

Lucy Hubbard

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by William Forth

On Friday, November 2nd, 1860, at Bromley Lane, near Brierly Hill, in the Dudley Circuit, LUCY HUBBOLD, finished her earthly course in the fifty-first year of her age.

Few names in the ranks of Primitive Methodistic labourers are more fragrant with the "beauty of holiness," or more closely associated with the victories of the cross, than that of our departed sister. Her conversion was the lighting of a spiritual luminary whose steady brightness shone for many years, seldom dimmed with a cloud, and which may be said, at its going down, to have been refulgent with beams which had their centre in the Sun of everlasting righteousness.

She was born at Townsend, in Staffordshire, July 14th, 1809, and received from her parents a strictly moral training, in addition to the education of both day and Sabbath schools. She lived, however, in alienation from God until our people missioned her native village, when she gave earnest heed to the word spoken, and became the first-fruits of that mission. Having heard that the Primitive Methodists were going to preach in a house opposite her father's, she, impelled by curiosity, went to see what kind of people they were. As in the case of Zaccheus, so with the subject of this memoir, curiosity preceded conversion. In her last illness she said to the writer, "Their sentiments, with reference to the judgment, made a very deep impression on my mind, and I never rested till I got my soul converted. I do not remember anything that was hard to accomplish except praying in public, for although I prayed very often during the day in private, yet pride and shame kept me from praying in public. At the close of a lovefeast held in Round Oak Chapel, I felt determined to attend to this also. Mr. Thomas Southall took me by the hand and said, 'Come to the prayer-meeting.' I knelt and told the Lord, in private, I would never rise from my knees till all my sins were pardoned. About six were converted (praise God), but I remained in bondage on my knees. Satan kept telling me all the while that I had something more to do before I could believe, which I struggled hard to do. The people waited to go out of the chapel, and came around me, and many times said "rise ;" but I remained on my knees breathing my prayers to the Lord, and silently repeating, 'I will never rise till my sins are pardoned.' At length a friend whispered in my ears, 'you have nothing to do but believe.' In a moment the spell was broken, and through faith the blood of Christ streamed into my soul, and in a moment my sins were pardoned."

Having obtained an assurance of the Divine favour, our sister pressed forward, praying and watching to be filled with all the fulness of God, and she laid aside every weight in order to receive it. She further said, "I prayed as earnestly for sanctification as ever I did for pardon. One evening, on my returning from the chapel, I knelt on the road, being alone, and said, 'Lord, sanctify my soul,' and there came such a blessing into my heart as I had never witnessed before. From that moment I saw into the way of believing for sinners to be converted which I had never done before, and I began to pray and believe for my neighbours to be converted, and in visiting the sick several found peace with God. It was the continual breathing of my soul, 'Lord, save sinners.'" Whilst in this state of sanctification, it being palpable to others, by the success attending her abundant labours in soul-saving, that she had a Divine call to preach, her name appeared on the circuit's plan, with appointments, the fulfilling of which she contemplated with a degree of reluctance. She said, "The Lord very clearly made known to me that I had to speak in His cause, nevertheless I was reluctant and neglected my first appointment, but I was so terrified night and day that I felt compelled to take the second; the cross of preaching felt so heavy, and the responsibility so great, that I concluded I should never be able to meet the day of judgment in a case so important; I therefore returned my plan." But so clearly was she convinced that she had done wrong, that she took it again, and while a local preacher she wielded the sword of the Spirit with faith's strong energy, and through a prayerful reliance on Jehovah's promise she continued to preach a present, free, and full salvation, and many were turned to the Lord. These seals to her ministry at the commencement of her career, were the nucleus of a great cloud of immortal souls which the Holy Spirit by her agency gathered together from the various places where she declared "the common salvation ;" a cloud of happy witnesses, to her devotedness to God, which will be the crown of her rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

Whilst taking her first quarter's appointments, she received from the Church a call to go out to travel, presenting to her pious zeal a wider scope for its development. From jealousy for the honour and success of that Gospel which to her had proved to be "the power of God unto salvation," she would gladly have seen that holy commission laid upon others whom she deemed better qualified, nevertheless herein she likewise followed Jesus with fear and trembling. She said, "When I arrived in Kidderminster Circuit, I visited much among the sick, where I found an old lady who had been under conviction for years, but never went further than 'I hope to be saved.' 'Hope! hope! you'll hope till you are damned, if you never believe.' She cried to the Lord, He was entreated, and her soul entered into the rest of saving faith. I exhorted her to keep steadfast. I then went to another person who was ill and saw him converted." The circuits in which our departed sister travelled were Kidderminster, Ludlow, Burton-on-Trent, Nottingham, Bottesford, and Longton.

It was while devotedly pursuing her blessed work in the latter place, that she became too lame to walk, having displaced some bones in one of her feet. When recovered from this, she went out for a time as a hired local preacher, but soon ceased to travel, in accordance with the advice of a medical man, on account of the organs of her voice being seriously injured. She located at Longton. Though debarred from her wonted efforts for the salvation of the lost, her influence for Christ was not unfelt in this more contracted sphere, for in the Church and her immediate neighbourhood, as well as through a considerable portion of the town, the light of her spiritual mind shone forth. The house in which she resided up to her final sickness, was bequeathed to her as a token of respect by a person, nearly all of whose family were converted to God by her ministry.

