

## **Rev. Robert Langford**

### **Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Emma Richmond Butcher**

ANOTHER of the heroes of early Primitive Methodism has passed away. We write of the Rev. Robert Langford. He was born at Woodmancott, in the county of Hampshire, on April 6, 1798. When quite a young man he was converted in the Established Church under the ministrations of an earnest and evangelical clergyman.

In those days Dissent was little known in that locality. From a child he had strong desires to preach, consequently, soon, after his conversion, though not joined to any particular church, he was constrained to preach, and used to visit the surrounding villages in the evenings after his business; and in the open air under some wide-spreading tree he frequently held forth the word of life to many ready listeners. Such was his delight in telling the story of the cross, that it was real pleasure to hear him, to walk a distance of some miles to those places; and in returning home, his soul was often so filled with the love of God that he could not refrain from singing aloud His praises, and the woods have echoed to his voice, in the stillness of the night. By his evangelistic labours he was made a great blessing to the people of those villages, especially the young; very many of whom were induced to give their hearts to Christ.

In a few years after his conversion the Primitive Methodists visited the place of his nativity, when he, and all those who had gathered about him, united with them.

They were indeed the people of his choice. He thought their doctrines and polity every way preferable to those of any other religious denomination. After joining them they soon called him out as an itinerant minister. In the strictest sense he was a worker. For twenty years he served the Connexion faithfully and well in the following circuits:—Shefford, Motcombe, Poole, Market Lavington, Radstock, Pembroke, Pillawell, Witney and Poole a second time. Much persecution and hardships were endured by him during the early years of his ministry, often going as it were with his life in his hand. He had naturally a very robust constitution and lion-like mind, or he could not have braved those mighty storms.

His was truly a life of self-sacrifice—forgetting his own ease and comfort in his desire to serve the Master. He counted no journey too long, no home too humble if he could only further the cause of Christ. As a preacher he was very acceptable. By his homely and forcible manner of setting forth the truth to the many hundreds that listened to him in the open air very many were gathered into the fold of Christ. He was a man of deep sympathy, and was regarded by the people generally as a father as well as a minister: consequently they esteemed him very highly. But after twenty years of such toil as those days required his strong constitution began to break down. In a sense I believe him to have been a martyr. He fought bravely. Peace to his memory!

For twenty-two years he suffered deeply, having a disease that baffled the most skilful medical practitioners, which entirely shook his nervous system.

For the most part of that time he lived in comparative obscurity, patiently waiting the call of the Master, and often longing to be gone. For the last few weeks of his life he suffered much, being unconscious the most of the time; still in his lucid moments he spoke of death with the greatest composure. He is now happily freed from his cumbrous tenement of clay. On the 8th of January, 1875, he sweetly breathed his life away, like the dying of the evening zephyr. The disease of which he died was chronic bronchitis.

He is now gone to reap the reward of all his toil. His happy spirit has joined the loved ones gone before: may we follow him as he followed Christ.

By his departure some have lost a faithful friend and dear companion; by his vacant chair some hearts are saddened, but they hope to meet him and be re-united through a long eternity.

May their hearts' desire be realised. Amen.

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## References

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1875/746