C. Laurie Etchr.

REV COLIN C. McKECHNIE

Thomas C Jack, London & Edinburgh.

METHODIST WORTHIES.

CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES

OF

METHODIST PREACHERS

OF THE

SEVERAL DENOMINATIONS,

WITH

Historical Sketch of each Connexion.

BY GEORGE JOHN STEVENSON, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIALS OF THE WESLEY FAMILY;" "THE METHODIST HYMN BOOK AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS," &c.

VOLUME V.

LONDON:

THOMAS C. JACK, 45 LUDGATE HILL.

EDINBURGH: GRANGE PUBLISHING WORKS.

1886.

CONTENTS OF VOL. V.

CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES OF PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHERS.

E. Laurie Etcht

GEORGE CHARLTON ESQ

Thomas C Jack. London & Edinburgh.

C. Laurie Etch.

REVEREND SAMUEL HULME

Thomas C Jack, London & Edinburgh.

C. Laurie Etch.

REV. FREDERICK WILLIAM BOURNE

Thomas C. Jack, London & Edinburgh.

C. Laurie Etch.

WILLIAM P HARTLEY, ESQ

Thomas C Jack, London & Edinburgh

Hugh Bourne.

[*Born* 1772 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1811 : *Died* 1852.]

THE sketch which we are about to submit of Hugh Bourne must necessarily be historical more than biographical because of the peculiar position he held as the founder of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. While others bore an honourable part in this great work, unquestionably the principal share fell to the lot of Hugh Bourne. He inaugurated the camp meetings, he formed the first class, employed the first evangelist, and had the principal hand in the drawing up of the constitution and rules. He was the father of the Connexion, and gave to it his time, his talents, and his life. He had no personal thought or concern beyond the Connexion ; he had no private life, he lived and moved and had his being in the Church he had been honoured by God in creating. To tell, therefore, the story of his life is to repeat the early history of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, and this can only be done within our limits in a very imperfect sketch. We hope, however, to give our readers a general idea of this brave, good man, whom God raised out of obscurity to become the founder of a great and powerful section of the Methodist family.

It is satisfactorily shown that the family from which Hugh Bourne sprang came into England with William the Conqueror, so that he could have claimed aristocratic descent and blue blood. The family estates were principally in North Staffordshire, where for ages the

Bournes were people of distinction and high social standing. Long, however, before the birth of Hugh, the property had passed into other hands, and his branch of the family had fallen to the level of yeomen and tenant farmers. Joseph Bourne, Hugh's father, was a moorland farmer, but, having learnt the trade of a wheelwright, he associated the two pursuits, and occasionally speculated in timber. He was a man of a strong, coarse nature, who lived a passionate and sensuous life, and whose violent temper, coarse indulgence, and want of forethought, caused great suffering and sorrow to his family. Despite, however, his violence and wickedness, Joseph Bourne thought himself a strict churchman, and was exceedingly zealous against Methodists. His wife, Ellen Bourne, appears to have been an exceptionally fine woman, who exercised a most powerful and healthy influence upon her family. She had mental gifts of a superior order, and was educated beyond her class. She had great mental fortitude, a refined sensibility, and much self-restraint. By her diligence, industry, and self-denial she managed, despite the carelessness and extravagance of her husband, to bring up her family in respectability. "Her industry and labours in the things of this life," says her son, "have been very great. We were a large family, and my father was a very wicked man, but my mother's industry and labour kept the family from want. Her road through life has been very rough indeed." The conduct of the husband threw all the care of the household upon the mother, and rendered her influence paramount, while it attached the children to her almost exclusively.

Hugh was the fifth child and third son of his parents. He was born 3rd April, 1772, in the farm-house of Fordhays, in the parish of Stoke-upon-Trent. The house was situated in a wild moorland district, where there were few neighbours, and no public road, and where the people generally were in a low state of civilisation. The family having little intercourse with the great world without, and knowing very little of its ways, Mrs. Bourne had a serious task, yet with reliance upon God she discharged her duty faithfully and well, and was honoured to see her children powerful instruments for good in the world. For economical and other reasons, Mrs. Bourne undertook the work of educating her children, and often she was busy attending

to her household duties, and at the same time teaching her children to read. Her principles of education comprehended the development of the whole spiritual nature, and she was therefore as much concerned to lead her children to the formation of right principles, and the apprehension of God and spiritual things, as to call into activity their reasoning powers. The education Hugh Bourne received was of a very elementary character, for as soon as he was able he had to take part in the work of the farm and the joiner's shop, but he had a keen thirst for knowledge, and applied himself earnestly to the work of self-culture. His mind was of an intensely practical order,—he had no speculative tendency. His range of vision was limited and precise, his intellect logical, and his memory retentive. He learned slowly, but what he gained he retained in a hard, dry, formal manner, and could reproduce it exactly without any tint or colouring. His mind was a storehouse, not a fruitful field; he would have made an excellent scholar if he had been placed in favourable circumstances, but never a great thinker. All through life he carried with him the influence of the struggle through which he gained knowledge. He studied principally natural philosophy, history, and the languages. When he was busy in the field or the joiner's shop, he was engaged mastering the elements of natural philosophy, or the rules of grammar; and, in after life, he gave evidence of the proficiency he attained in the several departments in the articles he published in the magazines and various small books.

The matter of supreme concern, however, in his education was the knowledge of God and spiritual things. Here is the record he gives of himself:—

"When I was four or five years of age," he says, "I had as clear ideas of God as it was possible for any one to have at that age. My thoughts were that God was an everlasting and eternal being; that He dwelt above the skies; that He created heaven and earth, and all things seen and unseen; that He was able to destroy all things, or to alter the form of everything; that He was present everywhere; that He knew the thoughts of every one. I thought that heaven was a place of happiness, and that those who were righteous and kept God's commandments were admitted thither, and could see God—which I thought the greatest happiness—and were happy for ever and ever; and that hell was a place of torments, and that all that did wickedly and broke God's commandments were sent thither to be tormented by the devil and his angels in blue flaming brimstone for ever and ever. These views made me very intent upon keeping what I thought to be God's commandments; I was diligent to know His will, I delighted in

His name. I was eager to know how to please Him, and was surprised to see people so careless and indifferent about things on which so great a concern depended; for, I thought, if the commandments were ever so hard, it was better to keep them and go to heaven than to break them and go to hell; and it was a great grief to me to hear anybody swear or do anything that was wicked."

In another place he says: "About my sixth or seventh year I was deeply convinced of sin; and for a period of about twenty years afterwards I seldom went to bed without a dread of being in hell before morning, and in the morning I had a dread of being in hell before night." This fearful feeling which haunted his mind, and the awful conception he had of God, darkened his life, and gave colour to his whole after-conduct. "Oh," he exclaimed, "that I had had some one to take me by the hand and instruct me in the mystery of faith and the nature of a free, full, and present salvation. How happy would it have been for me! But I looked, and there was no eye to pity; I mourned, but there was no hand to help." In the providence of God it was perhaps well that it was so, for the deep travail of soul fitted him to do the work to which God called him. He had no acquaintance with the Methodists during his early life, but one day he fell in with a volume of the *Arminian Magazine*, which so interested him, that he began to make inquiry who the Arminians were, and where they lived. Afterwards a friend lent his mother Wesley's "Sermons on the Trinity," Fletcher's "Letters on the Manifestation of the Son of God," Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and Alleine's "Alarm." Wesley's Sermon particularly arrested him, and gave him more real light upon the nature of religion than anything he had yet read. It was founded upon 1 John v. 7: "Whatever," says Wesley, "the generality of people may think, it is certain that opinion is not religion, no, not right opinion—not assent to one or ten thousand truths—even right opinion is as distant from religion as the east is from the west. Persons may be quite right in their opinions and yet have no religion at all, and, on the other hand, persons may be truly religious who hold many wrong opinions."

"The reading of this sermon," he says, "opened my mind and cleared my way for reading the other treatises in the book. . . . Previous to this, I do not know of having received any spiritual light from any sermon I had ever heard, but this sermon of Mr.

Wesley's on the Trinity was to me a light indeed; it cleared my way and gave me to see that I might join any really religious society without undervaluing others, and might profit by all, and this has been a blessing to me ever since."

His mind was now freed from the superstitious reverence for the Church which had been gendered in early life, but he had not yet realised the sense of pardon and full acceptance with God. He was tortured with the fear that he had sinned the unpardonable sin. At length, however, in the spring of 1799, "One Sunday morning," he says, "as I sat in my father's house reading 'Fletcher's Letters,' I felt the meaning and power of those words of the Saviour, 'I will love him and will manifest myself unto him.'" In a moment the scales fell from his eyes. "I was born again in an instant," he says, "yea, had passed from death unto life. I was filled with love and joy and glory which made amends for the twenty years' sufferings. The Bible looked new; creation looked new; and I felt a love to all mankind, and my desire was that friends and enemies, and all the world, if possible, might be saved."

Hugh Bourne was twenty-seven years of age when this great spiritual change took place. He had lived a pure moral life, and had been a diligent searcher for the truth, but he had failed to learn the way of peace. Now, however, he had entered into rest. He felt the blessed abiding sense of his acceptance with God, and from this time forth he was never haunted with doubt. He had often a depressing sense of personal imperfection, but no doubt. To him the spiritual world was more real, present, and potent than the things that are seen. In many respects his notions were no doubt crude and inadequate, but to him spiritual things were not intellectual abstractions, but realities, and God was a living presence abiding with him and directing all the ways of his life. Hugh Bourne acknowledged no man as his spiritual father. He gained light and help from Wesley and Fletcher, but the light that was his life came direct to his soul as he waited upon God. He had not been in formal fellowship with any Church, but had lived a quiet retiring life. He was shy and diffident, cautious and timidly suspicious, making few friends. We have now, however, to see how he became associated with the Methodists, and how God forced this shy moorland joiner to take the leading place

in the revival of religion which led to the establishment of the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

In June, 1799, he was made a Member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society without his consent. He felt strongly the necessity for Christian fellowship, and regarded it as a duty to join the visible Church, but the difficulty with him was what section of the Church he ought to associate himself with. He had met with some Methodists whose manner of life he thought was not in harmony with the Gospel, and he was prejudiced against joining the Methodists. However, being present in the house of a friend when the minister was renewing the quarterly tickets, his name was enrolled. When the minister offered him a ticket, he said, "I am not one of you;" but his friend told him that without the ticket he could not get admitted to the love feast at Burslem, which he was very anxious to attend. He was not, however, quite satisfied: "Being," he says, "quite in a dilemma, I made prayer and supplication to Almighty God, to reveal His will, and lead me right in this important matter, and determined to consult no man, nor to take any man's advice, but wait until the Lord should make known His holy will in regard to this very weighty matter. . . . I waited some weeks for an answer, till the Lord, in His mercy, manifested His will that I should be a Methodist." After he joined the Methodist Society, he was often urged to pray in the prayer meeting, but his natural shyness and timidity overcame him. He says, "If I attempted, the power of utterance seemed to fail me, and I knew not whether I should ever be able to pray in public." However, he attended the preaching services and class meetings regularly, often travelling great distances to hear a sermon, and in private he cultivated devotion and the study of theology. "From this time," he says, "my readings and studies were turned much, though not wholly, from arts and sciences, and general learning, and fixed more fully than before on the doctrines of Divine truth, and on the reading of Christian experience and doctrine." He became a consistent Methodist, and was satisfied with the doctrines, modes of worship, and government of that Society, and venerated the ministers and office-bearers.

In 1800, he purchased some timber near Harriseahead, and went there to reside. This circumstance brought him into contact with the

rough colliers living in the neighbourhood of Mow Cop. He had a relative in the locality, named Daniel Shubotham, who was a notoriously wicked man,—"a boxer, a poacher, and a leading character in crime." Hugh Bourne sought out this relative, and endeavoured to persuade him to turn to the Lord, and in the end proved successful. He also made the acquaintance of another collier who had been converted, and the three friends became deeply concerned about the religious condition of their neighbours. There were few religious services held in the locality. The people were grossly ignorant and very immoral, and it seemed as if there was no man to care for their souls. Bourne and his friends often consulted together about this wretched state of things. They visited from house to house, talking with the people about their souls, and held cottage prayer meetings. These meetings were prudently closed at an early hour, and the people often complained that they were too short. On one occasion when the people were so complaining, Daniel Shubotham, in an impetuous way, said: "You shall have a meeting upon Mow Cop some Sunday, and have a whole day's praying, and then you'll be satisfied." In the meantime, the prayer meetings were continued, numbers of persons were converted; a general revival of religion spread all through the neighbourhood, and a marked change took place in the lives and habits of the people. Mr. Bourne now assumed the duty of class-leader, and was induced occasionally to preach. The first sermon he preached was in the open air. The preaching services were held fortnightly, at the house of Joseph Pointon, on the Cheshire side of Mow Cop. On 12th July, 1801, no preacher was planned, and Hugh Bourne had agreed to take the service. A great crowd of people gathered together so that there was not room for them in the house, and it was arranged that the service should be in the open air. Mr. Bourne gives this account of the meeting; he says:—

"It was settled weather; the ground was warm and pleasant, and the people lined the rising mountain like a gallery, and the whole was a fine and imposing appearance. I stood up at the end of the house; the service opened well, and I read for a text Heb. xi. 7. I preached with my hand over my face all the time. I was often at a loss, but it occurred to me to preach as if I were speaking to one person; this opened a track I was accustomed to, and the Lord gave me liberty, and one person started for heaven under the sermon."

This was the beginning of the open-air mission in England, which has now become popular, and is patronised by the bishops and clergymen of the Episcopal Church; but which was at first frowned upon, and resisted, by not only the magistrates and civil officers, but by nearly all the established churches, and ministers of all denominations.

The work of God continued to prosper in the neighbourhood. A chapel was built, in which Mr. Bourne taught a school, and commenced one of the first Sunday schools in that part of the country. He was the true bishop and spiritual guide of the locality, and was abundant in labour for the salvation of the people. In 1804, he realised the blessing of full sanctification, and in the following year he made the acquaintance of William Clowes, who was his fellow-labourer in the spread of Primitive Methodism. He had read glowing accounts of the American camp meetings, and having heard Lorenzo Dow, a famous American preacher, he determined to hold a camp meeting on Mow Cop. As this was the first camp meeting held in England, we will give Hugh Bourne's account of it. "Mow Cop," he says, "anciently written Mole Cope—is a great rough, rugged, craggy mountain; the highest land in this part of England. It runs nearly north and south, ranging between Staffordshire and Cheshire, and is in both counties. The land is most poor, barren, and unproductive, giving the face of the country an unpleasant appearance." The camp meeting was held in a field on the Cheshire side of the mountain, in fact, in the very field where Hugh Bourne conducted his first open-air service. The meeting was held on Sunday, 31st May, 1807. Mr. Bourne says:—

"The morning proved unfavourable, but about six o'clock the Lord sent the clouds off and gave us a very pleasant day. The meeting was opened by two holy men from Knutsford, Captain Anderson having previously erected a flag on the mountain to direct strangers, and these three, with some pious people from Macclesfield, carried on the meeting a considerable time in a most lively and vigorous manner. The congregation rapidly increased, and others began to join in the holy exercises. The wind was cold, but a large grove of fir trees kept it off, and another preaching stand was erected in a distant part of the field under cover of a stone wall. Returning from the second stand, I met with a company at a distance from the first, praying with a man in distress. I could not get near, but I there found such a degree of joy and love that it was beyond description. I should gladly have stayed there, but other matters called me away. I perceived that the Lord was beginning to work mightily. Nearer the first stand was another company praying with mourners. Immediately the man in the first company was praising God, and I found he had obtained the pardon of his sins. Many were

afterwards converted in the other company. Meantime preaching went on at both stands, and about noon the congregation was so much increased that we were obliged to erect a third preaching stand. We fixed it at a distance from the first near the fir-tree grove. I got upon this stand after the first preaching, and was extremely surprised at the amazing sight before me. The people were nearly all under my eye, and I had not conceived before that such a vast multitude were present. Thousands hearing with attention solemn as death presented a scene of the most sublime and awfully pleasing grandeur that my eyes ever beheld. The preachers seemed to be fired with uncommon zeal, and an extraordinary reaction attended their word, while tears were flowing and sinners trembling on every side. Many preachers were now upon the ground. . . . The congregations increased so rapidly that a fourth preaching stand was called for. The work now became general, and the service was most interesting. Thousands were listening with solemn attention. A company near the first stand were wrestling in prayer for mourners, and four preachers were preaching with all their might. This extraordinary service continued until about four o'clock, when the people began to retire. About seven o'clock a work began among the children, six of whom were converted before the meeting broke up. About half-past eight the meeting closed. A meeting such as our eyes never beheld. A meeting for which many will praise God both in time and eternity. Such a day as this we never enjoyed before. It was a day spent in the active service of God. A Sabbath in which Jesus Christ made glad the hearts of His saints, and sent His arrows to the hearts of sinners. So great was the work effected that the people were ready to say, 'We have seen strange things to-day.'"

Daniel Shubotham's promise had been fulfilled; the people had had a day's praying upon Mow Cop, and the most blessed results had followed. It might have been thought that all Christian people would have rejoiced in the good work done, but it was not so. The Methodist preacher published a handbill disclaiming all connection with the camp meetings, the Conference condemned them, and the preachers were forbidden to take part in them. It looked as if the movement was going to be crushed, but Hugh Bourne was not of a nature to turn aside from what he considered the guidance of Providence. He was shy, timid, and cautious, but in matters of conscience stern and unbending. Many of his friends forsook him. The labour and expense involved were very great, but he believed that it was the will of God that this means should be employed for the diffusion of the Gospel, and he counted no sacrifice too great, no labour too severe, if he could fulfil the will of God and advance the kingdom of Christ. He published a pamphlet in defence of camp meetings, and travelled about the country arranging where others might be held. The greater the opposition, the more resolute Bourne became. The conflict between him and the

circuit authorities became sharper. At length the quarterly meeting dismembered him, without preferring any charge against him or without any trial. This was a most unwise and cruel act, which the authorities of the Methodist Church have often since regretted. Bourne was very much grieved at this action but he continued his work as if nothing had happened.

Being separated from the Wesleyans, Mr. Bourne felt at full liberty to continue the great work of open-air missions. He published Lorenzo Dow's Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs. He travelled about the country holding religious services, and urged his converts to join the Methodist Society. He had no idea of beginning a separate denomination, or of creating any schism, his sole object being to lead men to faith in Jesus Christ, and a life of holiness. The labours grew so abundant that he engaged Mr. James Crawfoot to act as an evangelist, paying him ten shillings per week. Crawfoot was very successful, and large numbers were added to the Methodist Churches, but the authorities were not satisfied, and at length refused to admit any of the new converts, unless they would pledge themselves not to encourage or entertain Mr. Bourne. A class of ten persons was formed at Standley, on the 10th of May, 1810, and was composed of persons that had never been in fellowship with any Christian Church.

Such was the humble and unpretentious origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, which, at the Conference of 1883 reported 1147 regular travelling preachers, 15,982 local preachers, 10,994 class leaders, 196,480 church members, 61,215 Sunday-school teachers, and 400,597 scholars, and the possession of church property worth £2,812,263, 17s., and, when it is remembered that several independent churches and separate conferences have been formed out of the Connexion, we may in wonder exclaim, What hath God wrought?

The growing cares of the young community were a great tax upon Mr. Bourne's time and strength, so that it became necessary for him to give up his regular calling. He was personally indifferent about money and worldly gain. He says, "I felt nothing in me that desired anything but God. My desire to live is only to grow up into Him." By the expulsion of William Clowes and others from the Methodist

Church, his hands were strengthened, and the work of God greatly advanced. A plan was drawn up of the preaching places, and the appointments of the preachers, and printed quarterly tickets were issued in 1811, and in 1812 the name Primitive Methodist Connexion was adopted. Mr. Bourne sustained the principal part in forming the societies, in framing rules, and consolidating the work of the missionaries. He travelled great distances on foot for this purpose, endured great fatigues, and bore much hardships; but toil was a pleasure in the work of the Lord. Gradually he came to be the manager of all Connexional affairs. Clowes was the successful evangelist, Bourne the legislator and administrator. He took an active part in drawing up the Deed Poll, and in 1818 he started the first magazine. He was for thirty years Connexional Secretary. He compiled and edited the Hymn-Book, prepared the Minutes of Conference for publication, was the principal member of Connexional Committees, and annually visited a great part of the Connexion, besides preaching every night and visiting regularly. In 1842 he gave signs of failing health, and the Conference relieved him from official work, and made him a small allowance for life. His constant labours, the harassment and anxiety associated with the formation of the Connexion, the privations he had endured, at length began to tell upon his iron constitution, and the old man reluctantly consented to be relieved of the care of the churches. He could not, however, be satisfied to settle down in ease, he revisited many of the scenes of his early labours, and, at the advanced age of seventy-three, crossed the Atlantic to visit the Primitive Methodist Churches in Canada and the United States. After his return from America his health rapidly failed, and on the 11th of October, 1852, he breathed his last in his brother's house at Bemersley at the ripe age of fourscore years.

Mr. Walford gives this account of his last moments:—

"He was cheerful and happy during the day, but about four o'clock he reclined on the sofa, and fell asleep. In this state he continued some time. When arousing, he seemed to be conversing with some one. Then beckoning with his hand as for a nearer approach, with a sweet smile upon his countenance, he said, 'Come, come,' several times, and looking intensely upwards, he repeated with emphasis and earnestness, 'Old companions, old companions—my mother,' and then without a groan or sigh, he passed from the pains and toils of mortality to the rest and peace of God."

Considering his early life and the disadvantages under which he laboured, few men in the Church of God ever accomplished more real and lasting good than Hugh Bourne. His labours were heroical, and, if he had not lived a temperate life they would have sent him to an early grave. His talents were not of a high order, but he put them to the best use. He was a genuine religious enthusiast; he never aimed at being a preacher in the ordinary sense, but he talked the Gospel to the profit of those who heard. He was mighty in prayer and knew the secret of the Lord. He was plain and simple in his manners, and perhaps a little peculiar in his dress. He kept to the old fashions of the moorland people, which made him appear odd in the large centres of population. Of course, he was human, and had faults of temper, and commited errors in judgment, but he was nevertheless a sincerely true and good man, who served his generation according to the will of God, and has left behind him a rich heritage of blessing.

W. S.

William Clowes.

[*Born*, 1780: *Entered the Ministry*, 1810: *Died*, 1851.]

HUGH BOURNE and William Clowes were the two principal agents in founding the Primitive Methodist Connexion. They were both members of the Burslem Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, and took part in revivalistic services in that district. They were both favourable to camp-meeting services, and were both expelled from the Wesleyan body, because they would not relinquish such irregular services. For a time Clowes and Bourne wrought upon separate lines, without any thought of uniting to form a new denomination, but through the providence of God, they were brought to unite, and formed the Primitive Methodist Connexion. The two men were very unlike in gifts and general temper, but they complemented each other very well, and wrought in general harmony, both being exclusively dominated by the one supreme desire to extend the kingdom of Christ. Bourne was the legislator, and administrator, Clowes the evangelist and missionary. Bourne was a disciplinarian, zealous, cautious, and prudent; Clowes was a man of generous impulses, open, trustful, and as simple as a little child. Clowes gathered the people into church-fellowship, Bourne trained them into church order and life. God gave to each his true sphere, according to his gifts, and by their united self-denial, heroic labours, and absolute consecration, the little one became a thousand. A Church was built up which in seventy years has grown to be the second

Methodist Church of Britain, in point of numbers and Church prosperity.

William Clowes was born at Burslem in the Staffordshire Potteries, 12th March, 1780. His parents were commonplace working people, living on a low enough level, and destitute of any high ideal of life. His father, Samuel Clowes, was a working potter. In early life he had been sober and religious, but yielding to the influence of corrupt literature he became ungodly and intemperate. He was evidently a man of a strong, coarse type, with violent passions, large sociality, and a weak judgment. His wife, Ann Clowes, was a member of the Wedgewood family,—a family whose name is identified with the development of the ceramic art in England. She seems to have been naturally of an amiable disposition, and had been well trained in her youth, but she was weak, and suffered great degradation by the violence and intemperance of her husband. According to the doctrine of heredity we would scarcely look for a mighty saint of God and a great preacher of righteousness from such a parentage, and yet the qualities which, perverted, lead to deep debasement, are the qualities which, rightly directed, lead to great usefulness and honour. From his father evidently Mr. Clowes inherited his powerful physical nature and susceptibility to excitement; and from his mother, his forbearing, loving disposition and strong desire for peace. All the circumstances of his infancy and youth were coarse and degrading. His home was rendered unhappy by the habits of his father. The neighbourhood is dark, dingy and dull, without anything to appeal to the imagination, or keep alive the ideal elements of the soul. His acquaintances were rude and vulgar, and the only ideal of manhood he could possibly attain was coarse and rude. It is evident that he had very little school training, for we find him apprenticed to the trade of a potter, when he was only ten years of age. School learning was not needed to make a man a good potter, and no other lot appeared open to him. Thus he grew up ignorant, godless, with a coarse ideal before him, and with no one caring for his soul, or seeking to help him to a higher level of life.

Out of such a childhood could anything but a violent, intemperate life follow? Mr. Clowes condemns himself most unsparingly for the folly and wickedness of his early life, but we who judge from a different

standpoint, can see that he was also much to be pitied, and the wonder is how he struggled through the vicious influences which surrounded him to a higher and nobler life. We judge that those who deny human freedom, who regard men as determined only by heredity and environment, would find this an inexplicable mystery. All the circumstances of Mr. Clowes's early life doomed him to degradation and sensuousness. The disposition which he inherited, and which was dyed into the very fibre of his nature, pointed in the same direction, and if he were to be redeemed, if ever he were to be other than a coarse sensualist, it seemed as if it would be necessary to reconstruct his whole nature, and change the whole character of the circumstances surrounding him. And yet we find this same man, in these same degrading circumstances, and even after he had yielded to indulgence until appetite reigned in him an unrestrained tyrant, we find him suddenly turning round and becoming a pattern of holiness and purity. Now that change cannot be accounted for, if we are mere creatures of circumstance, it can only find solution on the assumption of individual freedom, and the direct and immediate action of God upon the human heart. We do not care to repeat the dark sad tale of Mr. Clowes's early unconverted life. He always spoke of it himself with shame and sorrow, and would have hid it away from the sight of men, but that he thought to glorify God by showing the deep depths from which His holy arm redeemed him. There has been often observed a tendency among those who have been reclaimed from a violent and passional life, to parade the wickedness of their former state as if they gloried in it. Vanity is such a prevailing weakness of human nature, that men would rather be thought monsters in wickedness than be unnoticed or overlooked. We would not be uncharitable, but there is no other principle upon which we can interpret the zeal and eagerness with which some tell of the crimes of their unconverted state. There was nothing of this in Mr. Clowes; he told the sad tale modestly, feeling shame and condemnation and glorifying Christ, who can save to the uttermost. There is a great deal for which Mr. Clowes condemns himself that persons with a wider experience, broader outlook, and more perfectly instructed conscience would consider unworthy of blame. He condemns himself for foot-racing, dancing, and other physical exercises, in which he became

an expert. A man of his physical nature, with great vitality and passional movement, would necessarily have great surplus energy, and it would have been utterly impossible for him to have spent his leisure time in youth as Hugh Bourne, for instance, did, in reading and the pursuit of useful knowledge. The two men were built upon different patterns, and were following the guidance of nature in their different pursuits. Of course that was not perceived in the early days of the Connexion, and it may even not be known in some remote points yet, but there will be no true training of the young until it is understood and acted upon. Mr. Clowes was however guilty of more serious things than foot-racing and dancing, he became a renowned pugilist, and touched the deepest sink of moral obliquity. Until he was twenty-five years of age he ran in the way of folly, and led a low passional life.

During the most thoughtless part of his career, he was not without the sense of condemnation. God leaves none without witness. In the most unpromising, lying under a thick encrustation of ignorance and evil habit, sometimes is found a very fine, sensitive conscience. His conscience was weak, but it was sensitive. He had naturally a vivid imagination, high ideality, and spirituality, so that he gave body and form to the abstractions, and brought them near. He tells us that he frequently felt the arrows of remorse piercing him so deeply that he had to rush away from his sinful companions and hide himself. On one occasion he was at a dancing-party in the Burslem Town Hall, when there came upon him a very vivid and overpowering sense of condemnation, and a dread that God would immediately cut him down, and consign him to hell. He often attempted to break off his evil habits and reform his life, but desire was stronger than will; and though he willed to be good, he was again and again brought into subjection. The good in him, however, continued to grow, and the inward conflict continued more fiercely. His remorse for the past, and his fear of the future produced such mental anguish, that he often could not sleep at night, and his health was visibly affected. He had a long, deep, sore travail of soul, and it was not until he realised fully that he could not deliver himself, that he submitted to the great Deliverer, who snapped his bonds and set him free. Whom the Son makes free, are free indeed.

He was converted on the 20th January, 1805. He had been for a long time labouring under strong conviction, endeavouring in his own strength to reform his life, but constantly haunted with the sense of miserable failure. He says: "Indeed, it could not be otherwise with me than a constant failure from the course adopted—labouring to serve God in my own strength. What broken resolutions and abortive efforts at reformation does my history furnish." A short time before his conversion, a friend induced him to go to hear a sermon at the Methodist chapel. After the sermon, there was a love-feast held, to which he gained admission by the use of a ticket of membership borrowed from a person. The testimony he heard at the love-feast influenced him considerably, and led him more and more to desire salvation and holiness. The following morning he attended a prayer-meeting, which was held at seven o'clock. During the progress of the meeting he felt a gracious power resting upon him. He was earnestly pleading with God to save him, and there grew in his mind a calm assurance that God would save him, that in fact He had saved him. When the meeting closed, a friend spoke to him, when he instantly replied, "God has pardoned all my sins." And there was no doubt of the great and mighty change that had been wrought in his nature. From that moment he became a new man; the power of evil habits was broken; his sorrow was turned into joy; his sore conflict had ended; he had prevailed with God; he had taken hold of the Invisible; the power of God rested upon him, and he was now consciously and indisputably a son of God. In harmony with his nature and previous life, his conversion was sudden, violent, and thorough. He knew the moment of the change, and the change was most radical and abiding. Never from that morning's prayer-meeting did he stagger or go back. His path now was illumined with light from heaven, and grew brighter and brighter as he advanced year by year, until it ended where no shadow dwells, but where all is light, and peace, and love.

