

William Clissold

Transcription of Obituary In the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Alfred Johnson

The subject of this sketch was born at Painswick in the Stroud Circuit, in the memorable year 1815. When quite a little boy he lost his father, and his mother was left with a large family. But the child of tender years went out to work for twopence a day. His care and affection for his mother increased as he grew older, his anxiety leading him to seek better and more remunerative employment. About the year 1839 or 40, he went to Chippenham, where he got work at stone-cutting. He providentially found lodgings with one of our local preachers, who induced him to attend the Primitive Methodist Chapel during the ministry of the Revs. E. Foizey and O. Pullen. Often did our departed brother look down from the gallery upon these godly men and wish to be like them. Not long after these aspirations were indulged, he was savingly converted to God, and began at once to work in His service. Falling short of employment he walked to London to get work, and was successful in obtaining it the same day. While in the great city, he was frequently urged by his workmates to join them in Sabbath recreations; but he was true to his Christian principles. After two or three years he returned to Chippenham, but very soon made up his mind to live at his native place so to be near and help his aged mother. His advent in Painswick was the instrumental means of a spiritual awakening there. His lively singing, earnest exhortations, and fervent praying, astonished and encouraged the little society, and soon there were many conversions. Out of the number of the saved there are some living to-day preaching the Gospel.

In 1843, he was put on the preachers' plan as an exhorter. The next year he became a fully accredited local preacher, and he must have stood well with his brethren, as he was elected chairman of the March Quarterly Meeting. As a local preacher he was very earnest, and always spoke with much power. The Rev. T. Hobson says of him, "There was such an unction attended his preaching; and wherever he was appointed he was sure to have a good attendance, and an appreciative audience." He never wilfully neglected an appointment for fifty years, and he always took his full share of preaching at the farthest parts of the circuit, without murmur or complaint. In forty years he walked not less than sixty miles every quarter. As a visitor of the sick and absentees from chapel or school he was unequalled in the circuit. In this work he was "no respecter of persons," but the poor especially might depend upon a visit from him, which would not end without "a word of prayer." He was a great friend to little children. They all loved him who knew him. The writer met a little girl who attends another place of worship, and ventured to ask her if she knew Mr. Clissold. "O yes," she replied, "he always speaks to me when he sees me." As a man and neighbour he was thoroughly upright and conscientious. A grocer told me how Mr. Clissold acted when he discovered that a mistake had been made in an account already settled. Losing no time, he went to the grocer, pointed out the difference of over a sovereign, and cheerfully paid the balance.

He was chapel-keeper for some years, and faithfully discharged his duties to the last. The day before his death I visited him, and found him suffering from acute bronchitis and exhaustion. As he wished it I sang "Safe in the arms of Jesus." Too weak to sing himself, his lips yet moved as if repeating the hymn, and when I prayed he found strength enough to respond, "Amen," and more particularly when I asked God to save his two sons.

One of our local preachers, Mr. Musgrove, visited him a few hours before his departure, and whilst speaking of the glories of heaven, his face lit up with holy rapture. He said in reply to his visitor, "Only waiting," "My feet are firm on the Rock." To a female friend who called to see him, and who tried to get him to take a little nourishment, but failed as he could not swallow, he whispered, "Christ in the heart the hope of glory." At half-past five on Tuesday evening, November 28th, he peacefully fell asleep, aged seventy-eight years.

The funeral, which took place at the Slad Congregational Church, was witnessed by a large concourse of people. Before leaving the chapel "Safe in the arms of Jesus," was sung with much feeling. Four local preachers bore the coffin, and the school children followed in the procession. In my enforced absence through influenza, the Rev. S. Thomas, Congregational minister, Painswick, officiated. A funeral service in place of the ordinary service was held in the Rev. R. Collett's church. Mr. Jesse Wall, of King Stanley, gave a touching address. The general opinion concerning the deceased was, "If ever there was a good man, William Clissold was one." The Rev. S. Thomas, in the course of his remarks on the departed, said, "Painswick is the poorer for his death and the richer for his life."

References

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