

Windows of Witness (Acts 4:20) (Stephen Charnock)

Reference, *Puritan Papers Volume One* (D. Martin Lloyd-Jones) & *Existence and Attributes* (Charnock)

It is my great privilege again for the month of September, to share a glimpse from the life of a man who was instrumentally used in service to God. May our Sovereign Lord be pleased to raise up individuals in this day to serve for the glory of His name.

Stephen Charnock was born in London in 1628. He graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge; and obtained a fellowship at New College, Oxford, in 1650; and in 1656 moved to Ireland. For 15-20 years, Charnock's life is one of seeming silent obscurity. Then, in 1675, we find him as Pastor of Crosby Hall, in London. Charnock died just 5 years later in 1680, at the young age of 52.

We are able to get a more detailed look into how God used Stephen Charnock, from his written work. Almost all of his writings (with the exception of one small book), were published after his death. The best of his writings were compiled by his close friends, Mr. Adams and Mr. Veal, to whom he had committed his papers before his death. These writings are in various formats, with the most popular in a 9 volume set.

Stephen Charnock is therefore, (because of his writings), best known as a man who exalted our Great God by pulpit and pen. Charnock magnifies the truth of God's Divine power and rule in such a way that it is a tremendous comfort to the heart of God's people. He was known as "a preeminently holy man, distinguished at once by personal purity...and habitual devotion." It was said of Charnock that his greatest companions were his Bible and his books. The "productions of his pen", give evidence of his devotion to God's Word, and his many books of study. Tragically, the 1666 "fire of London" destroyed all of Charnock's personal library; however the impact on his life from their study, lives on.

Augustus Toplady (1740-1778) wrote of his work *Existence and Attributes of God*, "I have met with many treatises on the divine perfections; but with none which in any way equals that of Mr. Charnock." In this referenced work, Charnock speaks of the great necessity of giving ourselves to the careful study of God's word. He states, "**Prize and study the Scripture.** We can have no delight in meditation on him, unless we know him ; and we cannot know him but by the means of his own revelation; when the revelation is despised, the revealer will be of little esteem. Men do not throw off God from being their rule, till they throw off Scripture from being their guide ; and God must needs be cast off from being an end, when the Scripture is rejected from being a rule."

Charnock has a wide reaching impact even after his death for one reason; He was a man of the WORD!

I pray for God to ignite such love and desire in us, for our Lord and for His WORD!

~ Pastor Tim Hodge