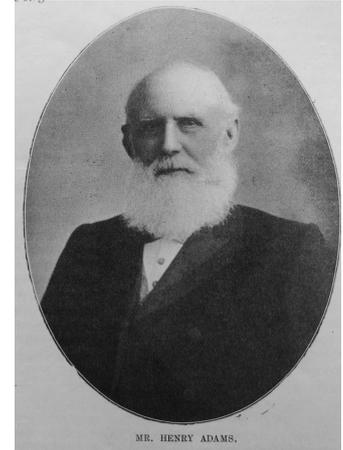


**Builders of our Church**  
**Mr. Henry Adams**

**Transcription of Sketch in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Rev. Philip Nume**

HENRY ADAMS was born at Hollinsend in 1836. Born into ordinary circumstances, his was no ordinary personality. He was endowed with powers fitting him to play a leading part upon the stage of life.

Gifted with immense energy, he, without a solitary worldly advantage, climbed to a position of the highest trust and confidence, with the responsibilities of a vast commercial concern in his hands. He began life in a miner's cottage, in a squalid village, but he became a prince of commerce, a great philanthropist, and a distinguished religious leader. Not repose, but action was written all over his days. And, it was action directed by skill and sagacity. Having conceived a plan he proceeded at once to execute it. This restless energy made him seem sometimes to be irritated by the slowness of other people; and that occasionally made his speed such as took the breath away from some who were called upon to work with him.



He did things promptly, punctually and with the greatest possible despatch. Difficulties were made to be overcome, and to surmount them was a joy. "Lay on Macduff" was the spirit of his life, whatever he undertook to do.

Naturalness was another of his notable characteristics. He aped nobody. True, he had a sharp, cut-and-thrust style of speech, but he said what he meant, and meant what he said. He never dodged. He was simple, sincere, and easy to be understood. There was not a particle of snobbery about him. He was without pretence and coxcombry. He was ever the same unaffected, plain-spoken, brotherly man.

His religious zeal was great. Of him we can indeed say truly, "The zeal of the Lord's house ate him up." Joining our Church when he was twenty-five years of age, he began at once to propagate his faith. As there was no chapel in the village where he lived he opened his house for preaching services. When he removed to Sheffield he immediately joined the society at Bethel, but he was soon drafted off to begin mission work in the south of the city, and out of this mission work have come John Street Circuit and the circuits formed from it. Our friend gloried in out-door evangelism. He was never happier than in a prayer meeting or where men and women were seeking pardon. He loved the class meeting, and to the end of his life set a fine example in the regularity with which he attended the week-night preaching service. Whoever else went gypsying on the Sabbath, Henry Adams was found in his own pew. On any matter that affected the welfare of his Church you could at once get his attention, his advice, and his practical help. He had a passion for building Primitive Methodist Chapels. It has been said that no man has done more, if as much, for chapel extension in Primitive Methodism in the North of England than he.

Mr. Adams was remarkable for his philanthropy; verily, he recognised that he was the Lord's steward. If it be true that the liberal soul shall be made fat, then what a flourishing soul Henry Adams must have had. No appeal for a needy cause failed to reach his heart and his pocket. There are scores of aged and feeble and poor who for years have found their hearthstones warmed and their mouths fed by Henry Adams'

thoughtful kindness. "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he made the widow's heart to sing for joy. He was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame; he was a father to the poor, and the cause which he knew not he searched out. He brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth."

Henry Adams was well-known for his devotion to Free Church principles. He was not only a first-rate Methodist, but an ardent Free Churchman. He was always to the front in any movement to vindicate and spread Free Church principles, and ready to help to furnish the sinews of war when battles for religious freedom had to be fought in his own city and in the country generally.

"The loss to the Free Churches," says the local paper, "is immeasurable and it is questionable if the gap he has left will ever be filled by one man."

Passive Resistance found in him a vehement and liberal supporter. Wherever the people's liberty had to be fought for there you were sure to find him fighting with both hands and all his soul.

Henry Adams was a loyal friend. If he became your friend you could trust him either in your presence or out of it. He would fight for you through fire and flood. Time and circumstance did not alter his esteem for you. There were those who took advantage of this noble quality in him and badly deceived him, and the wonder is that he did not become sour and cynical as the result of these repeated infidelities. But an optimistic temperament and the grace of God saved him from pessimistic views of human nature.

Mr. Adams' religious character was exemplary in all his relationships and practices. He had a firm grip of the cardinal evangelical truths and they sufficed for his spiritual needs. His convictions concerning the relation of God to his soul and of Jesus Christ to his salvation were clear, definite and undisturbed. He was not troubled with many intellectual difficulties concerning the great questions of religion. Nothing became him more in life than his way of leaving it. A few hours before the end he summoned his children one by one into his presence, and gave them his last advice. Then he had them all together in his room, and prayed with them, and soon afterwards, December 12th, 1906, he triumphantly passed into that "rest which remaineth for the people of God."

Mr. Adams' worth was recognised by his fellows. For some years he was a member of the Sheffield School Board and a Guardian of the poor. He was also elected president of the Sheffield Sunday School Union, and president of the Free Church Council of which organization he was for a considerable time the treasurer. Our friend was a member of all our important Church Committees, and a trustee of Elmfield College; and he took a deep and practical interest in our orphanage. The Liverpool Conference of 1888 elected him to be its Vice-president.

'At his funeral thousands of people followed the cortege on foot, and it is many years since the city of Sheffield was so greatly moved by the death of one of its best sons

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## References

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1906/