

Harriet Worth

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine

Mrs. HARRIET WORTH, the beloved wife of the Rev. Henry Worth, was the daughter of William and Mary Taylor, and began life at Reedness, in the parish of Whitgift, in the county of York, September 24th, 1840. Her father was a man of quiet, grave deportment and regular habits, whose industry and integrity won for him general respect; he was a regular attendant at the sanctuary, but not enrolled in the membership of the church. Her mother was a careful, industrious, clever housewife, and a pious and devoted member of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. The management of the family devolved chiefly upon her, though she was sustained in it by the father, and the results of their discipline and influence are manifest in the general character of their children. Shortly after the birth of Harriet the family removed to Howden-dyke, and became associated with the Primitive Methodist cause in Howden, with which the grandfather and grandmother had been connected almost from its commencement.

Some years ago both father and mother died in the peaceful hope of a better life. Harriet grew up under careful supervision, and became fit for domestic service, and after spending some years from home, several of them in the service of two esteemed clergymen of the Church of England, she became housekeeper to her brother, Mr. George Taylor, of Howden, who had been left in widowhood and who is a respected official in our church. The late Mrs. Taylor had been accustomed to render extensive service in the cause, and in this capacity our departed sister was a worthy successor to her. She became a zealous and successful missionary collector, and in tea-meeting and bazaar efforts in the interest of our trust property, her services were cheerfully rendered. By these means she was again brought into closer association with the church of her fathers, and early in the year 1873, under the ministry of Mr. J.E. Elford, she was happily led to realise her personal interest in Christ, and rejoice in His salvation. At once she became a member of the church, and henceforward strove to walk blamelessly before God, and serve her generation according to His will.

In July, 1875, she became the wife of him who now sorrows because she is not, and during the three years of his superintendency of the Brigg Circuit, three other years in the Barton Circuit, three years in the Doncaster Circuit, and two years superintendency of the Staveley Circuit, she proved herself to be, in no mean degree, worthy of the position she had been called to occupy.

Her husband says of her that 'her qualities as a housewife were of the highest kind.' She did not find everything in ministerial life according to her expectation, but her concern for her husband and the work in which he was engaged was continuous and unabating, and her hand was ready to assist in every good work. She took pleasure in charitable actions, but always did them in a quiet, unobtrusive manner. One of her latest acts. was to send to a family in Sheffield some useful articles of clothing from the wardrobe of her own family. She was somewhat reserved in conversation in relation to her own religious experience. She rather lived than talked religion, but in the class-meeting she would say with emphasis, 'I am the Lord's, and He is mine,' and express her desire to be a more complete Christian, more fully like Christ, etc.

In a letter of condolence, addressed to Mr. Worth after her decease, Mr. W. Dunham, of Brigg, in whose class she met while resident there, says, 'I always looked on Mrs. Worth as hardworking, industrious Christian woman—your son and daughter have lost a good mother, and you a gem of a loving wife; but, I have no doubt, your loss is her gain. This testimony will be endorsed by those who knew her best, in every station in which her husband was called to labour.

She was frequently the subject of severe personal affliction, and her life companion being sometimes most distressingly afflicted, her physical and nervous energies were every now and again severely taxed, and it was marvellous how she endured the pressure; but her shoes were iron and brass, and as her day so was her strength.

In 1886, Mr. Worth's health having completely failed, he was necessitated to ask for superannuation, which was granted by the Conference. Doncaster was selected as their place of residence, and it was hoped they might spend a few years together in peaceful retirement. But how uncertain are all earthly hopes! Being somewhat unwell she went to spend a few days with

her sister on Cottingham Common, thinking that the change might help to her restoration. She at first seemed to revive, but quickly became worse and had to call in medical aid. The doctor found her very weak, but gave hope that he could be of service to her. This hope, however, was not realised. She became still worse, a physician was called in, and after a careful examination and consultation the doctors pronounced her case serious, and it was feared the issue might be, as it proved to be, fatal. After the relapse her mind was still concerned for her husband and his work. He was engaged to preach at Clowne in Derbyshire, on what proved to be her last Sabbath on earth, and to attend a public meeting on the Monday, on which her spirit passed to the skies: and writing to him, in anticipation of this visit, what proved to be her last letter, she said, 'I hope you will enjoy yourself, and pray that you may have a good time. I should like to see your shirts and collars. I do hope Jane Amelia' (Miss Worth) 'will do her best to look after you. Now, dear, you must not trouble yourself about me while you are away. I am glad you are going, and that you will stay a night at Staveley.' Instead, however, of this expected visit to his old friends in the Staveley Circuit, he was called by telegram to the bedside of his afflicted and dying wife. He found her suffering from typhoid fever and congestion of the lungs, and completely prostrate. She took but little notice of anything around her. When her attention was aroused she would answer in a manner shewing full consciousness, but would quickly sink back again into apparent insensibility. It was evident, however, that her thoughts were intent on the great verities of religion. Once, with great effort, she commenced the verse—

'There is a fountain filled with blood,' &c.,

but could not finish it. At another time, when her husband was speaking to her of the all-sufficiency of Christ, and the help He can render us in all circumstances, she gave a conscious assent, and then when he repeated such lines as—

'Thou, O Christ ! art all I want,'

she would quote the following line—

'More than all in Thee I find,'

and so on through the verse. And again—

'O Lamb of God, Thy precious blood takes all my sins away.'

Again and again she joined him in repeating—

'Takes all my sins away.'

After this the fever increased in violence, and nature gradually sunk under it until on Monday, August 15, 1887, about 2 p.m., she ceased to suffer, and her spirit went to the home of the blessed. Her mortal remains were interred in the Cottingham Churchyard, August 18th, a deeply affecting service being previously conducted in our own chapel, by the Rev. P. Milson of Hull, who also read the appointed service at the grave. May her removal be sanctified to the spiritual good of her sorrowing relatives and friends, and may they finally meet her in the world where sickness and death can never come.

JAMES T. SHEPHERD.

References

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