

Rev. William Newton

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by John North

WILLIAM NEWTON, travelling preacher, was the son of John and Mary Newton, and was born at Kilnwick, in the county of York, July 4th, 1816. His parents were strictly moral, and regular in their attendance at the Established Church; and were careful to watch over the spiritual welfare of their children according to the light they had. It was, perhaps, partly through their influence, that William, in his youthful days, was preserved from falling into gross sins, though he unhappily sought enjoyments in the vain and unsatisfactory pleasures of the world.

When about sixteen years of age, he and several others were induced to attend a Primitive Methodist Camp Meeting at Driffield, about six miles from his native village. The lively singing, processioning, etc., made a deep impression on his mind; and while the servants of the Most High proclaimed the doctrine of the glorious gospel, the Holy Spirit applied the word to his heart; he saw and felt himself a sinner, and that without an interest in the blood of Christ he could never be saved. He remained at the lovefeast in the evening, and that night he and many others realized the blessedness of conscious pardon. As there were none of our people at Kilnwick, our friends at Driffield were invited to mission the place. They did so, and great good was done; a society was formed, and William Newton was one of the first members. He was not satisfied to go to heaven alone; he was anxious that his parents, and brothers, and sisters, should share in the blessings of redemption, and shortly after his conversion a sister was brought to Christ; then a brother. Not long afterwards, both his father and mother obtained "the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins," and a goodly number of relatives came over to the side of Immanuel; not a few of whom have since fought the good fight, and received the victor's crown.

William had not been converted long, before the circuit authorities, seeing in him promises of future usefulness, gave his name a place on the preachers' plan. He now began to point sinners to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, and God blessed his labours in the salvation of precious souls. Having learnt the trade of a tailor, he left home in 1836, and went to Hull for improvement, where a preacher being ill, he was requested to supply his place. After praying to be guided aright, he yielded to the request of his brethren, and laboured there until the following midsummer. At the Conference of 1837, he was stationed for Barnard Castle and Kendal mission; but at Christmas here moved to Whitehaven branch. At the Conference of 1838, he was stationed for the Thorne and Hatfield branch of Scotter circuit. While labouring in this station, he had a severe affliction, which brought him down to the gates of death. The circuit thinking there was no prospect of his ever travelling again, returned him on his pledge. He was at home during his illness, and when partially recovered, he attended Hull Quarterly Meeting, to know what the friends intended to do in his case, and in consideration of his improving state of health, the meeting stationed him for Brigg branch. From Brigg he removed in 1840 to Patrington branch. In 1841 he entered into the marriage state, with her who now mourns his departure. His subsequent labours were in Bradford, Market Rasen, Louth, Howden, Pocklington, Doncaster, Saffron Walden, and Reading circuits.

According to the information I have received, "He laboured with acceptability in the various stations, generally leaving them better than he found them." Having travelled with him, I can bear witness to his pacific disposition, of his zeal for God, and his unwearied exertions to save souls. I always found him one in whom confidence could be placed; he endeavoured to his utmost to carry out the discipline of the Connexion.

He endured much affliction, both personal and domestic, and suffered many inconveniences in consequence. He at all times, however, gave evidence of the sustaining power of the grace of God. His labours in Saffron Walden circuit were very heavy, and according to one of his colleagues, laid the foundation of the disease which ultimately brought him to his grave. For six months previous to his death his friends perceived his strength to fail. About March, he took a severe cold, but did not apprehend any immediate danger, He continued to labour until he was necessitated to rest, on account of increasing weakness. Medical aid was procured, and he was recommended to take a journey to Hull, it being thought that a change of air might prove beneficial, and accordingly he went thither. From Hull he went to Lincolnshire to see his mother.

On arriving there in January, he was suddenly brought low by the breaking of a blood vessel. After this he was very desirous of going to his family, and removed as soon as the doctor gave him permission. On arriving at Reading, he thought himself a little better; but the improvement was of transient duration, he soon became worse. In the midst of all his afflictions he was resigned to the will of God. His confidence in him was unshaken; he knew in whom he had believed, and proved the consolation of religion in a dying hour. Towards the closing scene he said but little. A little before his departure, seeing his dear wife weeping, he said, "Let me go; there is too much of the devil and sin in this world." A friend called to see him, to whom he gave satisfactory evidence of his faith in God, and said, "Speak as much about heaven as you like, and as little of the world as possible." He quietly fell asleep in Jesus on the 22nd day of May, 1856, in the fortieth year of his age, and in the nineteenth year of his itinerancy. On the day of the interment, he was taken to the chapel, where suitable addresses were given by Mr. G. Lamb, from London, assisted by Messrs. Miles, Turner, and Kendall. His remains were followed to the cemetery at Reading by several travelling preachers from the surrounding stations, thirty local preachers, and a large concourse of members and friends.

As a husband, he was kind; as a father, he was affectionate; as a minister, he was generally well received. His chief delight was to see the work of God revive. He has left a wife and five children to mourn their loss. May they follow him as he followed Christ, and meet him in heaven.

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1856/513