

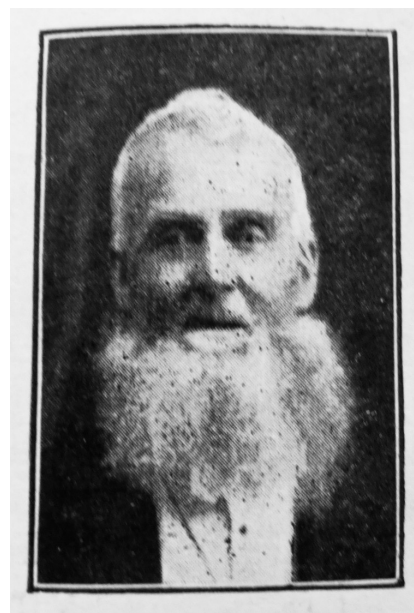
Michael Hornsby

Transcription of Obituary in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by William Shipley

If the history of the Saltburn-by-the-Sea Society should ever be written it will tell of two outstanding facts, viz., the conversion and the ascension of Mr. M. Hornsby, the former event taking place in the year 1872, and the latter in the year 1905. And, singularly enough, the ascension took place on the anniversary day of his conversion.

He was converted on the Missionary Anniversary Sunday night and translated on the Missionary Anniversary Sunday morning, and between these two events he crowded in a vast amount of hard secular and spiritual work.

His was a fine example of the "strenuous" life. Being but sixty-seven years of age when he passed away it was marked more for its intensiveness than for its extensiveness.



In public affairs he took a deep and practical interest, having served on the Town Council and being at the time of his death a member of the Board of Guardians. He was an ardent temperance reformer, and in politics a strong Liberal.

His church work was many sided. In the Sunday School he found a congenial sphere, and would persist in attending it right up to within a few weeks of his death. The children loved him. One dear little girl did but express the sentiment of many when she said on hearing of his death, "Well, I shall miss him, mother."

As a local preacher he faithfully discharged his duties, never thinking of "vain glory," but only of the good that he might do. In the earlier years of his lay ministry he laboured in conjunction with the late sainted Robert Gilbertson, and their united efforts constituted not the least of the formative influences of the Guisborough Circuit.

His preaching was practical and full of "the sincere milk of the word." For him to quote Scripture was an easy matter, for few were the verses in the Psalms and other favourite Scriptures that were not underscored by his pencil.

He attended District Meeting three times as a delegate and was twice delegate to the Conference. He set an excellent example to our well-to-do laymen in taking every magazine published by our Book Room.

In official matters he “wore his heart on his sleeve” and was always sagacious and conscientious. At times he expressed his convictions with unmistakable candour, but was none the less beloved, his actions always being obviously free from anything bearing the taint of a selfish diplomacy. Missionary work had his unbounded sympathy and munificent support. He served on the General Missionary Committee and on the General Sunday School Committee.

One of his last acts was to give £600, in addition to the £200 he had previously given to the funds for a new church in Saltburn.

The funeral was thoroughly representative and was conducted by the Rev. E. Lucas, superintendent minister. The Rev. H. Pratt, of Newcastle, offered a tender and appropriate prayer. The address was given by the Rev. W. Shipley, of Liverpool.

Other ministers attending and taking part in the funeral service were the Revs. J.P. Osborne, G. Chun, R. Ainsworth, J.G. Bowran, J.W. Cotton, J. Walton and T. Shaw.

Beautiful tributes to his worth and work were received from the Rev. James Pickett, who on behalf of the General Missionary Committee said:

“He was held in the highest possible esteem by us, and we have long appreciated his great devotion to our Church, and his most generous support of the missionary cause.”

The Rev. T. Jackson, of London, writes: “He was one of my most treasured friends and helpers, and both I and my mission are much poorer now that he has passed within the veil.”

The Rev. W.A. French, ex-Conference Secretary, says: - “His profound interest in every good work, his large-hearted and unostentatious generosity won for him the affection of all who knew him.”

Rev. Joseph Ritson, Editor, says:- “He was a good man, one that everyone trusted, esteemed and honoured as a man of unquestionable integrity and unfailing devotion to the cause of God.”

Rev. G.F. Fawcett, Governor of Elmfield College, writes:- “His death is an incalculable loss to our Church.”

The Rev. G. Chun says:- “I never knew a man more humble, sincere and earnest in spiritual things. His loyalty to the church and open-handed generosity, his unbounded hospitality, especially to the ministers, has not, I think, been surpassed in our Church.”

Equally fine tributes were received from his old friends, Principal Johnson, of Manchester College, and Rev. A. Latimer, and many others.

For his widow and family we pray God’s richest blessing.

References

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