

Windows of Witness (Acts 4:20) (Charles Hodge)

Reference, Quotes from - *The Life of Charles Hodge* (By A.A. Hodge)

As JC Ryle states in *The Christian Leaders*, “The instruments that God employs to do his work in the world deserve a close inspection.” May our Sovereign Lord be pleased to raise up individuals in this day to serve for the glory of God.

Charles Hodge (1797-1878), was a longtime professor at Princeton Seminary, and a highly respected preacher and theologian. We are privileged to have many of Hodge’s letters, journal articles, diary entries, and personal reflections. Charles Hodge was one of the most influential leaders in the foundational years of the church in America, and is considered by many, one of the greatest American theologians of the nineteenth century. CH Spurgeon said there was no writer whom he more fully agreed with, than Charles Hodge. Yet, as a professor at Princeton, he remarked “I have never advanced a new idea...I am not afraid to say that a new idea never originated in this Seminary.” He saw as his supreme priority the need to simply and clearly proclaim the truth of God’s Holy Word. While his letters and articles provide clear evidence of his advanced intellect, it was far from being his most valuable trait. Charles Hodge possessed such a unique blend of God given authority and compassion that a close friend described him as possessing “a soldier’s courage and a woman’s gentleness”.

While Hodge was praised by “theologians in Europe and America as ‘the theologian of the age’”, he was “modest and unassuming as a child — never courting a compliment; never saying or doing anything for effect; never (bringing) attention to himself in any way. Of course he could not be blind to the homage which was paid him from every quarter; but his own estimate of himself was framed by quite another standard. His vast learning taught him that he had barely crossed the border of that boundless domain of truth which stretches off in every direction into the infinite; and his habitual feeling was, ‘What we know is very little; what we do not know is immense.’”

Again A.A. Hodge writes of Charles, “Therefore it was that our dear Professor was ever ‘clothed with humility’ — ***clothed*** with it; it covered him like ‘a raiment of needlework’ — covered all the powers of his mind, all the treasures of his learning, all the wealth of his affections, all that made him great and good, loving and beloved, all that moved us to look upon him as one given to the church (may it be allowed me to say) to show how much a Christian may, even in this world, become like Christ.”

It was the habit of Charles Hodge while preaching, to read his manuscript. All who knew him, confess that his reading was most often not animated. However, on multiple occasions under such conviction, the weight of the hour, and the power of God, it was said that “his heart swelled, and lifting his head from the manuscript, he stood erect...whilst the tears poured down his face, he delivered the message with a gust of emotion that went through the audience like the sweep of a storm through the forest. All hearts were broken, and for a moment were held and swayed by a might power.”

May God be pleased to give us such authority, humility, and compassion!

~ Pastor Tim Hodge