One of his first actions after his conversion, and one which abundantly demonstrated his sincerity, and the character of the change which he had undergone, was that he endeavoured to make restitution to all he had in any way injured when he was in his depraved condition. This is one of the fruits of true repentance, not seen as frequently as is

desirable. Mr. Clowes had contracted a great many debts through his extravagance, and he immediately began to pay them. "My creditors," he said, "had long given up the debts as irrecoverable; however, I can truly say, that their pleasure in receiving their accounts could not be greater than mine in paying them." His religion had made him honest. This practical regard for the claims of his creditors prepared the way for his success in Hull, when he afterwards visited it as a missionary, for some of his creditors lived there. He was not free from temptations and persecutions, but he had learned the secret of spiritual power, and sometimes spent days and nights in devout meditation and fellowship with God. The conversion of his wife, for whom he prayed continuously, strengthened his faith and greatly encouraged him. God and eternity, heaven and hell, were realities to him. His conceptions might be very inadequate, but they were intense and realistic. He saw his neighbours moving forward in almost one solid mass, to the deep, dark, frowning gulf that moved to meet them. He knew that Jesus had died to save them all, and that He could save to the very uttermost, and he was sure, if the people only knew the true nature of religion, they would submit to be saved. Often he cried out—

"Oh, that the world would taste and see
The riches of His grace;
The arms of love that compass me,
Would all mankind embrace."

Sometimes, in his zeal, he frightened people, and raised a suspicion that he was going mad. On one occasion, an old woman called at his house, having heard that he was going to remove, and being in search of a house. It was on a Sunday morning. He invited the lady in. He says: "My friend Shubotham was with me at the time. I then said to the woman, 'let us kneel and pray.' At this the woman appeared much astonished; we, however, kneeled, and I told the Lord that the woman had broken the Sabbath, and that the devil had sent her to tempt me to do the same; and while I prayed that God would take hold of her, arrest, enlighten, and save her, my friend Daniel heartily responded, and we had a glorious shout. At the close of the praying we arose, and the woman seemed as if thunderstruck. I earnestly

exhorted her to look to Jesus, and believe in Him for salvation, and requested her to come on Monday morning, and I would tell her all about the house." The reader must understand that this is written soberly, and narrated as a matter of course. These men believed in what they professed. They required no authority to preach; they could not do other than preach. They were genuine enthusiasts; they were possessed of one idea, and grasped at their neighbours any way, to pluck them as brands from the burning. He disturbed and excited all his neighbours; he opened his house for prayer-meetings, class-meetings, and band-meetings. His house soon became too small, and to make further provision, he removed to a larger house. He attended a meeting every night, and on Sunday he commenced as early as seven o'clock, and was often praying with penitents, and pointing them to the Saviour at midnight. His fame spread all through the neighbourhood as a mighty man of prayer, and numbers came from a distance to hold fellowship with him; among others was Hugh Bourne, with whom he was afterwards to have a closer fellowship. Having commenced to serve God, it is evident he threw into the new life all the fervour and passion of his great warm nature; and, as he had been a notorious sinner, now he became a zealous soldier of Jesus Christ. His friends and neighbours had the most unbounded confidence in him, and even superstitiously regarded him as endowed with some kind of miraculous power. "While he was at his employment one day, a man called upon him and desired him to go home with him, as he was so distressed in his soul, that he could scarcely bear up beneath his sufferings. Mr. Clowes promptly responded to his wishes. Without stopping to put on his coat, he immediately left his work, accompanied by the weary and heavy-laden sinner; he encouraged him *to believe just there and then* for pardoning mercy. While thus engaged, they turned off the road into a field, and falling upon their knees, prayed fervently for salvation, and the man was instantly made happy, under a sense of God's pardoning love. Mr. Clowes returned to his secular labour, and the released captive went on his way rejoicing." On another occasion, a friend travelled all the way from Liverpool to make inquiry of the way of salvation. A widespread revival of religion took place in the neighbourhood, and Mr. Clowes rejoiced, and laboured

without stint. His soul was full of glory, and when walking by the way he often shouted aloud, and praised God. Nor must it be thought that he spent his time exclusively in heated and excited meetings. He joined an association for mental improvement, and earnestly endeavoured to acquire knowledge. The great spiritual change which he had experienced, excited and determined to an intense activity all his inner nature, and he felt sorely his lack of education, and was anxious to repair the loss. He became a diligent reader, especially of theology and the Bible. His intellect was inspirational rather than logical. He was not a reasoner, nor even a thinker; but when he was in an elevated mood, he saw the truth with a clearness and fulness that none of his companions could attain by reasoning, and then he spoke as one inspired. His whole intellect was saturated with strong feeling, and even in the utterance of a commonplace, he charged it with a new beauty and power, by which it came home to the hearts of his hearers. He also engaged in practical works of philanthropy, feeling it to be the duty and privilege of a Christian to help men in every way in which help was needed.

He became a travelling preacher in December, 1810. The officials of the Methodist Church, seeing his zeal and advancement in knowledge and holiness, appointed him a class-leader at Kidsgrove. The class so rapidly increased in numbers that another had to be formed, and yet another at Tunstall, to which he was also appointed. His name soon appeared on the plan as a local preacher, and he most earnestly sought out opportunities of usefulness. An account has been given in the sketch of Hugh Bourne of the first English camp-meeting held on Mow Cop. Mr. Clowes attended that meeting and laboured; singing, praying, and exhorting from early morn till late at night. He says: "At the termination of this day I felt excessively exhausted, as I had laboured from the commencement of the meeting in the morning till eight o'clock in the evening with very little cessation; but the glory that filled my soul on that day far exceeds my power of description." He continued to work with Bourne and others who were favourable to the camp-meetings and open-air services; and, in consequence, he soon found himself in conflict with the circuit authorities. The Conference condemned the camp-meetings as highly improper, and likely to be

productive of considerable mischief. The Burslem circuit, in carrying out the minute of Conference, dismembered Bourne; but for a short time bore with Clowes, hoping that he would desist, but he was profoundly convinced that God was using the camp-meetings to win the people who were living in sin and ignorance, and, therefore, he continued to support them and to work with Bourne. Hugh Bourne was expelled, 27th June, 1808; but it was not until the June Quarterly Meeting, 1810, that William Clowes's name was taken from the plan. No charge or complaint was preferred against him; he was arbitrarily and unjustly degraded, still he continued to attend his class; but at the September quarterly renewal of tickets, he found that his ticket of membership was refused, and that, in fact, he was cast out of the Methodist Church because he had been too zealous for the glory of God and the conversion of sinners. He says:—

"I attended [the leaders' meeting] in my official capacity, and ventured to inquire what I had done amiss that my ticket had been withheld by the preacher, and my name left off the plan? I was told that my name was left off the plan because I attended camp-meetings contrary to Methodist discipline, and that I could not be a preacher or a leader amongst them unless I promised not to attend such meetings any more. I told the members of the meeting that I would promise to attend every appointment on the plan which should be put down to me, and to attend all the means of grace and ordinances of the Church; but to promise not to attend any more camp-meetings, that I could not conscientiously do, for God had greatly blessed these meetings, which were calculated for great usefulness, and my motive in assisting at them was simply to glorify God and bring sinners to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. I was then informed that I was no longer with them—the matter was settled. I, therefore, delivered up my class-papers, and became unchurched."

The action of the Burslem officials excited great discontent in the district. All the people in the neighbourhood believed in the sincerity, simplicity, and genuine goodness of Clowes; they were also witnesses to the great moral reformation that had taken place through his labours, and to express their sympathy with him, a large number dismembered themselves from the Wesleyan Society, and invited Clowes to preach in their houses. Early in December two of his friends offered to subscribe five shillings per week each if he would give up his trade and devote himself to the work of evangelisation; and after seeking counsel from God, he accepted the agreement. To-day, as we look back upon this agreement, it is difficult to say whether Clowes or his

friends showed the grandest spirit of self-sacrifice. He could earn more than £2 per week at his trade, yet he agreed to surrender it and accept ten shillings per week as a missionary; but the friends who subscribed the ten shillings were themselves poor men, and had had to exercise great self-denial to pay it. Now it must not be thought that these men were moved by any feeling against the Methodist circuit, or any hope of establishing another Church; they were, in fact, anxious that those gathered in should join the Wesleyans. They were determined exclusively by one pure supreme passion to win their neighbours to the love of God and to a life of holiness, and surely the Wesleyan Church did a most unwise thing in dismembering such men. By their self-denial, by their abundant labours, by their godly conduct, they showed that their zeal grew from abiding conviction, and that they sought not their own but their neighbours' good.

Mr. Clowes continued to act as an itinerant minister from 1810 until the close of 1827. The record of his work reads like a chapter from the Acts of the Apostles. His absolute abandon, his boldness and power, the crowds that flocked to hear him, the general excitement, the physical prostrations and extraordinary spiritual revelations, the large numbers converted, the churches founded, and the abiding good accomplished, form a tale the parallel of which we do not know outside the inspired history of the early Church. Immediately after his engagement he commenced holding services in his own locality. His record was such that he could preach to his neighbours. He knew nothing of the proverb so often misapplied about a prophet not having honour in his own country. He was sure he would succeed most where he was known best. He makes this record in his journal: "I may here observe that the greatest tokens of Divine mercy were displayed at this period of my ministerial career, not in the public means of grace, but in visiting families and in praying from house to house." He had very little difficulty in gaining access into the homes of the people in the locality where he was known. They welcomed him as a friend and a genuinely good man. He turned all social intercourse to spiritual purposes, and sometimes the family became so absorbed that the preacher won them to God. One day visiting at Rodsley, he was invited to take tea at a farm-house. While

the meal was being prepared, Mr. Clowes waited upon God. The power of the Highest overshadowed. When the table was spread he stood up to ask God's blessing, and while thus engaged the power of God fell upon all assembled. The refreshments on the table were unheeded, and the whole party remained praying and praising God. Whole families were in this way won to the Saviour, and wherever he went revivals of religion took place.

Hugh Bourne, Crawfoot,—the old man of the Forest as he was familiarly called,—and others, were also earnestly pushing forward evangelistic work in the neighbourhood. Numbers of people were converted and joined to the Methodist Churches, until the authorities of the circuit refused to admit any more unless they engaged to close their doors against these earnest evangelists. This the people refused to do, and so there grew up at different points all round North Staffordshire, and stretching into Cheshire, small societies or churches. In some places they were called Bourneites, and in some Clowesites, according as they had been missioned by Bourne or Clowes. Mr. J. Steel, who had been expelled for encouraging these irregular agencies, together with Bourne and the missionaries, thought that it was time to unite all these separate societies, and work them as one circuit. "At this period," says Mr. Clowes, "we stood in detached and separate parties without any particular bond of union or organisation." A constitution was drafted, quarterly tickets were printed, and the name Primitive Methodists was adopted. This was in the year 1811, which may be truly regarded as the year when the Connexion began its career. Before this time there were several small detached societies, but they were without a name, without organisation, without ministers. Now, however, they were united, and as various streams converging to one point may make a swelling river, so the union of these small societies formed a strong and powerful Methodist Circuit.

Mr. Clowes was now sent further afield on mission work, and entered upon new and trying experiences. He visited the neighbouring counties, and was frequently to be found in barns, in market-places, in streets and lanes, in fields, lifting up the standard of the Cross. He was an excellent singer, and having command of a number of popular airs, he sung them to spiritual songs. He had great power

in prayer, seeming to penetrate the vail, and take hold of the living God. He had the true oratorical temperament, and when he looked with his burning eyes upon the crowd of upturned faces that had gathered to hear him sing, he seemed to cast a glamour over them by which they were spell-bound. He had to suffer terrible hardships and persecutions. Drunken and infuriated mobs attacked him, he was made the butt of coarse and foolish jests, he was pelted in the market-places with stones, rotten eggs, and all kinds of filth. On one occasion the water-hose was turned upon him, brass bands were engaged to drown his voice, the church-bells were clanged, and the infuriated people yelled as if they were mad. It seems almost impossible to think of these things occurring not half-a-century ago, but there is still great savagery in the English character, the veneer of civilisation being very thin. Some of his bitter opponents were the clergymen of the Established Church, and on the village green many were the encounters of the early Primitive Methodist missionaries and squires and parsons; and feelings were then excited which have not yet cooled down among the agricultural labourers. Nonconformists and Wesleyans often questioned the wisdom of his methods, and even the purity of his motives. Friends were very few indeed, and his enemies were many, but in the most cool, confident spirit, he went forward with his work, indifferent to persecution and misrepresentation. It is a most sublime spectacle to follow this devoted, zealous servant of God as he passes from town to town, and village to village, founding churches, and gathering in the outcast, suffering from hunger, fatigue, and the abuse of the wicked, but never murmuring or repining. All the circumstances of his outer life were hard and trying, but deep down in his soul there was calm and joy, and in the midst of trials he could say, None of these things move me.

One of his greatest successes was in Hull. He visited Hull, 15th January, 1819, and stood alone. He got the use of an old factory to conduct service in. The difficulties he encountered were almost insuperable, but God delivered him. In a month he had established five society classes, and held the first Primitive Methodist love-feast in Yorkshire. On the 30th May, he held the first camp-meeting, and was able to report a membership of 300. Some of the lowest and most

disreputable people of the town were converted, and the crowds attending the services were so great that a larger place was needed to conduct the services. Eight months after he had opened his mission, the West Street Chapel was opened for public worship. Hull now became the head of a circuit, and in a short time had seven branches, employing eighteen travelling preachers, and four years after his first sermon there were 10,814 persons on the church-roll. Making Hull the base of his operations, Clowes pushed forward to York, and established a church there. He visited most of the towns in Yorkshire, and in 1821 he opened a mission in the counties of Durham, Northumberland, and Cumberland. All along the Tees, the Wear, and the Tyne, he met with great success, establishing important churches in nearly all the towns and villages, and even where he was not directly instrumental in founding a church, his faith and zeal, his ardent piety, his self-denial and enthusiasm inspired others. It appeared that he carried a contagion of spiritual earnestness, and excited all with whom he was in immediate relations.

In 1824 he was stationed for London, and in simple confidence the evangelist went to attack the great metropolis of the world. Judging from a worldly stand-point it perhaps seemed an act of presumption that an imperfectly educated man, with no social standing and very limited means of support, should undertake such a work. But he was utterly unconscious of any such thing. God was the God of London as He was the God of Tunstall and Hull. The people in London were sinners and were perishing. The Saviour had commissioned him to preach the glad tidings of salvation, and he saw nothing presumptuous or incongruous in going to the work which God had appointed. His faith was sublime, his unconsciousness absolute, and his heroism of the highest order. He did not see such rapid and abundant success in London as he had done in the provinces. The difficulties were very great, he could not find suitable places to hold services, and the people were light and frivolous. London, he exclaimed, is London still. Careless, trifling, gay, hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. He was very much distressed with the Sabbath desecration of the metropolis, and one Sunday morning he took his stand in Clare Market while the people were busily engaged buying and selling. He was soon

surrounded by a great crowd of people; some laughed, some shouted in derision, some stared with astonishment, but the servant of God dauntlessly bore testimony against their wickedness, and called upon them to repent and turn to God. As he proceeded, the crowd became subdued, the people listened with increased attention, and one man was converted to God. On another occasion, when he was conducting a camp-meeting at Westminster a publican and three drunken companions dressed themselves up to represent the devil and his angels, and when the service was proceeding they rushed in among the people, yelling and gesticulating, creating great alarm among the people. Mr. Clowes, however, was not to be terrified by a mock-devil, and in the midst of the confusion he began to sing and pray with such confidence and power that he soon restored order. The greatest difficulty, however, Mr. Clowes had to contend with was the want of suitable places of worship. The people were all very poor, rents were very high, and open-air meetings were not always convenient. In consequence of these difficulties his success in London was not as great as in the provinces, but the foundation of a great and valuable work was laid, and now Primitive Methodism is beginning to make itself felt as a potent agent in the evangelisation of the Metropolis.

From the metropolis, Mr. Clowes went to Cornwall, where he was blessed with great success. Congregations were gathered, societies formed and grouped into circuits. In 1826 he was restationed at Hull, glad to return to his warmhearted Yorkshire friends. In the limited space of seven years and two months twenty-one independent circuits had been made, with an aggregate membership of 8455. There still remained in the parent circuit 3541 members, making a total of 11,996. For a short time he continued to labour with his old ardour and success, but in 1827 he was prostrated by a severe affliction. Upon his recovery it was thought unadvisable for him to continue mission work and so he settled down amid a numerous circle of friends, making occasional excursions to preach anniversary services.

For twenty-four years he lived among his friends revered and beloved. His extraordinary labours, his dissipated habits in early life, and the hardships he had borne told upon his iron constitution, and his health slowly gave way, but his conscious realisation of spiritual

things was clear and distinct to the end. He was surrounded by a large circle of friends who loved him as a father, and who sought to render his declining years comfortable. On the 1st March, 1851, he was struck with paralysis, and early in the morning of the following day, in the presence of a number of his friends and followers, he passed quietly to the rest and higher service, aged seventy-one years. Devout men carried him to his burial, and a neat tombstone in the public cemetery of Hull bears the following inscription :—

Sacred to the Memory of
WILLIAM CLOWES,
One of the founders of the Primitive Methodist Connexion,
Who died 2nd March, 1851, aged 71 years.
He was a burning and a shining light.

Mr. Clowes was twice married. On 28th July, 1800, he was married in the parish church of Newcastle-under-Lyne, to Miss Mary Rogers of Tunstall. She died in 1833, and in 1834 he was married to Mrs. Eleanor Temperton of Hull, one of the oldest and most respected members of the community in the town. He died without issue.

There is a foolish notion that in spiritual things, God reverses the method by which He conducts the government of the world, and instead of employing the fittest means for the accomplishments of His ends, employs the most unfit, that no flesh may glory in His sight. And a superficial view of Church history might seem to favour this opinion, but a closer examination reveals the fact that the method is the same, and that there is wisdom in all the ways of God. In the work of the Church as in the Government of the natural world there is a proper adjustment of agents and work. William Clowes was specially fitted for the work to which God called him. He was not called to reform the theological beliefs of his age, to change the government of the Church, or even to evangelise the learned and cultivated sections of the community, but to preach the Gospel to the neglected masses in the large centres of population, and to carry the sound of the Gospel to the benighted villagers, and he was eminently fitted for this work. His powerful physical nature enabled him to endure the toils and hardships, the persecutions and fatigues. A man

of a weaker type would have utterly failed. He was eminently fitted for open-air work, having an excellent voice and powerful lungs. The distances he travelled would have killed many men, but he sustained it, and was always full of buoyancy and life. We have already said that his education was neglected in youth, and he never repaired this early loss. He was not a thinker in the proper sense, but when he was heated he seemed like one inspired. In his quiet moods his mind wrought slowly and uncertainly, but when he was excited he poured forth a burning tide of words which inflamed his audiences. He had the oratorical rather than the logical cast of mind, he had the artistic rather than the philosophical intellect. When the glory was upon him, when he gained abandon, all his nature seemed raised to a higher level, and his face shone and his eyes burned as if he were possessed. General testimony is borne concerning the extraordinary power of his eye. It was the one great feature of his face, and any person who ever saw his eye lit up would never forget it. He was a man of a simple, child-like nature, free from all self-assertion, censoriousness, or harshness. He was gentle, loving, and kind, and won people to him by his large humanness. He was a lover of peace and charity, and though inflexible in his love of truth and righteousness, made few enemies. He was controlled by one simple passion, the desire to save men, to pluck them as brands from the burning, to lead them to the Lamb of God. He lived as seeing the invisible. He was not troubled with any doubts or migivings, he stood sure in the faith. Religion was to him a life, not a creed, an experience not a theory. He had great nearness to God and power in prayer. In his fervent importunate pleading there was a freedom and boldness which some mistook for irreverence, but it was freedom gained by long intercourse. He knew in Whom he had believed. So he lived among men, so he laboured, and to-day thousands in this land, and other lands, rejoice in the knowledge of sins forgiven through his labours.

He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost.

H. G.

John Garner.

[*Born*, 1800: *Entered the Ministry*, 1819: *Died*, 1856.]

THE subject of this sketch was the son of John and Elizabeth Garner, persons of humble life, residing at Kegworth, in Leicestershire. The father was a hosiery operative, and was enabled, through his earnings, to respectably maintain his family. He was a man of native mental force, sound morality, and fairly good education. The mother was remarkable for good common-sense, mental and physical energy. As true parents, they united in earnest endeavours to rightly educate both body and mind of their offspring.

John was born 13th February, 1800; ten years prior to the birth of the Connexion, in which he was destined to play a distinguished part. He was the second son of ten healthy children, seven sons and three daughters—"Job's number and distribution." Of the early life of our hero we know but little. His rescue from drowning when ten years of age, is the first striking incident in his personal history. One day he and his eldest brother were walking along the bank of a river. John seeing an object floating towards him, endeavoured to pull it to the shore with his stick; in the attempt he lost his balance, and fell headlong into the rushing current; his brother's presence of mind and prompt action in taking him by the heel, saved him from a watery grave. When quite a youth, his original cast of mind and natural peculiarities gave strong signs of development; and revealed a some-

what kingly nature. Courage, enterprise, and genial humour were his leading traits. With the latter quality his entire being was strongly tinctured. When fifteen years of age, "he was on a visit at his eldest sister's, at Clifton, in Nottinghamshire, when the village wake was held. Joining the boys in their juvenile pastimes on the green, he amused himself with uttering unintelligible jargon. This arrested the special attention of his fellow-playmates. Some of them regarded him as a foreigner, and were diverted with hearing the 'young Frenchman' talk. He was no less amused with their credulity. First they pointed to one object, then to another, and asked him what he called it; and they were delighted with picking up a few French words, as they thought, from the good-natured stranger." This incident reveals the originality, shrewdness, and humour which characterised him in subsequent years.

John's father fully purposed to give his children a good education; but the noble intentions of his heart never reached fulfilment, through a long and painful illness which terminated his earthly life when only forty-five years of age. This sad event cast a great gloom over the little home at Kegworth, and imposed a struggle for maintenance upon each member of the family at an early age. "With a small capital of book knowledge the subject of this sketch bade farewell to the schools, which to him, in after life, was frequently a subject of regret."

His early religious training was well looked after at home, and in a General Baptist school. When quite young, his mind was deeply impressed with Scripture truth, and his heart gradually prepared for its adoption and practice. His mind was ever under powerful moral restraint, hence he never became a victim of open dissipation.

When fourteen years of age he was bound apprentice to a shoemaker of Kinoulton, in the Vale of Belvoir, Nottinghamshire. In this new relation he displayed tact, push, and principle; became a good workman, and soon gained the esteem and confidence of his employer. While residing in that neighbourhood, the great crisis of his life was reached. About the year 1816, the pioneers of Primitive Methodism, with that ardour for which they were remarkable, pushed their missionary operations to within a few miles of Mr. Garner's residence. He was induced to listen to their heart-stirring sermons; and in 1817 the

truth preached proved effectual. Passing through the deep concern of penitence, he found,—

> "New faith, new love, and strength to cast
> Away the fetters of the past."

Having found "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," the young convert began to—

> "Reflect that life, like every other blessing,
> Derives its value from its use alone;
> Not for itself, but for a nobler end
> The Eternal gave it."

Andrew-like, his first efforts were directed towards the salvation of the members of his own home.

"A living Christian will rejoice in whatever promotes the kingdom of his Master in any part of the earth, but he will certainly find his highest joy in the advancement of the work of grace among those of his own circle. As the sun cannot enlighten us without enlightening all the intervening space, so Christian love, the out-going of Christian faith, will first affect those whom kindred or association has brought near us." To this class John Garner belonged. After conversion, scarce three months had elasped ere he preached his first sermon at Stenton, Nottinghamshire. Among the hearers stood his brother William, who was amazed to find him thus engaged. He was deeply impressed, and resolved to become a follower of the Lord. On July 1st, 1821, John wrote in his diary, "I attended a love-feast at Ruddington. In the evening I preached, my brother William was saved, and made happy in the Lord." "During nearly thirty-five years they laboured, rejoiced, and suffered together in the same section of the Lord's vineyard."

Mr. Garner's labours were not confined to the family of which he was a member. Fired with a divine commission, and encouraged by pious and judicious friends, he "resolved to let no opportunity slip of doing good to perishing souls." His whole strength was consequently thrown into the work of God. His intense zeal urged him to frequently walk twenty miles to hear a sermon by a Primitive Methodist minister. After the labours of the day, it was no uncommon thing for him to travel ten miles to attend a meeting. At the outset of his

Christian experience he had a right conception of the value and obligations of Christian fellowship. His religious life was no passing emotion of short duration; it struck its roots into the divine realities; found constant nourishment in living communion with God, and ample expression in genuine compassion for, and personal contact with, those he sought to save. Having joined the Primitive Methodist community, he soon gave evidence of ability, piety, and fervour; therefore, in the year 1818, at the age of seventeen, he was put on the local preachers' plan. At that time such an appointment was in itself a test of moral fortitude. The names of all the preachers were on one plan; they usually had to preach three times on the Sabbath, and walk "twenty or thirty miles." Meanwhile the thought and purpose of complete devotion to the work of the ministry was influencing his mind and heart." After intense mental conflict, earnest prayer, deep reflection, and some degree of hesitation and wavering, he resolved to take leave his secular calling. In 1819 he received his first appointment, in the Loughborough circuit, as a regular travelling preacher. This step was not taken as the result of personal ambition, the expectation of social elevation, or by the mistaken advice of friends. Mr. Garner felt in his soul the trumpet-call of God to duty, and his whole nature was stirred by the power of a divine commission. Like the saintly Brainerd, he could say, "I long to be as a flame of fire, continually glowing in the divine service, preaching and building up Christ's kingdom to my latest, to my dying hour." Having counted the cost, he determined to pursue his constant, arduous labours with courage, faithfulness, and persistence. Of such a resolution his first sphere of labour became a severe test. The societies were much disturbed and divided. The circuit embraced sections of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Warwickshire. A great demand was consequently made upon his moral and physical strength, nor did he escape the hands of vile and cruel persecutors. We subjoin an extract from his "Life" which reflects the spirit of the times; the conditions in which he often worked, and also Mr. Garner's moral heroism. The scene happened at a village near Coventry. In describing it he says:—

"As soon as I entered the village, stones were thrown in different directions. I made the best of my way to Mr. ——— where a few people had assembled to hear

the Word of God. A mob, amongst whom was the clergyman of the parish, instantly followed me, surrounded the house, broke the windows, and compelled us to dissolve the assembly. Seeing no probability of the persecution abating, I was compelled to expose myself to the malicious rage of wicked men, who furiously drove me out of the place with stones, rotten eggs, sludge, or whatever came to hand. They followed me out of the village. The friends who accompanied me, seeing the madness of the mob, were affrighted and made their escape. Some of the rebels seized me, others propped my mouth open with stones, while others attempted to pour sludge down my throat. One of the party furiously knocked me down. After being shamefully beaten with their hands, feet, and other weapons, I was dragged to a pond, and the enraged mob seemed anxious to gratify their cruelty, by witnessing the death of a fellow creature. I had not so much as a faint hope of being delivered out of their hands alive; hence, I committed my body and soul into the hands of the Lord. Contrary to all expectation a way of escape opened. One of the vilest persecutors rescued me from the hands of his confederates,—and some of the rebels pursued and seized some of my friends who had fled, by which means the mob was withdrawn from me."

Notwithstanding this severe conflict, he resumed his labours, showing the truth of his biographer's words, "When he had formed his plan, counted the cost, and fixed his resolution, it was not an easy matter to turn him from his purpose. He had sufficient courage to engage in an aggressive warfare with the powers of darkness, and ample fortitude to bear up undaunted in presence of the manifold hardships involved in such an enterprise." He continued his good work with signs following, in Tunstall, Hull, Scarborough, West Gate, in Weardale, Redruth, Darlington, Oldham, Nottingham, Sheffield, Doncaster, Halifax. In all his circuits he was eminently successful. "There is in the University Library of Prague a magnificent old Bohemian M.S. hymnal, written in the year 1572, and adorned with a number of finely illuminated miniatures. One of the most characteristic of these little works of art stands above a hymn in memory of John Huss, the Reformer. It consists of three medallions rising one above another; in the first of which John Wicklif, the Englishman, is represented striking sparks out of a stone. In the second Huss, the Bohemian, is setting fire to the coals; while in the third, Luther, the German, is bearing the fierce light of a blazing torch." The central medallion is a fine illustration of Mr. Garner's distinctive function. Mr. Hugh Bourne, one of the founders of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, said of him, "He is like a fire all through the country." We cannot wonder therefore that the Connexion esteemed him highly

"for his work's sake;" and conferred upon him the highest honours at its disposal. When in 1830, the denomination was enrolled in the Court of Chancery, he was one of the "four travelling preachers only" who on the ground of seniority and respectable standing in the ministry, had their names entered in the legal document known as the "*Deed Poll.*" When in 1843, through the rapid growth, and the constantly increasing demands of the body, it was found necessary to remove the centre of management, from Bemersley, an obscure hamlet near Burslem, to London, Mr. Garner was appointed to the important position of General Missionary Secretary; an office which he filled with great vigilance and impartiality until his resignation from active work. Having a great aptitude for the transaction of business, and a large amount of influence, he was frequently voted to occupy the highest post in the Connexion, that of President of Conference.

