

Powerfully Obscure Faithfulness

God uses people like Andrew, and only He can calculate their effectiveness. Sometimes it takes an Andrew to reach a Peter. An obscure Methodist preacher of the eighteenth century named Thomas Mitchell was an Andrew. His obituary read, "Thomas Mitchell, an old soldier of Jesus Christ, a man of slender abilities as a preacher, and who enjoyed only a very defective education." Yet one of his friends wrote of him: "His earnest and loving work caused him to lead many people to Christ." Though a man of "*slender abilities*" and "*defective education*", he was nevertheless God's means of bringing to Christ the great preacher Thomas Olivers.

Thomas Mitchell went to a little village in Lincolnshire, where he arose each morning at five o'clock to preach in the open air, as John Wesley often did. His preaching was so fiery that he was arrested and attacked by a mob and he was taken to the public house for a hearing before the village curate. The crowd convinced the curate to let them throw Mitchell into a filthy, slimy pond. Each time he managed to crawl out, the mob threw him back in. He was then painted from head to foot with white paint and taken again to the public house. After a long debate about what to do with him, they decided to drown him. He was thrown into a small lake outside the town, and each time he came to the surface, a man with a long pole would push him under again. Eventually he was taken out, more dead than alive. He was tirelessly cared for by a godly old lady of the village, but when the mob found out that he was recovering, they threatened to rend him limb from limb unless he promised never to preach again. He refused to make such a promise but somehow managed to escape the threatened punishment. He later wrote of the incident, "All the time God kept me in perfect peace and I was able to pray for my enemies." For the rest of his life he continued to minister in obscure faithfulness. But by God's standards and in God's power, he was far from being "*a man of slender abilities*."

"And God is able to make ALL grace abound toward you; that you, ALWAYS having ALL sufficiency in ALL things, may abound to EVERY good work."

[2Cor. 9:8]

– Article submitted by Chuck Wetzel
03.24.2020