

Rev William Kewin

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WILLIAM KEWIN was born in the parish of Marown, in the Isle of Man, on the 19th of February, 1821. He walked according to the course of this world until about the year 1841, when he was convinced of sin under a funeral sermon preached at Peel by brother Charles Jackson. Shortly afterwards he returned from Peel to his home at Castletown, and became a member of brother Stowell's class. One evening, after returning from a prayer-meeting, he retired into secret, poured out the ardent desires of his soul for pardon, was enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with his heart unto righteousness, and rapturously exclaimed, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." He was so filled with joy and gratitude, that, notwithstanding the family had retired for rest, he went to their sleeping apartments to tell them what great things the Lord had done for him.

He soon became a very useful member of society. He took a great interest in the Sabbath-school, and had such a happy method of addressing the children, that he not only engaged their attention, but, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, deeply impressed their minds with the important truths of the gospel. In prayer-meetings he was also exceedingly useful; his short fervent prayers, accompanied by implicit confidence in the promises of his heavenly Father, were ever prevalent. He diligently read his bible, and laboured in every sense to improve his mind and store it with useful knowledge. He was, therefore, soon appointed the assistant-leader of the preachers' class, and was made a blessing to it. In process of time he was put on the preachers' plan, and laboured diligently, acceptably, and successfully as a local preacher, till he was taken out to travel.

Brother Jesse Ashworth has furnished me with the following account of his labours as an itinerant preacher: "My dear friend, Kewin commenced his labours as a travelling preacher in February, 1846, in the Settle and Grassington mission, where he laboured with great satisfaction to the people for something more than two years. As a colleague he had my high esteem. I found him invariably ready to co-operate with me in every useful enterprise. His diligence in study, his zeal in family visiting, and his attention to the discipline of the Connexion, were highly commendable. He cultivated personal piety, and breathed a spirit of devotion in his walk and conversation. His talents were considered good; his pulpit labours were very acceptable, and frequently crowned with pleasing success. It was apparent to all who were acquainted with him that his heart was in the work of God, and that it was his greatest delight to labour for its prosperity. He was greatly beloved by all the friends, and his removal to another mission was much lamented.

"His second station was Maidstone, where he laboured about a year before his health failed, and where his name is still like ointment poured forth. In addition to his general usefulness, I would just mention a few instances of a more particular kind. The first was at Hebden, in the Settle and Grassington mission. After his preaching there on good Friday, 1846, a blessed revival of religion commenced, and some were converted almost every night for two or three weeks. He also laboured zealously in a revival that took place at Grassington, when about sixty persons were converted in about six weeks. His watchfulness over the new converts was very praiseworthy. The third instance I would mention was at a protracted meeting at Gravesend. Here he was very zealous and active for about a fortnight. Some who were converted on that occasion, and who often made reference to him in the relation of their experience, have "passed through death triumphant home." What a happy meeting will they have with him in glory!

"After this protracted meeting the health of our dear brother began more fully to give way, and, seeing that all the skill of his physician failed, he visited his native shores with a view to his restoration. After spending some time at home, he thought himself so far recovered, that he returned to Maidstone; but he soon found that the duties of the itinerancy were more than his physical ability could sustain. Had he been sufficiently strong, he would unquestionably have been a great blessing to the Connexion; but lack of health required him to locate."

Shortly after his return to his native isle, he ruptured a blood vessel, from the effects of which he never fully recovered; though he so far rallied as to be able to take a few appointments and to lead his old class. I knew our dear brother intimately for the last two and a half years, and found

him one of the excellent of the earth, He had a fine mind, well stored with almost every kind of useful knowledge, was of a kind and open disposition, and his conduct as a Christian uniformly accorded with his profession. As a friend he was warm and constant; as a husband, he was affectionate; and as a father, he was fond and indulgent. His affliction, though painful and protracted, he bore with exemplary patience and fortitude; he evinced no fretting or repining. When his sufferings had nearly terminated, he said, "I have not had a day's affliction more than I needed;" and when he perceived that his end was approaching he was perfectly resigned to the will of his heavenly Father. He expressed his implicit reliance on the mercy of God through Christ, and looked forward with a calm and serene mind to a blissful immortality.

As the time of his departure drew nigh, his relations having assembled around his dying bed, he reminded his parents of the kind attention of his wife during his long illness, and earnestly entreated them to be kind to her and the dear child, affectionately exhorted them all to give their whole hearts to the Lord, and then in almost inaudible accents commended them to God and to the power of his grace. Being exhausted he lay silent for a short time, when, rallying a little, he took his dear wife by the hand, and said, "Jane, I am going to heaven; follow me." After this he spoke but little. The last words he was heard to articulate were, "I long to be gone." He afterwards silently waited for the Bridegroom, having his lamp trimmed and his light burning, and at midnight, on December 2nd, 1855, the Bridegroom came, and he was admitted, we doubt not, to the marriage feast in the mansions of bliss, aged thirty-four years.

References

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