We must now view this truly great man in the decline of life. In 1842, he experienced painful symptoms of asthma, which he was never able to fully shake off. Although for several years following he rendered good service, the once vigorous nature began to give evidence of failing strength. In 1848, he was compelled, through incapacity, to seek release from the active duties of office. The Conference was deeply moved with his pathetic appeal for retirement, and at once granted his request. On leaving London, he went to reside in the quiet village of Burnham, near Epworth, where he was contented, grateful, and happy. In 1854 he attended Conference, in Manchester, for the last time. The brethren assembled saw that his sun was setting rapidly. In 1855, he was reduced to a state of utter prostration, his affliction often reaching intense agony.

Amidst all, it is inspiring to observe the simple unwavering faith in Christ which he maintained. We catch from his own words the key-note of his soul's true harmony, "ALL'S RIGHT." The roots of his religious life had struck like the massive cedars of Lebanon. "While perspiration profusely bathed his temples through difficulty of breathing, and tears involuntarily stole down his once manly but now pallid cheeks, he said, 'The beauty of religion is, it helps us in the time of need, and that help I now have.' For many years he had shown—

"How sublime a thing it is,
To suffer and be strong."

On the afternoon of 12th February, 1856, the day preceding his natural birthday, he finished the struggles of mortality, and entered into the joy of his Lord, to celebrate his birthday in "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

On the Friday following, his remains were interred on the Primitive Methodist Trust premises, Epworth, in presence of a large and deeply moved assembly. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

In forming an estimate of the man, his position and work, we note: First, *his good physical organisation.*

A recent writer has observed, "For a weak-bodied man to undertake the onerous duties of the preacher seems to me a tempting of Providence. Where there is organic difficulty of lungs, heart, or nerves, the work of God is to be done in some other way than in the ministry." Such words might have been specially applied to the men of Mr. Garner's times. Their duties were constant and arduous. Great draughts were made upon their strength. The pioneer nature of their work demanded a strong, healthy constitution. The subject of our sketch was not a failure in this respect. Before he had attained years of manhood, he was remarkable for a commanding presence. His kingly nature marked him off for a leader's position. The physical defects likely to awaken in an audience ludicrous emotions and mar mental and moral excellences were foreign to his nature. As the fortunate possessor of a vigorous constitution, comely appearance, and a voice of rare tone and volume, he was eminently qualified for his life work.

In his journal he states: "I was exposed to the cruel treatment of civil officers; to hunger, to thirst and fatigue by day and by night. I have seen my companions in travel fall by my side through weariness, and have myself slept nights in the open air, in sheds, or other outbuildings, unobserved by any one except Him who never slumbers nor sleeps."

Again: "Exhorted in the open air. There was frozen snow upon the ground—no moon—but we could see to proceed by the light of the stars." Had he not possessed an iron constitution, he would have

succumbed early to the severe conditions of his laborious life; but with a body well ordered in health and vigour, he worked hard in the cause of God and humanity.

His intellectual powers also were above the average. Had he not been deprived of a liberal education in youth, his mental capacities would have shown to much greater advantage. His native powers were good. As a reasoner he was neither remarkable for critical exactness nor extensive grasp. But having good perceptive organs, and a keen intuitive mind, he could readily see the relation of one proposition to another, and conduct a plain argument to its legitimate conclusion. He had the knack of solving difficult questions, and through his sound understanding and common-sense could discriminate with acuteness and decide with firmness and wisdom. While apt to be impatient of contradiction, he was generally open, genial, and generous. Wit, humour, and pungent sarcasm were features of his mental constitution; they were natural and spontaneous, not cultivated. Sometimes they betrayed him into somewhat ludicrous actions, which he keenly felt and regretted. But when under good control, these mental peculiarities imparted to his methods and work the charm of originality, and lit up his life with a fine glow of interest. On the platform and in the pulpit he put a manly restraint upon his natural tendencies, there,—

> "He was serious in a serious cause,
> And understood too well the weighty terms
> That he had ta'en in charge. He would not stoop
> To conquer those by jocular exploits,
> Whom truth and soberness assailed in vain."

On less solemn occasions he could relish a little innocent mirth. As he was travelling to Conference once, he alighted from a coach. At the same time a young man stepped down and called out for a porter to carry his carpet-bag to a steam packet lying hard by. Mr. Garner immediately answered the call, took up the bag, carried it on board the steamer, and received his fee for the service rendered. While this act may have been intended to rebuke the smart young man, it would gratify that deep vein of humour which ran right through our hero's nature. That he had a way of his own, lifting him above the level of conventional compliance, the following incident will show: "In one of his circuits

the people had contracted the habit of coming late to the services. He determined to correct this bad habit. When therefore he was appointed on one occasion, he went through the service in regular order, but with more despatch than usual, and dismissed the congregation. On his way home the late comers met him and in a tone of surprise asked, "Is there no service to-day?" "Yes!" was the prompt reply, "but you are *too late*, the service is over." Afterwards those who wished to hear him got to chapel at the hour appointed.

Although not a scholar, he had no rude contempt of learning, but was ever eager and ready to utilise any aids likely to make him more efficient in his work. He was neither profound nor highly intellectual; but he possessed the originality of a plain understanding, which had gained insight into God's Word through the teaching of the Spirit: the originality of the *heart* as distinguished from the *mind*.

His spiritual and moral qualifications were the most prominent features of his character. He was deeply conscious of the dependent connection of his own life with that of his Lord. He found in Christ, "Truth for the understanding, authority for the will, love for the heart, certainty for the hope, fruition for all the desires, and for the conscience at once cleansing and law." The love of Christ and humanity constituted the very life blood of his religious life, and gave to every act a marked intensity. Uprightness, thrift, and order were the basis of every habit.

In the heavenly experiences granted by the grace of God, Mr. Garner occupied an advanced position. The whole man went out after God, and was in living touch with the Divine. In *prayer* his soul entered the secret place of the Most High; in *meditation* he sought, through the Holy Spirit, to permeate his being, and inform every faculty with the sense of Scripture; the supreme aim of all his *service* was to save men and edify the Church. He saw ruined souls on every side. He saw a power that could save them. He saw also that this power was operating in and through him, and that he was therefore obligated to take part in the divine philanthropy. He saw in his fellow-men those for whom heaven in its love had laboured; and true to the divine impulse throbbing in his heart, he pressed his entire powers into the service of God and humanity. Living commu-

nion with Christ was doubtless the secret of his marvellous success. Wherever he went "a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." Many of his journals read like chapters in the Acts of the Apostles. For example, "In the Cornish Mission I have witnessed one of the greatest revivals with which I ever became acquainted. The work was the most powerful at Redruth, but the flame extended for miles round. This blessed work was not confined to the prayer-meetings in the chapel, for we taught the people from house to house. The Lord added to the Church daily. No fewer than twenty persons joined our society in an evening, and, during the ten months I have been at Redruth, more than *six hundred* have united with the Primitive Methodists in Cornwall." During two years' labour at Oldham about *two hundred* were added to the Church. After tracing his success in such circuits as Tunstall, Hull, Scarborough, Whitehaven, West Gate, Halifax, and many others, we are prepared to accept the following words written by himself, "I have had the satisfaction of seeing thousands of souls added to the societies amongst whom I have laboured."

One familiar with his work at Oldham states, "He seldom occupied the pulpit without witnessing—either while speaking or at the close of the service—some striking displays of the power and grace of God. Out of the pulpit he manifested great devotion, and was ever anxious to win souls. He was much beloved and highly esteemed for "his work's sake."

As a preacher, his fame was in all the churches. We are not surprised at this, considering the following description, "Having read his text, he usually commenced in a moderate tone and with measured pace. He was neither loud nor rapid, but sufficiently audible to be heard distinctly by a large assembly. As he proceeded he became increasingly animated, and not unfrequently poured forth a torrent of burning truths, in loud, musical, and impressive tones. Under ordinary circumstances, at the mighty gatherings of people, on large camp meeting occasions, by his loud, melodious, and earnest manner of address, we have often heard him make a wide circumference resound with his commanding voice, and seen thousands drawn to listen with fixed astonishment to his plain and powerful eloquence. His appeals to the

imagination and passions of his hearers were seldom. His addresses to their understanding and their hearts were constant." His sermons were remarkable for concise arrangement, brevity, clearness, energy, and unction.

A recent writer, referring to "*The Preacher as a Public Man*," has remarked, "We recognise in the great march of civilisation many valuable contributing forces that have no necessary ecclesiastical character or connection. There are many moral reforms which may occupy a prominent position before the world, and whose influence may be of immense benefit to the community; there are political schemes which are conceived and furthered in the spirit of true patriotism; and there is culture in art, science, and literature which serves to repel barbarism and refine society." In the relations above indicated Mr. Garner was *not* a prominent public man. His activities and interests were largely limited to the work of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. But, as his biographer remarks, "The eye of his mind was not blinded by bigotry nor was his soul contracted by exclusive intolerance. He had a mind to perceive and a heart to appreciate any good thing." His efforts in the despised temperance cause are proof of this. He was called to work of a distinctive character, and in doing it thoroughly he proved himself a true reformer, and was in the highest sense a public man, having lifted thousands by his labours into a higher realm of life and practice. Such work is the noblest patriotism. On reviewing Mr. Garner's Christian manhood, self-denial, unswerving devotion, marvellous success and influence, notwithstanding severe conditions, we are free to award him an advanced position among the Pioneer Heroes of the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

To all present-day workers, the grand message of this truly good man's life is—

"If thou canst plan a noble deed,
And never flag till it succeed,
Though in the strife thy heart may bleed;
Whatever obstacles control,
Thine hour will come; go on true soul,
Thou 'lt win the prize, thou 'lt reach the goal."

William Lister.

Born, 1804 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1827 : *Died*, 1872.

IN relating the story of a man's life, it is not unusual for the writer to point out incidents associated with the youth of his hero, indicating that from the first he was possessed of extraordinary parts. A little homily is written, having for its subject, "The boy is father of the man," or, "Childhood shows the man as morning shows the day." The idea is a general one that if there exists a spark of real genius it will occasionally manifest itself at an early period of life. Words will almost certainly be expressed and acts performed which will awaken in the minds of those interested in their subject, expectations of large achievements in the coming time. But there have been those whose natural parts have not lifted them so far above the average as to constitute them men of genius, who have nevertheless done useful work in the world, made their lives eminently successful, and in their own particular sphere risen to the highest positions. This much at the least may be said of William Lister. Amongst his compeers in the Primitive Methodist ministry, in the first years of the history of the Connexion, there were not a few men who, if not highly educated in the technical sense, might fairly claim to be talented. If they were not cultured according to the ideas of the schools, they were possessed of superior natural gifts. In powers of speech, in the vivid realisation of spiritual truth, in passional feeling, and in the ability to affect deeply

large bodies of people, several of the early Primitive Methodist preachers were rather like the Hebrew prophets. From the day when the fire of the religious life quickened and sanctified their natural gifts it became evident that they were possessed of a distinct and weighty personality whose influence upon the community would be very great. They lived good lives, and in their day accomplished good work, but not all of them rose to the highest positions of trust and honour which their Church opened to them. William Lister's youth and early manhood gave no indications of the possession of remarkable gifts. He had natural abilities, in some respects above the average, but they were not of the brilliant kind likely to attract attention, nor were they of so high an order as those with which some of his brethren had been endowed. And yet he succeeded in all his work, and his success was as marked in the higher positions to which he was appointed as in those of the ordinary kind. In all the Methodist Churches there have been men who have made the very best of circuit preachers and missionaries, but who have failed to distinguish themselves in District and Conference assemblies, and have been incapable of managing the affairs of a Connexional office. William Lister inspired the minds of those with whom he laboured with confidence in him, both with respect to all kinds of circuit work, and his capability as a legislator and administrator. Called gradually from one position of trust and honour to another, his success in them was so signal that the Church never had to regret having reposed confidence in him. His career is an evidence of what may be done by men of ordinary ability, without any special gifts excepting earnestness, indomitable courage, and persistence of endeavour in fitting themselves for the discharge of every duty to which they may be appointed. He was a man thoroughly in earnest; and because it was natural for him to be in earnest, his earnestness was constant, and he was saved from giving up the struggle because all his hopes were not immediately realised.

William Lister began his earthly life in the village of Washington, Durham, in the year 1804. At the beginning of the century his native county was not such a bee-hive of industry as at the present. It was a coal-producing district, and the Tyne and Wear were important

waterways. But shipbuilding had not reached its present proportions; engineering, now one of the chief industries, was then unknown; and extensive slopes and vales which have since been disfigured by the utilitarian spirit of the age, were at that time scenes of rural beauty. The country around Washington to-day boasts a large population of coal miners, but at the period of William Lister's birth a small proportion only of the collieries now in active operation had been opened. His parents, who belonged to the working-classes, were highly respectable, and were amongst the most regular in their attendance at the services of the Established Church. The colliers of Durham and Northumberland were not at this time for the most part so brutal and degraded as in some parts of England. Educational advantages were few, and children of six and eight years of age were sent down the mine for twelve and fourteen hours a-day. The sports and pastimes in which they indulged were rough and cruel, and some forms of lawlessness by many were regarded as virtues rather than crimes. But in times earlier, and to the mind of the true philanthropist less cheering, the northern pitmen had known and respected their benefactors. When John Wesley had been hooted and jeered in many parts of the kingdom, he records gratefully the kindly welcome he received at the hands of these simple-minded working men. The movement which he inaugurated exercised a powerful influence upon the coal miners of the two north-eastern counties, and although much of roughness and semi-barbarism was to be found amongst them, there were not wanting evidences of social and moral improvement, whilst here and there were families who sought to maintain an air of respectability in their homes, and paid some deference to matters religious. To this class belonged the parents of William Lister. While he was yet a lad he was brought directly under the influence of Wesleyan Methodism, a circumstance which had much to do with the formation of his habits of thought and life. In these years of his boyhood he was much given to reading, and was intelligent and of a thoughtful disposition. Books were not then so plentiful as now, but a fair quantity of religious literature fell into his hands, which he studied with care and thoroughness. His parents became members of the Wesleyan Society, and William was by this means brought into contact with Wesleyan ministers. His

interest in them and their work, which from the first was considerable, increased until he began to regard their calling as the most honourable open to man. Even in those early years he felt ambitious to devote his own life to the calling he esteemed so highly. It is a strange fact that with such hopes and ambitions he was still a stranger to experimental religion, and although not guilty of open sin he was living without God. Before entering into the kingdom an influence from another quarter was to affect him. When he was fourteen years of age the family removed to Bigges' Main, a colliery village four miles east of Newcastle-on-Tyne. The Primitive Methodists had just begun to mission the district, with Hull, in Yorkshire, for their base of operations. Their earnestness and religious fervour, their power of adaptation to men and circumstances, together with the success of their efforts to elevate and improve the lives of the lowest, impressed the minds of the Listers, and, after watching it for a short time, they connected themselves with the movement. The father of William gave himself heart and soul to the work, and with true courage and devotion stood by the little Society at Wallsend, through all the struggles and feebleness of the first years of its existence.

The preaching of Thomas Nelson, one of the first Primitive Methodist missionaries in the northern counties, especially a sermon on "The Prodigal Son," affected deeply the heart of William Lister. For several weeks he was in a state of misery and fear. He found no rest either day or night. His journals testify to the fact that he often spent whole nights in fear of death, and of the wrath of God. But for a natural bashfulness which characterised him, he need scarcely have remained in torment so long. There were kind friends in his own family, and others who were accustomed to visit his home, whose knowledge of the religious life would have made them helpful to him, and who would have been glad to lead him into the light and sunshine of the favour of God. His timidity, however, hardly knew bounds, and he kept brooding over his state, wishing to present himself at the class meeting to tell his tale of sorrow, but kept back by fear and by thoughts of his unworthiness. Like many others, he was mistaken about the way of salvation. Instead of trusting, he kept hoping and praying for a manifestation of the grace of God, that would be an

indubitable evidence of his salvation. At last he conquered his bashful feelings and went to the class meeting, but even then no peace came to his heart. And yet he struggled on. One day he was alone, seeking for comfort in the Divine word. And he found it. As he read those lines unto which the human heart never tires of listening, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," his soul found peace. To William Lister this event was more than conversion from sin, and the start in the religious life. The long weary struggle through which he had passed, and from the misery of which he had felt no desire to turn away until he had found that for which he was striving, determined the keynote of his religious life. He had not entered into the kingdom of heaven by means of one grand effort, but through much violent conflict, and a struggle long sustained. His hand had grown weary with effort, but when most weary it had been reaching out towards the object he desired, and his soul had not become embittered when the hopes he had cherished had been long deferred. His Christian life was a fitting sequel to such a beginning. It was characterised by solidity, steadfastness, and immense tenacity of purpose; and the reality of the change of which he was himself so conscious bore fruit in the remarkable definiteness of his Christian experience.

It has been indicated that William Lister was inordinately bashful. At one time his extreme shyness well nigh spoiled his career. His brethren in the Wallsend Society soon recognised his worth. Before he was twenty he was made the leader of a class. The choice proved a happy one. To develop the spiritual life of its members and add to their numbers were objects for which he laboured much, and in both he succeeded far beyond his expectations. His general usefulness led to his appointment as a local preacher before he was twenty-one. In 1827 he received a call to labour as a travelling preacher in the Sunderland circuit. This northern seaport had proved a fruitful field of labour to the Primitive Methodist missionaries. The town society had become numerous and influential. Being imbued with the zeal of their founders, they had largely extended their field of operations, and it is probable that in calling Mr. Lister to labour among them some new mission was contemplated. It seemed a fine opening for one who,

from the days of his childhood, had been dreaming of becoming a minister of Jesus Christ. It was characteristic of his shrewd and timid disposition that he did not rush at the chance. Ultimately, however, he consented to accept the offer, and arranged to preach on the following Sunday in the circuit chapel. On the Saturday he started the journey to Sunderland on foot, but his bashfulness overcame him. "I pondered on my ignorance," he writes in his journals, "the importance of the work, and my inexperience, and after proceeding a few miles returned home, and sent word to my Sunderland friends that I could not comply with their request." It was not to be expected, however, that a matter that had wrought itself into his inmost life could be so easily disposed of. He bitterly regretted the step he had taken, and resolved that if ever another opening was presented, he would not act so foolishly. It was not long in coming. North Shields circuit needed an additional preacher, and William Lister received the call and accepted it. This experience proved useful to him in after years. From this time he fought resolutely against his bashfulness, and although for years it had considerable influence over him, he ultimately became a man noted for quiet persistence and self-reliance.

No better illustration of the methods and character of the work of William Lister is to be found than what is recorded of his station at Berwick. Before he entered the ministry, the North Shields station had already missioned the greater part of Northumberland, and had one agent in Alnwick and another at Berwick. Mr. Lister went to the old Border town, early in the year 1829, and found a small but active church already in existence. This church was the fruit of three months' labour by his predecessor. Considering the conservative tendencies of the people upon religious questions, and their loyalty to the Westminster Confession and the Presbyterian Church, it is remarkable that Primitive Methodism made any headway whatever in such a short time. The work, however, had been done in a substantial manner, and Mr. Lister was the man to follow it up in the spirit in which it had been undertaken. Having to work amongst a people so shrewd and far-seeing, it would not have been sufficient merely to adopt strange methods to attract the attention of the multitudes, least of all methods not in harmony with the spirit of the Gospel. The inhabitants of the

border country were then and still are too thoughtful and soberminded thus to be imposed upon, and it was well that Mr. Lister, in entering upon his labours, paid due attention to pulpit preparation, and endeavoured to present the message of the Gospel in its fulness and power. The following is from the sketch of William Lister, in the "Hugh Bourne Centenary volume of Eminent Primitive Methodists," and may be regarded as a judicious estimate of his preaching capabilities:—

"From the beginning of his ministry, Mr. Lister has borne a good reputation as a preacher, and though now verging on 'the sere and yellow leaf' of age, his pulpit-power is by no means diminished. To persons of fastidious taste and of 'itching ears,' there is little in his preaching of an attractive nature. He does not startle by his novelty, or astound by his profundity, or tickle by his wit, he is not, in the cant phrase of the day, a great preacher, which means great in almost anything or everything but the art of winning souls to Christ. We speak of him in the highest terms of praise when we say, in apostolic language, he is 'an able minister of the New Testament.' His discourses are lucid expositions of Gospel truth, invariably dealing with the fundamental principles of religion, discussing with perspicuity and fulness the great question touching a man's acceptance with God, and his progress in holiness, and uttered with a fervour which leaves no doubt as to the earnestness of the preacher, and which often breaks into strains of impassioned and heart-thrilling eloquence. Usually the structure of his sermons is textual, rather than topical or expository; following in this respect the track of the old Puritan and the early Methodist preachers; and, after all, if regard be had to the most important purposes of pulpit oratory, it may be questioned whether the modern and more fashionable methods of sermonizing are an improvement. In his preaching Mr. Lister gives evidence of choice rather than of extensive reading. Whatever may be his scholarly attainments (and of these we are not competent to give an opinion), he does not make a parade of them in the pulpit. He does not interlard his sermons with tit-bits of Greek criticism, purloined from Dr. A. Clarke, nor the scraps of dog-Latin, filched from some old school delectus, awakening the astonishment of ignorant rustics, and the contempt of thoughtful men. Of the heathen poets and philosophers, and even the dramatists and principal classical writers of our own country, his acquaintance we should judge, is limited; but he seems to have conversed freely and at large with the theological and ecclesiastical writers of our own and of bygone times, and to be intimately acquainted with the principal works of Methodist literature." (This estimate was written when its subject was still living.)

However excellent the quality of his pulpit ministrations, he could not have succeeded had he not been an arduous and persevering worker. But he was always busy. He was the leader of a class which met at 9 A.M. on the Sunday; at 10.30 A.M. he preached in the room which had been rented for the purposes of the church until a chapel could be built; at 1.30 P.M. he preached in the open air, taking his stand on

the steps of the town-hall; after which he conducted another class, and in the evening preached in the yard adjoining the room, it being too small for the congregation. In addition to his Sunday labours he preached every night during the week, and walked many miles to his appointments. The Sunday afternoon services in front of the town-hall were of great benefit to the town, in arousing the religious feelings of the community, and turning their minds towards serious subjects, and were not without some advantage in enabling the Primitive Methodist missionaries to gain a footing in the town. The congregations that assembled to listen to the sermons of Mr. Lister were large and orderly, and it is to be feared for some time more critical than devout. But after a while the fervour and passion of the young preacher, and the evident singleness of his purpose, produced an impression favourable to the work. It was not unusual after these meetings, for men and women, conscience-stricken, to go to the preacher who had delivered the message, to seek for the light and comfort of salvation. The people unto whom he had been sent, although for the most part church-goers, were scarcely religious. However charitable he desired to be in his judgment of their spiritual state, he could not fail to see that the religion of the majority was mere formalism. The ceremonial received due attention, and there was besides an intellectual apprehension of the truths of the Gospel, but in most cases there was a serious lack of spiritual life. The passion and enthusiasm of the young preacher were new features to them, and told favourably for the new movement. The number of church members increased, and the people of the town began to recognise in the mission a centre of religious activity and power. Mr. Lister on the week days visited and preached at most of the villages within thirty miles to the west of Berwick. His success was various, but in few instances did he fail wholly in establishing a cause. The Primitive Methodist Connexion has not reaped nearly all the fruits of the labours of its missionaries in these northern districts. The Border people have been too loyal to the creed and Church of the Covenanters to allow this. But the number of those who have been awakened into newness of life through their agency, and have become devout and useful adherents to the religious communities of their fathers, may be safely reckoned by thousands.

Such perseverance and constancy in religious work as was manifested by William Lister naturally created in him an elevated tone of spiritual life, and gave an intense fervency to his Christian experience. The state of his own soul was a matter of anxiety and care to him. He generally succeeded in finishing his pulpit preparations by noon on the Saturday, and spent the rest of the day alone with God. In those times of "closet repast" as he curiously styles them in his journals, he availed himself of the use of books bearing on the subject of the religious life. Of these one was specially helpful to him. The "Life and Memoirs of Dr. M'Allum" gave him such a sense of his shortcomings, and supplied him with such a high ideal of Christian perfection and consecration to the service of the Master, that he is led frequently to acknowledge his indebtedness to his knowledge of the inner life of that good man for spiritual stimulus and perseverance in the Christian course. The difficulties associated with his work made him the more anxious to seek the cultivation of his heart, to acquire a constant sense of God's nearness. The consciousness of his own feebleness and insufficiency compelled him to fall back upon the Divine Father for help. It was on account of such feelings that he made entries in his journal like the following:—"Preached eight times; but it has been a week of struggle. Satan has attacked me sorely. Oh, how feeble I am in myself; uphold me, O God, by Thy free Spirit. Without Thee I can do nothing, but I will acknowledge Thee in all my ways, and Thou shalt direct my steps." Again, in an ecstacy of strong desire for the salvation of men, he writes,—"There is nothing on earth for which I long so much as the conversion of the people." His desires did not remain unrealised, for "hardly a service was now held in the town of Berwick in which many were not seeking the Lord with tears. Oh, how thankful I am that God gives me, amidst all my feebleness, such favour and success amongst the people." Considering all the difficulties of his position and the severity of the strain upon him every day, he could never have been sustained in the work but for this fervour of soul and enthusiasm for the prosperity of the cause of God. In reading the journals and memoirs of these pious men of a generation now passed away, one is invariably reminded of Enoch, who walked with God, and found in Him a daily Companion.

The Divine presence and help were not sought at long intervals and in special seasons only. Because He was needed by them at all times they sought ever to have Him consciously near them. The conflict was constant, the trial of faith and patience was ever upon them, but at no time were they without the manifestation of the saving grace of God.

In the autumn of 1829 Mr. Lister met with much discouragement and difficulty. The character of the work was regarded as peculiar, and by some who thought themselves capable of judging, even disreputable. The public began to speak disparagingly of it; and to all appearance the great mass of outsiders, who at the first had looked on with critical eyes, but had been good enough to suspend judgment, were now ready to pronounce against it. Perhaps this was only what might have been expected. In these Methodist meetings there was more noise in the way of response than had ever been heard before in a religious service on the banks of the Tweed. Besides, a few instances had occurred in which some of the congregation had been overcome with the excitement, which had given offence to many. Some had attributed these indecorous proceedings, as they were called, to the preacher, who, they said, appealed too much to the feelings of his audience, and others did not hesitate to attribute them to Satanic influence. Amongst the members of the church, too, there were timid souls who felt keenly the lash of public opinion, and who sought to mend matters by objecting to the character of the meetings, and, when they were not altered, resigned their membership. There were two leaders in the number, and five of the persons who had been chosen to be trustees of the new chapel, then in course of erection. Through these unfortunate circumstances it became difficult to get a trust formed, and more difficult still to find money to proceed with the undertaking. Such was often the history of building projects in Primitive Methodism in the early times; and but for strange and unlooked for events,—events so strange and unexpected that the men most concerned had no hesitation in calling them special interpositions of Providence,—the difficulties would not have been surmounted. An event of this nature occurred when Berwick chapel was being erected. It was late in the year 1829, and money was sorely needed, when one morning a boy handed Mr. Lister a letter containing Bank of England notes to the amount of £70, with the

following communication :—" Rev. Sir,—Please to accept the enclosed—from a friend, £15 ; a well-wisher, £20 ; a lover of truth, £10 ; and one who has got good under your ministry, £25 ; total, £70, to aid in building your new chapel."

Although Mr. Lister did not in every case realise tangible success in his work, it is noteworthy that he left all his stations, on the whole, in a more prosperous condition than he found them. Of Kelso, one of the places he missioned in connection with Berwick, he writes in the journals that it was the subject of much prayer. He visited the people and preached several times, but the Word was not received with gladness, and eventually with some reluctance he resolved to cease his visits to the locality. Other instances of failure are faithfully recorded, but on the whole his work bore ample fruit. It may be said that he made the Berwick station twice. The first time he left it it was in a flourishing condition, with its membership steadily increasing. Afterwards he went to Edinburgh, where he found fifty-eight members, and the station generally in a shattered condition. He succeeded in the twelve months he occupied the ground in putting it in a healthy state, and left over one hundred members in the church. In his absence Berwick was suffering from bad management. He was therefore restationed to the place of his early conflicts and victories, and during a stay of three years raised the membership from 115 to 232. He then went to Ripon, and in another three years with the help of colleagues, performed an amount of work which can hardly be realised. The district was agricultural, and as a result was sparsely populated, and yet 27 new societies were added to the circuit, and an increase of membership of over 400. Besides labour of other kinds, he walked in that station 6400 miles.

Little further need be related of his work as a preacher of the Gospel. Providence had endowed him with considerable gifts as a ruler and disciplinarian. By some, indeed, he would be considered too strict in the enforcement of rule. If he felt a given course to be the right one, it was hardly possible to turn him from it, and hence his reputation for a certain firmness which at times might develop into sternness. But his kindliness of disposition was undeniable. He was gentle and sympathetic towards all in sorrow, and no more tender-

hearted pastor ever went to the house of mourning. To those with whom he became the most intimate, especially, the milder side of his nature was quite apparent. A few warm friendships entered into his life. They were rare, and only occurred when he was brought into close contact with some fine and exalted spirit. The one he valued most highly was formed on his second circuit, Sunderland, the superintendent of which at the time was the gifted Rev. John Petty. From that time onward an affection like that of David and Jonathan existed between these two men of God. Mr. Lister is generous and grateful in his acknowledgments of the obligation under which he rested to his colleague for counsel, intellectual stimulus, and direction, and for clearer views upon the subject of Scriptural holiness. It was one of the greatest trials of his life to be separated from Mr. Petty, and go to a field of labour where his friend would be with him no longer.

