

## **Doody, Thomas (1825-1874)**

### **Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Edward Kershaw**

The following is a sketch of the life and labours of the late Rev. Thomas Doody, written substantially by himself, a short time previous to his death:

“My father William Doody was in the British army nearly 22 years, during which time I was born at Leith, Edinburgh, on August 16, 1825. We went to various parts of the United Kingdom with the regiment till in 1829 my father was discharged with a pension at Woolwich, Kent. We then came to reside in his native village, Lilleshall, near Newport in Shropshire in the Wrockwardine Wood circuit; we afterwards removed to the next village, Church Aston. Here my dear departed parents were induced to open their cottage for preaching services, prayer-meetings, and class-meetings; and eternity alone will fully reveal what our family owes to God’s very gracious Providence for taking this step. Previous to my parents taking this step they went to the Established Church, but were strangers to saving grace. Through opening their cottage for religious worship, and by the instrumentality of our people, they were, however, led to Christ, and to cast in their lot with us as members of our connexion.

“After this our cottage became a home for our ministers and friends, and my parents felt and manifested deep concern for the salvation of their children. When my father was at his employment, my mother would read to me from the word of God, explain my lost condition, endeavour with prayers and tears to lead me to Christ, and her touchingly tender manner would often melt me to tears while I was between seven and eleven years of age. Before I was eleven years old I was apprenticed for seven years in the neighbouring village of Edgmond to learn to be a tailor, the trade of my choice. My parents thought that the family into which I was sent, were of good morals, but too soon I found that swearing, Sabbath desecration and drunkenness were very common. At first these things shocked me, but at length I got hardened, and premised to equal the worst. Being overworked, and at times shamefully beaten I was led to think much of the home I had left. When I went home on a visit, prayers, tears, the best advice, and parental love in its many forms were my portion: and hence when I was from home, and remembered these things I was at times very sad. Fearing that after all my mother’s prayers and tears I might miss heaven, I used to wish I had never been born, or that I had only been a bird, or beast, a tree, or stone. All the time I believed that religion was right, and often wished I had it, but was unwilling to give myself entirely to Jesus. While thus resisting the Holy Spirit, my dear mother’s last illness set in, and as she had a presentiment of its tendency, she said to me one day, “My boy, I feel I shall die soon, but if after my death you grow up in your sin and die a wicked man, and at the last day [ see you on the left hand, it will be very sad!”

“At this time I was a little more than fourteen years of age. My mother died in triumph on December 7, 1839, and the day following her death I went home and found myself deprived of one of the best of mothers. Then I felt more than ever the value of religion, and on that day December 8, 1839, I resolved that my mother’s God and people, should be mine; and by faith in the merits of Christ Jesus I obtained pardon and was reconciled to God. I joined our little society at Edgmond the following Sabbath, became a scholar in the Sunday-school, and afterwards a teacher, and I became strongly attached to both society and school. I also read the Holy Scriptures much and especially my favourite chapter, Proverbs iii. For some time I was persecuted by my fellow workmen and by my master. My fellow workmen often called me nicknames and my master would scornfully say that I was too young at fourteen to be religious, and that I should backslide. As months and years however, rolled away and I did not fall, he altered his opinion of me. He gave me credit for being a faithful servant, allowed me to attend any religious services I pleased, and said he expected the day would come when I should be a “parson.” In the year 1843 I finished my seven years apprenticeship and

for improvement I went to several large towns, and also to London. Wherever I went to stay any length of time I joined our people without delay.

“While in London, I joined our people at Elim chapel Fetter Lane, and to them I was much attached. When I left London, I went home, commenced business, and having good health and a mind to work, I soon acquired a good connection, and to all appearance, I only needed larger premises to become wealthy. My name was put on the Wrockwardine Wood circuit plan, and in the capacity of a local preacher I laboured some time. From the time of my conversion however, I had an impression on my mind, that it was my duty to enter the regular work of the ministry, if I had a call to do so. Fearing to take a wrong course I made it a matter of special prayer, and the more I prayed the more deeply it was impressed upon my mind.

“At the Wrockwardine Wood, March Quarterly meeting 1850, I was asked if I was willing to be a travelling preacher, and I answered, yes. I was duly examined, furnished with testimonials, and pledged by the general missionary committee, at the Nottingham Conference in 1850. The circuits in which I have successively laboured, are Bedford, Deal and Dover, Bedford, (a 2nd time) Settle, Chatham, Staleybridge, Bradwell, Birkenhead, Bacup, Oldham 2nd, Preston, and Manchester 1st.” Thus far the autobiography. His next and last station was Southport.

