

Rev. Levi Ramsden

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

The late REV. LEVI RAMSDEN was born December 13, 1809, at Flockton, a village in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and died April 8, 1887, at Gwernysaint, in the Monmouth and Lydbrook Circuit. We have no authentic record of his childhood and early youth, but we know that the zealous labours of our pioneer missionaries were made a great blessing to him, and when twenty years of age he was converted to God. He cast in his lot with the Primitive Methodists, and held on his way fifty-seven years, till the Master said, 'Come up higher.'

No sooner did our friend know the Saviour than he diligently sought to save his fellows, and after being an earnest, useful local preacher three years, on May 24th, 1836, he left home to fill the place of a travelling preacher in the Pocklington Station, and being pledged at the Conference of 1837, was appointed to the Louth Circuit. Any person who enjoyed his society would come to the conclusion that 'He was a faithful man, and feared God above many.' He laboured acceptably and with encouraging success on the following stations:—Louth, Halifax, Epworth Branch, Louth (second time), Hull (London Mission), Sheerness, Guernsey, Alderney, Jersey, St. Austell, Redruth, Chippenham, Pillawell, Radstock, and Frome.

Through his instrumentality many souls were brought to Christ. He was beloved by his hearers generally, for his constant efforts put forth to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, His single aim was to promote the glory of his Divine Master in the salvation of sinful men; and he succeeded well, considering the up-hill work he had to do in Kent and other places. On two only of his stations he had to report a decrease, while on others the increase was respectable, as for instance, Halifax, increase 76; London, 88; St. Austell, 73; and Redruth, 220, &c., &c. So his nett increase in twenty-five years was 708 members.

We regret that the only written document left us of his labours is his journal, for 1841-2, on the London and Sheerness Missions, from which a few extracts may be interesting --

'Sunday, Dec. 12th, 1841. Rain falling fast. I preached at Paddington in the morning, and at 6 at Westminster: a good time, and a blessed day to my soul. Walked seventeen miles.

Dec. 13th, we held our preparatory quarterly meeting. We have peace, and our prospects are much better; an increase of thirty-five members, and our finances improved.'

'Sunday, 19th, preached at Cooper's Gardens, Sutton Street, and Poplar. In the prayer-meeting one woman professed to obtain salvation. Walked eight miles.'

'Jan. 2nd, 1842, Sunday, preached in Onslow Street in the morning, Cooper's Gardens afternoon and evening. A gracious influence, and in the prayer meeting three professed to find the Lord. Praise the Lamb for ever. Walked eight miles.'

'March 13th. Attended 7 o'clock prayer-meeting, led class and gave tickets; preached at Poplar at 11, met classes and gave tickets at 2 and 3; preached at 4, and led another class; preached at 6, a prayer-meeting ensued, when four professed to obtain salvation. Praise the Lord for all His mercies. Walked five miles.' ;

'29th. A breakfast meeting at Cooper's Gardens, where I preached at 11 a.m., had a blessed time; at 3 p.m. gave tickets at Onslow Street, and at 6 preached at the Gardens. A blessed influence of the Holy Spirit rested on us in the prayer-meeting, and three professed to obtain salvation.'

Mr. Ramsden was twice married, but we have no recorded account of the former wife, with whom we understand he spent nearly twenty years happily, and who left him a widower when on the Frome Circuit; the latter was one of four sisters, who all got converted and joined our society about forty years ago. Miss Eleanor Williams was an acceptable local preacheress, and was well qualified for the position she occupied when she became Mrs. Ramsden, in 1860. However, it was not long after this happy union before our brother became ill, and through taking a severe cold suffered from rheumatism, bronchitis, and other diseases, which he could never get fully rid of. In 1861 the Conference superannuated him. He resided a short time in Gloucester, and in 1863 came to live in Monmouth, where he was an ornament to our society, and was respected by the inhabitants of the town generally. He was very seldom able to occupy the pulpit, but he became treasurer for the Chapel Trust, and spent much of his time in visiting the sick and administering to the comfort of persons in distress.

In the year 1871 he lost his beloved wife, who died at the age of fifty-two, and soon after this bereavement Mr. Ramsden removed to Gwernysaint Farm, three miles in the country, to end his days with his nephew and niece, Mr. and Mrs. E.T. Bevan, whose unwearied kind ministrations to him continued during the closing years of his life. He was attentive to all the means of grace when able, and much enjoyed the services in the house of God. Brother Ramsden was a good man, strongly attached to the Connexion, a liberal supporter of its funds, and was highly esteemed by all who were acquainted with him. He was a generous man. He 'looked not upon his own things, but on the things of others.' It was but for him to know a case of need: without solicitation, he would cheerfully render help, acting on the words of Jesus, 'Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.' He often caused 'the widow's heart to sing for joy.' He did not stop at the giving of a tenth: for several years before his death he expended considerably more than his income, reducing his little store, so that some persons were astonished in finding so small a portion left to be divided by his executors among his relations.

We could produce many testimonials of his good character, but one or two brief notices shall suffice. The Rev. J. S. Southwood says, 'During my three years' superintendency of Monmouth and Lydbrook Circuit, Mr. Ramsden and I had many pleasant hours together; his Christian converse rendered my visit a season of much enjoyment. I never heard him speak an unkind word of any person. His liberality was very marked, and his interest in every good work abounding.'

From Rev. B. Walton: 'He was a true friend. To know him was to trust and respect him. His piety was real. He possessed the mind of Christ, and exhibited that mind in word, deed, and life. Many refer to his kind counsel and godly example in terms of affection. He did much good without ostentation. Aged and sick persons found in him a practical friend. He was a "father in Israel."'

When the end came he was found 'watching,' and with a smiling countenance, without a struggle, he passed away at the ripe age of seventy-seven years.

His funeral on April 12th was attended by mourning relatives from Yorkshire, Cornwall, and Glamorganshire, as well as by many from Monmouth and the neighbourhood. Devout men—four local preachers—carried his remains to their last resting-place in the tomb in which his wife had lain nearly sixteen years, in the

burying-ground belonging to our Gwernysaint Chapel. The Revs. W. Harvey and S. Ainsworth conducted the services in the chapel and at the grave. On April 17th the writer preached memorial sermons to large congregations at Gwernysaint and Monmouth.

References

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