A man of such eminent piety, whose success in the regular work of the ministry had been so great, whose judicial mind had enabled him to render invaluable service to the Church when its difficulties had been of a peculiar kind, whose clever management of its affairs had been highly satisfactory, and whose knowledge of Connexional rule was well-nigh perfect, naturally won the confidence and esteem of his brethren. For many years he was a recognised authority in district and Conference assemblies. Several times he was secretary to the Conference, and in 1868, was exalted to the Presidential chair, when the Conference was held in Sunderland, the chief town of the district in which he had laboured all his life. It was a fitting tribute of honour to one who had worked with so much faithfulness and success for the Church of Jesus Christ. In 1871 he was made a Deed Poll member, and for some years was treasurer of the Superannuated Ministers' Widows' and Orphans' Fund.

Mr. Lister died in London, whilst still discharging the duties of the last-named office, in 1872, when he was in the seventy-sixth year of his age. His last words were characteristic of the man: "Yes, blessed Jesus,—no rapture but perfect peace, I know whom I have believed." And then his soul passed into the eternal.

R. H.

Robert Key.

[*Born*, 1805: *Entered the Ministry*, 1828: *Died*, 1876.]

THE question "How far are Christian workers in general, and ministers in particular, responsible for success in the spheres of labour to which they have devoted themselves?" is one that is often forcing itself upon the attention of the Churches. At the least it is almost certain to come to the front, and demand an answer, when a religious community is in a condition that is the opposite of flourishing. Other religious communities it is seen are making steady and even rapid progress, and if this one remains where it was, poor in membership and in influence, it is natural to think that the reason must be capable of being discovered, and plainly stated. Methodist Churches, on account of their peculiar mission and methods of working, are not likely to regard this subject with indifference. From the time of the revival which brought Methodism into existence until now, they have been earnest in prosecuting mission work among the masses. The constitution of their societies, and the character of some of their meetings, afford special opportunities of ascertaining their numerical strength, and the mere fact that they have been able regularly to report large increase, has made them the more willing to keep accurate records. They have been accustomed to talk less of unseen work and unseen results than some others, probably because usually they have had plenty of work, and results that have been perfectly apparent. In these circumstances it

has not been difficult for spirits not overburdened with Christian charity to place the whole responsibility, especially in a case of non-success, upon the shoulders of the chief worker, and to imagine that what is wanted is only another man to occupy the pulpit. This is a rather summary way of accounting for the prevailing state of affairs. To those who do not suffer by it, it may be an easy and agreeable way, but it can scarcely be considered in all respects satisfactory. When the question is asked, "Is a minister responsible for realising success?" it might be pointed out that the answer depends on what is meant by success. If it is said that success means a given number of conversions within a given period, a large increase in the membership every year, and a clear and regular improvement in the social status of the society, it would be decidedly unjust to expect such results invariably. Something depends on the state of the Church itself, and something too on the condition of the people among whom the work has to be done. Further, it should be remembered that real success may have been secured that cannot well be tabulated. The cry about unseen results is not altogether a false cry. Who will reckon how much of evil has been checked, how many moral wrecks have been prevented, how much of light and sweetness has been shed abroad by toilers whose work has been to a great extent unappreciated, because they have not seen many visible conversions. It might prove an advantage for every minister to understand that he is responsible for succeeding in his work. And it might prove of equal benefit for both ministers and Churches to know what success in religious work really means. If this last were properly understood, the minister would be saved from a weight of anxiety and despondency he has no right to bear, and the Churches would avoid harshness and injustice in their hearts and in their conduct towards those who, if they have not been men-pleasers, have sought faithfully to discharge their duties to the Lord's heritage. If work is honestly done success will come, but it is not for men to determine what form it shall take, or the exact time it shall be realised. Still it is not to be denied that it must be cheering to the worker to see bad characters reformed through his agency. More especially will it be gratifying to those who have to be largely dependent on their own efforts, and who have been compelled to struggle alone amidst difficulties

which would be regarded by most people as insurmountable. The subject of this sketch was thus situated, and yet he succeeded everywhere in a most unprecedented manner. His successes were of the kind which were visible to the least careful observer. A study of the character of the man would lead us to expect this much. From his very constitution it may be concluded that if he had not realised success that was tangible, he would not have realised any kind of success.

Few, if any, of those who knew Robert Key in his youth and early manhood, would have expected him to become so good a man, or one so useful in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. He was born in the parish of All Saints, in the county of Suffolk, 7th April, 1805. His parents without being extremely wicked were not religious, and took little interest in the moral development of their son. He was allowed to have much of his own way, and to choose his own companions and favourite pursuits, without interference on the part of his natural guardians. Those were times in which if religious instruction was not given at home, the chances were that the younger members of the family would grow up careless about religion, and wild and dissolute in their habits. There were few villages that were favoured with dissenting chapels, Sunday schools were scarce, and the parish clergyman was not of the type, which now happily may be found everywhere, a man faithfully devoting himself to the cause of religion and humanity. With Christian influences so rare, it was not surprising that Key, in early life, promised to become one of the most notorious of the wicked of the neighbourhood. His companions were all of a disreputable kind. Cruel sports, drinking, and poaching occupied all their leisure hours. In what was evil young Key was not better than his friends. On the contrary, it would appear that he was a ringleader of the set, often venturing further into evil than the rest, and exhibiting a daring in committing sin that was worthy of a better cause. Considering what the man had become, and the kind of life to which, to all appearances, he was doomed, sin in its worst forms was the natural thing to expect in him. He had an exuberance of spirit and physical vigour, and in the tame affairs of the country district in which he resided there was afforded no vent for this overflow of life. There were no educational institutions, no parish politics, and no private careers sufficient to

absorb his energies, so that from the very environments amidst which he was placed, it was to be expected that with no religious training a young man of such an active temperament would go to considerable lengths in wickedness.

That such a beginning would have ended badly goes without saying, if nothing had occurred to effect a change; but a combination of events occurred about the period that he attained to his majority, which compelled him to think seriously of the probable results of his action. The mere fact that he was just reaching manhood forced him to be more thoughtful than previously. He would not have been like the majority of young men if he had been wholly without ambition to do well, and become a respectable citizen. In their most lawless days they entertained in their secret hearts the hope of reformation. Many of them had set a bound in their minds to their days of wickedness. Robert Key was not without moral sense, and although little had been done to awaken and cherish it, by the circumstances of his life, his conscience began to assert itself, and caused him to realise the necessity of honouring the law of God. At this juncture he married, an event which also had the tendency of deepening his convictions of moral responsibility. All these circumstances, however, might have been insufficient to lead him into righteous habits, had it not been for the fact that at the same period nearly the whole of his companions were arrested. They had ventured a little beyond what could be borne, and were transported. Whatever the effect of this upon themselves proved, it gave the one in whom we are specially interested a better chance to carry out the resolution which it led him to make to aim at better things. No hindrance arose from the influence of bad companions; the one foe with which he had to struggle was his own evil nature. The Primitive Methodists had already sent a missionary into the district, and he was one of those who availed themselves of the privilege of hearing the Gospel from his lips. The plain, earnest, homely message touched his deepest nature. He was not and never had been a half-hearted man, and it would have been an unusual procedure on his part if he had stopped half way in the reformation of his character. In 1826, he professed conversion, and formally attached himself to the Primitive Methodist Society of the village.

The change that had taken place in the man was thorough. The witness of it was in his life, and considering how he had lived previously, it was only natural that those who knew him should be struck with the Christian consistency and respectable conduct which he now manifested. The rioting and drinking were done. The mischief he had been working to peaceable men was brought to an end. Many of those who saw this change wondered how long it could continue, but whilst all wished it might prove permanent, there were not many who were confident enough in its genuineness to believe that would be so. When weeks had passed away, and he did not falter from his new course, it was regarded as nothing short of a miracle. The reformation did not merely show itself in his ceasing from the evil habits which had degraded so much his own character, and made him to be feared throughout the neighbourhood. His life was not passive, his character was not negative, and whatever change might be effected in him it would be impossible to make him into a mere negation. If he was not positively evil he must be positively good, and if there were any who thought he could remain an inactive member of the Church, they were shortly to be convinced of their mistake. From the first he was as earnest and laborious in seeking to do good, as before he had been in doing harm. In prayer meetings and mission work, street-singing and school-teaching he was unsurpassed, at any rate in point of zeal by any of his fellows. Those capable of judging too soon became impressed with the fact that his talents were both varied and remarkable. Best of all, a deeply humane feeling seemed to possess him. A yearning compassion for men, and a desire for their truest welfare developed itself in his heart. It was this that made him feel he must work to bring them into the enjoyment of true religion, that by its influence their natures might be elevated, their minds stimulated in life's struggles, and comforted amidst its sorrows and disappointments. The Primitive Methodist Church at that time was in its infancy, its ministers and missionaries then, as now, were wholly drawn from the ranks of the local preachers, and new districts were being entered by its agents almost every week. The demand for suitable men was constantly increasing, and accordingly after Robert Key had thoroughly proved his powers of speech in the capacity of

local preacher, he entered the regular work of the ministry in the year 1828.

Missionary effort amongst Primitive Methodists in the early part of their history was under totally different management from that which obtains now. Since 1838 it has been under the supervision of a general committee, which decides what districts shall have mission agents stationed to them, exercises oversight of the methods of operation, receives and disburses all moneys, &c. But no missionary moneys were accumulated in the days when Robert Key started his ministerial career, and the connexional organisation was by no means so elaborate and complete as now. The circuit quarterly meetings both chose the men and the spheres of labour in which they might have an opportunity of displaying their powers of endurance and talents for establishing societies where none had before existed. In all appointments they sought to be directed by the Divine Spirit, and insisted that the man whom they sent should also know that he was sent by the Lord, and give assurance of this by some account of "a call" which he had received. The Connexion was young, and overcharged with youthful enthusiasm, which circumstance perhaps may partly account for the shortness of the intervals in which Macedonian cries were heard from towns and villages that needed religious help. As for the means of sending help, it was one of the things that needed the least calculation. If there was a balance of a pound or two in the treasurer's hands after all demands had been met, it was deemed sufficient to justify a large scheme of missionary enterprise into the contiguous parishes which were without Methodism of any kind, and Primitive Methodism in particular. Of course the salaries were small, and the missionaries lived away from home a great deal; lived too, according to apostolic principles, taking with them neither purse nor scrip, and trusting that the people to whom they carried the message of truth would regard the labourer as worthy of his hire. The quarterly meetings of the self-supporting stations who sent out these new agents were strict in demanding reports of success. One who did not succeed in making a new circuit independent of all help in two or three years was thought to have missed his providential way, and rather bluntly informed so, and if he failed more than once or twice was unceremoni-

ously put out of the ranks. Robert Key understood this, he was also well acquainted with the hardships and suffering he might have to endure, but he was full of faith, and dauntlessly accepted the call of the Yarmouth station to mission the Mattisford district. His stipend was accordingly decided upon. It was six shillings per week to support himself and his wife.

It was well that the newly-appointed missionary was not much given to reflection. Had he been troubled with such a mental tendency, the sphere of operation to which he was sent would have awakened doubts and fears. The prospect was not inviting. The agricultural labourer of Norfolk, for whose religious benefit this mission was undertaken, is not to-day an individual of the highest order of intelligence. Fifty years ago, however, he was very much worse. His life was characterised by gross ignorance and immorality. In the interval too little has been done to educate and reform him by those who ought to have felt themselves mainly responsible for the work; still it ought to be remembered that whilst direct efforts for this end have not been adequate, much has been accomplished by the influence of railways, a cheap press, and the spread of evangelical religion. With the hard material conditions of his life, it is impossible to expect to find a manhood of the most exalted type, but, despite difficulties, substantial improvement has taken place in his character. Of the moral state of the people of Hockering at the time that Mr. Key entered that village, the following is recorded in his Journal:—

"Hockering is a village with a population of four hundred souls. It is ten miles from the city of Norwich. Its inhabitants were in a very low state of mental ignorance —shrouded in darkness and steeped in sin. There was not at that time, as far as I could learn or hear of afterwards, one Christian man or woman in the parish. There were two persons only who had any religious light whatever, one of whom had sat under the Wesleyan ministry, and the other who had been a hearer among the Baptists. These were the only two individuals who had any fear of God before their eyes."

Hockering was not an exceptional case, as is evident from the entry he has made respecting Garveston. He writes: "I entered this place in 1831, and found its inhabitants in the deepest, grossest ignorance. I could not find one God-fearing man or woman in the place." If individual cases have to be cited, reference might be made to the case

of an old man named Billham, living at Lenwade. The following is recorded in the Journal :—

"Billham had been a very cruel man to his horses, both in feeding them and using them, so that it had become a common saying among the people that Billham's horses would never have another master. He always finished them with cruelty and starvation. When I was preaching in the street of the village he joined the congregation, and not long after his tears began to flow. He received good, and became an altered man; but his intellectual powers had become so much enfeebled that I could not come to any certain conclusion about the state of his soul. Sometimes he would express himself clearly and satisfactorily, at other times with much ignorance and uncertainty. His state was, however, a very hopeful one, and altogether an advantage to his horses, which, with better feeding and treatment, soon presented an altered appearance."

There is also an incident recorded of the mission to Hockering, which, in an amusing manner, illustrates the low state of the moral ideas of the masses of Norfolk :—

"A poor, depraved man, called Brighty, a fiddler, who attended fairs and public-houses, heard me preach on the Sabbath day, and could afterwards find no rest. His mental distress became so intense, that it unfitted him for his daily labour. On one particular occasion he went into a wood to give utterance to the pent-up feelings of his bleeding heart; but, obtaining no relief, he went to a public-house to try to drown his misery with drink; but even there he became worse. In the afternoon he went to work, having for a companion a man recently brought to God. Their work was to rake the weeds together to burn. About three I passed the field, and Brighty said to his companion, 'There goes Mr. Key; I wish I could go and ask him to pray with me.' 'Go,' said his fellow-labourer. 'Very well,' replied Brighty, taking his rake and breaking it against a clod, 'if my master comes, tell him I am gone to get a nail or two to mend my rake.'"

English society of all classes had become grossly depraved. The higher orders greeted the mention of religion with a laugh and a sneer; whilst the rural peasantry, having been left without moral and religious training, had become in some instances ignorantly stupid, in others, the energy that was in them manifested itself in some form of savage brutality. The clergy were seldom seen in their own parishes; the higher clergy, including many of the bishops, cared only for the emoluments of their office, and nothing whatever about its duties. Churches in which, during the course of a year, a single service was held, attended by half-a-dozen sleepy hearers, were not remarkable as centres of religious light and sweetness. It was also a fact, as incontestable as it was deplorable, that the Nonconformist Churches were making no progress either in numbers or influence, whilst in spiritual power they

had visibly declined. The natural result followed with this decline of the spiritual influence that had been awakened through the rise of Methodism. The Bible was not read, common morality was out of fashion, and the life of the people was growing every day more degraded. With all these drawbacks, however, and with a field of labour so uninviting, Robert Key succeeded. He succeeded in that which must always be regarded as the chief end of the messenger of truth—namely, the reformation of human character; he made bad men good. Numerous cases of individuals who gave evidence of having undergone a beneficial change are recorded in his little book, "The Gospel among the Masses." William Lane, of Hockering, was a somewhat extraordinary character. Unlike many of those among whom he lived, he had considerable mental capability. But he was a terror to the neighbourhood, and had been so far overcome of evil that, to use his own words, he did not know he had a soul. But through the visit of Mr. Key he became a changed man, and surprised everybody by his originality of thought and inspiring eloquence, when he began as a local preacher to declare the message of mercy to others. The following is also from Mr. Key's Journal:—

"While sitting one evening by the fireside of Mr. Wheaton, he remarked, 'We can retire to rest to-night without any fear of being burnt out of our house before morning. It was not always so. We had a gang of vermin here who had plotted a scheme to burn a whole parish down, and who actually succeeded in destroying seventeen houses, leaving as many families without a home. You may put these vermin into jail, and upon the treadmill, but they will come out the same devils they went in; but if the grace of God gets into their hearts it will change them. It cost me two shillings a-night during the whole winter to pay a man to watch my premises. Your people came here, and sang, and preached, and prayed about the streets, and they are now good men in your Church.'"

Although the district was sparsely populated, his success was such that he often had "great occasions" in which to deliver the message he loved so well to repeat. Sometimes at a camp-meeting the people gathered from the villages and hamlets for miles round, until there were from two to three thousand upturned faces before him; and if they were sunburnt and stolid, the scene would not be without its inspiration. It is evident from his Diary that his success was not confined to the poorest classes. He made, not only friends, but many

converts to Christianity who were able to render him substantial material help in his chapel building projects. The results were permanent for the most part. In leaving Mattishall circuit, he entered the following in his Journal :—

"It is now nearly four years since a kind Providence directed my feet hither. At that time there was not a member in what is now called the Mattishall circuit of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. The first sermon was preached at Cawston, 13th April, 1830, and the first Society formed in the same place about two months afterwards. I have missioned a tract of land thirty miles in length, containing more than forty places, and have planted about forty churches. The station has now four chapels, four travelling preachers, thirty-five local preachers, and seven hundred and fifteen members. It has not cost the parent circuit five shillings. In many families where ignorance and discord once reigned triumphant, where the sweet incense of morning and evening devotion never ascended, where vice, profaneness, Sabbath desecration, blasphemy, drunkenness, thieving, and poaching prevailed to an alarming extent, the voice of prayer is now heard, the Bible read, and the children trained in the way they should go. The ale-house is deserted for the house of God, the song of drunkenness is exchanged for the hymn of praise, wretched hovels for comfortable dwellings, rags for decent apparel, and disorder for peace and happiness. 'It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'"

The phraseology in which this statement is expressed may appear a trifle inflated and extravagant, but the facts and figures are undeniable.

When an attempt is made to account for results like those just narrated, amidst difficulties so great, and in such a short period of time, attention is at once directed to the man who achieved them. He was not of an ordinary type. Robert Key had a fine presence. Tall of stature, and powerfully built, with a rather small head, in which the intellectual did not predominate; a small, quick, restless eye, and a sweet, sunny face, he had evidently been made to command the eye and ear of a crowd. To see that massive frame under the influence of intense feeling, with the face lit up as by some Divine illumination, whilst he poured forth the floods of passionate eloquence to which his congregations were accustomed to listen, was a sight not soon to be forgotten. His was a nature that felt keenly and deeply. It was impossible to watch his movements, to listen to his conversation, or even to look upon him in his quiet moments, without knowing that there were fires in his soul that only needed the opportunity to burst forth, consume all opposition, and carry the light of his own convictions to

hearts hitherto enveloped in darkness. Besides, there was in him the courage of the true hero. No one, not really brave at heart, would have become a pioneer of the Primitive Methodist Church. If, indeed, by mistake, one had ventured upon the work who was devoid of this quality, a short experience only would have been sufficient to convince him that this was not his true vocation. The hardships of the position were not occasional, but constant, and were without any romantic side to them. There is something wofully pathetic in the following :—

"One day, after having walked about thirty miles without either dinner or tea, and preached in the evening at a new place, I failed to obtain a night's lodging. I had been to different inns, but could gain no admission, all pretending to be full. I had walked until the blood squeezed out at the top of my shoes, and I had torn out the lining of my trousers to bind up my bleeding feet. About midnight, I got as far as Hadleigh Heath. I could get no farther. I knew a person living there who had heard me preach once. I turned aside to see if the family were up, thinking if they were I would try them. I got to the front gate, and seeing no light my heart sank within me. What next to do I could not tell. After a few minutes' reflection, I thought I would get into their straw stack standing close by. While approaching it for that purpose, however, I began to ask myself what the consequences would be were I found there. It was about the time the rural police force was established, and I felt convinced that, should I be discovered by one of them, I should probably be taken up as a vagrant, and my missionary enterprise blasted. Leaning over the front gate, I wept like a child, and lifted up my heart to God. A powerful impression was made on my mind, and as it seemed to me an audible voice said, 'Call them up, they can only deny you.' Having knocked, a voice thundered from the window, 'Who is there?' I answered, 'Will you be kind enough, for Jesus Christ's sake, to take in a poor, weary, and worn-out servant of His for the night?' And she received me as if I had been an angel from heaven."

It was the qualities he possessed; his fine presence, his passion, his courage that made him one of those men who are capable, strangely and powerfully, to affect others. To be near him was to feel that in his nature there was a spiritual mesmerism by which he could in a measure control the wills of other men, gather followers around him, and compel those who sought to oppose him to become his champions and defenders. When at Reepham, the magistrates threatened to have the pipes of the water-engine turned upon him if he continued to preach in the market-place. This did not affect him much, and a gentleman who had taken in the state of the situation, warned the magistrates in words which show how completely he had won the hearts of the common people: "You had better be careful as to what you are doing, for

the people are coming from all the neighbourhood around to defend him; and if the engine is brought out it will be dashed to pieces, the pipes cut, and perhaps blood will be shed." Mr. Key himself realised that he exercised a wonderful influence over those whose benefit he was seeking, as the following incident will show: "We met a man carrying a pail of water. I took hold of him and said, 'Stop, my friend, I want you to go with me.' The man looked confused, but after carrying his water home came with us. He afterwards told me that he and the other members of his house felt they had not power to resist me, but were compelled to do as I told them." It was that power that is possessed by a few men who are willing to give their life away in the discharge of their duty, and who have put both body and soul into the hands of the Supreme Being.

The abundance of his labours as a factor in securing the success which he realised need only be mentioned. The constancy of his purpose was only equalled by the zeal with which he carried out his plans. To work for the end he had in view was not a burden to him, but the great joy of his life.

But his powers of eloquence, and the readiness and directness of his utterances, need to be more fully insisted upon. It would be unwise to claim for him that his eloquence was either of the highest or most varied order. There was no attempt at the suppression of feeling such as may be discovered in the oratory of a highly refined intellect. Neither was there an infinite choice of unusual and chaste language. But he was never at a loss for a word to suit his purpose. His eloquence was natural and therefore real, unlike the counterfeit that the mechanical speaker seeks to pass current. Almost from the first sentence on to the end, his sentences came rushing out—borne on the wings of the storm of feeling that was bursting from his heart. How much he had himself been moved on these occasions became clear when he had taken his seat. It was not unusual during the few minutes that were occupied in taking the collection at the end of the sermon, to commence in a sitting attitude to reinforce the truths of which he had been speaking. As for the directness of his language, there was no mistaking what he meant. When he spoke of heaven (and heaven was his favourite theme), it was in language that enabled his congregation

to see the place. His words were simple; his style popular and dogmatic, and hardly ever relieved by an attempt at argument; he would repeat the same thought, in words but slightly varied, a dozen times in succession, each time with increasing fervour, until it seemed to have penetrated to the core the hearts of his hearers.

The readiness with which he could meet an emergency and give back an answer to the querulous, was developed through the opposition with which he had been compelled to deal in his open-air preaching campaigns. The missionary of those days as now had to be quick at repartee, or he would have been often beaten off his ground. There are times when a little humorous satire will be more effective than a serious argument, and a pun do more damage to the enemy than the most logical of syllogisms.

Having regard to the character of the people amongst whom he had to labour, we are inclined to believe that one of the most important of his qualifications was his realism, the vivid realistic way in which he conceived spiritual things. Doubt, melancholy, despondent feelings to him were not the result of an over-taxed and underfed body, nor of any external circumstance of a depressing character. Such states of mind, he believed, were caused directly by the devil. Evil of any kind, whether working bad thoughts in the hearts of men or causing them to commit outward sin, or leading them to persecute the Church and raise hindrances in the way of the work of God, was the result of the action of the devil. As for this devil himself, he was a malignant, intelligent person, the wilful enemy of God and of man. When he went to the village of Hockering, he had a struggle as with a man, a strong man, who was seeking to do him mischief. "I entered the village," he writes; "in 1830, and endured one of the most awful conflicts with the enemy of souls it has been my lot to experience. Prior to the service I got into a dry ditch, covered over with briars and thorns, and for hours wrestled with principalities and powers; the conflict was so horrible that I was afraid at one time I should lose my reason. I opened my pocket-Bible and while reading the snare was broken, the powers of darkness were scattered, and hell's legions routed."

Despite his strong convictions and his great anxiety to carry on

his work successfully, it is seldom we find him resorting to the extravagances that are not only tolerated but looked upon with favour in certain religious quarters in our enlightened day. He was mainly dependent upon his own personal power, and the power of the truth he declared. The most unusual feature of his methods was that practised by all his brethren, preaching in the open air. But always did he seek to preach the Gospel. Prayer meetings, experience meetings, and other religious services were established, but the chief feature of his work was preaching. Even what has been recorded in his Diary as peculiar and a departure from the ordinary on his part will not strike those acquainted with present day missionary operations as extraordinary. He had faith in his message, and if he had failed by preaching Jesus to bring men into a better life, he would have concluded that the fault was in himself, and, in order to attract attention, not have begun to adopt showy practices wholly out of harmony with the spirit of Christianity. As for his sermons, they were of the plainest, simplest kind, dealing only with the first elements of religious truth. At the same time they gave evidence of careful preparation. The plan was generally in the old textual style, and the matter largely made up of Scriptural quotations. One striking feature of them was their illustrations. He could and did make them useful. They were not all fresh and original, but they were apt, and he could repeat them a score of times with as much fervour and enthusiasm as if they had but just come as a revelation to his mind. As a preacher and sermoniser he was quite an authority when in the prime of his manhood, amongst a large section of his brother ministers in the Norwich districts. The comparative sameness of his matter, and his lack of anything like profound intellectual insight, and of a large acquaintance with books, was fully recognised. There were many, too, who failed to obtain the amount of instruction and spiritual stimulus from his utterances which, from report, they had been led to expect. These sought for other masters to follow, and found them in men equally excellent but of a different type. Both classes were needed, and whilst the more thoughtful and studious amongst them were not much drawn towards Robert Key, there was a class who wished above all things to be able to rouse the masses out of their dazed condition. This class saw in

him their model. To preach and live like him, and to succeed as he had succeeded became their great ambition.

There were other features in his character which made the subject of this sketch useful to the Church to whose interests he had given himself so unreservedly. He was often sent to District and Conferential gatherings, but he was no debater, and not gifted with the legislative faculty. He loved dearly the Church of his choice, and was careful to conserve and gather up its strength. No man perhaps within its pale has achieved as much in founding, organising, and working new societies in such a short time as he achieved during his four years at Mattishall. In shepherding the flock he was as successful as in gathering into the fold, and whilst utterly devoid of sectarian narrowness, and anxious for the prosperity of the cause in every Christian community, he was most active of all for the advancement of Primitive Methodism, doubtless perceiving that he could do best for the one universal Church by concentrating his efforts within limits.

Robert Key was a leading man in a school fast passing away. Here and there we meet with such yet, but they are leaving us, and leaving none behind them who are exactly their counterparts. They have done their work, and brought the world into such a condition that they can now be done without more easily than if they had not made their influence felt. But he was more than a man of a type. In his own school he had qualities which lifted him above nearly all his compeers. His faith in God, and in himself as God's messenger, his vivid realisation of the truth so far as he realised it at all, his burning eloquence, his passionate love for men, his heroism all served to make him a prince amongst his fellows. Of his piety one who knew him well and is of a judicial attitude of mind, with a thorough insight into human character once said to the writer, "Robert Key was the best man I ever knew." This view of his worth was shared by large numbers of every section of the Christian Church. The following is an extract from a Norwich newspaper at the time of his death in that city in September, 1876 :—

"Mr. Key was a noble specimen of the pioneers of Primitive Methodism. He had a strong physical frame, and was above the average height, and of commanding appearance. He was a man of indomitable courage, burning zeal, and fervent eloquence.

He was in every way constituted to arrest attention, and to command respect from those who listened to his utterances. In the year 1828 he commenced his itinerant career. At that time the rural districts were in a state of semi-heathenism, crime, and discontent. The low state of morals which prevailed among the working classes, and the indifference of the clergy to the spiritual wants of the people, seemed only to give point and energy to his character and efforts. He went forth and told the 'story of the Cross' in language that arrested the attention of hundreds, who listened to his words till they were moved to trembling and tears. The inroads he was making upon bands of Sabbath-breakers, thieves, poachers, and others of the baser sort exposed him to much opposition, but it was all in vain. Robert Key felt called to his work, and was resolved to do it, or die in the field of conflict. Peace to his memory."

R. H.

John Petty.

[*Born*, 1807 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1826 : *Died*, 1868.]

IN building up Primitive Methodism, God has employed evangelists like William Clowes, organisers like Hugh Bourne, orators like John Flesher, and men who were so versatile in talent and abundant in labours that they cannot be said to have belonged to any class in particular. John Petty was a man of this kind. His paternal ancestors were thought to be French, and his maternal Scotch : he was born at Salterforth, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, 27th December, 1807 ; so French and Scottish elements entered into his constitution, and were developed beneath a bright Yorkshire sky. It has been our privilege to labour amongst different kinds of men, but never amongst a keener, shrewder, truer class than those of West Yorkshire. Their heads are as hard as their native hills, and as cool as the rocks of which they are made. Mrs. Gaskell describes them as a self-sufficient race, with an air of independence about them, and says that "their feelings are not easily roused, but their duration is lasting." How much Mr. Petty owed to West Riding influences it were difficult to say, for we can no more analyse his character, and trace the various elements to their French, Scottish, and Yorkshire sources than we can trace the honey on our tables to the particular flowers from which it has come. To understand him, therefore, we must look at the force that worked on those elements and moulded them into symmetry.

