

Charles Bridgeman's Testimony

(Died at approximately 12 years of age)

Charles Bridgeman no sooner learned to speak, but he betook himself to prayer. He was prone to learn the things of God. He would be often teaching them their duty that waited upon him. He learned by heart many good things before he was fit to go to school: so religious were his words, his actions so upright, his devotions so hearty, his fear of God so great, that many were ready to say, as they did of John, "What manner of child shall this be?" He would be much in reading the Holy Scriptures. He was desirous of more spiritual knowledge, and would be often asking very serious questions. He would not stir out of doors before he had poured out his soul to the Lord.

When he ate any thing he would be sure to lift up his heart unto the Lord for a blessing upon it; and when he had moderately refreshed himself by eating, he would not forget to acknowledge the goodness of God in feeding him. He refused to lie down on his bed until he had been upon his knees; and when sometimes he had forgotten his duty, he would quickly arise, and, kneeling upon his bare knees, ask forgiveness of God for that sin. He would rebuke his brethren, if at any time they were hasty at their meals, or eat without asking a blessing. His check was usually this, "Dare you do this? God be merciful to us! This bit of bread might choke us."

His sentences were wise and weighty, and might well become an ancient Christian. His sickness was lingering; in which one told him of possessions that must fall to his portion: "And what are they? said he: I had rather have the kingdom of heaven than a thousand such inheritances." When he was sick, he seemed much taken up with heaven, asking very serious questions about the nature of his soul. After he was pretty well satisfied about that, he enquired how his soul might be saved? The answer being made, "By the applying of Christ's merits by faith, " he was pleased with the answer, and was ready to give any one that should desire it an account of his hope.

Being asked, whether he had rather live or die? He replied, "I desire to die that I may go to my Saviour." His pains increasing, one asked him, whether he would rather still endure those pains, or forsake Christ? "Alas, " said he, "I know not what to say, being but a child: these pains may stagger a strong man, but I will endure them the best that I can." Upon this he called to mind that martyr, Thomas Bilney; who, being in prison the night before his burning, put his finger into the candle, to know how he could endure the fire. "O, said the child, had I lived then, I would have run through the fire to have gone to Christ."

Three days before his death, he told them not only that he must die, but the day: no sooner was that day come, but he fell into a trance, his eyes fixed, his face cheerful, his hands and arms clasped in a bow, as if he would have received some blessed angels that were at hand to receive his soul. When he came to himself, he told them that he saw the sweetest body ever eyes beheld,

who bade him be of good cheer, for he must presently go with him. The last words he spake, were these: "Pray, pray, pray; nay, yet pray; and the more prayers, the better; all prospers: God is the best Physician: into thy hands I commend my spirit. O Lord, receive my soul unto thee."

And thus he yielded up his spirit unto the Lord, when he was about twelve years old.