

Rev. Elijah Jackson

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by P. Coates

REV. ELIJAH JACKSON was born at Hanley, Staffordshire, in the year 1839. He was blest with parents who had regard for his highest welfare. His father was for many years an earnest and successful local preacher in the Primitive Methodist Connexion, who passed away before his son to his reward in the skies. It cannot be expected that anything peculiarly interesting should mark the early childhood of a youth retired from the observation of the world. From the careful religious instruction he received at home and in the Sabbath-school, at an early age he became intimately acquainted with the depravity of his nature, and the need of a change of heart. When about fifteen years of age these impressions became deep and permanent, and issued in his conversion to God.

The bias and inclination of his mind began at this early period to be disclosed. Preachers and preaching occupied much of his thoughts, and so strongly was it impressed upon his mind that he should seek to lead others to the same Saviour he had found, that before he was sixteen years of age, at the request of his father, whom he had accompanied to a preaching appointment at Burslem, he spoke to the people in the name of the Lord. His name soon appeared on the preacher's plan, and he continued to labour as a lay preacher until 1864, at which date, through the recommendation of the late Rev. Philip Pugh, he was called into the regular ministry.

He commenced his labours on the High Wycombe Station, and subsequently laboured with acceptance and success on the following circuits: London Second, Maidenhead, London First, Mexboro', Gainsboro', Pocklington, London Sixth, Canterbury, and Bedford. In his second year on the Canterbury Station he became the subject of a serious mental affliction, and was, for a time, laid aside from his work. Having recovered somewhat, he resumed his labours, but not without the most serious apprehensions of his friends. The Conference of 1880 appointed him to the Bedford Circuit, where he laboured to the best of his ability for one year. The following Conference removed him to Wickhambrook Circuit, but his work on earth was nearly done. It was soon evident that mentally and physically he was a complete wreck. It was with great difficulty that he could be persuaded to take rest, and almost to the end of life he expressed a hope to commence his work again with the New Year; but the Master had determined otherwise. He gradually sank, and the last three weeks of his life were very distressing; he became almost helpless; the greater part of the time reason was dethroned, and he was almost speechless. He made great efforts to speak to his dear wife and children, but nothing could be understood, so that no last words, no dying testimony is left behind. On December 12, 1881, he was gathered to his final home.

The following ministers with whom he laboured bear their testimony to his character and labours: The Rev. J. Phillips says, 'Elijah Jackson came to me a young man some seventeen years ago, and laboured with me on the London Second Circuit. I found him intelligent, affectionate, and unassuming; sound in doctrine, fervent in spirit, earnest in prayer and pathetic in preaching. He lived near to God, and laboured for souls; he won the esteem of all who knew him. I was grieved to hear of his severe affliction and death. May his sorrowing widow and fatherless children be sustained and comforted, and soon we shall all meet him in the land of light and love, where pain and parting are no more.'

The Rev. Paul Peacock says, 'I became acquainted with Rev. E. Jackson in 1870, during the time he was superintendent of the Mexboro' Circuit. I was his colleague one year, and during that period found him very attentive to all his ministerial duties. He was an acceptable preacher, good visitor, kind and sympathetic in spirit, and made many friends. The circuit during his superintendency prospered in all respects, and on the

occasion of his leaving for Gainsboro', the officials and friends presented him with several valuable books as a tangible expression of their appreciation of his services. Had the Master seen wise to spare him unto us, he might not have ranked amongst the leaders of the Connexion, but he would have been one of the many toilers who, by constant plodding, have raised the Connexion to her present position. May his heart-stricken widow and dear children meet him in heaven.'

The Rev. J. Beal says, 'It was my privilege and pleasure to be the colleague of the Rev. E. Jackson in the following stations, viz.: Mexboro', Gainsboro', and Pocklington, and, during our ministry together, I formed the highest opinion of his piety and Christian manliness, and the more I knew of him the more highly I esteemed and loved him. He was, indeed, an excellent man, and the most agreeable and considerate of colleagues. He was a plain, unassuming Methodist preacher, his only aim and his highest ambition was to be a successful minister, and in this he was blessed with a fair measure of success. On the stations it was our pleasure to labour together, we often rejoiced over the conversion of souls, and reported progress in every department. I have frequently heard him say the happiest hours of his life were when pointing the penitent one to Christ, and he will have many souls as the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord. His piety and Christian cheerfulness won for him a wide circle of friends in the stations in which he laboured in the Hull District. He was unquestionably a good man, an acceptable preacher, an excellent pastor, and a diligent business man, and his removal from the church below to the church above so early in life, and in the midst of useful labour, may be mysterious to us, and painful to his dear wife and her five little lambs, yet we dare not question the wisdom of that loving Father who does all things for our profit and His own glory.'

Mr. David Hodgson, of Croydon, writes, 'I am wishful to say, in reference to our beloved and late Bro. Jackson, that though not physically strong, he laboured ardently in chapel matters, depriving himself of necessary rest in order to successfully carry on the trust committed to his charge. His preaching was plain, scriptural truth, attended often with Divine power in the conversion of sinners to God. In all business transactions he was scrupulously exact. He lived near to God, and carried about with him a felt sense of the Divine presence.'

The Rev. J.N. Wheeler says, 'The Rev. E. Jackson was my first superintendent, and from the first day of my acquaintance with him until the time for leaving the Canterbury Circuit, he manifested all that consideration and love that may be expected from a Christian and a minister. He interested himself in my studies, watched over my temporal comforts, and strove at all times to encourage me in the work of the ministry. I cannot but respect his character, and cherish his memory with grateful love. He was exceedingly scrupulous and orderly in keeping of circuit and chapel accounts, and was trustworthy in an eminent degree. In his public character he maintained a peaceful and pious deportment, thus securing many friends and making few enemies. Had his health continued good, doubtless the circuit would have prospered greatly under his ministry. During his illness great sympathy was manifested by our own members and also the members of other churches. He left the station with the respect of all.'

Our respected brother came to labour with me on the London First Circuit on the day he became united to her who now mourns her loss. I found him all my brethren have said respecting him. After labouring a few months with us, he was removed by the General Committee to the Mexboro' Station to fill a vacancy occasioned by the death of one of our ministers, but the short time we were together a friendship was formed which remained unbroken till removed by death. May we meet ere long to renew it in that glorious land where it will sever never.

References

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