It has been well said that "the secret of a man's life lies in his religion,—in what he really believes about this world and his own place in it." John Petty was fifteen years of age before he turned his attention to this important subject: then it was that he was converted, and he sought at once to know God's will respecting him. A man's capabilities, and his surroundings in life, help to guide him to a knowledge of the divine Will, and Mr. Petty looked inquiringly at both. His natural gifts were not extraordinary. His cognitive, retentive, and comparative powers were good; but he lacked the imaginative. His mind was of the logical order, but bowed to authority, so he could not leave the beaten paths of public opinion and enter new regions of thought. He was a man of ready utterance, but not eloquent. It is true that marvellous effects attended his preaching, but they were not produced so much by the majesty and melody of his speech, as by the force of the truths that he uttered, and the power of the Holy Ghost which accompanied them.

Of his acquired abilities, his biographer, the Rev. J. Macpherson, says, "that a limited acquaintance with reading, writing, arithmetic, and English grammar, describes the whole of his school education." After his conversion he acted on St. Paul's advice to Timothy, and gave "attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, and his profiting appeared unto all." J. Wesley's Works and those of the Rev. John Fletcher were eagerly read by him, and he began to take preaching appointments in the surrounding villages. Being blessed in his work, he resolved to live to glorify God, and thenceforth *Consecration* became the watchword, the inspiring force of his life. Those who knew him best encouraged him to aspire towards the ministry; and as that office would afford him increased opportunities of glorifying Christ, and sweetening the lives of his fellowmen,—the very purposes to which he had consecrated his life,—it had attractions for him. Besides, it had been filled by some of the finest spirits of past ages—Isaiah, St. Paul, and Luther,—and he longed to walk in their footsteps.

In July, 1826, he received instructions to meet the committee at Tunstall, and it was decided that he should go to Haverfordwest, in South Wales, where three missionaries had withdrawn from the field. The way in which he set out on his journey resembles Luther's leaving

Wittenberg for Worms, with nothing but his Bible and his flute, which Carlyle calls "the most splendid and significant scene in European history." The allowance he received for travelling was not sufficient to pay his coach fare, and as there were no railroads, he "swung a large bundle of clothes and books over his shoulders, and, under the rays of a burning sun, made his way as best he could to Bristol, where he took the packet for Swansea. On the following day he walked thirty miles to Caermarthen, and on the evening of the next reached the end of his journey, having ridden but a few miles." When he arrived, he found the cause feeble and in ill odour, and herculean labours awaiting him. "He had frequently ten or twelve times to preach in a week, not unfrequently four times on a Lord's day—twice indoors and twice in the open air. Sometimes a whole day would be devoted to family visiting, each visitation being accompanied by religious exercises more or less extended, which made the labours of such a day as exhaustive as the duties of the Sabbath."

When he had been on the mission six months, a letter came from the General Missionary Committee, saying, that the treasurer had not a shilling at his disposal, and advising the station authorities to do without a missionary. "Oh!" says he, "the strange feeling which I experienced on that account. Three hundred miles away from my home, and not a penny to help me on the road. But this did not much move me; the thought of leaving my Christian friends on the other side of the Mission, whom I loved more than I had loved any people before, was what I could not endure, unless another preacher should be sent to them. Being sensible that the hearts of the people were with me, I resolved to stay and take what the Mission would raise." The General Missionary Committee allowed him to stay, but said that he had not to look to the Committee for any further aid. Heroic youth! Far from home; among strangers; salary barely sufficient for the necessaries of life, and that not guaranteed; yet still willing to labour! Such consecration is worthy of the Apostles.

Eight months after this arrangement was made we find him writing in his journal: "Was constrained to suffer hunger. This was nothing uncommon while at Haverfordwest, no regular board being provided

for me. I had to go to the people's houses for my food; and, as they sometimes neglected to ask me, I had nowhere to get my meals. At such times I was accustomed to go out into the fields and find as many blackberries as I could." The world's best work has often been done in poverty. Whilst Homer sang his deathless songs, he had to beg his bread; and whilst Luther fought the battles of the Reformation, he had often to live on bread and herrings; and this consecrated youth had frequently to appease the pangs of hunger by gathering blackberries. In after years he used to remark that "he took his degrees among the wild mountaineers of Wales." Whilst performing such heroic labours, and enduring such hardships, he was encouraged by seeing the good work prosper. During the two years he was in Wales he had a chapel built, saw enlarged congregations, and the society increase from twenty to fourscore.

His next station was in connection with Brinkworth circuit, which carried on extensive missionary operations in Wiltshire and Berkshire. Here he had to labour among a poor and benighted people; but his consecration was owned of God, and hundreds were converted. Whilst on this station he first saw, and was perplexed by, physical manifestations. "I was very much affected," he says, "at the sight of one of our members whose senses were overcome for a considerable time. She appeared to be in a vision. Sometimes she was in the greatest distress imaginable, and cried out, 'Save, Lord! save, Lord!' At the same time, her gestures appeared as if she were fighting against an enemy. At other times she appeared very happy, and repeatedly cried out, 'Glory!' I never saw one in this way before; but I believe it was of the Lord." Such manifestations were common in the early days of Methodism, and in the great revival of 1859, and seem to be the result of intense feeling: natures in which feeling predominates are peculiarly liable to them. We think that they are altogether different from, and should not be confounded with, the hysterical noises of those who profess to receive the gift of prophecy or of tongues. Mr. Petty did not condemn such manifestations, neither did he encourage them. His discretion in dealing with difficult cases, his diligence in mental improvement, his apostolic labours, and the marvellous results of his ministry, drew towards him the attention of the

leaders of the Connexion; so the Conference of 1829 appointed him to superintend Tunstall circuit, and to assist in editing the magazines. Whilst in Tunstall he sought and obtained the blessing of holiness. All Methodist ministers believe in holiness; but there is a diversity of view as to how and when it is obtained. John Wesley taught that holiness, or entire sanctification, is a blessing distinct from justification, or forgiveness of sin, and is received subsequently to it by a single act of faith. With this view agrees the Methodist hymn-book. Others hold that when a man is forgiven he is "cleansed from all sin," and then he begins to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." The advocates of the former theory hold that "sanctification does not preclude further growth!" If a man would settle this dispute to his own mind, he must do so at the bar of his own conscience, by interpreting for himself the change he has experienced. When he has done that, he is not entitled to say that others must experience similar facts, and give a similar interpretation of them, or they cannot be sanctified. Mr. Petty held the view of John Wesley, and in his journal for 11th December, 1829, wrote: "This is a memorable day. This morning God has sanctified my soul; He has cleansed me from all sin: I feel I am the Lord's alone. . . . (My experience) exactly answers the description which Mr. Wesley, Mr. Bramwell, and Esther Ann Rogers give (of sanctification). Satan tells me I shall soon lose it; but I feel, while I am completely nothing, Christ is my 'All and in All.' Glory! Glory! Glory! I am so filled with the Holy Ghost that I can hardly write. I am determined to declare it. Oh, my God, I fly to Thee for strength!"

On a subsequent date he writes: "How necessary it is that I should be eminently holy! First, I am an ambassador of Christ. I blush and tremble at the thought. Oh, how sacred is my office! And how holy I should be! Second, I ought to be holy in order that I may be useful. What solid and permanent good can I be instrumental in effecting except I be ardently pious?"

There is a ring of sincerity about these words which shows that they come from a soul that has been in contact with God, and that is entirely consecrated to the working out of His purposes respecting mankind. The results that flowed from Mr. Petty's consecration

were greater than ever, for in nine months he was able to report an increase of 305 members. In achieving such results he sowed in his constitution the seeds of the disease that in after years took him out of the world. Amid the biting blasts of the winter of 1831, he says: "Preached at Audley. I had not gone far from Tunstall before I got nearly up to the middle in water. I had more than five miles to walk in my wet clothes; but I cast myself into the hands of the Lord, and went forward with peace of mind. The house was much crowded, and I was fully clothed with the Lord. Held a prayer meeting. A young girl cried for mercy, and was made happy." Only a man fully devoted to the highest interests of his fellows would have walked five miles and conducted a meeting under such circumstances.

About this time he was requested by the General Committee to leave Tunstall and go to Sunderland. The reasons which led to this were very distressing, and are thus given by the Rev. J. Macpherson:—

"About three o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, 26th February, 1831, the Revs. J. Branfoot and J. Hewson, who were then stationed in the Sunderland circuit, were proceeding to their appointments on the line of rails in connection with the Hetton Colliery, on which coal waggons are passed to the place of shipment. The line at the place where the fatal accident occurred by which our brothers were suddenly removed out of this world, is an inclined plane with a double line of rails, on one of which the loaded waggons descending draw up the empty waggons on the opposite line. Ascending this incline, and seeing a train rapidly approaching, they stepped off the one line on to the other, forgetting that the empty waggons were as rapidly ascending that line in the contrary direction. The empty waggons immediately overtook them. Mr. Hewson was instantly killed, and Mr. Branfoot dreadfully injured, and expired the same night."

Sunderland circuit was paralysed by being suddenly bereft of two of its ministers, and as there were twenty-eight places on the plan, and many of them at a great distance from the circuit town,—Hartlepool and Stockton, for example,—it needed an energetic man, one fully consecrated to the Master's service. Mr. Petty proved himself to be equal to those needs.

The Asiatic cholera visited Sunderland soon after his arrival there. "It was shrouded in mystery. It defied the skill of learned physicians, who looked on with imbecile pity on its victims, one after another falling under its malignant strokes. The sexton could not prepare graves for the dead with sufficient rapidity, and trenches were

prepared where coffins were heaped on coffins, indicating the power of this angel of death in his desolating career. . . . Churches and chapels were thrown open for special prayer, and every means used to turn this fearful visitation to spiritual account." Thomas Carlyle says, that when the disease visited Dumfries the town was struck with terror, and that the panic even reached the clergy, who were "afraid to go and help the dying in their passage into eternity." Mr. Petty and his colleagues responded to the calls of sufferers night and day. The healthy saw their devotion; felt its power; attended our chapels; and at the close of the year, the circuit was able to report an increase of 695 members.

"Mr. Petty attended the Conference of this year (1832), which was held at Bradford, as a delegate for Sunderland district; and at its close was united in marriage to Miss Theresa Sproston, of Tunstall. A similarity of views, an earnest spirit of piety, a strong desire for higher attainments in the divine life, and a firm determination to live to be useful, cemented this happy union. The next day he wrote in his journal, 'What consolation it affords me that my motive in changing my station in life was pure; for if ever my eye was single, if ever I strove to glorify God and walk in my providential path, it was in taking this step. May we not, therefore, reasonably hope that it will be followed by the blessing of God and the most beneficial results?'"

The years 1831-32 were distinguished for agitation for and against reform. "Truly," says Carlyle, "the political aspect of England gives even me alarms." As he thought of the riots and conflagrations at Bristol, Nottingham, and other places, he said: "A second edition of the French Revolution is distinctly within the range of chances, for there is nowhere any tie remaining among men." When Mr. Petty returned to his circuit, he found that in many parts of it the "ties" between the employers and their work-people were broken. In his journal, he says:—

"*Sunday, 3rd June.*—Preached in the morning at Easington Lane, and in the afternoon and evening at Hetton. Oh, what destruction has there been in those places since I was there before! Hundreds have been turned out of their houses, and scores have fallen into sin. This has led me to weep in secret places.

"*Sunday, 19th August.*—In the morning, I spoke in the open air at High Downs. When I preached there before, there were upwards of sixty members; now, they are all removed, I know not where."

This strike caused him to report a decrease in September of 372, which so affected him, that in one of his preaching services, he could not pray for weeping. The strike ending, the good work again prospered, and in the following month he was able to report an increase of 302. In the April of that year (1832) he was sent by the Sunderland circuit to Guernsey. "The Channel Islands were regarded at that time as introductory to France, and the missionaries were sent there to learn the French language, and thus prepare themselves to labour in France." Whilst studying French, he was led to turn his attention to other languages, and he subsequently succeeded in acquiring a reading knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. We are far from thinking that a knowledge of the ancient languages is essential to a successful minister, but such knowledge is no disqualification, and a man is more efficient with it than he would be without it. Besides, consulting the original generates a feeling of confidence that cannot be got from any commentary, however distinguished its author may be. John Petty did not cease to be a missionary that he might be a student: he was a missionary first and a student afterwards. Consecration was his watchword at Guernsey, as it had been at Haverfordwest, Tunstall, and Sunderland; and it was followed with similar results. When he had been there a year, he says, "I have acquired some knowledge of the French language, being able to read and understand it tolerably well. I have also made some progress in English literature; and have seen our congregations in Guernsey increase from 100 persons to upwards of 300.

The Conference of 1835 appointed him to Cwm circuit, which comprised fifty-five places, and the Bromyard branch, and the Monmouth mission. Here he remained but one year, finding 780 members and leaving 910, an increase of 230.

The limits of this sketch will not admit of a detailed account of his labours in the Dudley, Shrewsbury, Northampton, Wrockwardine Wood, Darlaston, and Hull Second circuits, in most of which he was eminently successful. Nor were the revivals that attended his labours the result

of extravagant and sensational methods of procedure. He was too shrewd a man to attempt to purify the spirit through the senses. He rather aimed at elevating the senses through the spirit. Like St. Paul, he said, "Walk in the Spirit"—the higher life of loftier motives—"and ye will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." His general method of promoting a revival was "to visit extensively, preach the Gospel simply and faithfully, and occasionally, after an open-air service, conduct the people to a second service in the chapel." We have seen the results that generally attended this method.

His brethren were struck with the beauty of his consecrated life, and showed their confidence in him by first asking him to take the oversight of our Canadian, and then of our Australian Missions. Domestic reasons compelled him to decline both of these requests. In 1850 he was made assistant editor to the Rev. John Flesher. He had humbling views of his fitness for editorial work, but he says, that as he had done all he could to prevent the appointment, he durst not any longer refuse to obey the call. His brethren, however, thought that "he possessed, in an eminent degree those qualifications which are necessary for an efficient performance of the work. He was well acquainted with the English language, and capable of appreciating its beauties. Few men are more discriminating, select, and appropriate than he was in the use of words. He was always perspicuous, never obscure; and if his style was not elaborate it was by no means loose or careless." "During his six years of office," says the Rev. W. Lister, "he furnished a number of original articles on different subjects, and especially a series on the claims of the Christian Sabbath, at the time that question was being largely discussed by the people. It will be generally admitted that he did good service in promoting the efficiency and usefulness of the magazines."

In 1857 it was felt that the time had come for the history of the Connexion to be written. This was a difficult task, and required great discretion. The story of the Connexion's origin had to be told, and its exact relations to the Wesleyan body stated. The rival claims of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes to be regarded as Founder of the Connexion had to be considered, and the minds of their respective admirers satisfied. "The work would be an official document, and

would fix the position of the denomination in public estimation. Whether Mr. Petty possessed the intellectual, literary, and moral qualifications requisite for the work or not, the fact of his appointment to it implies that the Conference regarded him as the most competent person whom it could select." We think that he lacked the historic imagination—the power that transfuses history with life, and makes it something more than a mere record of facts. He says himself, however, that one reason why the Rev. John Flesher recommended him to the Book Committee was his lack of the imaginative faculty. When the work appeared, the Rev. W. Antliff said, "The Connexion may congratulate itself that it has a history 'every way worthy of the denomination,' and that, as a whole, it is a work of wide range, of real merit, of sterling worth, and will be a great authority when the present generation shall have been long confined and safely lodged in their narrow homes."

The following entries in the catalogue of the British Museum library are evidence of the literary energy and ability of Mr. Petty. In 1851, he began to edit the new series of *The Child's Magazine.* In 1852, his voice having failed him as a preacher, he wrote and published, "Twenty Plain Sermons on the Principal Doctrines of the Gospel," which reached a second edition in 1854. In 1856, he published, "Religious Experience: Its Commencement, Progress, and Consummation described in Eighteen Discourses," the object of which was to promote Scriptural and experimental piety. In 1859, he issued, "The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, from its Origin to 1859." Of this work a new edition, revised and enlarged, was published in 1864. In the years 1860-63, appeared "The Primitive Methodist Catechisms, in Three Parts." These have done much good service in instructing young people in elementary theology.

The Conference of 1860 conferred on him its highest honour, by electing him to be its President. As the Connexion had then been in existence fifty years, it was decided to hold jubilee services, and raise funds for a school for the education of the children of ministers and members, and of candidates for the ministry. Elmfield House, York, was purchased, and Mr. Petty was appointed Governor, and commenced his labours in 1864. That was a wise appointment. He had become

grey in his Master's service, but the force of his consecration was still felt. His presence was an inspiration. The young men were elevated in thought and feeling by contact with him, and the boys looked up to him as a father. A gracious revival took place among them. He says, "On Thursday night, 4th February, I met about a dozen of the boys in class. Two or three of them had previously found the Lord; the rest were much broken down, and sobbed aloud for mercy. After supper many of them stole away into their bedrooms for prayer, and sobbing and crying were heard downstairs. A penitent meeting was held in every dormitory, and I think above half of the boys professed to find the Lord. Many of them, I doubt not, did so in reality; and though some of them will probably soon forget what they then resolved and felt, yet a goodly number of them will, I hope, hold fast, and become eminent for piety and usefulness."

The duties of both governor and tutor became so oppressive that his health failed, but he continued to labour. "His journal for 1868, extending from 1st January to 16th February, gives detailed accounts of his sufferings. But in the midst of them he attended to a regular course of duty, as if nothing ailed him. The determination to do his work as far as he possibly could remained with him to the last. On 31st March he gave his last lecture to the ministerial students, which was on his favourite subject, 'Entire Sanctification.' He lingered about a fortnight longer; and a few days before his death asked if there were any flowers out, as spring was come. The next morning Miss Petty took a few small flowers to him. He expressed much pleasure in seeing them, and remarked, that as feebleness or old age crept on the tastes of childhood returned; that he used to be very fond of flowers when a boy, but that his life had been too busy a one to cultivate that taste."

He afterwards said, "Consecrated to God! consecrated to God!" At another time he said, "Oh, that weight of glory! The idea is too much for me! I cannot realise it! Draw the curtain back that it may in waves roll over me." These words suggested the following verses written by the Rev. W. B. Luddington :—

"To the end of life's conflict the warrior is come,
He waits for the convoy to carry him home;

When, lo, from the pearly gates over the river,
He looks on the glory which lasteth for ever.

"Oh, the weight of that glory, so grand and so bright,
The glory of love, and the glory of light!
The warrior exclaims, 'I cannot conceive
The weight of that glory I am soon to receive.'

"Grieve not at my exit from this vale of tears,
I am going to possess, through all future years,
The land of the blessed, where there is no pain;—
To live would be Christ, to die will be gain.

"Whilst scorched in the journey, and scarred in the strife,
I've oft dipped at the edge of the ocean of life;
But now see the tide, the full tide rolls along,
Oh, draw back the curtain and let it roll on.

"Draw, draw back the curtains, yes, back with them all,
Let the rich waves of glory roll over my soul;
I shall bathe evermore in the fulness of love
Which flows from the throne of my Jesus above."

The curtains were drawn back, and this consecrated soul now drinks of the river of God's pleasure. He died on 22nd April, 1868, in the 61st year of his age, and was interred in York Cemetery. Among the Fathers of our Church there was not one more devoted, nor who has left behind him a more inspiring memory.

G. P. M. A.

George Lamb.

[*Born*, 1809 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1829 : *Still Living.*]

THE Rev. George Lamb was born at Preston in the year 1809, and to thousands of loyal "Primitives," the busy Lancashire town on the banks of the Ribble is inseparably associated with the birth of the modern temperance movement, and that of our venerable friend.

We know little of his ancestry, but we suppose that the subject of our sketch cannot claim even a distant relationship to his namesake, the brilliant essayist of the early part of this century. His father was an Episcopalian; his mother a member of the Society of Friends; and although she was dismembered for marrying outside the Society, she still continued to attend the meeting-house, and could not be distinguished from the recognised members by speech, dress, or life. His father also attended the religious services of the Friends from the time of his marriage, but did not join the Society. George and two elder brothers became Methodists, although their religious training was commenced among the Friends. His brother Hugh joined the Primitive Methodists soon after they missioned Preston; he became a trustee for the first Connexional chapel that was erected in the town, and also for the present one in Saul Street. During the financial struggles in connection with the early history of Saul Street chapel, he rendered considerable service by meeting the monthly calls of the Building

Society, which had lent money for its erection. He was also for many years an acceptable local preacher, a useful class-leader, and a valued circuit steward.

It does not appear that George received any very distinct religious impression while attending the quiet services at the meeting-house; still, surrounded as he was by helpful influences, a salutary tone was imparted to his early years, and he soon developed a taste for reading. His father died when the subject of our sketch was little more than five years of age; and five years later, his school career was brought to a close. Wishful to know more about the people whose religious services he attended, he read carefully Fox's "Journal," Barclay's "Apology," and other publications issued by the Society of Friends; and, as a matter of course, such limited reading tended to the formation of somewhat narrow views respecting religion and religious people. These views were afterwards modified by discussions in a mutual improvement class, of which he became an active member. This class was conducted by the late Mr. Joseph Livesey, now famous as one of the seven men of Preston who signed the first teetotal pledge. Mr. Livesey was also an earnest worker in the Sabbath school; and here, too, George endeavoured to second the labours of the venerable abstainer. Brought thus into contact with earnest religious natures, he felt the need of a change of heart, which he earnestly sought, attending for a time a Wesleyan class-meeting. But in the month of June, 1826, while listening to a sermon by the Rev. Robert Hill at a Primitive Methodist camp-meeting, his religious nature was thoroughly aroused; and at the love-feast in the evening—where he was greatly blessed—he decided to join the Society. This decision was carried out by attending the class-meeting on the following Tuesday evening, when he was enrolled as a member on trial. With characteristic zeal he threw himself into Sunday-school work; and, his earnestness and zeal being appreciated, his name appeared on the preachers' plan before the end of the year.

As a local preacher he was frequently engaged ten or eleven Sundays per quarter; and as the Preston circuit was at that time very extensive, his journeys varied from ten to thirty-six miles. After some three years of such arduous but successful toil, he attended a missionary

meeting at Lancaster, where he had an interview with the venerable Hugh Bourne, who, being favourably impressed with the promising abilities of his young friend, urged him to devote himself to the regular work of the ministry. After anxious and prayerful deliberation, he resolved to do so; and was, accordingly, stationed to the Pocklington circuit.

In those days the most active members of the Connexion might be recognised by the extreme plainness of their dress. Double-breasted coats and waistcoats were supposed to contain a needless number of buttons—to say nothing about the superfluous cloth; and fashionable trousers and white hats were regarded as evidences of incipient pride on the part of the wearer. Ministers and prominent laymen were expected to exemplify, as well as to teach by precept, what were then considered to be sober and Scriptural views on the question of dress; hence Mr. Lamb, who happened to be the possessor of a double-breasted coat and a fashionable pair of trousers when called out into the ministry, had to sell the former, but was allowed to wear the latter, with the understanding that, when worn out, they were to be replaced by the more seemly (?) small clothes and gaiters.

As Mr. Lamb has frequently said, "Those days are gone never to return;" and, however much we may be inclined to smile at the singular views entertained by our Connexional pioneers on the subject of dress, we cannot but admire the rugged grandeur of their lives. Strongly averse to all forms of worldliness, they literally revelled in the consciousness of the Divine presence; hence they became "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Many of them were ignorant of the works of philosophers and poets; but they were well versed in the oracles of God, and delightfully familiar with the method of preaching a full, free, and present salvation. They were men for the time and work, and what they lacked in polish they supplied in power,—hence they succeeded where many would have failed. Penknives and razors, however appropriate for certain uses, are not the best weapons for hewing down gnarled trees.

After serving his allotted time at Pocklington, Mr. Lamb was removed to Halifax, where he remained two years, after which he was stationed to the Scotter circuit, where he remained five years. During

three of his five years' stay in the Scotter circuit, he was what was called the leading missionary; and he opened a number of places that are now connected with the Epworth, Doncaster, Gainsborough, and Retford stations. He formed nineteen societies, and took the lead in the erection of eleven chapels.

While Mr. Lamb was preaching at a camp-meeting in this neighbourhood, a young man was so powerfully convinced of his sinfulness, that for six weeks he lived in constant dread of Divine punishment. He received but little comfort at home, for his parents were practically ignorant of God, and they seldom attended any place of worship. At length, on a Sunday evening, he resolved to ask his parents to have prayer before retiring to rest. He did so, but received no answer to his request; hence he dropped upon his knees in great mental distress, and was soon joined by his father, mother, and four sisters, who were now powerfully swayed by an influence which they had scarcely felt before. In a short time the house became a veritable Bochim. "Father, will you *pray*, please?" said the son. "I cannot pray," the old man sobbed. "Mother, will *you* pray?" repeated the young man. "I don't know what to say," the mother replied. "Lord, help *me!* Lord, *help* me!" cried the son, in great anguish of soul. It was all he could say, but it was enough; he was soon able to exclaim, "Father, I believe the Lord has pardoned all my sins." Hearing this, the old man sobbed and wept aloud; upon which the son, amid tears of gratitude, said, "Father, if you will ask the Lord to save you, I believe He will do it." "Lord, save me! Lord, save my soul!" was the burden of the father's prayer; and, in a short time, he received "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Then, turning to his mother, the young man said, "Mother, ask the Lord to save *you*." She wept and prayed, until she too could rejoice in the consciousness of sins forgiven, when she cried out, "Bless the Lord, He has saved *me!*" And soon after the four sisters experienced the unutterable blessedness of Christian liberty.

The family had been on their knees two or three hours; and during this time, the candle had burnt out, and the fire had become extinguished; but a Divine light had beamed upon their minds, and a sacred fire of Heaven's own kindling was then burning in their hearts.

They embraced one another like children, as they rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Then they tried to sing; and succeeded in getting through the first verse of the well-known hymn—

"In evil long I took delight,
Unaw'd by shame or fear;
Until the Saviour struck my sight,
And stopp'd my wild career."

But when they came to the second verse—

"I thought I saw Him on the tree,
In agony and blood,"

they fairly broke down.

Family worship, thus commenced in such a remarkable manner, was regularly continued; and the converts of that memorable night held fast the profession of their faith. The young man in question is now the Rev. Robert Ducker; and, out of the society then formed in that hamlet, the Connexion has received three other travelling preachers.

The care of the Jersey and Guernsey Missions having been transferred from the Sunderland to the Scotter circuit, Mr. Lamb was sent to those islands, to heal, if possible, a breach that had been caused by the injudicious conduct of another minister. Arrived at his destination, he found a divided church at Guernsey; and at Jersey, a scattered society, a preacher's house out of which the furniture had been sold, and a preaching room that had been closed for a quarter of a year. But, these unpromising circumstances notwithstanding, he rested upon the gracious promise, "Lo, I am with you," as he obeyed the Divine command, "Go and preach the Gospel;" and in a few months he succeeded in healing the breach and in gathering good congregations. Some time after, he was appointed to the superintendency of the Halifax circuit. From there he went to Leeds circuit, which at that time covered nearly the whole of the ground now occupied by ten circuits; and from Leeds to York; thence to Grimsby; and from Grimsby to Hull, where he remained seven years. A year at Brigg, and then ten and a-half years in London; after which he returned to Hull to succeed the Rev. J. Petty, who had been appointed Governor of Elmfield College. Five and a-half years were again spent in Hull; and then he returned to London, this time as a Conference officer—General Book Steward.

And at the close of his term of office he was again stationed at Leeds, from which town he removed *the third time* to Hull, where he still remains, enjoying the honourable distinction of having "travelled" longer than any other Primitive Methodist minister.

On one of his stations, a clergyman of the Episcopalian Church pulled down a schoolroom in which he had been permitted to preach by the authorities of the parish; another clergyman ordered a constable to arrest him for preaching; and in London he was conveyed to the police station for a similar offence. But in spite of these and other difficulties, he had the satisfaction of leaving each of his stations stronger, numerically and financially, than when he entered it.

It will thus be seen that Mr. Lamb has laboured on some of the most important stations in the Connexion; and that a considerable part of his ministerial career has been spent in London and Hull—the metropolis of the British Empire, and the metropolis of Primitive Methodism. He has also filled the highest offices which the Conference has to bestow; and, we think, it argues something for the penetration and good sense of the community to which he belongs, that his unassuming worth has been so cordially recognised, and so heartily appreciated. For many years he has been a valued member of the Conference Executive; and in the year 1866 he filled the Presidential chair with much credit to himself and the Connexion. He was appointed General Book Steward in the year 1870; and during his five years of office—the usual term for a Conference officer—he won the confidence and esteem of the station book-stewards with whom he transacted business. In 1875 he was appointed to visit our Canadian churches; and while there he was, by a unanimous vote, chosen to fill the Presidential chair.

Speaking of the sittings of that Canadian Conference, he says, "We had a very harmonious assembly. A deputation from the Wesleyans visited the Conference for the purpose of commencing negotiations with a view to Methodist union; but, as the Wesleyans were not then willing to make such concessions as we thought the nature of the case demanded, we resisted the scheme. Since then the Canadian Wesleyans have yielded all that could be reasonably expected; and, I doubt not, Methodist union in Canada will prove a great advantage to all con-

cerned, and the means of more rapidly extending the kingdom of Christ."

