

## William Hockenhull

### Transcription of Sketch in the Christian Messenger by Fritz Condoever

HE subject of this brief sketch was born at Alkington, near Whitchurch, in the county of Salop, on October 11th, 1845. Twenty years later he was "born again," born of the Spirit. His conversion was very real; the change was thorough. "The contrast of experience," says he, "was as great as that of night and day." We have seen the sun with a ray of distant light challenge all the powers of darkness, and without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire that its memory was lost in the joy and glory of the morning." So was it with our friend, the light chased away the gloom and brought a joy which was full of glory. The new power which entered his life did not manifest itself in great demonstrations, but in unobtrusive and gentle forms. Like a stream which runs along many a mile in silent beauty. You may trace its course, not by roaring cataracts, but by the belt of verdure, greenness and fertility.



His brethren soon perceived his worth and urged him to come on "the plan," so that for some thirty-seven years he has preached the Gospel as he himself has understood it. No one, I think, will charge him with being heterodox, or influenced by the so-called German rationalists. He strongly adheres to all those doctrines which are commonly denominated evangelical. Therefore we need scarcely add that he is a strong Trinitarian, believes in atonement, regeneration, sanctification, and a future life of rewards and punishments. He would say of Christ as the late Henry Ward Beecher said of him: "Thou art my Hope, my Trust, my Life, my Object of worship, for all that belongs to me within and without, for the present and for the time to come. Thou, Lord Jesus, art mine." Mr. Hockenhull's wife and three children are like-minded. The children have been in the Church from childhood.

Temperance reformers have in Mr. Hockenhull a staunch supporter. Not only does he abstain from all intoxicating drinks himself, but insists that none shall come on his farm. For many years past he has followed this rule, and has clearly demonstrated that the statement made by some farmers, viz., "that men cannot be got for agricultural work to-day if drink is not given them," is fallacious. His experience has been though he gave them no ale he could always get more men than he required. We are happy to know that many are following his example, and instead of drink, are paying higher wages. Many years have elapsed since our friend commenced his noble labours in the interests of temperance, and to-day he is chairman of the directors of the Nantwich Temperance Hotel.

Amid his many duties he finds time to attend his class meeting, of which he has been leader over thirty years. He has also taken his place in the Sunday school as often as possible, but his numerous engagements have not permitted him to be among his young friends as often as he would have desired.

Appointments to responsible positions by the Society, Circuit, and District are usually regarded as "honours," and with these our brother has been heavily laden. He has done a vast amount of work both for his Circuit and District. His one great aim is to lead men to Christ. If we may speak of him as a man of one passion, we should say that passion was for souls. And this, perhaps, has led him at times to listen to sermons with a degree of impatience which have not been strictly evangelical. The one note of his ministry is evangelism. On a bed of rich and fruitful earnestness this flower seems to blossom quite naturally. In this day, when the Christian cause is damaged by giving rationalism undue prominence, it is refreshing to meet with a man of such fervent evangelism. The subject of this article is certainly not one of those who emphasizes the holiness of the sacraments above the holiness of the members, not one of those more scrupulous about the tithe of the mint, and anise and cumin of ritual than about fellowship with the blessed Lord. Madame Rowland, when standing opposite the statue of liberty, awaiting her execution, exclaimed, "Oh Liberty, what crimes have been committed in thy name!" As we gaze at the mass of superstition and nonsense in certain quarters we are led to say, "Oh Protestantism, what outrages are committed in thy name!" Our friend believes we should speak out for the old truths, that -

" They are slaves who fear to speak  
For the fallen and the weak.  
They are slaves who will not choose  
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,  
Rather than in silence shrink  
From the truth they needs must think."

## **References**

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