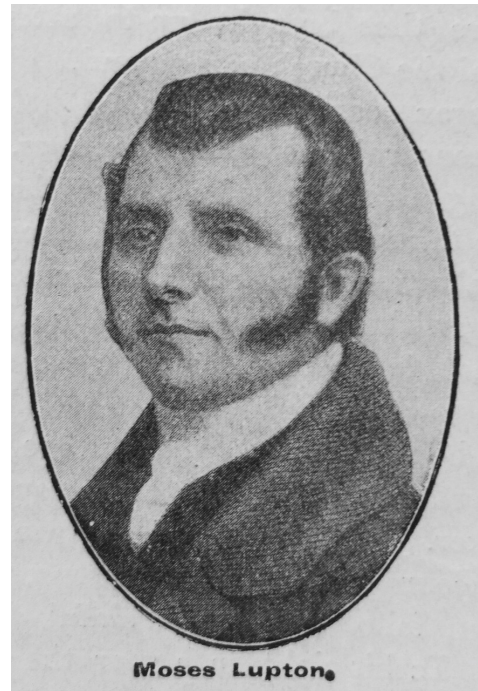


**Moses Lupton the Faithful**  
“A man of God an honourable man.” – Samuel

**Transcription of Sketch in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Grapho**

THE wonderful years of evangelistic fervour and victories which characterized our early history as a Church, were succeeded by the necessary period of organization and consolidation. Many of our forefathers were simply itinerating evangelists, and their apostolic successes brought with them new opportunities and responsibilities. That is to say, the thousands of converts gathered needed to be nurtured, and the work organized. And we have only to read the Acts of the Apostles to see how Christian institutions and ministries grew out of Christian evangelism. And the same law was in operation in the early days of our denominational history. Our evangelism conditioned, and required the subsequent work of harvesting, oversight and digesting. A grand work, most certainly, to awaken thousands from the slumber of carnality, and to turn their thoughts and steps towards spiritual ideals and aims; however, this is simply the supreme beginning, and at the same time the demand and opportunity of other kinds of work and workers.



“New times demand new measures and new men.” Evangelism was our prime quality and our distinctive peculiarity from the first, and must remain our distinguishing characteristic; however, the years brought, and have been increasingly bringing the need for men of business aptitude, sagacity, patience and organizing skill. And our Church owes a debt, hardly second, to the painstaking and practical talented men – the men of affairs with their patient skill who have aided in building up our great institutions. The evangelist comes first in order of time, but he must be immediately followed by the men who bring the directing, teaching and marshalling powers, if the work is to be made lasting and useful.

Moses Lupton belongs to the class of men who were called to guide the fortunes and build up the institutions of Primitive Methodism. Men of whom Lowell would say:-

“Life may be given in many ways.  
And loyalty to truth be sealed  
As bravely in the closet as the field.  
The kindly, earnest, brave, far-seeing men,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame.”

He was born at Ripon, in Yorkshire, July 28th, 1800. His parents were attendants at the Parish Church, and the children for years were thus brought up to attend the services of the Church of England.

He began early to be thoughtful and anxious concerning spiritual matters. And concerning those years he says "that if he had been taken by the hand and shown the way of salvation he might have found peace, but being without Godly counsel he became slack and indifferent, and gave up all attempts to be a Christian."

When he was fourteen years of age he was apprenticed to the business of a cooper and chairmaker. Here he found companionship which encouraged the evil and repressed the good, then followed years of sinful pleasure-seeking. In his eighteenth year the serious thoughtfulness of the earlier years returned. He says "I was struck as though a thunderbolt had met me; I saw that I was a sinner, and liable to the flames of hell. I thought if I went on any longer in sin I should be lost." His mother and brother, who had connected themselves with the Wesleyans, urged him to accompany them to the services. But he had strong prejudices against the Methodists, which for some time kept him from complying with their invitation. Finally, however, the antipathies melted and he went, and soon found the peace which he had so long desired. This change was no superficial matter to Moses Lupton. Religion became to him a priceless portion, and a great opportunity and responsibility. To him:-

"God bonds from out the deep and says,  
I gave thee the great gift 'of life.  
. . . . .  
I gave thee of my seed to sow,  
Bringest thou me my hundredfold?  
And he would look up with face aglow,  
And answer, 'Father, here is gold.' "

Yes, a hundredfold he would return. No mean minimum service would Moses Lupton render. The maximum - the highest and best in him he owed to God, and this was his ideal.