The subject of our sketch, it will be observed, is one of the few living links which unite the present generation of ministers to the founders of the Connexion. Entering the ministry in the year 1829 —the nineteenth year of the Connexion's existence—he was intimately associated with the pioneers of Primitive Methodism; he has since been honoured with the highest positions which the Connexion can confer; and he is still in active work amongst us, manifesting much practical sympathy with the movements of the present hour. And yet, the man who has been thus honoured, and who is so generally revered, cannot boast of any very remarkable natural gifts. Not that he has any conspicuous lack of natural ability. About five feet seven in height, with just the slightest possible tendency to corpulence, with an erect bearing, and a countenance indicative of blended mildness and firmness, his bodily presence is certainly impressive, if not imposing. And his voice, if not decidedly musical, is occasionally tremulous and pathetic, as he pleads out of a full heart man's cause with his Maker; still, it lacks the full volume and clear ring, the compass, flexibility, and distinctness of utterance which contribute so largely to enhance the fame of the popular orator. Among the many thousands who recall with delight his venerable countenance, silvery locks, and long flowing white beard, there are a few who speak of a somewhat stern demeanour and brusque manner, suggestive of one of the old prophets of Israel; but all who have been brought into close contact with him are well aware of the tender, genial, and even youthful heart that beats within that somewhat stern exterior. If, at a distance, he reminds one of the stern laws of the Old Testament, a closer acquaintance will suggest the genial gospel of the New, together with a capacity for appreciating true worth wherever found. Although he is what is termed "a self-made man," yet he never poses as such, and while he is self-reliant, he is far from being egotistic and dogmatic. As a critic of no mean order has said, "There is something about him which enables him, whether in the pulpit, on the platform, or in the business meeting, to command attention and to produce effect. He cannot be listened to without the hearer perceiving that he possesses two grand qualifications

for his work—deep seriousness and earnest feeling. He sees that the preacher's soul is engaged; and he says to himself, 'Right or wrong, this man has mastered his subject; he can be understood; he is in earnest.' He has an object before him—an object above and beyond the mere deliverance of his thoughts. That object is, aided by the Holy Spirit, to stir up the conscience, to lead the sinner to the Saviour, and to induce him to labour for the spread of His cause. A deep conviction of his responsibility as an ambassador for Christ, accounts for the occasional warmth of his delivery. Truth poured forth by a man thus qualified cannot be in word only. The spirit of the preacher stirs the spirit of the hearer, and sets his soul in motion. He feels himself borne away as by a subtile influence to surrender himself more fully to Christ. In this oneness of aim to win souls, in this strong feeling to win them *now*, is to be found the secret of Mr. Lamb's popularity and success.

The same principle of upright earnestness manifests itself in the committee room and Conference. His apprehension may not be quick; but, when once the vision is clear, there comes the inquiry 'Will the adoption of what is sought curtail the privileges of officials or members? Are the *means* by which it is sought agreeable to usage, to rule, to the Scriptures?' If, after being weighed in the balances, it is found wanting, then there is a gathering up of strength, a preparation for effort. With a few calm words—while his spectacles are being placed on the top of his head, and his hands in his trousers-pocket—he commences; then, seizing the subject with a fearless spirit, he frequently moves his right foot as he warms up to his argument; and woe to the luckless wight who is thought to be wanting in straightforwardness! A hard hit may follow. Yet, after all, there is a genial cheerfulness seen to play over his countenance. Seldom offended himself, he as seldom offends with what he says. There is such an evident honesty of purpose, glowing affection for his brethren, and strong regard for the welfare of the Connexion, that, though he may oppose, and you feel the stroke, yet you cannot but regard, admire, and esteem."

Some preachers are so studiously elegant, so gorgeously ornamental and magniloquent, that an intelligent hearer can scarcely avoid the conclusion that they have less affinity for the force of true thought

than for the jingle of words in rhythmic periods. Not so Mr. Lamb. His pulpit ministrations are characterised by an utter absence of the sensational and dramatic; and, like Paul, he may truthfully say, "My speech and my preaching is not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power." He is not what is called a popular preacher. As might be expected from his mental mould—which is practical rather than speculative—his reading has been confined chiefly to Methodist theology; and his favourite themes are Repentance, Faith, and Holiness, with their fruits. Speaking of the venerable William Clowes, he says: "I never heard a man pray like him. I had intimate intercourse with him for about seven years; and was with him up to the last night of his existence upon earth." There can be little doubt that he caught something of the spirit of Clowes, by whose marvellous gift in prayer he was so deeply impressed. An ardent defender, he is also a beautiful example of that view of Methodist doctrine known as "The Higher Life." Not that he manifests the slightest tendency to parade his religious attainments. Far from that, his narration of Christian experience is characterised by modesty and self-depreciation; and these characteristics are equally manifest in his estimate of his own ability and work. In a letter to the writer, in reply to a request for a few particulars concerning his ministry, he says:—

"You have got hold of a poor subject for a sketch. I am a very commonplace sort of a man, possessing no special talent, and without anything romantic in my history. I do not see that there is anything in my life which, if recorded, is likely to be of service to the public. You know that I am a plain, prosaic person, almost without any imagination to adorn what I have to say. I read Blair and Whately many years ago, but I am not aware that they affected my method of preaching. I try to talk in a natural way without paying any attention to style."

With the exception of an occasional sermon, we believe that our venerable friend has not done much for the press. The following extracts are from his sermon on "Proportionate Giving," founded on 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Respecting *preparation* for giving, he says:—

"This should be the result of calculation, and of the exercise of Christian principle. Christians were required to look into their circumstances, to examine their income and necessary expenditure, and then to decide what proportion of their income should be given to God. On the first day of the week this portion was to be laid aside and kept

in store, separate from the rest of their property. Thus, giving was not left to the impulse resulting from a good sermon, a moving speech, or a strong appeal; but the amount to be devoted to religious and charitable purposes had to be settled at home, between conscience and God."

On the *proportion* to be given he says:—

"Nothing is here said of the amount or proportion. Christianity is eminently a free and voluntary religion. God loves to be served by free and willing hearts; hence no positive proportion is stated in the New Testament. So of the reading of the Scriptures, of private and public prayer; no rule is laid down to regulate the frequency of these exercises; all is left to our necessities and love. But if the New Testament is silent as to the amount and proportion of our property to be given to God, the Old Testament is not. And let it be observed that only those laws which were connected with the ceremonial law are abrogated. Christianity is Judaism made perfect. It is the child become the man. The ceremonial law in its external forms, was the *clothing* of the Church in infancy; and was, of course, laid aside when its majority was attained; but the moral and spiritual element of it—that which pertains to its essential nature—is preserved. Now, the giving of a certain proportion of our substance to God did not originate in the law of Moses; but was practised by pious men ages before Moses was born. Abraham, on returning from the slaughter of the kings, after having delivered his nephew, Lot, was met by Melchisedek, King of Salem, who brought forth bread and wine, and, as the priest of the most high God, blessed Abraham in the name of the Lord. And Abraham gave Melchisedck tithes of all the spoil. From the incidental manner in which this circumstance is named, we presume it was no new thing at that time for good men to devote a tenth of their property to God. Abraham would not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet of the spoil for himself, but he gave a tenth of all to the priest of God. And Jacob, Abraham's grandson, after that remarkable vision in which he had seen the ladder—the foot of which was on the earth, and the top of which reachcd to heaven—vowed a vow, in which he promised that if the Lord would give him bread to eat and raiment to put on, 'of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee.'

* * * * *

"The Christian who wishes to be and to do all that God requires should carefully ascertain his income and the just claims upon it; then, as in the presence of God, decide what proportion he ought to give—a fifth, a tenth or a twentieth—only let him remember that 'he who soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.' The part designed for God should be laid aside *first*. God requires that the first-fruits of all should be presented to Him. Too many professors of religion only give to God the payments left by the world. Tobacco, strong-drink, ribbons, flowers and useless ornaments many will procure for vain and selfish gratification, before anything is devoted to the cause of God, or for the destitute and the afflicted poor."

Mr. Lamb then shows by cogent reasoning and apt Scriptural quotations the advantages resulting from the adoption of the apostolic method of giving—advantages to the giver, to the poor, and to the cause of Christ—and that this practical benevolence will not be over-

looked by the Great Judge of all in the day when He will reward *according* to our works.

Converted through the agency of Primitive Methodism, Mr. Lamb has, throughout his ministerial life, manifested a spirit of Connexional loyalty without the slightest inclination to denominational bigotry. Like his quondam teacher, the famous Joseph Livesey, he is a staunch adherent and earnest advocate of total abstinence, which movement he joined when it was in its infancy. His reason for so doing is thus clearly stated :—

"I consider that the great work of the Christian minister is to save souls. I saw strong drink ruining souls—preventing members from being useful, and hearers from getting converted. I also knew many drunkards, who, by adopting the pledge of the Total Abstinence Society, had become sober, steady, religious men. As a minister I deemed it my duty to use every effort to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of the community in which I laboured. As a Christian I professed to love God and my fellow-men. Well, I thought, here is a cause that has been of great service to my fellows: I'll try it for a month."

He did so; and, finding himself stronger and healthier at the end of the month, he from that day became an earnest advocate of the cause. He was the first who signed the pledge in Gainsborough; and certainly teetotalism agrees with him; for, after practising it for nearly half-a-century, he is able to say that he has never had a penny from a Connexional Fund on account of sickness. In a similar spirit he tested vegetarianism for a year; but afterwards gave it up because of the difficulty of carrying out its principles while visiting the homes of our people.

Like the venerable Hugh Bourne, he generally manages to say a word to the children in his public addresses; and it is but the barest statement of the truth to say that on all his stations the children love him. He is also a remarkably industrious pastor; and, although he has been in the regular work of the ministry for fifty-five years, he is not satisfied without an occasional new sermon. Absolutely unselfish, and free from the slightest tendency to monopolise the honours of office, he cheerfully returned to ordinary circuit work, at the close of his term as General Book-Steward, although many of his friends were grieved because of his resolute opposition to a movement which had for its object his re-appointment. In a similar spirit he has for some years

refused to accept any invitation to the superintendency of a station. And yet, as all who heard his bright and hopeful address at the last Conference will readily allow, few of our senior ministers evince such practical sympathy with the spirit and methods of the present hour. The last time the writer called upon him in Hull, he was busily engaged in the preparation of notes for an address on the International Lesson for the then forthcoming Sabbath; and since we commenced to write this brief sketch of the life of our venerable friend, we have heard of a very interesting conversion resulting from his faithful preaching in London.

During the last sixty years, the Primitive Methodist Connexion has had many ministers of superior learning and more varied gifts; but few have occupied such conspicuous Connexional positions, and perhaps no one has been more thoroughly revered, loved, and trusted than the venerable George Lamb, in proof of which we may refer to the fact that he was, in 1884, elected President of the Conference for the second time.

G. S.

William Antliff, D.D.

[*Born*, 1813 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1829 : *Died*, 1884.]

DURING the past generation, few names have been more widely known in Primitive Methodism than those of the two brothers, the Rev. William Antliff, D.D., and the Rev. Samuel Antliff, D.D. Both made their way to a front place in Connexional rank early in life, and both succeeded in maintaining their honorable position through a long ministerial career. Dr. Samuel, the younger brother, is still doing good work as a circuit minister, after having held various important Connexional positions. Dr. William died 7th December, 1884, having just completed the seventy-first year of his age. Although between these two brothers there were several points of resemblance, the points of difference between them were quite as striking. In the days when they were in great request for anniversary occasions, the elder, with the generous feeling natural to him, was often heard to say: "My brother Samuel is a much better preacher than I." It may be doubted whether those best able to judge would subscribe to this all too generous estimate. Whilst Samuel was justly held in high repute for his pulpit capabilities, there were nevertheless defects in him not to be found in William. His delivery was deliberate and forcible, and his method of treating his subjects lucid and logical. On any occasion he could hold his audience well in hand for an hour or more, a task which was rendered all the easier, because

he was careful at all times to choose topics likely to take hold of the popular imagination. Lying beneath every utterance, too, was a quaint humour which gave piquancy to his words, and made his discourses highly interesting. But William was not without humour either—a humour which had the charm of being more good-natured and less satirical than that of Samuel. He was equally happy in the choice of subjects, and if not more logical and clear in his method of treatment, at least impressed his hearers with the idea that he had given more attention to intellectual and spiritual culture than the other. But the greatest difference between the two lay in the matter of passion and emotion. Samuel's arguments were those of a logician, his humour that of a diplomatist. All his utterances beyond question were sincere, but his convictions did not burn in his soul with the same intensity as those of William, and hence there was, in the words of the latter, a passion which sometimes made him forget to be deliberate or even logical, but which succeeded better than the most carefully measured words could have done in carrying conviction to the minds of his audience. Dr. William Antliff possessed many remarkable endowments, but none which contributed more than this to the Connexional reputation he built up.

William Antliff was born at Caunton, near Newark, Nottinghamshire, on 6th December, 1813. Long years before, Methodism, in its care for the rural population of England, had sent its missionaries through the Midland counties, and had effected a marked change in the condition of the people. Perhaps in no part of England was the Gospel, as it was preached by the followers of Wesley, received with so much heartiness as in the Midlands. The father and mother of the Antliffs had identified themselves with the Wesleyan Church, and when the Primitive Methodists entered their village, for some reason which does not transpire, became connected with the new Society. To the home atmosphere in which he was reared William Antliff owed a great deal. In later life he often spoke of the strong, healthy piety of his father, and the earnest religious character of his mother. Six years before he was born, the first English camp meeting had been held in the neighboring county of Staffordshire; and three years later, the first society of Primitive Methodists had been formed as the nucleus of

the religious body of which he was destined to become so distinguished a minister. Even at that time the movement was spreading rapidly, the number of its agents steadily increasing, and before William Antliff had reached years of responsibility, it had begun to make itself felt in the village of Caunton. Considering his natural characteristics and his training, it was not to be expected that he would grow up other than a Christian man. His religious education bore early fruit. At the age of nine he resolved to forsake the vanities and evils of the world, and consecrate his life to the service of Jesus Christ. It was no childish resolve formed in a moment of excitement, remembered a day, and then forgotten: it was a choice made deliberately, and never repented of. On the contrary, it was remembered with thankfulness, and sacredly kept to the end of life. It may be that the steadiness and persistency with which he carried out his purpose were the outcome of a strong will; or perhaps the strength of character which was afterwards revealed in him was largely the result of his decision at this period. Be this as it may, it is certain he never showed either lack of courage or a tendency to instability of disposition.

Those were days when mechanics' institutes and village libraries were unknown, and when for lack of better employment the villagers of England were in danger of becoming enslaved by vicious habits, or, worse still, of sinking into a state of intellectual torpor. The visits of the Methodist preacher, and the prayer meetings in the mission room, were not only a check upon vice, but institutions which served to keep alive a kind of public spirit, and save the life of the community from a dead level of monotony. William Antliff appreciated highly these religious gatherings. As a boy his voice was often heard in the village prayer meetings, and the more discerning of the officers of the Church soon perceived that in him their society possessed a youth of exceptional promise. He had the gift of speech, and was able in class meetings and prayer meetings to arrange his thoughts so clearly, and utter them with such force, that they could not doubt that Providence had marked him off for a chosen vessel. Accordingly, when he had barely entered on his teens, he was employed in preaching to the villagers in and around Caunton. It will be understood, that if he was able to declare the truths of Christianity with

ordinary power, his extreme youth would attract the people to come to hear him. There is a fascination in the daring involved in such action, and this, with the sweetness of the voice, and the simplicity of the bearing, gathered large congregations around the young preacher, whilst the effects of his words soon became apparent in the reformed lives of many of the people.

Perhaps the fascination which attracted the people to him was increased by the fact of the difficulties and hardships known to be associated with the work. For the young "local" there was no reward of money, and no prospect of honour. A boy, tender, and untried as those who spent their leisure in frolic and play; and yet they see him turn away from the frivolities natural to youth, because he looks seriously upon human life, and feels the reality of eternal things. To many, such action was wholly unaccountable. Why should they understand it? Their worldly minds were not capable of discovering motives sufficient to induce all this self-denial and toil. But William Antliff could not have acted otherwise. Religion was to him a life, a passion, a great force working in his nature, making him feel the world was nothing, and Christ everything. A spirit of faith and of consecration possessed his soul; he believed in God, and in the message he had to deliver, and felt such love for Christ and for men's souls, as led him into that state of abandon which more than aught else made his message effective. Entering upon his work in such a spirit, he soon gave evidence of a divine call by its success, and accordingly in 1829, at the age of sixteen, he entered the regular ministry.

Despite the spirit of freedom which he showed, William Antliff did not take the step which was to determine the character of his life without calculating what might be its future results. Even then he was prudent and very far-sighted: and he was not without ambition either, although his ambition never led him to seek for a cheap popularity. Constituted as he was, he could not have been satisfied with giving himself to the Primitive Methodist ministry if he had not seen in it a fair field for usefulness, and a chance of making his mark upon his generation. Life to him was too serious, and the work of which he felt himself capable too valuable, to be wasted on a movement for which he might have a sentimental regard, but which was not likely to

prove substantial and permanent. Anxious moments therefore followed his call to the ministry. Primitive Methodism was young, and although it had grown rapidly it could scarcely at that time be reckoned amongst the established Nonconformist Churches of England: and if the movement collapsed, his life to a great extent would be spoiled. But he was not long in making up his mind. In Primitive Methodism he saw the beginnings of a powerful organisation, one which could not fail, providing the spirit of its founders was maintained, to occupy a foremost place amongst the Evangelical Churches of the country. What better field of usefulness could he have, or where could he hope more completely to gratify his ambition to live a useful life? He might have chosen another Church, and with his pulpit abilities would have attained a high position in it: but if William Antliff was distinguished for one quality more than another, it was his spirit of loyalty to the Church of his boyhood. In his eyes no man could be more despicable than one who, having had his abilities recognised by a Church, and a fair field for their exercise offered him, through fear of hardship, or a desire for an easier life, turned from that Church. If at any time he was tempted to use severe language, it was in speaking of those who showed a too ready tendency to alter their creed. And yet he was withal Catholic in spirit. None were readier than he to render assistance to other Churches, and few Primitive Methodist ministers have appeared so frequently in the pulpits and on the platforms of other denominations. This was done by him not only on ordinary occasions, but when he was put to great trouble to render them service. His sympathies extended to sections of the Church with whose creed he could not agree. Distinguished for the breadth of his opinions, he never claimed to think broadly in the matter of the doctrines of the faith; and yet on one occasion, when the Unitarian Church, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, was without a pastor, he unhesitatingly accepted an invitation to occupy the pulpit on a given Sunday, and to that highly intelligent and critical congregation he preached two Methodistic sermons.

The far-sightedness which characterised William Antliff thus early led to another beneficial result. Men of remarkable gifts were associated with him in the ministry. Only such could have made headway in the circumstances amidst which they found themselves. But many of

them had only a meagre knowledge even of English literature,—in some instances the Bible and Wesley's sermons constituting their library. Of course there were many exceptions to this rule. Here and there were to be found men of fair linguistic acquirements, who had also read extensively on mental and moral philosophy; but the majority succeeded as preachers of the truth, not because of their scholastic attainments, but on account of their remarkable natural gifts. William Antliff's calculating spirit convinced him that in the years to come, for the credit of Primitive Methodism, and for the sake of their personal success, it would be necessary for the ministers to seek for mental culture. From the first, therfore, he applied himself to reading and study, with results highly creditable to him. The getting of books, with the stipends then paid, constituted a problem not easily solved, and the help of a teacher was wholly out of the question, but before he had reached the prime of life, he knew sufficient Latin to correspond in that tongue, and sufficient Greek and Hebrew to read the Scriptures in the original. His knowledge of English approached perfection. Those who knew him best could tell, that sometimes he displayed a little innocent vanity respecting the purity and accuracy of his composition, and though it would be too much to say that one who often had to speak impromptu never stumbled in his grammar, or found himself plunging helplessly in the middle of an involved sentence, it rarely happened that those who had to listen to him were offended even with the slightest errors. The English language was the only science to which he gave sufficient attention to acquire a thorough mastery of it; but whilst this is true, his acquaintance with logic, metaphysics, theology, hermeneutics, physiology, and ancient and modern history, was by no means meagre. All he knew, too, he was able to make a practical use of in his sermons, and hence his hearers were always impressed with the idea that they were listening to a man of considerable culture and extensive reading.

No sphere could have been more congenial to William Antliff than the itinerancy. The study of human nature in all its conditions had for him a more than ordinary charm. Possessing a fine insight into the varied aspects of life, even the hard and often sinful conditions in which he found men living afforded opportunities for enjoyment as

well as for serious reflection. As a travelling preacher, he was stationed at fifteen circuits, in thirty-one years; and in later life was often heard to express a wonder at the growing desire on the part of ministers to stay a long term of years at one place. He believed in the itinerancy as being essential to the successful development of Methodism, and preferred changing often, because of the increased opportunities thus afforded of seeing human nature as it is affected by the habits and customs prevailing in different localities. One consequence of this was that he soon had a rich fund of original anecdotes, with which he was accustomed to enliven public meetings, and in his happier moods the social circles which had the honour of his presence. Many of these anecdotes have been put into permanent form in "A Book of Marvels," published in 1874, and which secured an unusually large circulation. Notwithstanding its large sale, however, it has been doubted whether the author acted wisely in publishing it. Had it been made up wholly of incidents illustrative of Primitive Methodist life and character, it might have stood the assaults of the critics uninjured; as, however, it contains a large quantity of irrelevant matter, it may justly be regarded as a literary failure. At the same time, the book has merits, and proves at the least that its author was a keen observer of human nature.

In the days when William Antliff was a young preacher, the whole Connexion was under the personal supervision of its founder, Hugh Bourne. He knew all the preachers, and had some idea of the general character of the work of the stations. One of the many peculiar characteristics in him, was his strong liking for and his aversion to different men: William Antliff was not one of his favourites. The venerable father was not the man to make known the reason of his dislike, but the object of it was aware he would be carefully watched, and if he failed to give proof of his usefulness, would not receive much favour. It should not be concluded that the blame for their peculiar relations attaches wholly to Mr. Bourne. Along with the generosity and sympathy natural to him, there was also in the nature of William Antliff an overstrained dignity of bearing, which prevented him from forming close friendships, and would not allow the most kindly of his brethren to get very near him. This disposition, combined with

the persistency and ability with which he upheld his positions in district meetings and Conferences, led some to regard him with feelings decidedly unfriendly. But he was generous always. None knew better than he of the dislike of Mr. Bourne, and yet none have held that remarkable man in greater esteem, and few have spoken of him with so much veneration and love. All the leading men of the Connexion were aware of the appreciation of William Antliff for the founder of Primitive Methodism, and when a "Life of Bourne" had to be written, the Conference put the work into his hands. If the task was accepted with fear and trembling, it was because he held the subject of the book in such high esteem as to doubt his ability to do justice to him. The writing of the book was a labour of love, every page giving evidence of the painstaking care its author had bestowed upon it. A person capable of such genuine magnanimity was certain, sooner or later, to break down prejudice, and find a way to the hearts of his compeers. Besides, it was noted that he yearly grew less severe, and softer in his disposition, losing, gradually, the rigidity which held him from others, so that his last years were those in which he was most popular and most worthy of the love he gained.

From the first he succeeded in his public work. Of a noble and commanding presence, erect and dignified in his bearing, possessed of a fine countenance and massive well-proportioned head, his appearance itself was prepossessing and impressive. Clear in his reasoning, quick in wit and perception, with a ready flow of language, a good voice, and an emotional nature soon set on fire, his eloquence would at times rush forth so rapidly as to carry his congregation by storm. Few men have attended more anniversaries, and in nearly every county in England, from Cumberland and Northumberland in the north to Cornwall in the south, Primitive Methodist and other congregations have been charmed by his oratory. Not merely in the pulpit and on the platform has his power as a speaker been shown, but in district meeting and Conference assemblies he found scope for his debating powers. It has been said that he was so complete a master of English, that his extemporaneous speeches on the floor of the Conference had about them all the grace and beauty of well-prepared

discourses. In these legislative gatherings he generally appeared as a moderate conservative. It was a thankless position to assume in the courts of a democratic Church, and yet he not unfrequently managed to carry his point. Too far-sighted to set himself in direct opposition to a new movement, he gave more effective resistance to it by taking pains to sketch a picture of the difficulties that would arise and the dangers that might overtake the body from the new proposals, so that even their warmest advocates grew half-hearted, and began to doubt the wisdom of their action. He was not wholly opposed to change, but only afraid of rapid change, and often urged the Conference to "make haste slowly." Naturally he soon became a distinct figure in the annual assembly, and in due time his abilities received their reward in his being three times appointed conference secretary, and twice its president.

When still in middle life, he was made editor of the Connexional magazines, and during his term of office launched the *Christian Messenger*, and the *Child's Friend*. At the time, it was considered he had done his work well, although, if the literature he issued from the book-room were examined to-day, it might be doubted whether it would bear the test of criticism. Judged by modern standards, it must be pronounced a failure. The articles, whilst displaying some literary capacity, are of the dull and heavy kind. Theology and ecclesiastical history constitute the bulk of the matter they contain. It is obviously unfair, however, to compare them with modern magazine literature. Messrs. Cassell, Macmillan, and Chambers had not then made their influence much felt in the education of popular literary tastes, and even if they had, the state of feeling in the the Primitive Methodist Church was too puritanic to have allowed the Connexional editor to fill his periodicals with the light and varied articles with which they now abound. That he was not wholly lacking in editorial enterprise is evident from the fact that he started the two new issues named above; although perhaps had he not been so conservative in his tendencies, he might have done more than he did in altering the character of the magazines.

A voracious reader and a diligent student himself, William Antliff was amongst the first to see the need for special training for the young

men entering the ministry. In the advocacy of this movement he met with a steady and not always intelligent opposition from those who were accustomed to regard scholarly and mental culture with suspicion. There were many such in the Conferences when the question was canvassed, but he had many able coadjutors also; and at last, in 1869, when Primitive Methodism had existed as a separate Church nearly sixty years, the Sunderland Theological Institute was opened, and William Antliff appointed its principal. On the whole, it would have been difficult to find a better man for the post, although his twelve years of office in this capacity did not pass without criticism. Perhaps he was too much a mere schoolmaster. Living with him, his pupils hardly knew him. It is certain he allowed his sense of dignity to hold them off, and prevent little confidences to exist between principal and students, which would have enabled him to dominate their minds and more powerfully affect their character and life. They saw in him a fine example of what unaided self-help had done for him, but for the want of sympathetic feeling the example lacked the life necessary to make it an inspiration. On the other hand, he ruled the establishment well, and his ripe experience gave him a large knowledge of what was needed in a Primitive Methodist minister. Occasionally, too, he came out of himself. This generally happened towards the close of one of his lectures on theology or hermeneutics, when he would wander a little from his notes, to say a few words about the importance and blessedness of the work of the ministry. His words would begin to flow, and such pathos would tremble in his voice and language, that his class became completely subdued, and sometimes a student would feel half-ashamed of himself, until, in looking round, he saw that others beside himself were weeping. The wisdom of the methods of teaching employed may be questioned, but only one opinion about his intentions can be held. He desired to send forth a band of men who would be able to present the truth to the world, and succeed in bringing it to the feet of Jesus Christ.

Besides the literary work already named, William Antliff wrote a preface to four small works in the British Museum Library, where are also found a paper on the Foreknowledge of God, a funeral sermon, two lectures, a new reading and spelling-book, and a Sabbath-school

hymn book prepared by him. In 1870, he had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Middletown Wesleyan University, Connecticut, America, in recognition of the services he had rendered to Methodism.

In 1881, he asked the Conference to allow him to superannuate. He had been in active work fifty years, and had often wished that he might not cease to work till called away from earth. The Conference was visibly moved when the veteran who had done such splendid service brokenly said, "The time I have dreaded long has come at last." Not for long, however, was he to remain inactive. On 7th December, 1884, his spirit passed into the higher service of the Church made perfect.

H. R.

James Macpherson.

[*Principal and Tutor of the Primitive Methodist Theological Institute, Manchester.*]

WE read, "The best thing that can be said of a man is that he sprang from nothing and made himself; that he was born mud and died marble." Horace says, "It is of no consequence of what parents any man is born, so that he be a man of merit." The Rev. James Macpherson cannot be classed with those who "by ancestry are only the shadow of a mighty name," nor with those described in Tennyson's line—

"By blood a king, in heart a clown."

His parents were Scotch in blood and name, and moved in the industrial walks of life. His father was a native of Callander, on the Teith, in Perthshire, a place remarkable for the picturesque beauty of its scenery, and in the vicinity of the Trossachs, one of the most romantic spots visited by the Scottish tourist. Sir Walter Scott's description of it is—

"Crags, knolls, and mounds confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world."

Here he learned the useful handicraft of village blacksmith. And if he did not obtain a wide world fame for literary merit, as some of the knights of the anvil have done, it could be said of him—

"His brow is wet with honest sweat,
He earns whate'er he can,
And looks the whole world in the face,
For he owes not any man."

He ultimately settled in Edinburgh, where he married Christian Tait, an Orcadian, the daughter of a small farmer in South Ronaldshay. Influenced by a laudable ambition, not uncommon in Scotchmen, the brothers of Miss Tait went to Canada in connection with the Hudson's Bay Company. They and their descendants are now a numerous family in affluent circumstances. But, as Sir Philip Sidney says, "I am no herald to inquire of men's pedigree; it sufficeth me if I know their virtues."

The subject of our sketch was born at Edinburgh, on the 27th of February, 1814, and is therefore over seventy years of age. If he was not born to wealth and title, he inherited a splendid physical constitution and a healthy brain, which have been of immense service to him in the labour and conflict of life. We are in almost total ignorance of his manner of life in childhood and budding youth, consequently we have no stories to tell of his earlier years. But if "childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day," we may infer that he would be distinguished for sobriety and thoughtfulness rather than for frolic and fun, for love of books rather than for love of games, for well-mastered lessons, rather than excellence in sports. However, as we have but little of fact in relation to those days, we will neither draw upon our imagination, nor entertain our readers with mere speculations. Our desire is to present the man. And if he was at our side, he would say, as Oliver Cromwell when sitting for his portrait said, "Paint me just as I am, wrinkles and all."

