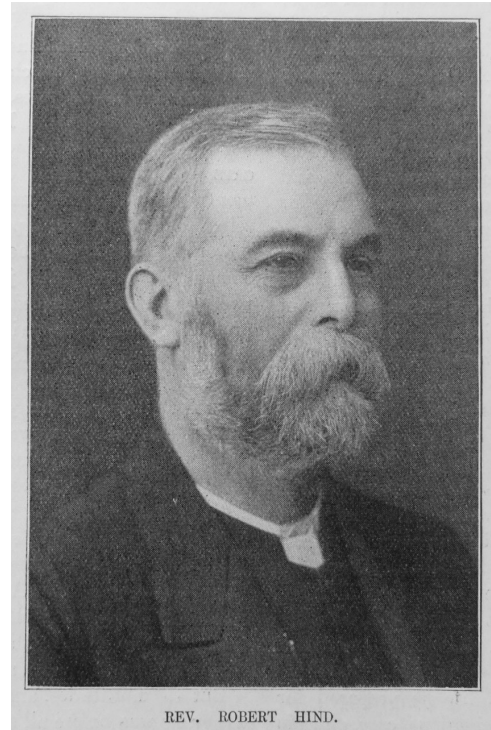


Rev Robert Hind

Transcription of obituary published in the in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Editor under the heading "Our Departed Leaders"

The passing of another of the princes of our Israel reminds us that through all the hundred years of its history Primitive Methodism has been producing strong men and brave, devoted women. We seldom realise their greatness until the extent of the gap they have left behind brings it home to us. Robert Hind has been long recognised as one of our foremost ministers, gifted far above the common, wise in counsel, eminent in service. For twenty-six years he was a quite exceptionally successful circuit minister, and if he had done nothing outside that sphere his record would have been remarkable. But he was all this and a great deal more. His literary ministry, extending over a quarter of a century, afforded guidance and inspiration to thousands, and as the head of a great department of his Church he rendered service of an exceptionally onerous and valuable kind. |



Born at Nenthead, Alston Moor, high up among the Pennine Hills, on December 21st, 1851, Robert Hind came of a good, wholesome, religious stock, and laid during the country life of his boyhood the bases of his future development, physical, intellectual, spiritual. Thoroughness was a note of that preparation. At fifteen he was able to undertake the physical work of a man. There was always a suggestion of reserve power in the tall, deep-chested, figure, the ruddy, handsome features, the deep manly voice. In the master of the village school, who was a University graduate, he had a gifted teacher, and the elementary foundations, especially in English and mathematics, were well and truly laid. The religious influences of home life were supplemented by a genuine conversion during a revival conducted by Miss Bennett, of Chester, and the voracious reader who was ever widening his outlook by the perusal of the great masterpieces of fiction soon gave such indications of capacity for service that when a mere youth of sixteen he became a local preacher. Recommended for the ministry his way was barred for a while by the illness and death of his father which laid upon him the charge of a prosperous family business.

Subsequently the difficulty was surmounted, and a year at the Sunderland Institute proved an excellent preparation for the ministry. His probation, spent on the Crook Station, was exceptionally successful, and notwithstanding excessive labours in revivalism, out of some forty probationers he came within four marks of the premier place for the four years' examinations.

In Blyth and Gateshead Mr. Hind's virile ministry made a deep impression, and his superintendencies in Durham, Paisley, and Middlesbrough were a series of extraordinary successes and triumphs. Now his remarkable administrative abilities found full scope, and his ministry was wonderfully fruitful. The

outlook of these three stations was completely revolutionised. During the greater part of his six years' ministry at Middlesbrough a marvellous revival was experienced. It was unique in that there were no special services and no special agents, and conversions took place every Sunday for years. The revival quickly solved all the circuit problems and issued in abounding prosperity. Through all this wonderful time Mr. Hind was one of the foremost citizens of Middlesbrough, a distinguished member of the School Board, and a President of the Free Church Council.

This striking success was due first of all to the moral influence of a remarkable personality. This made itself felt in the entire working of our friend's stations. It sent the breath of a new life through the organisation of the churches. While manifest in all his stations this undoubtedly reached its zenith at Middlesbrough. To extraordinary difficulties he there brought extraordinary ability and force of character. Mr. Hind's personal influence was immensely increased by his pulpit power. All his life he prepared for the pulpit with conscientious care, and his sermons were massive in conception. He knew how to get at the heart of a text, and also at the heart as well as the intellect of his hearers. His philosophical bent and training contributed to the effectiveness of his ministry, and his wide reading in poetry and fiction gave balance to his mental development by the culture of the imagination. Analytical power, logical coherence and imaginative force were all conspicuous in his discourses, and in the great revival, logic, reason, imagination were all welded into one glowing whole by the spiritual fervour which dominated the preacher. His continuous expositions of the Acts of the Apostles and the Book of Revelation were marked by singular freshness, insight, and spiritual power, and John Wilson, M.P., would travel long distances rather than miss one of the former on a week-night.

The readers of the "Review" know the high intellectual level of his numerous articles, often contributed quarter after quarter, on a great variety of themes, religious, philosophical, poetical, and imaginative, and year after year he enriched the magazines with his fine serial stories, and his articles on all kinds of subjects. For nine years he wrote the monthly review for the ALDERSGATE, and all his work during the closing months of his life was penetrated with a new religious fervour which possessed a strange power of searching the hearts of his readers. Then he was an able journalist, and for twenty years collaborated with the writer in producing the Conference issues of the "Primitive Methodist" and in a lessened degree of its successor, the "Primitive Methodist Leader;" while his weekly summary of current events in the same journal was characterised by such knowledge, judgment and grasp of great principles as served to command the attention and respect of readers outside the denomination. Only a few knew the value of the service his great gifts of administration rendered to the Chapel Aid Association and Insurance Companies, which under his care developed enormously, the former having deposit account of half a million sterling.

But to multitudes, and not least to the writer, he was before all things a friend: an ideal friend, generous, sympathetic, understanding, and calling out the best and the highest qualities of their nature. That such a friend and a minister of gifts so great should be cut down in the fulness of his powers is one of the inscrutable mysteries of Providence. The news, a week before his death, that there was no hope, came as a painful and incredible thing to his friends all over the land. For though it had been known that he was ill it seemed impossible that he should die. He fought gallantly against the mysterious disease which first revealed itself in a trifling form more than eighteen months ago. But courage and determination and medical skill and the prayers of many all failed to arrest the

disease. He met the last enemy with the courage and faith of a Christian, in simple trust in the Redeemer and in sure hope of immortality.

He died in Newcastle whither he had gone to be under a specialist, February 19th, 1909, and his mortal remains were laid to rest there amid a vast concourse of ministers and friends from many parts of England and Scotland.

A beautiful and impressive service was held in the Kingsley Terrace Church in which old friends and associates took part. The writer gave the address on this occasion and also at a Circuit Memorial service at Middlesbrough a week later.

It is impossible to quote from the innumerable letters received by the sorrowing widow and boys, but they constitute a marvellous tribute to the worth and influence of the brother and friend, whose passing to "the other side" has left a blank in many hearts and. lives that can never be filled.

References

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