

John Bainbridge, (1844-1910)

Transcription of obituary published in the Minutes of Conference by Joseph A Taylor

JOHN BAINBRIDGE. - John Bainbridge was born at Mosley, in the county of Durham, in the year 1844, and passed hence the last day in December, 1910. In early life his educational advantages were very few, but he was possessed of mental grit, and gave himself whole-heartedly to the reading of helpful books. While in his teens he became a decided Christian, and commenced teaching in the Sunday School at Mosley. The Durham officials recognising in him a studious, well-informed Christian, put him on the circuit plan, and shortly afterwards he went to Spennymoor as hired local preacher under Rev. J. Watson.

Having successfully passed the necessary examinations he entered the Sunderland Institute for a year. He commenced probation on the Seaton Delaval circuit, the Rev. W. Bowe being his superintendent. He spent the whole of his probation on his first circuit. In 1879 he began his ministry in Blyth circuit, and here he is supposed to have spent the most fruitful part of his life. He laboured with much acceptance for five years, giving special attention to pulpit preparation. The Rev. John Snaith was superintendent. In writing of their happy term together, Mr. Snaith says, 'He had been a year at Blyth before I became super. As a preacher he stood high with the whole circuit; his sermons and speeches were well thought out, his reading was confined to books requiring considerable reflection. He was quite at home with the essential doctrines of Methodism. He was very genial and open with those who gave him their confidence, but reserved towards those who showed lack of respect for him. To such he would appear unsocial, and was liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented, and no doubt he suffered in both these ways. From all I know of him, I am confident he could not knowingly be guilty of a dishonourable action. In all our intercourse he was kindly and upright, a true friend, a real Primitive Methodist.

Rev. Matthew T. Pickering writes: 'We knew Rev. J. Bainbridge very well in the early days of his ministry. His strongest feature was his preaching. I was only a boy when he came to Blyth, but remember him well and distinctly. He often came to our home, and my father had great hopes of his future. Slow in forming friendships, but very true as a friend. I remember his kindness in my early studies.'

In the Leek circuit Bro. Bainbridge made a great impression as a preacher. Mr. Wm. Trafford says: 'I can unhesitatingly say - and I speak for many who were privileged to sit under his ministry - he will not soon be forgotten in Leek. While here he made the most of his preaching gift. The effect on his congregation was unmistakeable. His sermons often lasted sixty minutes, but we were prepared to listen longer. We saw a beauty in the Word we had never seen before. To the young men of the Church he was a father, guide, and friend, especially to the young preachers. Many in this town mourn his departure, and will cherish his memory.

If I may add a word of my own it would be this: 'The place he was denied down here is now his in heaven.' The Conference of 1909 appointed Bro. Bainbridge to Ramsor circuit, but circumstances did not permit his settling there. In the August he came to Hanley, practically a superannuated minister, but cherishing hope that the Conference of 1910 would find him another Station. Physically he was a

broken man, but managed to preach a few times in the circuit and attend the services. For years he had suffered from chest weakness and failing sight, and the last few months his general strength waned very rapidly. Medical skill and the kindly attentions of his devoted wife did all that was possible, but without avail, and calmly taking hold of his wife's hands at two o'clock in the morning he said: 'My dear, I am going; good bye, God bless you,' and thus he passed into the unseen region where all is peace, December 31st, 1910, in his 66th year.

The funeral took place Wednesday, January 4th, in the General Cemetery, Hanley, preceded by a service in our Marsh Street Church, conducted by Rev. J.A. Taylor. Prayer was offered by Rev. W.J. Kirkland and an appropriate address given by Rev. Wm. Bennion, who had been requested to represent the General Committee. There were also present, Sydney and George Bainbridge (sons), Revs. Geo. Lee, W. Hall, W.B. Bache, W. Lawrence, W.B. Cheshire, T. Clamp, W.E. Webley, F.W. Henshall, and others.

During his active ministry Bro. Bainbridge travelled on the following Stations: Seaton Delaval, Blyth, Newcastle-on-Tyne Third, Berwick, Crook, Pateley Bridge, Chichester, Pembroke Dock, Leek, Cwm, Margate, Saffron Walden, and Bradford. In all he laboured thirty-five years, often amid much physical suffering. In Mrs. Bainbridge he had a sincere helper, full of sympathy and interest in his holy work.

References

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