Mr. Macpherson is tall and well-built. He is tough and wiry, without any approach to flaccidity. His muscular development and energy are remarkable for a person of his calling in life. He has a good, broad, deep chest, and is as sound in wind as he is strong in limb. He is an uncommonly healthy man, and owes but little to medicine. He formed abstemious habits in early life and still cultivates them. He has no respect for the gourmand who lives to eat; he thinks men should eat to live. Hence he avoids the luxuries of the epicure, and

takes plain, honest, substantial food. He has no organic disease, and has passed through a half-a-century of hard work without much sickness. A friend, who has great affection for him, sometimes playfully calls him, "The iron man who never tires and is never sick." This is but a slight exaggeration.

His hair is thick, closely cropped, sprinkled with grey, and worn in a plain form. He shaves closely, and wears but little beard. His head and features are well-formed and impressive. In build, mould, and appearance he is typical of the Lowland Scotch. He has lived beyond the Psalmist's allotted term of human life, but is still hale and strong. He looks younger than he is, and would look younger still were it not for a little stoop. Humanly speaking, he has in him many years of life and labour.

Our friend has intellectual as well as physical stamina. If we call him a genius we may lay ourselves open to criticism. If genius be some wonderful "boon of heaven, to its choicest favourites given," or some extraordinary inborn power of mind, enabling a man to perceive and grasp by intuition, when ordinary men can only apprehend by reasoning and analysis, then Mr. Macpherson is not a genius; but if, as Hogarth says, "Genius is nothing but labour and diligence;" or if John Foster was right when he wrote, "One of the strongest characteristics of genius is the power of lighting its own fire," then Mr. Macpherson is a true genius. His unwearied industry in mental pursuits has been most conspicuous. Before he went to business he had the ordinary schooling available to the industrial classes of the Scottish metropolis, with a slight introduction into the Latin Grammar. Subsequently he attended for a length of time the evening classes of the Edinburgh Sessional School, and received much benefit under the able tuition of James Wood, Esq., advocate, and for a number of years Sheriff of Peebleshire. After he left school he availed himself of every facility within his reach for the cultivation of his mind and the acquisition of knowledge. He has been a diligent student all his life, and his love of books is as strong as ever. Fifty years ago, when stationed in the island of Jersey, he acquired a practical knowledge of French, and preached in that language to the islanders with fluency and effect. At that time he also began the study of Greek under a retired French

Protestant minister of great ability. We cannot speak with certainty of his acquaintance with Greek classics, but we do know that he has a critical familiarity with the Greek Testament. A few years afterwards he was stationed at Silsden, in Yorkshire, and devoted himself to German under a distinguished German professor, and had for fellow-students two gentlemen who afterwards distinguished themselves. One of them became the governor of a well-known college, and held that situation for many years, and the other is now one of the most respected members of the House of Commons, as well as one of the most successful of Yorkshire manufacturers. He can read the Hebrew Bible and give lessons in that language. He delights in mathematics, and is intimate with various branches of science and philosophy. He has also familiarised himself with some of the best poets, and stored his mind with the facts of civil and ecclesiastical history. But it is as a theologian and logician that he specially excels. Mr. Macpherson would be sorry, if not offended, if he knew that we had called him a great scholar and divine, and perhaps it would not be literally correct, but many a man has been so characterised who has been less worthy of it. He has, at least, abilities and attainments which would command respect in the highest Christian circles in the land. And young men who are not favourably circumstanced may see in him an example of what plod, pluck, and determination can accomplish in spite of adverse circumstances.

"The heights by great men reached and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

Mr. Macpherson's moral and religious characteristics are as distinctive as his intellectual. He is strict, firm, and regular in creed and conduct. He is intensely orthodox. He has no sympathy with the latitudinarian tendencies of the age, and is grieved when heresies creep into Evangelical Churches. He is rigid in his interpretation of the moral precepts of the Bible. His teaching and practice concerning the law of the Sabbath, would please the early Puritans, if they were to return to the earth, and are not unworthy of the strictest of Scotch

Presbyterians. He condemns Sabbath travelling by rail, or boat, or hired conveyance of any kind as an infringement of the fourth commandment. And he conscientiously abstains from what he censures. If he cannot reach his appointment on Sunday morning without hired conveyance he goes on the Saturday. He has been known to walk for hours on a Sabbath morning, and perform the return journey on foot in the evening, sooner than countenance either railway or hackney coach establishments, even when his people would have been glad to defray all costs. He was announced to preach anniversary sermons in Staffordshire some years ago. On the Saturday he was detained in Manchester, and could not leave till night. To his consternation he discovered that he could get no further than Stockport that evening, and he could not go by train or car in the morning, without doing violence to his conscience. What was to be done? Sacrifice his scruples, or neglect his appointment? Neither. He secured a few hours' sleep in the house of an old friend, and rose up early in the morning and walked more than twenty miles to be in time for the morning service. Whatever we may think of his ethics, we cannot withhold our admiration from such self-sacrificing consistency.

He abstains from all intoxicants and narcotics, and contends against their use on the grounds of economy, seemliness, expediency, health and morality. Many pleasant stories are told of his encounters with moderate drinkers and with lovers of the bewitching weed. His opposition is conducted with such tact, temper and spirit that where he fails to convince, he seldom gives offence.

Some people, who have but a casual knowledge of him, regard him as cold, hard, and distant. That impression, however, wears away as we get nearer to him. There is a great fountain of warm emotion in his nature, and when the crust that covers it is broken, as we have seen it broken, the living waters of tenderness and kindly sympathy gush forth in almost overwhelming force. He has a warm heart, and a genial, well-curbed, sanctified humour, which make him an agreeable companion. He is not destitute of the power to draw men to him, and to attach them by bonds of esteem and cords of affection. Hence his numerous admirers and personal friends.

He is very unassuming. He never parades either his learning or

his piety. It would be an outrage to apply to him, the words which Robert Burns puts into the lips of "Holy Willie,"—

"Yet I am here, a chosen sample;
To show Thy grace is great an' ample:
I 'm here a pillar in Thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an example,
To a' Thy flock."

He has been one of the Sauls of his denomination for a generation, and yet he seems almost unconscious of it, and appears to wonder why so many look up to him. He would not think it beneath him, to sit at the feet of a little child to be instructed. You never find him playing the great man by small exhibitions of learning, which astonish the simple and awaken the pity, or the disgust of the scholarly.

"Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,"

is advice which finds a practical embodiment in him. We do not wish to convey the idea that he is in all respects a model man, or that he is so perfect all round that he never evokes the antagonism of wise and good men. The traits of his character are not equal in development and strength. And this incomplete symmetry gives him an angularity which sometimes invites criticism and provokes opposition. But with all his faults, there is in him such a combination of intellectuality and Gospel simplicity, of ethical severity and religious tolerance, of manly dignity and Christian humility, that the denomination with which he is connected has reason for being proud of him.

He was brought to religious decision in Edinburgh in 1829, through the labours of the Rev. Thomas Greener, one of the first Primitive Methodist ministers stationed in that ancient city. He had been the subject of religious impressions from his childhood, but he had no experimental knowledge of regeneration till he was brought into contact with the Primitives. He was no sooner converted than he united with the Infant Church, and gave himself to active service for Christ. Through his efforts a Sunday school was commenced in Edinburgh, of which he was both a teacher and superintendent. We

have been informed, and we believe the information is correct, that this was the first Sunday school connected with Primitive Methodism in Scotland. He also officiated as a local preacher with great acceptability and success. It soon became evident that he had ministerial gifts of no common order, and he was pressed into the itinerancy while a mere youth. His call to the ministry was marked by a singular coincidence which made a deep impression on his mind, and which is not yet erased. He had a conviction that his future was to be devoted to the Primitive Methodist ministry, but he never breathed a word to any one about it. But one day while on a visit to the house of a friend, he seemed to hear a voice saying to him, "What would you think if you were to-day to receive a call to the ministry?" At that very moment, to his surprise, and to the surprise of all his friends, the Rev. William Lister entered the house, and drew from his pocket a letter from the Rev. John Petty requesting him to proceed at once to Sunderland to become an itinerant minister. Mr. Macpherson regarded this as a call from God, and he felt that he must obey. He made arrangements forthwith to respond to the invitation, and arrived in Sunderland on 19th April, 1833, where after the usual examination, he was accepted, and began his ministerial career. We would not lay too much stress upon this incident, nor deduce from it any doctrine in relation to the supernaturalness of the Divine call; but it seems difficult to explain it on the ground of association of ideas and reduce it to a mere natural phenomenon. We record it, and leave our readers to draw their own inference.

With varying success Mr. Macpherson has ministered in the following stations:—Sunderland, Jersey, Weymouth, Donaughmore (Ireland), Silsden, Rochdale, Keighley, Preston, Chester, Haslingden (twice), Stockport, Blackburn, Birkenhead, Manchester 2nd, and Manchester 3rd (twice). From 1871 to 1876 he resided in London, and discharged the duties of Connexional Editor. And since 1876 he has been located in Manchester, devoting his time to the interests of the Manchester College for the training of candidates for the Primitive Methodist Ministry.

It is well known that the early ministers of the Primitive Methodist Connexion had many privations, persecutions and trials

which severely tested their physical, mental, and religious mettle. Mr. Macpherson had a fair share of these hardships, during the first years of his ministerial life. In the summer of 1837, he was appointed to the Donaughmore and Lurgan Mission, in Counties Down and Armagh, Ireland. When he arrived in Dublin, he had only a few shillings in his pocket, not enough to pay for a car to take him to his destination, so he set out on foot, and arrived at his new home the next morning, having performed the journey in a very primitive manner, spending an hour in refreshing sleep between the furrows of a field, with the canopy of heaven for his covering. Not unfrequently in that mission, his bed was chaff, or straw, or shavings of wood. Sometimes on the mountains of Mourne his abode for the night has been a humble cottage of native architecture, consisting of two or three apartments on the earth level, one of which was occupied by, perhaps, a pony. Some of the journeys in this Mission meant a walk of twenty or twenty-five miles. These hardships had to be endured, or the work would have remained undone. It was well that God raised up such men as Mr. Macpherson—men with healthy, vigorous bodies, who were not over fastidious and who were ready joyfully to toil and suffer for Christ's sake. The memory of such men ought to be preserved as inspiring examples of self-abandonment for Christ and humanity. It is also well known that Primitive Methodist ministers for many years entered upon their high and holy work without any preliminary training. Many of them started ministerial life with little intellectual lore and with few books, and on their stations had so much walking, preaching, visiting, and other work, that facilities for mental culture and the acquisition of knowledge were few and small. Yet some of them by husbanding their time, by sacrificing all luxuries, and what some would call necessaries, and by persistent effort, have reached an intellectual altitude that cannot be despised. Dr. David Thomas wrote in the "*Homilist*," some years ago, that some of them had written books which would not disgrace the library of a bishop, and many of them would do honour to any pulpit in the land. Mr. Macpherson is a good sample of these determined heroic men. We have already mentioned his residence in the island of Jersey. A mission was opened in May, 1832, and Mr. Macpherson took charge of it in September,

1833. His duties were to preach three times on the Sabbath indoors to the same people, and on the evening of the same day once in the open air, and again indoors on a week night. That meant five fresh sermons every week. And in addition, he had to pay periodical visits to the suburbs of St. Heliers to preach the Gospel with the view of founding and building up a Church. Yet amid these abundant labours, he so mastered French as to be able to conduct service and preach in that language. And as if all this was not sufficient, he took weekly lessons in Greek. With such unconquerable devotion it is no wonder that he has reached such eminence. It would have won for him a foremost place in any Church. The fathers of the Temperance Reformation have borne testimony to help they received from the ministers and members of the Primitive Methodist Churches in their inaugural struggles. One or two of the seven men who signed the total abstinence pledge along with Joseph Livesey, were connected with this Church. Some of the first meetings of the Total Abstinence Society were held in their chapels and schoolrooms, and amongst the first advocates are the names of some of their ministers. They were the first religious sect that openly countenanced the abstinence movement, and the agitation for the legal suppression of the liquor traffic. And they have not left their first love. Mr. Macpherson is one of the oldest Temperance Reformers in the country. He joined the old Temperance Society in 1829, and signed the Total Abstinence pledge in 1837, and has kept it, and advocated it ever since. He may be regarded as one of the fathers of The United Kingdom Alliance. Mr. Nathaniel Carr, and Mr. James E. Nelson, both of whom have since died, went over from Manchester to Stockport, when Mr. Macpherson was superintendent of the Stockport circuit, and had an interview with him. They said that they had tried moral suasion alone sufficiently, and that the time had come to take political action, and if this was to be attempted, they must begin somewhere. They then asked for the loan of a chapel in which to hold a meeting, and Mr. Macpherson gave them permission to occupy the Lancashire Hill Primitive Methodist Chapel, Stockport. They then requested him to take the chair, and he consented, and the first meeting on the lines of the United Kingdom Alliance was held that night. The speakers were the chairman (the Rev. James

Macpherson) and Messrs. Carr and Nelson. We have not been able to ascertain the exact date, but we have good reason to believe that it was in the autumn of 1852. Many meetings of a similar character were held between this and the formation of the Alliance in 1853, but this was undoubtedly the first of the whole series. Mr. Macpherson still adheres to the principle of the Alliance.

Mr. Macpherson has rendered great service to the Church of his choice in a variety of ways. He does not shine as an ecclesiastic. He is not what is called "a good business man." He seldom appears to less advantage than in the legislative assemblies of the denomination, and yet his voice in these gatherings has not been in vain. He was elected president in 1872, and met the expectations of the Conference. During the period he filled the editorial chair he originated a magazine, called "The Teachers' Assistant," which has rendered great service to the Sunday-school teachers and local preachers of the Connexion. It has been to many, a matter of surprise and regret, that he has not favoured us with larger and more numerous literary productions. He has enriched various serials, newspapers, magazines, and reviews with articles from his pen; edited the last edition of the Connexional history, and brought it down to a recent date, and written "The Life and Labours of the Rev. John Petty," and we hope he will give us a book on doctrinal or practical Christianity, or both. He is eminently qualified to do this, and it would be a memento of him, and would do service when he has passed away.

His preaching is more conspicuous for the severity of its logic than for the brilliancy of its rhetoric, for the clearness of its teaching than for the power of its declamation. It appeals to the understanding and conscience more than to the passions and emotions. His metaphysical cast of mind leads him to the discussion of abstruse questions, but when he is in good form he has a wondrous power of making these dry and difficult subjects interesting and plain to ordinary hearers. He delights in doctrinal subjects, but his sermons are neither mouldering skeletons nor immobile statues. Generally, they are bodies with souls in them which make them live and move as well as have being. Much of his preaching is almost purely extempore. He has been known to take a text on the spur of the moment and preach a sermon

which has captivated his hearers. Even his best sermons have never been committed to paper. He has turned the subjects over in thought until he has burned them into his brain and soul. We have heard it said that a gentleman who was intent on publishing a volume of sermons by different preachers wrote to our friend for a sermon, and he replied that he supposed he did not want printed sermons and written ones he had none. His ordinary method of preparation is to get a subject, think it through and through, dot down a few points on paper, and depend on the inspiration of the service for language with which to clothe his thoughts. His preaching is consequently very unequal. Sometimes he plunges, flounders, and fails. At other times he rises into the region of real eloquence, and completely entrances his congregation. He is not what is popularly called an orator. His voice, manner, style, and taste are against him achieving distinction in this respect. A candidate for the ministry at the close of a grandiloquent address was anxious to know what our friend thought of his performance, and managed to make known his desire. The young man was chagrined when our friend told him that if all our ministers were as eloquent as he, our poor people would starve for lack of food. He is grave, calm, reverent, and unassuming. He is happiest when he can form his congregation into a kind of Bible-class, and talk to them as a teacher. And these are the services to which his hearers refer with the greatest pleasure. He cannot often command the thunder, the earthquake, the tempest, and the rushing torrent, but few can surpass him as an expounder of the Scriptures. We have, however, known him catch the sacred fire, and it has radiated till the whole congregation has been aglow with holy feeling.

But he has rendered no more signal service to the denomination than by his unwearied efforts in connection with ministerial education. He has taken a lively interest in this question for many years. So far back as 1854 he submitted a resolution to the Conference on the importance of raising the educational standard for ministerial candidates and probationers. He was requested to forward his views to the General Committee (the Executive of the Conference). These were embodied in legislative form, and were adopted by the Conference of 1855. This is regarded by some as the first practical step towards

an institution for ministerial training, but we have not sufficient data at hand on which to base an independent and authoritative opinion. This we do know that Primitive Methodism has had no truer friend to ministerial education than Mr. Macpherson. Years before the establishment of a college he was accustomed to get young ministers to meet at his house in order that he might help them. The writer remembers those meetings with gratitude. He afterwards originated a scheme in the Manchester district for the improvement of probationers which subsequently became Connexional. Ministers were appointed in various parts of the Connexion to direct the studies of ministerial probationers. This method was continued throughout the Connexion with more or less effect for several years, but in the Manchester district eventually the probationers were placed under the care of Mr. Macpherson, until he was called to London to discharge the duties of Connexional Editor. He was accustomed to travel to different centres of the district weekly, meeting the probationers in groups. All this labour was gratuitous on his part, and in addition to his regular circuit work. The travelling expenses of himself and the probationers were cheerfully paid by the friends of ministerial education in the district. By these efforts an impetus was given to these young ministers which has enabled them to gain a position and to do a work which otherwise they could not have done. And when he left the district for London those who had been under his tuition presented him with an address expressive of their gratitude to him for the service he had rendered to them.

The Manchester District Meeting of 1864 requested the Conference to establish a Theological Institution in Manchester, and appoint Mr. Macpherson the Principal, but the Conference did not see its way clear to take this step. The year following, however, a number of students were placed under the care of the Rev. J. Petty, in Elmfield College, York. When the Sunderland Theological Institution was projected, Mr. Macpherson was nominated as Tutor, but declined to stand in competition with his friend the Rev. J. Petty.

The General Committee, at the suggestion of Mr. Macpherson, sent certain proposals to the Conference of 1875 with a view of giving ministerial candidates still greater facilities. The Conference appointed a committee to consider these suggestions. This committee recom-

mended the Conference of 1876 to open another Theological Institution in Manchester, and to appoint Mr. Macpherson to raise the needed funds. The Conference adopted the report of the committee. And the history of Mr. Macpherson is identical with the movement from that date, and is likely to be to the end of his earthly life. The College has been erected, and is now in working order. The various buildings, furniture, &c., have cost about £9000. The difficulties which have had to be surmounted have been great, but above £7000 have been raised. And it is hoped that the remaining debt will be swept away this year. Mr. Macpherson has toiled hard, and his perseverance in trying circumstances has been surprising. Many a man would have given up, but he has continued. We sincerely hope that he may live to see the Institution free from debt and doing the work he has so much at heart, to his own satisfaction, and the satisfaction of the Connexion.

He has had two batches of students under his care, and their progress indicates his suitability for tutorship.

He is "apt to teach," delights to teach, and all his public life he has been teaching. When engaged in pastoral work it was his habit to teach the children of the families he visited, and to encourage the young men of his stations to cultivate their minds and hearts. He has qualities which eminently qualify him for the class and the lecture-room of the College. If his governing ability was equal to his tutorial, he would be unrivalled in his denomination as the head of a college. We pray that his life may be spared for many years to come, and that it may be powerful and useful. And we are certain that when the end comes, whether that event be soon or late, that he will have laid the Church and the world under obligation which ought not to be forgotten.

J. T.

Thomas Newell.

[*Born*, 1821 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1845 : *Still Living.*]

THE brethren whose lives and characters are set forth in these pages may be regarded as representative men in the several churches to which they belong. No single individual will fully represent his church, but he will embody some particular aspect of it, and thus the whole series will present, with more or less accuracy, the leading features of the various Methodist Churches. The subject of the present article is a fine representative of that feature in Primitive Methodism, which has most powerfully impressed the popular imagination, and which has been one of the chief agents in raising the Connexion to its present position as the second in membership among the Methodist bodies. Though intellectually far in advance of what imperfectly-informed outsiders suppose, Primitive Methodism cannot claim intellectuality as its most striking feature during the seventy odd years of its existence. The circumstances of its origin, the poverty of the bulk of its early members, and the consequent lack of regular scholastic training in its ministry, rendered this impossible. But while high culture was wanting, and, indeed, was not essential for the work to be done, something else, absolutely essential to a true church, was possessed in high degree. Primitive Methodist ministers have ever been distinguished by an earnestness and enthusiasm born of deep religious convictions, and by that peculiar quality so difficult to define, yet so

essential to a true minister of Jesus Christ—unction. This does not necessarily imply rant and noise, which may be present without any unction at all, but a spiritual presence, breathing through every word, and look, and gesture, and which pierces the heart, arouses the conscience, and powerfully moves the whole moral nature. Of this feature in Primitive Methodism, Thomas Newell is a fine type. We regard him thus, not because he has this quality in such an extraordinary measure, nor because it is the only striking feature in his personality—but because it is the informing spirit that touches and vivifies every other quality he possesses. In him this quality is backed by intellectual force, and regulated by sound judgment and common-sense. Hence it is that we consider him a good representative man. Biography has been described by a recent writer as a branch of natural science, in the investigation of which environment is an indispensable subject of inquiry. The truth of this remark will be evident to every student of biography. Hence the parentage and early years of any man who has risen to eminence are of the greatest importance, if we would fully understand the forces which have chiefly moulded his character and influenced his destiny.

Thomas Newell was born on Thursday, 13th September, 1821, in a farm-house not far from Todmorden, in East Lancashire. He was the youngest of fourteen children. His father, Edmund Newell, was rather below medium size, of spare build, and reached the advanced age of eighty years. He had in his nature a vein of sly, quiet humour, was rather reserved in speech, and once remarked that he "let his talk wait till it was fit to come." From him, evidently, the youngest son has inherited that touch of reserve and caution which characterises him both in speech and action, as also that dry humour that may be found occasionally in his utterances. We should say, however, that Mr. Newell's physical constitution, as well as his most prominent qualities, have come from the mother's side. Mary Newell possessed a remarkably healthy, hardy constitution, and lived to the patriarchal age of ninety-one years. Towards middle life she became somewhat corpulent, a tendency that has marked her son during his later years. She was a woman of strong common-sense—a valuable quality, of which she bequeathed to her son an uncommon share. From her, also, we

judge, he has inherited the fire and fervour which distinguished him as a preacher. Let the reader now turn from these plain Lancashire peasants to the following description of their son, as given in 1878, by a writer who knew nothing of Mr. Newell's parentage or early life, and it will be easily seen how much he has inherited from his ancestry:—

"Mr. Newell is a man apparently between fifty and sixty years of age, but seems still only in the prime of his powers, both physical and mental. He is above the medium height, has a well-marked tendency to stoutness, but is evidently full of vigour and activity. He strikes a stranger, at first sight, as a strong, burly, Yorkshire yeoman, who would know his own mind, and would be perfectly capable of defending himself, in a physical encounter, with half-a-dozen ordinary town-bred men. Not only does he strike one as having a vast reserve of muscular energy, but also of emotional and will force. His temperament is sanguine, hair auburn, very slightly sprinkled with grey, and getting thin on the top. He wears it cut short, and shaves pretty extensively, leaving only a closely-cut and stubby fringe of whisker extending round the lower part of the face. His head is round, face perpendicular, brows horizontal and knitted over his eyes, which are full of fire and determination, conveying an impression of resolution almost military. There is about his physique a remarkable union of massiveness with mobility. Even when he is in repose there is a restlessness in his eye, and a sharp twitching of the nerves of the face, indicating that his mind is on the alert; and the breadth and fulness about the base of his brain indicate the presence of an energy which, the observer feels, might leap forth into action at any moment, and which would be rather dangerous to any one with whom he might come into collision. This tendency is, however, modified by the large development of his brain in the religious and moral requirements, and the effect of this combination of strong physical and high religious endowments is, we judge, the production of a thoroughly typical Primitive preacher. We take him to be a thoroughly efficient minister, with excellent power of speech, quick and strong emotion, and capable of throwing himself with great energy and feeling into any work he may take in hand. He is evidently endowed with a clear head and a warm heart, can readily seize the salient points of a subject, and put them before others with great distinctness and force. He is evidently a man of strong common-sense, of extensive ministerial experience, and wide knowledge of Connexional law and usage, who can readily form a judgment on the bearing and probable effect of any proposal that is brought forward. Without any marked intellectual subtilty, he is gifted with remarkable shrewdness and practicability. He has an agreeable presence, and there is no assumption in his bearing. His manner is modest, and he evinces much readiness to listen to and consider the views and opinions of others. This gives him a hold upon the goodwill of the people, while his more solid qualities give him a hold on their judgment and esteem."

During the greater part of their married life of fifty-four years, Mr. Newell's parents were occupied in farming, and he himself was similarly employed up to the time when he entered the ministry. Like many others who have risen to eminence, the subject of this sketch had few educational advantages. Todmorden, in this respect, resembled

many of the rural districts of England sixty years ago. Thomas Newell never had a day's ordinary schooling in his life. A Sabbath school, a mile and a-half from his home, and a night school kept in winter by a working-man, were all the educational facilities within his reach. His curriculum at these institutions was limited to reading and writing. Under the fostering care of his mother, however, he learnt to read very early, and soon acquired that taste for reading which is so often one of the earliest indications of mental capacity and the possibility of future eminence. Hence he became so proficient as a reader, that at the early age of seven he was promoted to the Bible-class in the Sabbath school An incident which occurred on this important occasion is worth relating. Just as the small boy entered the Bible-class, the teacher was exercising his pupils in the art of spelling—a very necessary exercise in those days, but happily no longer required on Sundays. The word "Solomon" had gone nearly the whole round of the class without any scholar being able to spell it. At last it came to the boy just promoted, when, to the astonishment of all, he solved the mighty problem at the first attempt. The Sabbath school was vastly inferior to the majority of such institutions at the present day, as may be gathered from the fact that not a single person connected with it made any profession of religion. Yet to his attendance there Mr. Newell owes his conversion to God. The school was at first carried on in the upper chamber of a dwelling-house. Afterwards a commodious building was erected by public subscription, "for children of all religious denominations," as the inscription-stone stated. Although the school was carried on by persons who had no experimental knowledge of religion, certain pious Wesleyans, from a distance, occasionally visited the school, and taking charge of a class, sought to lead the scholars to the Saviour. The conversation and prayers of these devout men made a deep impression on our young friend's mind, and they abide with him to-day. How little the sower knows where his seed may take root, and how widely its influences may spread in after years. A preaching service was established by the Wesleyans, and was held on Sunday afternoons, previous to the Sunday school.

Sunday, 25th October, 1835, is a red-letter day in the history we are recording. Thomas Newell was then fourteen years of age; and

had the event of that day been deferred to a later period, in all likelihood his life would have run in a somewhat different channel. At this critical time of life that decision is often taken, which either leads to a life of usefulness and perhaps eminence, or dooms to failure and disaster. The writer has often been struck with the fact, that men of eminent usefulness were converted about the age of fourteen. When the years between fourteen and twenty are largely wasted in folly, the chances of rendering signal service in the cause of religion are greatly lessened. On the Sabbath alluded to, the service was conducted, as was usually the case, by a Wesleyan local preacher. He was a preacher of great earnestness and pathos, his whole soul was thrown into his work,—just the man, in fact, to reach the heart of a youth like Thomas Newell. Taking for his text, Job. xxi. 15, "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto Him?" he set forth the benefits of religion, and especially of prayer. The pathos and power of the preacher, coupled with his earnestness and sympathy, so vividly brought home to the boy of fourteen the value and importance of religion, that his heart was won, and he resolved to give himself to the Saviour. Shortly before this event, the Primitive Methodists had begun to hold religious services in a cottage, about half-a-mile from Newell's farm. These services our young friend occasionally attended along with his companions. A class-meeting had also been established in another house in the neighbourhood. Under the labours of these Primitive Methodists, several of Thomas Newell's acquaintances were converted, and three or four of his companions. These had begun to attend the class-meetings, and two or three weeks after his decision for Christ, one of them asked him to go to class. He consented, but a difficulty presented itself. Each person attending these meetings was expected to contribute a penny per week, and young Newell was not worth a penny. His natural independence made it impossible for him to go without a penny; he knew he hadn't a penny, and yet he promised to go to class. But God's hand was with him. On the day preceding the class-meeting he went an errand which involved a walk of five miles. For this he received a penny, and thus the difficulty was removed. He attended the meeting, and was disappointed on finding his penny was not called

for. For nearly half-a-century he has attended these class-meetings, and has never been without the means of contributing in harmony with Methodist usage. That quickening of the intellectual life which usually follows conversion led young Newell to devote his spare time to reading. The Bible, books of history, travel and biography engaged his attention. To the study of theology he was partly driven by the action of the Knowlwood circuit, in which the society was situated to which he belonged. His gifts and graces before long attracted the attention of the devout in the neighbourhood. Though still but a boy, his steady, consistent conduct, and the intelligence and power of his exercises at class and other meetings, made it evident he was fitted for a wider sphere of Christian service than was afforded him at Todmorden. Soon after the close of his sixteenth year, and the second of his church membership, the quarterly meeting ordered the initials of his name to be placed upon the preachers' plan, at the end of that of his class-leader, and he received an intimation that he would be expected to take part in a service within a few days. This service was held in the house of his eldest sister, and among his neighbours and relatives. With much fear and trembling he stood up and spoke for about ten minutes from the words, "Wilt thou be made whole?" In relation to this occasion, Mr. Newell says: "I often marvel at the ignorance and presumption displayed by me in venturing upon that service. Had I understood preaching, I should, no doubt, have acted differently and shirked the appointed task. But then I might never have found what I believe to be my proper place, and have missed what has been the greatest joy of my life. Our Father leads his children by a way that they know not."

