

Rev. E.R.S. Tripp

Transcription of the Obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by W.H. Matthews

The almost sudden death of the Rev. E.R. Tripp, on the 21st of August last, at the early age of forty-seven, removes from the ranks of our ministry an earnest, conscientious, and successful servant of Jesus Christ, in the midst of his days and in the prime of his manhood.

Bro. Tripp was born at Summercotes, in the county of Derbyshire, in the year 1849. His father was for some years a Primitive Methodist minister, but was ultimately obliged to resign, the work being too laborious, so that he had all the advantages and blessings of a Christian home from his birth, and early became acquainted with the joys and sorrows of a minister's life. His first recollections were of Lynn, in Norfolk, and then of Sheerness, where his father was obliged to relinquish the work of the ministry, and the family removed to the Isle of Man and commenced farming. Here he began a new life, for the change from the flat country of the South to the hilly and picturesque Island, presenting every possible variety of scenery, very greatly impressed him. As a boy he was dreamy, reserved, reflective, fond of nature, of books, making companions of his father's flocks, and holding conversations with the animals.

He was converted December 8th, 1867, in the 18th year of his age, at some special services at Richmond Hall, Liverpool, and became a worker at once. The first thing he did was to confess to his mother, sisters, and brothers at home what God had done for his soul, and then he persuaded his companion to surrender to Christ. He joined the Church, and was diligent in attending the means of grace. The change wrought in him by the Spirit of God produced quite an alteration in the quality and quantity of his reading. Always studious, he was now more so. Romance and fiction had to give way to Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," "Grace Abounding," Milton's "Paradise Lost," "Paradise Regained," &c., &c. He had the usual experiences of most beginners at public speaking; his voice sounded strange to him, and a seven minutes' address in the school seemed like half-an-hour. He and four more formed themselves into a Mission Band, devoting two nights to missioning the streets and holding cottage prayer-meetings, waiting for no authority beyond the love that impelled them to seek the lost, and God honoured their labours by many converts.

He was soon harnessed to official life, for in connection with Gilead Street, in the Liverpool Third Circuit, he was promoted to the offices of Class-Leader, Society Steward, Sunday School Secretary, header of a Band of Hope, and Precentor till a more powerful instrument could be secured. To all the offices just named was soon added the more important office of local preacher. His first attempt was at Zion, where he made a favourable impression. His practice in the open-air did him a good turn here. Shortly before he was recommended for the ministry he had arranged to go to America with his eldest brother, but, obstructed at every turn, he could not get off. God had other work for him to do, other employment to which to devote his life. In due time the "call" came, and, after passing through all the preliminaries, he entered the College at Sunderland, going through the usual term with credit.

He commenced his ministry at Chorley, and travelled on the following stations:—Bury, Liverpool Second, Skelmersdale, Bolton, Ramsey, Chester, Cradley Heath, and had just entered upon his new circuit, Brighouse and Greetland, when he was called to lay down the work he loved so much. He was not well when he came to Elland, and had travelled from Birkenhead, where he had been spending a part of his holiday with his aged mother, with considerable difficulty. Not wishful to make an unfavourable impression on the circuit in relation to his health, and desirous of keeping faith with the people, he struggled to do his work. In a few days he rallied; it was thought the change would be beneficial and that the bracing air of the West Riding would agree with him. He took his work on the 18th of August, and on the 19th walked to the place of his appointment with great inconvenience, but could not conduct the service. On the 20th the doctor was called in, but he did not think there was any immediate danger, but on Friday, about noon, he passed beyond mortal vision. So unexpected was the change to all, that the friends watching by him thought he had swooned, and began to use restoratives, but the spirit had gone beyond the recall of human effort.

He fell in harness, in the midst of his work, full of plans and arrangements for promoting the work of God in the sphere to which he had been appointed. He was interred at Elland on the 25th of August, accompanied by numerous friends from the Brighouse and Greetland, Sowerby Bridge, Halifax, Bury, Bolton, and Cradley Heath Circuits.

The service in the chapel, in which the Revs. James Travis, J. Prestwich, R. Jones, W. Sawyer, J. Goldthorpe, G. Newton, Scott Coates, and W. H. Matthews took part was very impressive. The Rev. J. Travis, an old friend, delivered a very appropriate and touching address. A few fraternal words from the Rev. Scott Coates, as representing the Free Churches of the town, showed us the good impression Mr. Tripp had already made upon the churches and neighbourhood as an earnest and faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a minister he was faithful and successful. In looking up the statistics we have discovered that his circuits gradually and solidly grew under his guidance.

While making no pretensions to scholarship or literary attainment, he knew his business, and was well-informed on those questions bearing directly on the work of his life. He was shy as a youth, and very retiring as a man; only a sense of duty brought him to the front. He never sought popularity at the expense of his circuit. Many men more self-assertive, with less ability, have been preferred before him. His aim was to build up his circuit, which is the surest way to build up the Connexion. He was manly and generous, far above anything like meanness and self-seeking. He endeavoured to live the gospel he preached. He was a good man and of blameless character. He possessed a strong vein of humour, which made him a very genial companion, and with corresponding sympathy made him a welcome visitor to the suffering and the needy.

He was fortunate in his marriage with Miss Mason, of Ramsbottom, only daughter of the late Mr. Richard Mason. Mrs. Tripp has been a helpmeet indeed, taking the deepest interest in the work of her husband, and nobly sharing the manifold duties of a Methodist minister's life. The affection between husband and wife was of no ordinary kind; they loved each other. He leaves her behind with five fatherless children to mourn their loss. We bespeak for them the sympathy and prayers of the Church, and earnestly pray that the Great Father in Heaven may richly fulfil in their experience the special promises made on their behalf, and may they have grace submissively to wait, "Until the daybreak and the shadows flee away."

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1897/467