

Rev Richard Ainsworth

Transcription of Obituary in the Minutes of Conference

This honoured servant of Jesus Christ entered into the larger life on Tuesday, March 17th, 1931, at the advanced age of 81 years. He was born at Mellor, near Blackburn, on June 18th, 1849. His parents were godly people, being members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. When he was fourteen years of age the family moved to Rishton, where the Primitive Methodists had opened a small chapel. When he was twenty years of age he joined the Primitive Methodists, and quickly became a very useful worker amongst them. He was soon appointed society steward and class leader, and shortly afterwards the Circuit Quarterly Meeting asked him to prepare for the plan.

As a local preacher he laboured on the Blackburn Circuit with considerable success, witnessing many conversions. At the age of twenty-four he married one of the sweetest and saintliest of women, who greatly assisted him in all the work he did for the Kingdom of God. Shortly after their marriage they removed to Accrington, where he continued his labours as a local preacher with marked success.

On account of his unusual gifts and successes as a local preacher he was urged by the Missionary Secretary (Rev. W. Rowe) to enter the Primitive Methodist Ministry. He hesitated for a time owing to lack of education. But he sought to make good this lack by attending a young men's college at Accrington. He successfully passed his candidate's examination and earnestly desired to enter the Sunderland Institute. This, however, was not possible, and he was sent right away into Circuit work. He commenced with a brief term of ministry at Glasgow, and afterwards travelled on the following Stations:- Glastonbury, Plymouth, Torquay, South Molton, Walsall, Sudbury, Skelmersdale, Peel, I.O.M., Oakham, Easingwold, Scotter, Guisborough, Stoke-on-Trent, North Cave and Glasgow Fourth.

Owing to failing sight he was compelled to seek superannuation in 1915. For four years he resided at Blackpool, then he removed to Morecambe, where he spent the remainder of his life.

During his thirty-eight years of active Ministry our brother faced some very difficult tasks and achieved some notable triumphs. Again and again the Missionary Committee called on him to undertake some forlorn cause, and by his sound judgment and excellent administrative ability he turned failure into success. As a Christian Minister he had a high sense of his calling, and put his conscience into all his work. The ordinary as well as the extraordinary affairs of the churches under his care received his close attention, hence he usually left his Circuits in a healthy and prosperous condition. Under his wise supervision a number of chapels were erected, enlarged or altered; many heavy debts were considerably lessened and others entirely wiped out, while in other cases whole Circuits were saved from bankruptcy.

But Richard Ainsworth found his greatest joy in preaching the Gospel and winning souls for Jesus Christ. This was his supreme and constant task, and in this he was pre-eminently successful wherever he laboured. As a preacher he sounded the evangelical note. His thoughts would often gather around the cross of Jesus Christ, and to him that cross spoke of a boundless love and priceless sacrifice. No wonder that his forceful appeals led many to gather around that cross for forgiveness.

Our brother never lost touch with his people, and his visitations to homes of sickness and bereavement will ever be gratefully remembered. He also had a very clear sense of the duty of giving. To him it was not what he could spare, but what he could sacrifice. He lived carefully himself in order that he could all the more handsomely assist the needy and worthy causes which came to his notice.

During his years of retirement his passion for preaching and his love for his Church never diminished. He frequently took preaching appointments until about a year before his death, when bodily weakness made it no longer possible.

His last illness was long and trying, but he bore his suffering with a quiet patience. He greatly enjoyed the visits and prayers of his brother Ministers, and delighted in their conversations on the goodness of the Lord and the work of the Kingdom. He faced death quietly and passed through it triumphantly into endless day.

On Friday, March 20th, a well-attended and impressive service was held in the Parliament Street Church, Morecambe, conducted by Rev. W.E. Webley, at which Rev. S.G. Delafield spoke words of appreciation, and Rev. P. McPhail offered prayer.

The interment took place at the Blackpool Cemetery, attended by Revs. S. G. Delafield (representing General Committee), Hermon F. Johnson (representing District Committee), W.J. Tubb, John Prince, Jas. Wright, W. Ernest Webley and many other friends.

W. E.W.

References

PM Minutes 1931/271