

Samuel Nettleton

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by F.P.

SAMUEL NETTLETON, who died at Stokesley on November 25, 1877, was born at Saxton, near Tadcaster, on November 17, 1815. He was 'born again of the Spirit' in the year 1833, being then eighteen years of age. He joined the Primitive Methodist Church, and continued a useful and consistent member up to his death.

He entered the regular ministry in the early part of the year 1837. The Rev. W. Lister, who was our late brother's first superintendent, says in a letter to the writer:—

'My acquaintance with him began in the month of May, 1837. That was my second year on the Ripon Station, As several villages had been visited by us, it became necessary that our number of labourers should be increased, so Mr, Nettleton was called into the ministry on the recommendation of the authorities of the Tadcaster Circuit. He was then a strong muscular young man, twenty-two years of age, decidedly pious, full of zeal, deeply in earnest for the conversion of sinners. He entered on his work with an enthusiastic desire to gain that object. His was more heart than brain power, his intellectual attainments being rather circumscribed. He nevertheless strove to attain a clear understanding of the truth he was now set apart to propagate, and so to arrange his ideas as best to be useful and acceptable. But his forte was earnest prayer and communion with God. Heaven's blessing followed his efforts, so that he frequently, after finishing his round on the circuit, had to tell when we met of battles fought and victories won. An extensive revival of religion went through the station. The societies rose in faith and power, scores of sinners were converted. The efforts put forth by our late brother, joined with those of the late Joseph Spoor, who was a colleague with us, were the principal means of spreading that work.'

In those days, short terms on stations was the rule; hence we find that during the twenty years of our late brother's ministerial career, he travelled on twelve stations—Ripon, Middleham, Brompton, Berwick, South Shields, Newcastle, Brough, Darlington, Carlisle, Stokesley, Stockton, and North Shields, where he was when he ceased to travel as a Primitive Methodist Minister.

There was a net increase on eight of the above stations of 497 members. Of the other four stations no account has been preserved by our late brother. The chapel in Cecil Street, Carlisle, was built during his stay on the Carlisle Station.

Little or nothing is known by the writer, or the family of our departed brother, of his ministerial career, he not, having kept a record of his doings. The Rev. W. Lister, in the letter already mentioned, says of our late brother:—

'We parted at Midsummer, 1838, and had not much intercourse, though we at times met, until 1845, when we were again stationed together at Newcastle-on-Tyne. We found the station in a very disturbed state, through a long strike among the colliers; societies and schools broken up, chapels filled with family furniture; so that it was some time before we got into working order. Mr. Nettleton laboured well. He visited much, and in that department of his ministerial work was successful,—though he never felt himself so much at home as he did in the former agricultural station. Nevertheless, he put forth vigorous efforts, and was acceptable amongst the people.'

As a man and a minister, Mr. Lister says of him:—'In all my dealings with him, I found him of a gentle spirit, truthful, upright as a man, pious and devoted as a Christian, an agreeable and laborious colleague, and useful in bringing souls to the Saviour.'

Of our late brother's leaving the ministry, Mr. Lister says:—'As to what were his motives for leaving the ministry and entering on business, I am not able to define; I know he felt its responsibility and that frequently preyed upon his mind,'

He resigned his ministerial position in a letter to the North Shields Circuit Committee, dated April 9, 1857, and his resignation was accepted by that Committee. After residing for a while in Hartlepool, he ultimately settled at Stokesley where he resided up to the time of his death. He not only continued in church fellowship with, us, but maintained his ground as a useful local preacher and class leader, and treasurer and chapel steward of Stokesley Chapel. He was a trustee of Facely Chapel. All who knew him will testify to his regularity and punctuality in his attendance upon all the means of grace, and he was equally as regular and punctual in the discharge of all his official duties. He could be depended on as one sure to be at his post of duty if health permitted, And his intimate knowledge of Connexional law and usage enabled him to be of great service at all our Quarterly Meetings, which he regularly attended. He was like-wise a good supporter of the Connexional funds, being a regular subscriber to the Missionary Fund, and to the Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society.

He will be greatly missed at all the principal gatherings in the circuit. He was ever ready and willing to either preside or speak at any of the public meetings and Missionary meetings. And he will be specially missed as an efficient camp-meeting preacher and leader of lovefeasts. For he excelled as a leader of a devotional meeting, whether it was a lovefeast, or class meeting, or prayer meeting. He could bring the holy fire into the meeting, and keep up a blessed influence. He was useful in the town as an efficient advocate of total abstinence. And he was a useful member of the Board of Guardians for years.

But now he has gone home to his reward in his Father's house of many mansions, having finished his work on earth. May his death be sanctified to us who are left, and excite us to diligence in getting and standing ready for our call.

References

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