and a half from our house. At this time I was strongly impressed with the necessity of a holy life, in order to the enjoyment of the favour of God. But alas! those impressions wore away through neglect of the means of grace, and associating with other children who were without any religious concern."

About this time he began to attend a church Sabbath-school, and ultimately became a teacher therein, and also one of the choir; but he remained without any special desire to serve God until he went to reside at Warrington for the purpose of learning a trade. He had a fellow apprentice of the name of William Howard, who was from the same neighbourhood as himself, and was grandson of the aged lady in whose house at Lymm our first ministers preached the Word of life. Charles frequently accompanied brother Howard to Divine service held in our chapel at Latchford, Warrington. On the 16th of January, 1837, he heard the Rev. J. Lawley preach a sermon in this chapel from "Will a man rob God?" He then became at once the subject of serious thoughts, which deepened into a conviction for sin; and his language was, "O that I knew where I could find him whom my soul desireth to love." On the Tuesday evening following he went to a class-meeting hoping that the communion of saints would help to that communion with his Maker which he was earnestly seeking, and seeking on the terms of a perfect surrender, through Christ, of himself, of all he had, and all he was, to know, do, suffer and be, whatever was the pleasure of God. In relation to his attendance at this class-meeting, he says, "I now entered into, covenant engagement to be the Lord's servant until death, so I gave myself to the church."

On the evening of Saturday, June 21st, 1837, he attended a band meeting, in Latchford chapel, when he rested his all on the atonement of the Saviour, and was there and then made acquainted with the way of salvation by faith. He now found that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to his believing heart, and he became the subject of the blessedness of that man who maketh the Lord his trust. But as faith and works are necessary to our spiritual life as Christians, just as our soul and body are to our natural life as men, therefore the subject of this account at once commenced his course of practical obedience in the discharge of the duties of Christianity. Forthwith he identified himself with the Sabbath-school as one of its teachers, and one who aimed successfully at the spiritual welfare of his youthful charge. In of his operations in this sphere, he says, "Often have I seen the teaching suspended in that school that we might pray with scholars seeking mercy."

In a short while he was judged by the authorities of the station quite eligible to be an exhorter, and in July, 1837, he delivered his first exhortation with such acceptability and profit to his hearers. that he was soon placed on the Warrington station's plan, The first plan on which his name was placed was delivered to him by the writer, who was then labouring on that station. He also became an auxiliary local preacher in Preston Brook circuit and St. Helen's mission. Owing to his connection with three stations he was seldom a Sabbath at home; and rough roads and long journeys were often his lot on the Lord's-day. On this subject he says, "Often has the midnight storm of winter poured upon me when returning from appointments considerably distant from my residence." After labouring three years as a local preacher, he was called into the Itinerancy at the Conference of 1840, and laboured twenty-two years as a travelling preacher in the following stations, namely, Bolton, Isle of Man, Staleybridge, Liverpool, Haslingden, Manchester 2nd, Ramsey, New Mills, Bury, and Blackburn. Most of these stations under his ministry improved in every respect, so that after allowing for a small decrease of members in three of them, the Manchester District realized about 1,100 souls of a clear increase on the stations in which he and others laboured, during the time of his appointment in them. Previous to his being a superintendent, he was for four years a colleague of mine. As such I found him kind, courteous, affectionate, and always willing to co-operate in carrying out any measure calculated to promote God's honour in the welfare of souls. As a minister he was exemplary, prudent, diligent, and faithful. His mind was well furnished with information, which made his public ministry and pastoral visitation always acceptable. Several documents have come to my hands showing the high esteem in which he was held as a man, as a Christian, and a minister in those parts wherein he exercised his ministry. The following is a copy of what I received from Haslingden Circuit. The Rev. Thomas Hindley says, "I have consulted a number of the officials of this station relative to the labours of the late Rev. C. Jackson, while in this circuit, and the unanimous testimony of all of whom inquiry has been made, is, that he was 'in labours more abundant;' in the pulpit he was efficient and acceptable; in his official transactions he was firm but courteous, he was a steady maintainer of Connexional discipline; in his social and pastoral intercourse he was very agreeable, and by his kind Christian deportment he was made very useful in this department of Christian labour. Here he was very much respected, and his name is as ointment poured forth."

At intervals during the last few years he was much affected with loss of voice, which in his case arose from diseased lungs, and which eventually compelled him to relinquish the regular duties of the ministry—thinking that freedom from exposure to the night air, and the anxieties connected with the active duties of the itinerancy, might, with other means, aid in prolonging his life. He therefore applied to the Conference of 1862 for superannuation, which was granted to him. He sat down at Ramsey, in the Isle of Man, and after a few months' residence there he removed to Kirk Michael, in that station. But his disease did not abate, but it slowly, yet gradually progressed, till it was evident, both to himself and friends, that he was not to be long an inhabitant of time. Happily for him, his religion rendered him submissive and cheerful. He therefore bowed to God's will, and from the following letter which he wrote to a friend a short time before his death,

we see he had the pleasure of knowing that through Christ he was more than a conqueror over death, the last enemy, and enjoyed a meetness for the “inheritance of the saints in light:”—

“Dear brother Barlow,—I got yours in due time, and was glad to hear from you, and hope finally to see you before the throne in glory. I am resting on the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus Christ, and have a settled peace, a heart filled with gratitude to the blessed God for the many mercies I enjoy at this solemn time; everything earthly seems of less value and of smaller importance as I draw near the tomb. My hope is in a living Saviour.

‘Not a soul of Jesus’ care,
Ever suffered shipwreck there.’

C. Jackson.”

As he neared the celestial port, he stated to the Rev. S. Stobbs, that he found the doctrine of the atonement and of salvation by faith in Christ to support his mind in the prospect of death, and that the doctrines which he had preached to others were no cunningly devised fable, but he felt them to be a reality.

On the night preceding the day of his death, he said in reply to the inquiry of some Christian friends, that he was very poorly, as he had not slept for several nights, but, said he, “The Lord will not lay on me more than I am able to bear;” and he then said, “What must I have done if I had had to seek religion now? You know what religion is, but cannot understand what I am now experiencing, neither will you be able so to do until you be brought into the condition I am now in;” and he then added, “The will of the Lord be done.” He was never heard to murmur, and was quite conscious to the period of his death, which took place on the evening of the 22nd of September, 1863, at Kirk Michael, in the Isle of Man; and thus at the age of forty-four years my old respected colleague in the ministry and valued friend departed hence to participate in the Redeemer’s joys (Matt. xxv. 21—23), and share in the untold glories of all his heaven (Rom. viii. 17), where may his widow and five fatherless children all join him at last, is the prayer of THOMAS JOBLING.

References

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