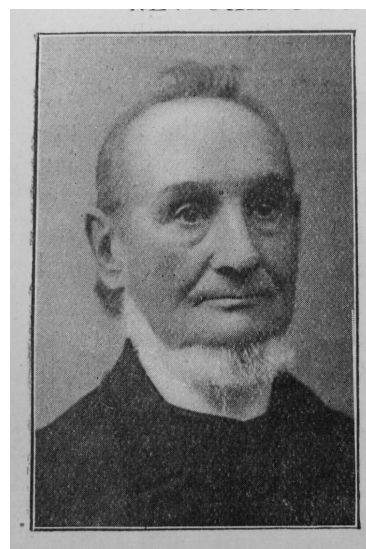


## Rev James Boulton

### Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by William Barker

When the Venerable James Boulton passed into the higher life on September 30th, 1907, Primitive Methodism lost one of its oldest and most devoted ministers. His life was almost contemporaneous with the life of the Connexion, and he was one of the last of the brave and holy men who worked with Hugh Bourne and William Clowes as a pioneer preacher.

James Boulton was born at Barwell, near Leicester, on May 3rd, 1815, and hence he was in his ninety-third year when he was translated to the Better Land. His father was a Leicestershire farmer and a Churchman, and yet he was so broad-minded that he willingly allowed the pioneers of Primitive Methodism to preach in his barn when they missioned the villages in the area now covered by the Hinckley Circuit. Over seventy-two years ago James Boulton was converted and admitted as a member of the Primitive Methodist Church.



At that distant date Barwell was included in the Leicester station, and Mr. Boulton, as well as the late Rev. Ambrose Kirkland, was called into the ministry by his native circuit. In his early ministry Mr. Boulton laboured with Hugh Bourne, John Benton, Sarah Kirkland, and other notable preachers of the early days.

For several years men like Dr. S. Antliff, J. Dickinson, W. Jefferson, W. Carthy, C. Lace (the blind preacher), J. Brownson, and Robert Parkes were his compeers in the old Nottingham District.

During his active ministry, which covered the unusually long term of forty-nine years, Mr. Boulton served at Leicester, Loughborough (three times) Derby, Chesterfield, Donnington, Burton-on-Trent, Mansfield, Newark, Lincoln, Horncastle, Motherwell, Berwick, Allendale, Brough, Whitby, Hetton, Spilsby, Hinckley, and Bottesford. After he was placed on the list of supernumeraries he settled at Leicester, and until the death of his gifted and devoted wife in 1896, he did a good work in pastoral visitation and preaching at our Belgrave Church.

When he broke up his home he still found his chief joy in toiling for the church he served so long and loved so well. He went to reside with his son-in-law, and as both his daughters had married Primitive Methodist ministers, he kept in close touch with Connexional and Circuit life. He was a frequent preacher at Darwen and Bolton, and as late as the year 1900, when he was in his eighty-fifth year, Mr. Boulton was specially engaged by the Higher Ardwick Church to open a new mission at Levenshulme, and he did a work in that rapidly growing suburb of Manchester which led to the establishment of a progressive church. In his eighty-seventh year Mr. Boulton lost his eyesight, and for four years was totally blind.

When the Conference assembled in Manchester in 1906, a deputation consisting of the Rev. James Travis, Alderman Hilton, and Mr. Thomas Lawrence, visited Mr. Boulton and expressed the warm regard of the delegates for the oldest minister in Primitive Methodism. When Mr. Travis offered prayer a mighty power fell on the little assembly. As the brethren rose from their knees Mr. Boulton told them he was convinced that his sight would be restored and that he would again declare the everlasting Gospel of the Prince of Peace.

And it was so. An operation was performed and the precious gift of sight was again enjoyed. On Easter Sunday, 1907, Mr. Boulton preached with remarkable vigour and power, in our Old Trafford Chapel. As the summer advanced, however, his strength began to wane. The veteran was greatly disappointed when he found that he could not attend the Conference at Leicester last year. Twelve weeks' illness supervened, and then in the fulness of faith, the aged pilgrim passed into the rest which remaineth for all the people of God.

The funeral took place on Friday, October 4th, 1907, amid many manifestations of sorrow and regard. An impressive service was held in Moss Lane Church, Manchester, of which Mr. Boulton's son-in-law is minister. The Rev. Henry Yooll, President of Conference, delivered a beautiful appreciation of Mr. Boulton's life and character, describing him as a faithful Christian, a powerful evangelical preacher, a great soul-winner, a painstaking administrator of church business, and a diligent student of God's Holy Word.

The, Revs. G. Parkin, B.D., J. Odell (ex-Presidents of Conference), J. Yearsley (District Secretary), Principal Johnson, F.L.S., Professor A. L. Humphries, M.A., (Hartley College), J. Harryman Taylor, M.A., and Mr. Thomas Jones (Deed Poll member and Circuit Steward), shared in the impressive funeral service. A large number of ministers, as well as representatives from Darwen, Higher Ardwick, Levenshulme, Moss Lane, and Old Trafford Churches attended the funeral. Six students from the Hartley College acted as bearers, and Mr. G.A. Genney (Higher Ardwick) officiated at the organ. From Manchester the coffin was conveyed to Newark-on-Trent, and the remains were laid in the family vault by the side of the devoted wife who died many years ago. An old friend and comrade in arms the Rev. William Cutts (ex-President of Conference), assisted by the Rev. Nathan Haigh, of Sheffield, conducted the committal service, and delivered an appropriate address at the grave-side.

“Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age,  
Like as a shock of corn cometh in its season.”  
“Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty:  
They shall behold the Land that is very far off.”

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## References

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1908/318