

MOTCOMB CIRCUIT MISSION,

Commenced in August, 1830.

JOURNAL OF WILLIAM STRONGMAN,

In the Spring the friends in this circuit proposed to open a new mission, but were prevented by the illness of one of the travelling preachers.

Sunday, August 1. I was at Martin, in the south-east of Wiltshire. Preached and held a lovefeast. One soul was in deep distress for pardon. I prayed with him, but he did not get liberty.

Aug. 2. Went to Downton, six miles from Martin. But there being a meeting to elect a parliament man, I went to Breamore, in the south-west part of Hampshire; and soon after 7, P. M. preached under a tree, to about one hundred people. God was present; tears were shed, and some appeared to be concerned about their salvation.

Aug. 5. I went to Hureuit, accompanied with several pious friends from Salisbury. We sung through the village, and I preached to an attentive congregation.

Sunday, Aug. 8. Employed in the Salisbury branch, preached 3 times, met a class, and held a lovefeast. M. Moore and E. Dike were on the mission.

Sunday, Aug. 22. Preached at Breamore at two. While giving out the first hymn, a gentleman or farmer came, & said he was churchwarden, and requested me to desist. Our conversation was as follows:

C.W. The parson of this parish dont like for you to preach here; therefore you must give over and leave the place.

P. Sir, I understand we have done you much good by preaching here. Your congregations at church are much larger than they were before. There are abundance of people come to hear us, and as we conclude in time for the church service, they immediately go there.

C.W, But this is such a public place, that it is offensive to our clergyman. If you would go to some obscure part of the parish, the parson would not mind that much.

P. Sir, I do not wish to offend any man in the world. Perhaps you can recommend me to a more suitable place a piece of waste land of your own or somewhat.

C.W. (Shook his head, and said, he did not know that.) But you must not abide here. The place is so public I do not think you have any right to preach here.

P. I am duly authorized to go out into the highways and hedges, and testify repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. And surely we ought to do all the good we can.

C.W. Whatever authority you may have to preach in a more private place, I doubt of your authority to preach in such a public place as this.

P. Sir, I have as much right to preach here as in any part of your parish, and therefore shall not give over.

The church warden then walked off, and I saw him no more. May God save him.

As some had determined, (if possible,) to drive us out of the parish, this conversation had a good effect, it gave them to see that we were not to be affrighted. And the people were glad of our determining to preach there. I had a good time in preaching, and published it to preach again as usual.

In the evening, J stood up at Downton, by the side of the highway, under a tree to shelter me from the rain. While praying, a clerical magistrate rode up, and requested me to remove out of the way, which I did, having hundreds to hear. I addressed him as a minister, and said, Jesus Christ had commanded us to go out into the lanes and streets, and compel sinners to come to the marriage feast.

He said he should hold no argument with me about those things; but observed he was a very liberal minded gentleman, and had befriended: Dissenters, and would protect them. May God save his soul.

I had a profitable time in preaching, and informed the people that we intended to establish preaching there.

A letter having been received by the Motcomb Qr-day board, from the city of Winchester, in Hampshire, requesting for a preacher to go there, I, by the Qr. day's direction, went there on September 20, and was welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Tops. And after morning service in Mr. T's chapel, I preached in one of the principal streets. Some mocked, and one ill- disposed person fetched one of the city officers, who appeared desirous to pull me off the chair, but seemed afraid of the consequences.

Friday, 24. Returned to Saram, having preached seven sermons, held other meetings, visited many families, and walked about eighty miles. There is, I think, a good opening at Winchester; but Motcomb circuit is not at present able to undertake it; but perhaps some of the other circuits might.

Sunday, Oct. 3. On the new mission. Had a hard day: walked many miles, and preached four sermons. Fatigued in body, but happy in soul. Thank Almighty God.

The season of the year is closed for preaching in the open air, and we have found it more difficult to get houses than congregations. But about thirty have been joined in society at different places, and the work is still prospering. In one place, after much labour and prayer to God, when we almost despaired of succeeding, an independent lady said we should have a house of hers.. And, thank God, we occupy it gratuitously, and have a society there of 16 persons. This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous in our eyes.

Sunday, Jan. 30, 1831. Preached twice at Stower. P. Had a hard time. — In the afternoon, preached a funeral sermon, while our departed friend was worshipping before the throne of God. In the evening I preached at Kington Magna; and the Lord was precious. After preaching held a lovefeast, and we had a heavenly meeting. I thought it one of the best I ever was at. Several spoke of entire sanctification, and two obtained it.

I have heard of more testimonies of entire sanctification, since last Christmas, than I had heard before since I came into the circuit. Praise the Lord; he is deepening his work in the hearts of believers.

God has saved many souls of late in different parts of the circuit: yea, at Kington Magna, Gellingham, Motcomb, Enmore Green, and Knoyle; and the work is still going forward. O may the teeming shower come down, and thousands be saved.

W. STRONGMAN.

References

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