He and a number of young men fired with the same burning purpose met for prayer, and through their devotion and labours a blessed revival stirred the locality, and numbers were converted. He remained with the Wesleyans about two years. About this time William Clowes missioned Ripon and formed a Primitive Methodist Class. The flaming spirit of Clowes caught up the eager soul of Moses Lupton, and he found in the new evangelism, of which Clowes was an apostle in very deed, a sphere and atmosphere more congenial. From this point Moses Lupton became a Primitive Methodist. Soon his decision, and integrity of character, natural abilities, and spiritual graces, and devotion, and enthusiasm were recognized, and he was put on the plan as a local preacher. It was not long before he was desired to enter the ministry. His master to whom he had been apprenticed was willing to release him, and so he joined the ranks of our ministry, and began a ministry of forty-four years of distinguished toils, laborious industry and of considerable successes.

The wide area over which his ministry extended will be seen from the following places where he was successively appointed: Guisborough, Malton, Dewsbury, Howden, Grimsby, Pocklington, Scotter, Louth, Lincoln, Glasgow, South Shields, Brampton, North Shields, Hexham, Stockton, Darlington, South Shields; again, Carlisle, Shotley Bridge, Alston, Whitehaven, London, Shotley Bridge (second time.)

At the commencement of his ministry he was oppressed with the sense of his own unequalness, and unworthiness for the ministry; and with the greatness of the work to which he had been summoned. But such feelings were in keeping with all such men as Moses Lupton. Men of his stamp could not but see the contrast between their own gifts and the immense requirements of the duties and opportunities of their calling.

A consciousness of self-insufficiency is a primal qualification for the Christian ministry; because wherever there is a sense of personal importance, it ever betrays into endless weakness, and detractions of the finest influences, and proves the absence of those lofty conceptions of the sacred calling which never fail to bring continuous encouragements and inspirations.

The sufficiency of Moses Lupton was not found in himself, but in God. He drew his strength from no spring of personal resource, but from the eternal fountains of heavenly might. He had no meagre ideas of personal religion, it was no mere profession, but it was a divine fellowship. And of the ministry to which he had been called, he thought not as a vocation, but as a sacred service in which he was to be a divinely used instrument.

There is the man, then; more than ordinarily gifted - robust physically – conscientious and transparent in character - clear in perception - sound in judgment - firm in principles and convictions - fervent in piety - consuming in enthusiasm; a vessel meet for the Master's Service - a man whom the King is well pleased to use. He brought into the ministry such solid qualities, such an unreserved surrender and devotion of himself, such a passion for his work, and such a whole-souled love to his God, that none can wonder at the remarkable approval which was set upon his work.

We have chosen the word "*Faithful*" as the one above every other that pictures the man of whom we are writing. He was thorough, loyal, conscientious, and self-expending in every sphere wherein he was called to serve. As a man, as a minister, and as an official, he put into all his relations and duties a most exemplary self-obliviousness and a painstaking devotion. He shrank from no difficulties, however threatening; he shunned no duties, however distasteful; he shirked no work, however hard. He was a faithful man to his heart's core.

It is impossible to follow him through the circuits in which he successfully toiled, but he had golden harvests in them all. As a preacher he was well instructed in the things of the Kingdom, and was deeply taught in the doctrines and duties of our religion. His ministry was not after the cunning devices of man's wisdom, but in the teachings and demonstration of God's Spirit. He dealt with no fine wordiness, no subtle and hair-splitting thinking, but direct, heart-searching presentations of God's saving truths, and we do not wonder at the revivals which were experienced in his circuits, and some of the remarkable conversions he not unfrequently saw. He aimed at the spiritual prosperity of his circuits, and Heaven honoured his endeavours by giving him the prize for which he strove. Of other men it may be said, "they have their reward," but it is as brief as the fickleness of the crowds, and as empty as human applause; but such rewards as Moses Lupton gained, because he aimed at none other, are as enduring as the soul's salvation.

Fortunately he has left us some records, which are valuable in their illustration of the kind of minister he was, and the more than ordinary success which attended his labours. In October, 1822, he was

sent to mission Reeth and its neighbourhood. He began at Helaugh by preaching in the open air. On his second visit to the locality seven persons were converted, and a fortnight after eleven others, all of whom united themselves in Church fellowship. At Reeth and other places contiguous, a gracious outpouring of the Divine Spirit was witnessed, so that when he left this neighbourhood the following April, over a hundred had been saved, and formed into a Church. He was one of our earliest missionaries in Scotland. He laboured in Glasgow during 1833-4-5, and they were years of abundant toils, amid sore and many difficulties; but remarkable were his successes. The old Glasgow Green was a favourite spot for him, as it has been for many another to speak the Gospel message to the thousands who then, as now, gather there. When he was stationed at Louth, in 1829, he found the circuit in ruins. But Moses Lupton was not the man to lose heart. He gave himself to incessant toil, in complete dependence upon God; prosperity was restored, and many were the converts he won during his ministry there.

