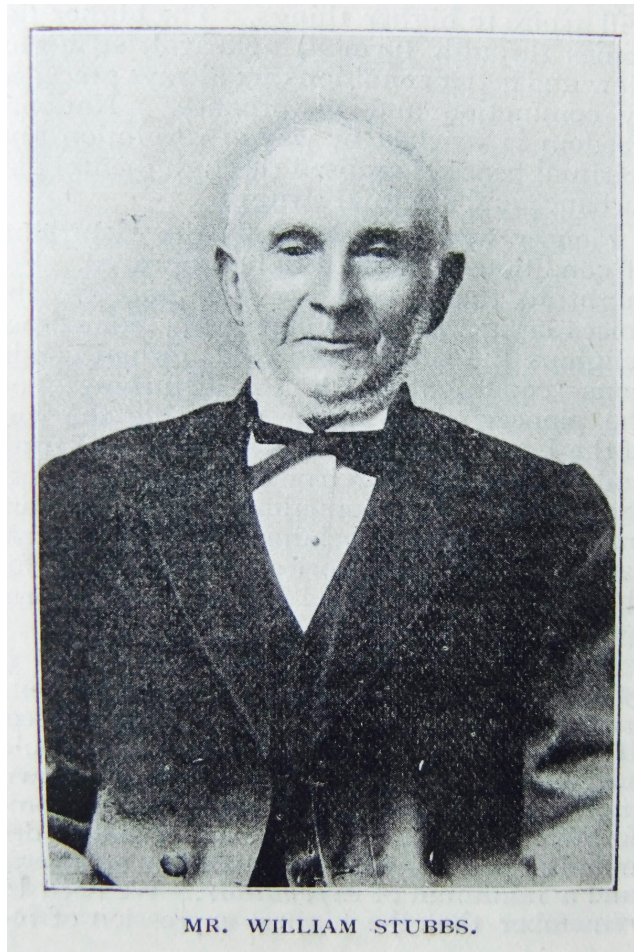


William Stubbs

Transcription of Sketch in the Christian Messenger by Fritz Condoover in the series 'Local Preachers Worth Knowing'

There are to be found in the Mother District many worthy local preachers, but we think that it is impossible to find one more worthy of a brief sketch in our magazines than Mr. William Stubbs, of Crewe. He was born in the year 1824, and after receiving a most meagre education he commenced to labour as a farm-servant. What education he received at the day-school was of little use to him. It was in the Sunday school where he received the most educational help. When thirteen years of age a rather serious accident led him to think 'that if he should die he would be lost.' He says, 'I was truly alarmed and awakened to a sense of my danger, and for about nine or ten weeks my soul was bound down by chains of darkness, and so great was the conviction of sin that I could neither eat nor sleep.' The farmer for whom he worked thought he was going out of his mind. At this time Hugh Bourne came to Weston, his native village, to hold a Camp meeting. At the early morning prayer meeting Mr. Bourne pleaded hard for souls to consecrate themselves to Christ. Cried the preacher, 'If there is any person here, old or young, who wishes to find pardon and peace at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, I will tell him how he may get it.' 'To me,' says the subject of this article, 'that was good news. I listened to every word he said. And although I was only thirteen years and six months old, the way to Christ was made so clear that I at once sought and found the Saviour. This change took place in July 1837.' When seventeen years of age he was put on the local preachers' plan, and very soon had the joy of seeing many brought to God. At this period of his life he relinquished his work in the fields as a farm servant and entered the Crewe works, where he toiled until he retired on a pension.



As a preacher he has laboured for God and the Church of his choice for over 60 years, and in the earlier days often travelling great distances to publish the truth dear to his heart and hastening home to work after a toilsome night journey. He has ever tried to be earnest, simple, and effective when in the pulpit, and many will testify to the success of his efforts. When pleading with sinners his heart ever seems aglow with sympathy; sympathy with men, sympathy with the Lord. 'To do valiantly,' says Carlyle, 'we must believe firmly.' Verily the subject of this sketch cannot be questioned as to the firmness of his faith. All who know him will witness to the fact that he is a man

of great faith and profound conviction - conviction of the grandeur of our mission. We are co-workers with God. And the grandeur of our mission should give to weakness heroic strength, and kindle in the coldest hearts the fire of a divine enthusiasm.

His work in the town of Crewe has been of no mean order. In the year 1863, he and a few others built a Primitive Methodist chapel in Wesley Street; after two years had passed it was found necessary to build a larger place, so Mr. Stubbs showed no small tact in securing the land for what is now widely known as the Mill Street Church, which has been for many years the scene of great activity.

As a class leader and general visitor he has few equals. It appears to some of us that there are few houses in Crewe which he does not visit, that he may pray with the people. He is a sunny Christian, and delights in recalling the amusing sayings, as well as the more serious ones, of the great men of the past. What personal reminiscences he has of Hugh Bourne, Henry Higginson, John Petty, and of many others of the great witnesses of the past.

Latterly his days have been somewhat clouded by the death of his most excellent wife, who for 49 years toiled by his side and helped in every good work to which he put his hand. And yet, having a wonderful sense of the presence of God, his face is radiant, though the tear-drops oft stand in his eyes.

Though seventy-seven years of age, he is still very active indeed, and just now contemplates becoming an active member of the Christian Endeavour Society at Mill -Street.

There is something grandly noble in men like William Stubbs, giving in such a hearty manner their services, their time, their money, their energies, and their love for so many years. May our young men emulate his example, and serve their day and generation with the same unselfish spirit, and with the same energy and devotion.

We desire that the life of our friend should be long spared that he may do the work he so much loves. And, after his living *on* God, may he go to live *with* God. As he has 'walked with God,' may he, like Enoch of old, one day walk off with God.

References

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