Since ceasing to travel, her name stood on the preachers' plan of Tunstall Circuit, and she occasionally took appointments near home. She was the leader of a class in the society at Longton up to her decease, and she will ever be remembered with deep respect and gratitude by her members as a mother in Israel. Having enjoyed and cherished a long walk with God, her instructions savoured of the holiness she possessed, and the desire she felt for them to increase in the same. Holiness was her theme. She lived at the footstool of the Lord in private, and He honoured her with power in the public means of His grace. Hence in prayer she was bold and evinced nearness to God, and her believing soul could discern

"The cloud arise
Little as a human hand,"

as a signal for the Lord's host to go on to victory. The writer and many others can testify to showers of blessings descending whilst united with her in prayer. Having much of the mind of Christ, she abstained from "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," and like Him, her every day life was in humility and self-denial, both in spirit and outward appearance. Her piety, far from being spasmodic or feverish, was uniformly displayed by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

"Holiness to the Lord" was the motto of her inner life, inscribed on her heart's tablet; and by those in and of the world, as well as those in and of the Church, this spiritual inscription could be easily read. She was always ready at any hour to visit the sick and the dying, for her lamp, so oft renewed at the throne of grace, burnt ardently, and on many of these occasions the door of heaven opened to her knocking, and she returned home with praises on her lips. If the work of the Holy Spirit appeared to decline in her class or the society, she felt it her first great business to bring the matter before the Divine mercy-seat, and she has not died without seeing some results of those intercessions. Though endowed with good mental abilities, she did not neglect to improve them, by searching the Scriptures, and studying the writings of various theologians, history, &c., having a deep impression that as an ambassador for Christ, she ought so to divide the word of truth as to commend the deep things of God to the judgments of her hearers, as well as to speak "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" hence her pulpit labours were characterized by soundness of doctrine, solemnity of manner, experimental holiness, perspicuity of language, love to the Saviour, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. She impressively preached present pardon through the blood of Jesus, expecting sinners to be saved, and God honoured her faith with His enriching blessing, therefore wherever, she went she was welcomed, sinners were affected and often converted, and the Lord was glorified.

To preach and visit as usual she at length ceased, the chariot was stayed, and her harness about to be taken off—she attended her weekly class-meeting no more, and her seat in the sanctuary was vacant. But even on her dying bed visitors were warned, instructed and exhorted to flee from the wrath to come, by her love-impassioned soul. After attending to and disposing of her worldly affairs, she said to the writer, “Since I have been afflicted I have been very heavily tempted, nevertheless I have a clear title to the better world, as clear as I first had when God pardoned my sins, and if it were possible for me to recover and to have my youth and strength again, I would throw myself fully into the work of the Lord; but if I be unable to work for Jesus, I wish to live for nothing else on earth but soul saving; not desiring to go before it be the Lord’s will, yet when it is His will I would much rather die than live.” In this blessed state she has been parted from us for a season, but although so useful as the departed was, the writer quails before the thought of setting forth her character as perfectly faultless—for none but the Saviour has lived on earth perfect in all points, and to imitate Him alone is safe and right.

As a Christian, he professes never to have seen one with fewer faults; and he would say that those who suppose certain of their pious friends to possess every amiability and grace, and to be worthy of the closest imitation, should remember the frailties and imperfections to which the soul is exposed whilst united with a weak, dying body here below; also that those who are sceptical as to the existence of true religion, or ready to condemn its possessor when they behold the slightest blemish, should not forget that dark spots even, if ever so minute, always show themselves the soonest upon a bright surface.

Her interest in the cause at Longton was great. The last expression of her sympathy, with the trustees, was in giving £5 towards the new schools. The complaint which terminated her sojourn here, was rheumatic fever, which caused her excruciating suffering, but although reduced by pain, it was thought desirable by her friends to remove her to their residence, near her birth-place, where she laid down the cross, the sword, and the shield, and with victory on her lips, her blood-washed spirit, disrobed of its clay vestment, triumphantly passed within the veil, through the merits of Christ, to walk in white with them that are worthy. She very often said, “I never lost the witness of the Spirit.”

Heroes of the world’s campaigns, and martyrs of the Church, often have their life-deeds memorialized to posterity by monumental statues and marble pillars; but these are destined to fall, at least in the day of the Lord, when the heavens pass away, but the deathless brands plucked from the burnings through her agency, who maintain their faithfulness, who were washed and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, shall be presented blameless before the Father; eternal monuments of the godly character, the Scriptural motives, the sacred zeal, and the prevailing prayer of her in whose departure the world has lost an intercessor, the Church a consistent member, society a bright example, the sick a faithful visitor, and the holy Gospel of Christ a living, practical expositor. May the writer and the reader so live and so die.

References

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