There is no need to multiply such instances, and we will content ourselves in quoting his own words, which may almost be described as a summary of his long and successful ministry. He thus writes - "In carefully examining my records and accounts, I find for the September Quarter-day, 1828 – when I began to enter the accounts of my stations - to June Quarter-day, 1866, inclusive (exclusive of the six years I was in office in London) making thirty-two years of accounts, that for these years of regular circuit work, I have had an increase of one thousand five hundred and sixty members, in addition to the making up of the losses by deaths, removals and falling away, being an average increase of forty-nine per cent., and averaging the income, that is to say, the increase on the income of my stations, fourteen per cent. For the same period will be found to be correct. I did not keep a record for March, 1822, to June, 1828, or had I done so the average for those six years would have been quite equal to the above; so that for thirty-eight years it would have stood thus - increase one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four for the thirty-eight years of my regular circuit ministry. I have taken no credit for the six years I was in London. I have travelled forty-four years and reckoning 3,000 as the average number of miles travelled on foot by me each year, which I believe to be considerably under the mark, I have walked 132,000 miles; and computing six sermons a week (a low average) for the forty-four years, I have preached 13,728 times; and I may confidently estimate thirty family visits per week for the same period - thus making 46,640 visits, in addition to all extra travelling, meetings, and circuit business. During the thirty-eight years I was in the superintendency, and this was the time of the greatest toil, exposure, anxiety, suffering, and poverty of the Connexion, at times the labours were Herculean, the privations many and severe, the anxiety intense, but my succour and support were from above."

What an amazing record? There the man and the minister are reflected in his own words. A simple and grateful review and summary of hard and successful years. And those of us who knew Moses Lupton, know how impossible it was for him to exaggerate or set down a sentence which had even a colouring of self-boasting in it. It was a thankful look-back on the track along which he had been so wonderfully conducted, and a joyous acknowledging of the work Heaven had strengthened him to do.

The sterling qualities of the man, sanctified and made concentric by grace, were transfused into the duties of the minister; and these were equally in evidence in the official. Honours and offices spoil some men. Drest in a little brief authority they play fantastic tricks. And in the scramble for office,

and in the routine of business, many a man shrinks; but not such men as Moses Lupton. They do not allow their manhood nor godliness to be cramped by officialism. In all his official relations and duties he always brought to them a painstaking care, a sound and clear judgment, an unflinching integrity, and a uniform thoughtfulness and consideration for others, which never failed to win for him abiding confidence and esteem.

From 1859 to 1865 he fulfilled the duties of the General Missionary Secretary, and five of these years he also did the work of the Secretary of the General Committee. What these years meant of exacting labours and multiplied responsibilities we can hardly fancy. And, as if the secretaryship of the two committees was not enough, during a portion of this time he held the secretaryship of the Connexional Jubilee Fund and the Connexional Lancashire Famine Fund. These things entailed enormous care and untiring labours, necessitating often sixteen hours of close toiling daily; but he neglected no duty and shirked no work.

In 1864 he was elected a Deed Poll member. In 1870 he was elected President of the Conference, and in both these positions of honour rendered valuable service by his knowledge of Connexional rules and usages, and the nobility of his character. When he retired from the onerous duties of Connexional Secretary, in 1865, he was appointed, a second time, to Shotley Bridge Circuit, but the winter was so severe, and he suffered in his health so much, that he resolved to seek superannuation the following Conference.

Upon his superannuation in 1866, he went to reside at Darlington, but subsequently removed to Sunderland. Here, even though he was out of active service as a minister, he was a valuable acquisition to the district and other committees. His interest in the establishment and management of the Theological Institute are beyond all praise. As Secretary of the Institute Examining Committee he was most efficient and diligent. This was the time we personally knew him, and learned to admire him. He was the very soul of honour, unflinching in principles, but the essence of kindness - a man more to love than to fear. His visits to the studies, and his intercourse with us students, were never dreaded but welcomed. Moses Lupton was an ideal old man - he was in sympathy with young men, their studies, and difficulties, and in turn we loved him.

He was present at the May examination of the students, in 1875, for several days. The Conference time drawing near, he expressed his doubts of being able to attend because of growing weakness. He seemed conscious the end was approaching, and on the morning of June 10th the end did come - the end of toil and suffering, but the beginning of his immortal recompense.

So passed within the veil one of the noblest of our noble sires. Others may have equalled him, but we dare to think none excelled him in loyalty to his Church and faithfulness to his work. His life had been a living sacrifice, his ministry a blessing to thousands, and to multitudes his memory was, and still is, fragrant.

Let laurelled marbles weigh on other tombs,  
Let anthems peal for other dead,  
Rustling the bannered depth of minster-glooms  
With their exulting spread;  
His epitaph shall mock the short-lived stone,

No lichen shall its lines efface;  
He needs these few and simple words alone  
To mark his resting place -  
Here lies a faithful man.

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### **References**

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1904/857