In this circuit our departed brother had much personal and family affliction. He entered the station in July 1873, and on the 30th of the September following, he ruptured a small blood-vessel, and on that account, he was ordered by his medical adviser to refrain from public services for a few days. Early in the following month he resumed work, preached several times, and helped at missionary meetings, but feeling his old pains return, and often returning home unwell, he was obliged to rest, and have recourse to medical treatment. About this time the members of his family were suffering from gastric fever.

On the 26th of November he was laid up with bronchitis, and was confined to his bed-chamber for several days. On account of failing health the December Quarterly meeting decided that he should rest for a while. During this time he visited his native place in Shropshire, and also Bedford, and with the blessing of God and the kindness of his relatives, he returned home somewhat better.

On the 8th of February he resumed his work, but he often felt so unwell and such dizziness in his head that it was with difficulty he got through the services. On the 4th of June, while helping at a tea-meeting at Holmes, in the Southport circuit, he had a stroke of paralysis which took away his speech and the use of his right arm and leg. For several weeks he was confined to bed, and unfit to be taken home to Southport.

In course of time he somewhat improved, was taken home, and with assistance was able to get up and go about a little, but he did not recover his speech, or the use of his arm or leg.

Early in October he had a second stroke of paralysis, was seized with several fits and powerful convulsions, and at times was rendered quite unconscious. But though his affliction was very severe, he was found when visited by myself and others, trusting in God, resigned to his will, and very happy. His sufferings were borne with the patience that becomes a Christian, his confidence in the prospect of death was strong, and his prospects of heaven were very bright. About half past seven on Thursday morning October 15, 1874, he sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, having been a member of our connexion 34 years, and a travelling preacher 24 years.

His remains were interred at Churchtown on Saturday, October 17, 1874. Previous to the departure of the family on their melancholy errand, a large number of ministers and friends from different circuits met,

formed themselves into a procession, and accompanied the hearse and coaches to the place of interment; thereby testifying the high appreciation which they entertained of the deceased. The following estimates of the character and ability of our departed brother by his ministerial acquaintances will be highly appreciated by his sorrowing family and friends.

The Rev. T. Bennett of Buckley, says, "Perhaos I have know the late Rev. Thomas Doody for a longer period than any other minister in the Manchester District has. I always regarded him as a very pious man, and a devoted minister of the gospel. His aim was to do good, and his whole soul seemed to be in the work to which he was called. He was loyal to the church of his choice, and diligent in his efforts to promote the prosperity of his stations, and the weal of the connexion, which in his death has lost a useful minister,"

The Rev. W. Inman of Liverpool writes, "I have a vivid recollection of his many excellencies. He was a fine, genial, happy spirit, so much so that none could be gloomy or sad in his company. Moreover he always seemed to be hopeful of the most doubtful events. When once relating to him my fears for the suffering operatives of Lancashire, in the late cotton distress, he said in reply, 'My brother, but there is a bright side to that picture,'

"The sympathy in his nature too ran deep, and often overflowed in tears and practical help for the sorrowing and suffering. We have known him weep over the fall of a child, and have seen him often go out of his way to help the poor in their distress. I am but one amongst many who have been struck with his power in prayer, and with the great grandeur of his simple style.

"With these gifts and many others combined which we could name, he was eminently fitted both by nature and grace for the work of an evangelist, to which he was called, and in which he took great pleasure. As a colleague I found him ever faithful, willing and obliging. He was a true yoke-fellow in gospel bonds. Indeed I may say of him very truly, he was an Israelite in whom was no guile, I hope to meet him before the throne of God in heaven."

We cannot close this memoir without giving an estimate ourselves of our departed friend's character. A journal of his labours being in our possession, and having travelled with him two years in Bradwell circuit, and two in Oldham 2nd, we can speak with confidence of his character.

There were several traits in him worthy of our imitation. Among these we may mention his humbleness of mind—his uprightness of conduct—his love for the means of grace—his attachment to the connexion—his cheerful disposition—his liberality of soul—his power in prayer, and his diligence and punctuality in business matters.

In his study, public labours, family visiting, and circuit management he displayed industry and method, diligence and order. Duty was his delight, and he was always employed. He was highly esteemed as a man of worth by those who knew him best. He was a good man, an eminent Christian—a sincere Primitive Methodist—a devoted minister and an excellent colleague. He was also a true hearted friend, a loving husband, and a most affectionate father.

His departure is a felt loss, especially to his dear family, but their loss is his gain. The Lord comfort and bless them, and may they meet him in heaven.

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## References

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1875/371