

## **Rev. Hezekiah Cooke**

### **Transcription of Obituary in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Thomas Clamp**

The passing of this eminent saint and minister of Christ, in the early afternoon of Friday, December 22nd, 1905, removed a familiar personality from the district of Wharfedale, and created a distinct blank in the lives of many who had treasured his friendship.

His origin was humble but honourable. He was born at Wood Bottom Mill, near Huddersfield, now in Scholes Circuit, on December 31st, 1835. His father was a local preacher in our Church, but died at the age of twenty-four, when Hezekiah was only seven months old.

Converted in his twentieth year, and dying in his seventieth, Mr. Cooke just realised the jubilee of active service.

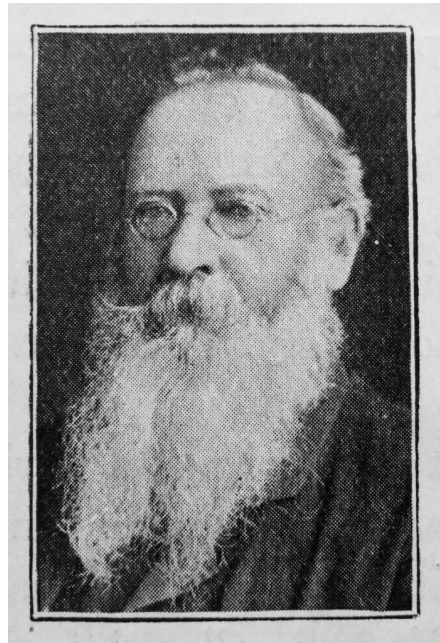
After much useful work as a hired local preacher, Mr. Cooke began his regular ministry in Leeds First Circuit, and subsequently travelled Pontefract, Leeds III., Otley (twice), Knaresborough, Halifax, Leeds V., Harrogate, Hull V., Leeds VI., Bradford II., and Pudsey. In the year 1900 he superannuated and spent the remainder of his time, in about equal parts, first at Guiseley, and then at Burley, in the Otley Circuit.

The fact that among his first acts of service as a converted youth was to help dig out a chapel foundation, is significant as opening up a long series of chapel efforts which marked his ministry.

At Rawdon, in Otley Circuit, he was chiefly instrumental in the erection of the present commodious chapel and schoolroom. During his term at Knaresborough, the site for the former Harrogate Chapel was secured and considerable funds raised.

As regards his Halifax ministry, Alderman J. Brearley, after saying, "he was the means of leading both myself and my brother (since deceased) and several others to the Saviour," adds, "It was largely through him a new class was formed at Queen's Road, which has since grown to be Halifax Second Circuit," During this term the Gibbett Road Chapel site was bought for £400, which was raised, and a promise list of nearly £1,000. These premises were afterwards sold for between £3,000 and £4,000, and the money used in building the splendid property in Queen's Road.

At Leeds V., Bramley "Moriah" Chapel was built under his superintendency, and Armley Branch Road site secured, and the school room built. Roker Lane, Pudsey, land and premises were also added to circuit property. At Harrogate the Starbeck site was bought, a school chapel built, and half the cost raised.



While the above is a fair record it was as a preacher and pastor he excelled. The Rev. E. Dalton stated before the General Committee that "he had never heard a finer expositor of the word of God," and that "Mr. Cooke's abilities had never received the Connexional recognition to which they were entitled." His family visits usually ran into the three figures per week. His prayers are precious memories to many. His superannuation simply increased his devotion to this class of ministry. A month before his death he was heart and soul in a gracious revival which visited our Burley Church. He took several services, led an open-air procession on a November night; led penitents to the front, and sang and prayed with them with all the energy of a young man.

Though physically he was above the average in height, and in latter years carried a fine manly presence, it was known to many that he was the subject of a painful affliction. The end came with startling suddenness. He had an attack of influenza which developed bronchitis. He, however, improved and was getting about as usual. On the morning of his death he visited several places of business, and posted his Christmas cards. Returning home he took his dinner as usual, then complained of pains. He rallied again, then collapsed, and all was over in five minutes.

His remains were laid to rest at Bramley in a vault containing those of Mrs. Cooke, who pre-deceased him. Burley Chapel was filled for a memorial service before leaving the village, and at the end of a ten miles' journey, six hundred persons, representative of the official life of Leeds and York, and Bradford and Halifax districts, awaited the cortege in "Moriah" Chapel, one of the monuments of his skill and industry. Our best conclusion is found in a testimony borne to him as far back as 1894, by Rev. J. Bennett. "His personal influence, whether in pastoral work, business transactions, social intercourse, or preaching the gospel, is all for Christ. Thus all contact with him, official or unofficial, is charged with inspiration and blessing. Happy must that community be that can number among its ministers men of the high character, ability, and devotion, of the Rev. H. Cooke."

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## References

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1907/70