

Michael Laycock

Transcription of obituary published in the Minutes of Conference

MICHAEL LAYCOCK. — The subject of this brief biography was a native of Bingley, Yorkshire, and was born in July, 1847. Little can be related of his early years, but his attachment to Primitive Methodism and his conversion were mainly due to the influence of our Bingley Sunday School. It was in this connection that he made the acquaintance of two youths, and between them a most intimate friendship developed, which remained unshaken through all the years. One of this trio, Mr. J.D. Fox, the present steward of the Bingley Circuit, delivered an address at a memorial service held at Bingley, July 2nd, 1911, in which he paid an affectionate tribute to our departed brother, the third companion also being present at the service.

As a boy, our friend was denied the advantages of an elementary education, but from the time of the surrender of himself to God, he applied himself zealously to the cultivation of his mind and soul. His studious habits and his intelligent grasp of the truth commended him to the circuit officials as one eminently fitted for the service of the Master and the church; and accordingly his name was placed on the preachers' plan. He soon gave evidence of the appropriateness of this appointment, and his efforts produced such favourable impressions that his superintendent minister (Rev. Henry Hatherley) took special interest in coaching Michael in his studies with the view to prepare him as a candidate for the ministry.

Having successfully passed the examination, he entered the Sunderland Institute, and after a course of study commenced his ministry in London, where he returned subsequently for a second term of service. He also laboured on the following circuits:— Bedford, Pembroke Dock, Pateley Bridge, Bedale, Filey, Middleham, Guernsey, Manchester, Mansfield, Brigg, Dawley and Hadnall; and remained on the latter circuit till within three months of his decease, when he removed to Croydon to be among his friends.

His marriage to Miss Foulds, also of Bingley, proved to be a truly happy union, and Mr. Laycock had the unfaltering support of his devoted wife in the work associated with his circuits.

As a preacher, Mr. Laycock possessed marked pulpit gifts, and throughout his ministry of 39 years 'he gave diligence to present himself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' His expositions were luminous and inspiring. A friend writing, says: 'I shall never forget his preaching; I loved my Bible before I sat under his ministry, but I loved it better after I had known him. It became a new book to me; he helped to give it a charm and a power it had never possessed before to me.'

His library indicated a wide range of reading, and the well-marked volumes of theology and philosophy the trend of his mind. He retained his interest in the pursuit of knowledge almost to the end; and in his affliction, the writer, visiting him, found him captivated with Professor G. A. Smith's 'Genesis.' As a student of nature he was fascinated by its beauties, and his native town, with its lovely environs, was very dear to him. His love of reverence was very pronounced, both in public worship and in conversation on sacred subjects. He bore an honourable name in our church and enjoyed the confidences of all his brethren. As a pastor he was sympathetic, sharing both the joys and sorrows of his people. His tender heart won their affections, and his genial disposition made him a general favourite with the children. He was a true minister of Jesus Christ, and attached considerable importance to his engagements, never neglecting a congregation, however small the number, or long the distance he had to travel. His loyalty to his church could not be questioned. Of a retiring and sensitive disposition, he naturally shrank from distinctive positions; but at the same time, he conscientiously discharged the duties of any office with which he was intrusted. Twice he was elected to represent his districts in the Annual Conference and on both occasions when it was held in Bradford; but sickness prevented him fulfilling his duties of G.C.D. on the latter occasion.

It was at this Assembly that our brother's application for superannuation was sympathetically received; and among the number of applicants no case was more pathetic than this; inasmuch as both Mr. and Mrs. Laycock were invalids for several months, and singularly both being the subjects of paralytic seizures. Immediately after the closing session of the Conference, we

received the news that his life of suffering had terminated, and that he had passed into the presence of his Lord to receive the crown of life.

It was the morning of Coronation Day (June 22nd). His departure was sudden, but peaceful. His remains were interred at Mitcham Cemetery (Croydon) after a service held in the Cherry Orchard Road Church. The Revs. A. Fawcett and F. Clark officiated, and the Rev. E.J.T. Bagnall represented the General Committee. Many and tender were the expressions of sympathy with the afflicted widow and the son and daughter in their bereavement.

‘Peace, perfect peace—with loved ones far away;
In Jesus’ keeping we are safe, and they.’

References

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