

Richard Killingrey

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by John Butcher

RICHARD KILLINGREY was born at Stoke Ferry, Norfolk, February 13th, 1825. His parents were pious, God-fearing people; and no doubt to the piety of his parents, together with their earnest prayers, are to be traced his comparatively early conversion, and the usefulness of his after life. When very young, his excellent father, caring for the spiritual welfare of his son as well as his own, took him by the hand, and led him to a Primitive Methodist place of worship. The result was he received deep religious impressions, which were never fully erased. Indeed his own statement is, "that he could not remember a period, in his whole life, when the Holy Spirit did not powerfully strive with him."

At the age of fifteen, from some cause, he began to slight the means of grace, and yielding to the temptations of the wicked one, he sought to shake off his religious feelings, and like other young men of the neighbourhood, to drink into and follow the spirit of the world. In this state, however, he found no peace of mind. All his efforts to obtain happiness in this kind of life proved entirely vain. The world yielded no satisfaction. He found by painful experience that "there is no peace to the wicked;" but that "they are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest." But while thus living, the God of his father followed him with the message of mercy, and the impressions of the Holy Spirit, which often induced him to pause a little in his sinful pursuits, and reflect on the end to which they would inevitably lead. This part of his life was truly restless and unhappy, all his waywardness being directly against his own convictions.

When he had reached the age of seventeen, that devoted and useful minister, the Rev. John Smith, was appointed the superintendent of the circuit where he resided. Under his earnest and faithful ministry, many young persons were led to seek the remission of sins by faith in Christ Jesus. Nor did they seek in vain. He, whom they humbly sought, came to their help, and filled their souls with gladness, by the sweet assurance that all their sins were freely forgiven. This began a new era in their experience. Their cheerful and expressive language now was, —

"My God is reconcil'd,
His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry."

Among them was found brother R. Killingrey. He now had life in the truest and best sense—life in Jesus, who is "the Resurrection and the Life." This life soon began to show itself in both words and works, at home and abroad. This pleasing and happy change took place in the year 1842. He at once united with the society, and continued a pious, active, and consistent member thereof till he left the place of his nativity for a wider sphere of labour. His name soon appeared on the plan, honourably enrolled among the local preachers of the circuit, which place is occupied for about five years very creditably to himself and with acceptance and profit to the various societies and congregations to which he was sent.

As he was a young man of piety zeal, and considerable ability for public speaking, the Scotter circuit, in 1849, called him into the regular ministry.

In this new and important field of Christian labour, principally with the Rev. W. Sanderson, who was then the superintendent of the Doncaster branch, he spent the first three years of his ministerial life. I have often heard him speak with the test affection and Christian of his excellent superintendent, and of the wise counsel and timely aid he kindly rendered him. On these years he looked back with considerable pleasure.

Saffron Walden was his next station, where he spent two useful, though laborious years. Then successively he travelled in Maidenhead, Frome, Falmouth, St. Ives (Cornwall), Redruth, and Penzance circuits. I first formed his acquaintance in 1856, he then being my colleague in the Frome station; and after wide removals one from the other, for seven years, in July, 1865, it was our lot to be thrown together again as fellow-labourers in the Gospel in the Penzance circuit.

Physically he was not strong, and for several years past he suffered much from general debility; sometimes for many weeks together he was laid aside from his much-loved work, and at other times he filled his appointments when scarcely able to go through the whole of a service. Could he now speak to us, he might truly say, with the apostle to the Corinthians, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

Preaching the glorious Gospel of Christ to poor and perishing sinners was his delight, and a full, free, and present salvation found in him an able, earnest, and sometimes a truly eloquent minister. In his discourses he had a happy way of setting before his hearers the great gift of God to a sinful world, and the glories and pleasures of the "better land." In the various stations where he travelled, his name is held in respectful and affectionate remembrance. And we doubt not but at the last day many will greet him as the honoured agent, in the hand of a merciful God, by whom they were awakened to a sense of their sins, and led to Jesus for salvation and eternal safety. Since his death, a person from Southampton has written to say that he, with many more to his knowledge, were brought into the enjoyment of religion through the labours of our departed brother. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

On June 3rd, 1866, he occupied the pulpit for the last time. He was then in a very weak and shattered state of health; but in the service, as though he had some presentiment that it was his last public effort, he seemed to forget his weakness, and in his zeal was carried on with more than usual earnestness to entreat his hearers to serve the living God, and be at peace in this life, and happy for ever hereafter.

For some weeks he had suffered most acutely, both by night and day, from neuralgia, a severe cough, and other unfavourable and distressing symptoms. These now gained greater strength, so that his medical attendant advised a change of air without delay. Accordingly, on Friday, June 22nd, he with Mrs. Killingrey, left Cornwall for Hampstead, in the county of Essex. In his debilitated condition the journey was a long one; but through the good hand of God, he reached his destination safely, though much exhausted.

The change at first appeared to be productive of some good, which raised the hopes and expectations of his friends. These, however, were soon blasted as with an east wind. His disease returned with greater violence, and his symptoms became more distressing than ever. It was now painfully manifest that the best medical skill was of no avail. All that care, skill, and affection could do was done for him, but his days were numbered. Eternity was now before him, but he had no fear or dread of it. The religion he had long enjoyed, and so earnestly and often urged on the acceptance of others, now sustained his own spirit, and brightened his future.

The following extract of a letter which he sent to one of his friends in this circuit, dated July 31st, will show the state of his mind in prospect of death and eternity:— “I feel all is right—anchor cast—sails spread —the port in view—a good hope through grace—prospect bright. My feet are on the Rock of Ages—he takes me by the hand,—I lean on his arm, and recline on his bosom. Should he think it wise to remove me, all is right!”

On August 27th he said, “I shall not be long, but it will be all right with me. I am washed in the blood of the Crucified, and am made ready to die.” Then turning to his devoted wife, he said, “The Lord hath promised to take care of you, and comfort you, and it will not be long before we meet again.”

On the 28th he could talk but little. His countenance seemed lighted with joy that he should so soon join his friend Smith in the glorious presence of their Saviour and Lord.

The day on which he died his sufferings were very great. Mrs. K. said to him, “My dear, you are longing to be gone.” His ready and submissive reply was, “Yes, but willing to wait my appointed time.” Then stretching out his hands, he said, “Glory, glory! Cannot you see him and the millions of angels?” And after waving his hand in token of victory over the last foe, he passed away from the Church militant to the Church triumphant in heaven on Friday, August 31st, 1866, in the forty-fourth year of his earthly sojourn and the seventeenth of his ministry. “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.”

His mortal remains were borne to their last resting-place on September 6th, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection at the last day. That his widow, who now mourns his loss, may be sustained by the God of all grace, and ultimately join her departed husband in the song of triumph before the throne of the Eternal, is the sincere prayer of JOHN BUTCHER.

References

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