Theology now became a subject of earnest study. The first considerable purchase Mr. Newell made was the works of John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley, and from them he derived more benefit than from all other books put together, The Book of course excepted. They were studied with great care and thoroughness, and gave the young preacher a firm foothold in Gospel truth and Methodist theology. During the next seven years Mr. Newell continued to do the work of a local preacher in his native circuit, and with such acceptance and success that he was frequently urged to give himself to the work of the regular

ministry. At length a "call," as the phrase of the time was, came to him from one of the circuits in the Hull district. But Mr. Newell had not yet been convinced that he had a call from God in this direction. His natural modesty, moreover, made him shrink from the responsibilities of the regular ministry. Probably he himself would say that cowardice had a good deal to do with his refusal of this call. But God took him in hand, and showed him he was not to have his own will. His way of life seemed closed; nothing that he took in hand prospered, and at length he began to realise that he was fighting against Providence. He resolved, therefore, that if another call came, he would obey it at any cost. It came soon. The Silsden circuit required an additional preacher, and forwarded a call to Mr. Newell. It was at once accepted, and he entered upon his new sphere of labour on Sunday, 13th April, 1845. It was not usual in those days to allow probationers to remain more than one or two years in one circuit, and Mr. Newell, after spending two successful years under the kindly and judicious superintendency of Rev. R. Davies, removed to Bradford. There is nearly always something special in a minister's recollections of his first circuit. Sometimes the memories are painful, but more frequently are they pleasant. Attachments are formed that last through life, and he returns from time to time to the friends and scenes of his early ministry with feelings of peculiar pleasure and gratitude. It must have been with some such feelings that Mr. Newell, after a ministry of some thirty-six years, returned to Silsden circuit, of which he is now the superintendent. But we are anticipating. After two successful years in Bradford, under the superintendency of Rev. T. Crompton, now of Canada, Mr. Newell's probation closed. The character of his early superintendents is a matter of no small importance to a young Methodist minister. Mr. Newell considers himself to have been unusually fortunate in this respect, and to the kindness, judicious counsel, integrity and straightforwardness of the two brethren above-named, he believes he owes a great deal. During the thirty-eight years of his ministry, Mr. Newell has spent four years in Silsden, two in Bradford, five in Burnley, two in Halifax, three in Huddersfield, nine in Leeds, three in Thirsk, five in York, and five in Keighley; so that, taking Leeds as a centre, his labours have been confined within a radius of about fifty miles. The whole of his

ministry has been spent in circuits now belonging to the Leeds district, where he soon became known as an able preacher. His fame ere long travelled beyond the Leeds district, and he was in request for special services in various parts of the Connexion. No better evidence of the solidity and worth of his preaching need be given, than the fact that for twenty-two years in succession he preached Sabbath-school sermons at Wearhead in the Westgate circuit. The hard-headedness of the Northerners is proverbial; claptrap finds small favour with them as a rule, and the people of the Wear Valley have as keen a relish for high intellectuality, combined with deep spirituality, as any class of people in the North of England. That they found in Mr. Newell a fine combination of the two is evidenced by the fact of his long and well-sustained popularity amongst them. Mr. Newell's ministerial life has not been specially eventful. There has been little startling about it. Rather it has been marked by that steadiness which is a leading feature in his character. Throughout his career he has been recognised in his circuits as a good preacher. The pulpit has been well sustained, and his ministrations have been rich in blessing to the people. The writer has a vivid remembrance of Mr. Newell's ministry in the city of York nearly twenty years ago. The massiveness of his sermons, their cogent reasoning and forcefulness, and, above all, the rich unction that accompanied them, made a deep impression on his mind. Some of the texts are remembered to this day; and the prayers were no less powerful than the sermons. Mr. Newell has been equally successful as an administrator. He has kept his circuits well in hand. That rare combination of firmness and gentleness so essential in church government has marked his circuit administration in a remarkable degree. Hence it is not surprising to find that his circuits have generally prospered. Their prosperity, however, has been of the steady-growing kind, rather than one made up of leaps and bounds to be followed by a painful reaction. Still he has witnessed some considerable revivals of religion. Thirsk experienced a blessed work during his station there, and recently in his present circuit special services were carried on for some fifteen weeks, and scores professed conversion.

Mr. Newell's qualities early marked him out for official position, and his brethren have not been slow to do him honour in this respect.

Such honours have not been sought, but they have been deserved. He has held the office of Secretary of the General Chapel Fund Committee, Secretary of the District Committee, and for several years he was examiner of probationers in the Leeds district. He has been thrice General Committee delegate for his district, and five times delegate to the Conference. In 1878, he was elected Vice-President of the Conference, missing the higher honour only by a single vote. At the Conference of the following year he was elected President by a sweeping majority, and discharged the duties of his office with that firmness, tact, and impartiality for which he is so well known. Some eight or nine years ago the Conference elected him to the position of Vice to the present Connexional Editor, but he seems in no hurry to retire from the work of the itinerancy. After nearly forty years of ministerial life, he is still comparatively vigorous and robust, and had it not been for two lengthened seasons of affliction he would probably have been still more vigorous. He has not been without the experience of bereavement, having lost his first-born, a most beautiful and promising child; while some fourteen years ago he was called to pass through that sorest trial, the loss of his wife, who had been to him as true a helpmeet as ever man had.

Mr. Newell has not done as much as might have been expected with his pen. His productions are confined chiefly, we believe, to occasional articles in the Connexional magazines, and a small work on "The Destiny of the Wicked." This volume was originally prepared as a paper to be read before the Ministers' Association of the Leeds district, and was published at the urgent request of the Association. The writer modestly states at the outset that while he is deeply conscious of the fact that able and learned men have dealt with the subject, and that he cannot hope to advance anything new or original upon it, he takes comfort from the thought that he is not required to produce a treatise for the special use of men of severe critical taste, vast learning and theological wealth, but rather for those who, like himself, "have received a great part of their training in the streets and lanes of the city, and the highways and byeways of rural life." Hence the work is given as the results of a plain common-sense reading of God's Word on the difficult and solemn theme which forms its subject. The book is a

presentation of the orthodox view, of considerable clearness and force, and a review and exposure of the weakness and fallacies of the various theories in opposition to that view. Mr. Newell's mind is logical rather than philosophical in its cast. He proceeds step by step from premiss to conclusion, maintaining throughout a careful concatenation of ideas. We should say he has been largely influenced in this respect by his early studies of Fletcher's works, though he is lacking in that mystical vein which comes out occasionally in the author of the "Checks." Hence the mystical and the vague find small favour with him, and the poetic and imaginative are by no means prominent features in his composition. In his theology Mr. Newell is thoroughly Methodistical. In the work before us, as well as in his sermons, Methodist teaching is given forth with no uncertain sound. This arises from no blind adherence to creed, but from the fact that his intimate acquaintance alike with Methodist theology and the Bible has convinced him that the two are in more substantial accord than exists between divine revelation and any other humanly arranged system of divine truth. Mr. Newell's style of writing is marked by chasteness, simplicity, and fervour. His vocabulary is not particularly extensive; he confines himself chiefly to purely Saxon terms, and as he is clear and definite in his thinkings, his writing is free from ambiguity. He never indulges in fine writing; figures and tropes are rarely used, and oratorical display is carefully shunned. Something of that fervour which pervades his preaching is also present in his writing, and compels the reader to recognise that he has to deal with a man profoundly in earnest. In these days, when flippancy and claptrap are so much in favour, it is refreshing to meet with a man who has risen to eminence without any questionable aids. While the churches can appreciate manliness, mental grasp, clear, strong thinking and Scriptural truth, expressed in terms drawn from Chaucer's "Well of English Undefiled," such men as Mr. Newell will always meet with due recognition and honour. We may fitly close this sketch with a tribute to Mr. Newell's rare loyalty to the Church of his choice. While free from anything like bigotry or sectarian narrowness, he is a thorough Primitive Methodist. Having spent nearly half-a-century in her communion, he should know his own Church thoroughly, and he is evidently as well

satisfied with it as a man need expect to be with anything in this world. "Were I in the morning of life," he wrote recently to a friend, "instead of the evening, and had my lot to choose, I would not wish for any other sphere of service than the one I have had, and, thank God, still have." His is essentially a wholesome nature; there is nothing morbid about it. Hence he has no grievances, no grudgings, and was never happier in his work than he is to-day. Primitive Methodism has had the services of many good men and true, but of none more heartily loyal and devoted than Thomas Newell. Her ministry has never been a sinecure. It is to-day one in which there is much toil and sometimes even hardship, but while she can command such loyalty and devoted service as are exemplified in the subject of the biography we now close, she has nothing to fear for the future.

R. J.

Colin Campbell M'Kechnie.

[*Born, November*, 1821 : *Entered Ministry*, 1838 : *Still Living.*]

AS his name imports, Colin Campbell M'Kechnie hails from "ayont the Tweed." It is generally assumed that Methodism has not been a success in Scotland, and there is some truth in the assumption, if we are to estimate success only by the number of its adherents. None of the Methodist denominations are numerous in Scotland, and only a few of them are represented. Many causes are assigned for this, but the chief one we believe is, not that Methodism has failed in the work of conversion, but that a great number of those converted through her agency were members of Churches at the time of their conversion, and instead of associating themselves with the Methodists, remained in the Churches where they were already members. In England there is a larger class of non-church-goers, who have no tie binding them to any religious organisation. Nominally, they are perhaps counted as belonging to the Established Church, but their only connection with it is probably that they have been baptised and married there. The Episcopal Church in England is not a popular institution. It is the Church of the respectable and well-to-do people, and has always been opposed to the interests of the poorer classes. In Scotland, it is quite different. The Kirk is the bond of national life and union ; it is the only public institution left which is distinctly national. It has a grand and glorious history. It has been the

defender of the national liberties, and the advocate of popular rights. The people are bound to it by a thousand grateful memories and endearing ties. There have differences risen, and great secessions taken place, so that now the Free Kirk and the United Presbyterian Kirk have more adherents than the "Auld Kirk"; but these secessions have taken place in defence of a purer Protestant doctrine, and stricter Presbyterian government, so that they are even more national than the "Auld Kirk" itself. Except, therefore, in the large manufacturing towns, where the population is of a conglomerate character, the Scotch people are adherents of the Kirk. It would be thought a great disgrace if the children did not join the Kirk which their fathers founded, and in defence of which their "forbears" suffered and died; and it would be thought a great dereliction of duty if a person forsook the Kirk to associate himself with an English sect like the Methodists. The consequence of this prejudice has been, that numbers converted through Methodist agency have remained associated with other Churches, and the numerical increase of Methodism in Scotland has been very slow. But it must not, in consequence, be assumed that Methodism has been a failure in Scotland. In the first place, it has largely contributed towards the humanisation of the Scotch theology, toward the softening of the presentation of the Gospel, and toward the great revivals which have taken place during the last fifty years. The old hard, harsh, Calvinistic presentation is now a thing of the past, and in the kirks Christ is preached as the Saviour of the world. The severely cold and formal service has also given place to a brighter and more cheerful service, and Presbyterian worship to-day is a very much different thing from what it was before the Methodist missionaries crossed the Border. Further, the Methodist Churches of Scotland have supplied to the several denominations some of their ablest and most popular ministers, and so have largely contributed toward the success of Methodism elsewhere. The Primitive Methodists in Scotland are numerically a small body, but they have been intensely loyal and active, and have sent into the ranks of the ministry some of the most able and devoted servants of the Church. At the present moment, the men at the head of the intellectual institutions of the Connexion are Scotchmen. The Principal of the Manchester College is the Rev.

James Macpherson, who, we believe, hails from Edinburgh, and the Connexional Editor is the Rev. Colin Campbell M'Kechnie.

Mr. M'Kechnie was born in Paisley, in 1821, where a mission was established, and where at present there is a strong and prosperous church. He can claim on both sides a long Scotch pedigree. On the maternal side he belongs to the Clan Campbell, and has the blood of the sons of Diarmid in his veins. On the paternal side he springs from a Lowland family, and has thus in his nature the caution and determination of the Teuton, and the fire and passion of the Celt. On the father's side he inherits his self-possession, his strong practical nature, and his love of work; on the mother's side he inherits his fine susceptibility, his artistic instinct, his love of poetry, and his moral fervour.

In the early days of the Connexional history, the harvest was great and the labourers were few, so that those who showed any fitness for the work of the ministry were often thrust out before they had attained maturity of thought or even of physical development. Boy-preachers were not uncommon in the early days, and upon them was thrown labour that would have taxed the energies of full-grown men. Mr. M'Kechnie entered the ministry at seventeen years of age. The education he had received was very much higher than that prevailing in the denomination. Scotchmen have to thank John Knox for the advantages they have secured in the battle of life. His system of parochial schools secured for the poorest of the people a good elementary education. From the first Mr. M'Kechnie gave evidence of unusual gifts. His intellect was quick and bright, his imagination vivid, and naturally he had a rich and varied vocabulary. It is perfectly evident that it was purposed by God that in whatever sphere he was called to move, he should take a leading place. From the first he bore evidence of one of God's elect. Immediately after his conversion his devotion and earnestness in the cause of God excited attention, and singled him out as peculiarly fitted for the work of an evangelist. Various difficulties stood in the way of obeying the call of the Church, but these hindrances were only an occasion for the expression of his strong will; and while but a boy he joined the noble army of missionaries, and has the glory and honour of having shared

the labours and sufferings of the fathers of the Connexion. The hardships, trials, and labours of the early missionaries of the Connexion are almost incredible. They had long journeys to perform on foot, because of the want of conveyance and their poverty. They had to preach every day of the week, and frequently had two and three services to conduct. They had to put up with the hardest fare and the poorest entertainment, and in consequence numbers of strong men had to surrender the position. It was a hard and laborious life, in which only the strongest survived. It was but natural that a boy like C. C. M'Kechnie, separated from a comfortable and happy home, where he was surrounded with indulgences and sustained by sympathies, should feel his position, and occasionally be haunted by the sense of loneliness and depression; but he was full of earnest enthusiasm, and was naturally of a buoyant and hopeful temper, and therefore he repined not. As he wandered through the villages of North Yorkshire and South Durham, preaching Christ the Saviour of men, he endured hardness as a good soldier of the Cross, and submitted cheerfully to the severe outward conditions of his life.

He early entered upon the duties of the superintendency, and had intrusted to his care most of the large and important circuits in the north of England. He was never much of an ecclesiastic, and paid little attention to the discussion of rules or the making of laws. He had, however, the secret of governing men, and by his large knowledge of human nature, his broad catholic sympathy, his tact, judgment, and sweet reasonableness, did more to build up into a solid church life and order, the crowds that were gathered into our fellowship than many of the ecclesiastics. The latter, by their narrowness and litigiousness, created schisms, and to them more than to any other cause do we owe the fact, that in the early days, as many converts joined other Churches as were retained. In all the churches of the north of England there are many who were converted through the labours of the Primitive Methodist missionaries. Mr. M'Kechnie was generally able to heal divisions, to minimise differences, and to encourage the spirit and bond of union. He had no need to seek authority in laws of Conference; he had no need to assert his office. His superiority, intellectual and moral, was felt, and men were honoured in being

associated with him. Nor was it only that he was enabled to keep the converts, but he was the leading figure in some of the greatest revivals that ever took place in the Sunderland district. In Allendale, Weardale, and North Shields, great revivals of religion took place during his superintendency, in which thousands were won to the Saviour and the fellowship of the Church. The present writer happened once to call at a hairdresser's in North Shields when Mr. M'Kechnie was leaving the circuit. A number of men were gathered in the shop, and the theme of conversation was the minister leaving the town. Some of the speakers were Presbyterians and some Episcopalians; but they all agreed with the hairdresser, who averred, that Mr. M'Kechnie had done more good, had shown a larger loving spirit, and a greater care of the poor, than any minister that ever had been in the town. During his superintendency North Shields was the most powerful circuit in the Sunderland district. He had the happiest method of dealing with his colleagues, by which he awakened all their gifts, aided them in their studies, stimulated them to increased usefulness, and bound them to him by a strong tie of friendship. Every circuit improved under his management, and he was regarded generally in the district, and throughout the Connexion, as one of the most successful superintendents. Naturally, he is not of a robust frame. He is slimly built, and more fragile than strong, and his nervous organisation is so fine and susceptible that he works up his energies rapidly. His early hardships and labours, and his unremitting toil as a student and circuit minister, early told upon his health; so that while he was comparatively young his health gave indications of surrender. During his superintendency of the Newcastle-on-Tyne circuit he suffered a complete break-down, and was for a few years superannuated; but by rest and care he regained his health, and was appointed to the office of Connexional Editor. This office is held only for a term of five years; but when the five years term was expired, the Conference felt that he had shown such peculiar fitness for the position, and had rendered such unique and valuable service to the Connexion, that a special law was made in his case, and the gentleman appointed as his successor moved his re-appointment; and so year by year he has been re-appointed, and has held the position for what is equal to two full terms. In

fact, it is recognised in the Connexion that if he should be compelled through failing health or from any other cause to retire, there is no minister so well able to fill his place.

While in circuit work Mr. M'Kechnie was very popular as a preacher, and his services were in demand in all parts of the Connexion. His preaching was not what is usually regarded as of a popular type, being too carefully prepared and too thoughtful for those who want merely a momentary excitement. It was the strong utterance of a living man who believed what he said, and said what he believed. He was not indifferent to art, but it held a subordinate place, and was so subdued as to assume the air of spontaneity; his imagery was sometimes most bold and beautiful. His imagination is most active in his mental life; it gives body and form to things spiritual; and we should think that he restrained it in preaching rather than stimulated it. He has a rare command of stately language, suitable to the high order of his thoughts, and when the fire of his strong passion flashed like an electric spark through a discourse, it gleamed and burned like a star. Some of his pulpit and platform efforts were attended by extraordinary results: he could hold his audience breathless or rouse them to exclamation.

Despite his extraordinary labours, Mr. M'Kechnie, from his entrance into the ministry, paid great attention to the culture of his mind. The original furnishing of his mind was of an unusual order. He has the intuitive intellect and a fine poetic sensibility. He is quick in perception, and extremely sensitive to the finest influences. He sees truth, receives it by inspiration, and feels the glow of it warming his whole nature. All his generalising faculties are largely developed, and he has a rich endowment of ideality and sublimity. On the other hand, his logical faculties are all full and active, so that he is never satisfied with his position unless he has reasoned it. This is an unusual combination of gifts, and while it ensures greatness also involves many penalties. From the interaction of the two intellects he will have had to suffer from doubt and fear. His mystic intellect will have hungered after the supernatural; while the cold, reasoning intellect will have lifted up barriers and caused the other to halt and limp; and so his heart will have been tried with the sorrows of yearning desire and dark doubt.

His course of study was at first such as to strengthen the logical intellect. He naturally familiarised himself with the intricacies of metaphysical theology, the transition from this to mental science was easy, and these formed for many years the principal themes of his deep meditation: they established and confirmed the philosophical habit of his mind. This early habit of thought still clings to him, and it is impossible to hear him speak, or to read anything from his pen, without being impressed with his mastery of method. He immediately pierces to the heart of a subject, and points out its causes and consequences. In later years, he has greatly enlarged the scope of his studies, and has a wide, liberal, and accurate knowledge of literature. This has been a positive benefit to him, because it has given play to imagination and the powers of the intuitive intellect, and we judge that he is now more quickly responsive to the spiritual than even in his early life. His intellectual powers are lubricated and enriched by a pure flow of natural humour, which occasionally, when he is denouncing evils, takes a slightly acid tincture, but usually is warm and human. In his speculative movements he is able to reach such altitudes and gain such clearness that he sees the humorous side of all positions, and a flash of humour often reduces the position to simplicity. He has a rich, deep, human sympathy by which he is almost more governed than by his reason. He has the wonderful power of putting himself into the closest contact with persons of the most opposite types of character, and sympathetically understanding them. He is full of large consideration, brotherly kindness, and generosity. According to his means he is liberal beyond most. His gifts are continuous, and he would deny himself of any legitimate pleasure to increase the well-being of others. It is this which gives him his great power over men, almost more than his intellectual power or purity of life. He has more warmly attached friends in the ministry and the Connexion than perhaps any other man in the denomination.

In 1849, with a few friends in the Sunderland district, Mr. M'Kechnie founded the *Connexional Review*, which was commenced with the title, *Christian Ambassador;* and he has since acted as its editor. In the early years he contributed largely to its pages, but in late years he has been principally engaged in editorial work. He edits

monthly six magazines, and the work is unusually exacting, because the contributors, as a rule, have not had the training necessary to make them independent of careful revision. The work that he has done in the education of the ministry and the Connexion by his articles, and his editorial management, is almost incalculable. There have often been regrets expressed that he has not given to the Church and the world any great treatise worthy of himself, but the work he has done has been even greater than this, for it may be stated, as an unquestioned fact, that he has done more to excite into activity the thought of the denomination than any other man. He furnished an Introduction to "Greenfield's Discourses," and D. H. Woodcock's "Wonders of Grace." His power and influence over the young men in the ministry is very great. He is loved by them as a father, and revered as a great teacher.

Mr. M'Kechnie has been called, through the providence of God, to pass through the darkest and sorest trials of life. He has been stripped of his family, after seeing them to man's and woman's estate. But he has borne his sorrow with the most perfect Christian resignation, and has thus become more chastened and submissive.

In 1880, he was elected to the presidential chair. His is the only case in late years in which an election has taken place without a contest. There is no position to which his brethren would not gladly elect him, for there is no man in the Connexion so universally loved, honoured, and trusted. He has lived for the Connexion, to it he has given his great gifts, the flower and labour of his youth and manhood; and his high character, great abilities, and noble generosity, have awakened for him a deep and universal love.

In 1881, he was a member of the first Methodist Ecumenical Conference, held in London, and his name is recorded amongst those who took part in the deliberations of that assembly of representative Methodists from all parts of the world.

H. G.

Joseph Wood, M.A.

[*Born*, 1829: *Entered the Ministry*, 1851: *Still Living.*]

THE attention that is being given to the religious welfare of the young by all sections of the Christian Church is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. The progress made in this department of Christian activity during the last few years is truly marvellous. Prejudice and error long held sway in the Church in relation to the young, to her great loss and injury. But truth is now gaining ground on all sides, and a department of Church work, which for many years was regarded with indifference, is now seen to be of the very first importance. Young disciples are no longer barely tolerated, but welcomed and encouraged, and the best talent of the Church is set apart for their nurture and guidance. In short, the Church is at last recognising that her hope for the future lies in the young, and every effort is being put forth to make the Sunday school in the truest sense the "catechumen department of the Church." In thus devoting special attention to the young, Primitive Methodism is but returning to the spirit and practice of her chief founder. As is well known, Hugh Bourne never lost an opportunity of addressing the young. He was intensely solicitous for their salvation. In the sanctuary or the street, on the camp ground and in the homes of the people, he found an audience among the young, and spoke to them of heaven, of hell, and a Saviour's love. Many of the elders in the Church to-day

remember the old man laying his hand upon their heads, and recall his earnest and kindly admonitions. In the Consolidated Minutes of the Connexion, which bear so strongly the impress of its chief founder, evidences of Mr. Bourne's deep solicitude for the salvation of children may still be seen. In the regulations for conducting those camp-meetings, which played so important a part in the origination of Primitive Methodism, it is stated that at least one sermon on such occasions shall be addressed to children. While, however, the Connexion never wholly neglected the young, in common with many other Churches it did not for many years devote that attention to its Sunday schools that their importance demanded. Many of these schools were Connexional only in name,—some were connected with unions outside the denomination; discipline was lax, methods and organisation defective, and their connection with the Church merely nominal. While much remains to be done, a great deal has, nevertheless, been accomplished. The Connexion now possesses a well-organised Sunday-School Union, with a General Committee and Secretary, district and circuit committees, having the entire oversight of the schools. The result is seen in the widespread awakening to the vast importance of the young that has been witnessed throughout the Connexion, and the rapid advancement of the schools in general efficiency. With this great and beneficent movement no name is so intimately connected as that of Joseph Wood. The Sunday-School Union owes more to him than to any other man in the Connexion. At the outset, the movement had to contend with no small amount of prejudice and misunderstanding, but, under the judicious management of its first Secretary, these difficulties have been surmounted, and the Union is now an accomplished fact. It must not be supposed that this is the only movement with which Mr. Wood has been closely connected. Before our sketch closes it will be seen that he has had a hand in nearly all the great changes that have taken place in Primitive Methodism in recent years. But he is best known to the great bulk of the Connexion as the chief founder and first Secretary and Agent of the Connexional Sunday-School Union.

Joseph Wood was born 23rd April, 1829, at Ipstones, near Cheadle, in the north of Staffordshire. His parents were farmers, of good

family and social position. He comes, moreover, of an old family, the pedigree of which has been traced back several centuries. His ancient lineage and rather aristocratic connections have not been without their influence upon his character. Whatever we may say to the contrary, in these democratic times, there is something after all in birth and blood. To this, we think, may be traced in no small measure that fine sense of self-respect, and that slight air of semi-conscious superiority which have always distinguished him. He can speak with authority, and occupy the highest positions as one "to the manner born." His father's name was Joseph, as has been the case with the eldest son in the family for many generations. He possessed a fine physique—a feature which has characterised most of the family. The subject of this sketch has sometimes remarked that he never met with a stronger man than his uncle Samuel, nor a finer-looking man than his uncle John, nor a more handsome woman than his aunt Anne. Mr. Wood's father, and all his uncles on the paternal side, were noted for their sociality. No harvest festival or social gathering was considered complete without one or more of them. They were all racy, witty, humorous, the life and soul of any society they entered. This gift they inherited from their father, who could with a few words and a comical look convulse a roomfull of people with laughter. To the eldest son, the father of our subject, this sociality was somewhat of a snare, for to the end of life the glass was a temptation to him ; and though he often attended Methodist meetings, and sometimes prayed on these occasions, he lacked religious decision, and never became a member of the Church, unless it was of the Church of England. All the members of the family were distinguished by fine business qualifications. Two of Mr. Wood's uncles accumulated great wealth, and bequeathed large fortunes to their children, several of whom reside to-day in the halls of Derbyshire. Mr. Wood's mother was the daughter of Mr. James Plant, of Golden Farm, near Leek, Staffordshire. Her parents had a large family, amongst whom were a number of fine-looking men and women. She was lower in stature than most of them, but was a very strong and comely-looking person. She possessed a superior and well-balanced mind, and in the management of her dairy, her house, her family, as well as in her judgment of cattle, of which she was very fond, she so

excelled, as to be spoken of as one of the cleverest women in the country. She was, moreover, a *good* woman, remarkable for her kindness to the sick and ailing in the neighbourhood; she did not, however, experience pardoning mercy till a few weeks after her son's conversion, and about two years before her death. Mr. Wood comes of a long-lived stock. His father and grandfather both died at the age of seventy-four, and though his mother died at the comparatively early age of fifty-two, of an illness brought on by severe colds, her father and mother reached the patriarchal age of ninety-two and ninety respectively. We have dwelt somewhat lengthily upon Mr. Wood's ancestry,—first, because he has one, and one, moreover, of which, on the whole, he may be proud; but chiefly because we believe his personality is largely the result of a fine blending of the best qualities of his ancestors on both the paternal and maternal sides.

The first six years of Mr. Wood's childhood were spent at Ipstones, and the following six years at Cheddleton Park Farm, whither his parents removed. He remembers having during this period several narrow escapes from death. On one occasion, he fell into a well; on another, a cart shaft fell upon him, and rested upon his neck. The third was characteristic and prophetic. He had one day wantonly disturbed a wasps' nest, and was nearly stung to death. We take it that he has disturbed a few hornets' nests since the days of childhood; and though he has occasionally had to pay the usual penalty, he has survived the infliction, and has generally in the end come off victorious. The writer has known one or two youths who had a passion for attacking hornets' nests, and has observed that the tendency has invariably re-appeared in a slightly altered form in maturer years. When about twelve years of age, young Wood removed with his parents to the Whim Farm, Monyash, Derbyshire, which had previously been occupied by his grandfather and great-grandfather. He received his early education at a school at Cheddleton, and subsequently attended the village school at Monyash. At a very early age he gave evidence of that passion for books which so rarely fails to manifest itself in those who are destined to intellectual and literary eminence. At school he was bright and quick at learning, and gave indications in various ways of possessing more than an average share of capacity. He gradually

rose till he became the head of the school, and the "fellow" of the master. He remained at school till he was about seventeen, when his masters candidly confessed that they could not take him any further, and his school days were brought to a close. His first religious impressions were received at the Wesleyan Sunday School, Cheddleton, but he does not remember a time when he was not under gracious influences, or did not love the Saviour, except for a few years when in his teens. He then lost that consciousness of the divine favour which he had had from infancy. Had he been properly nurtured and instructed, this would not have occurred. His infancy and childhood were the Lord's till about the age of thirteen. During the three or four years that followed, though powerfully wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, he remained in a backsliding state. His conversion was his reclamation. It took place at Monyash, among the Primitive Methodists. Two or three pious females had the most to do with it, but a number of things combined to bring him to decision for Christ. A terrific thunderstorm, and a sermon by a local preacher from "The wages of sin is death," made a powerful impression on his mind. He surrendered himself to the Saviour, and found peace in a field on his father's farm. Subsequently, his mother, brother, and three sisters were all converted. His brother became a popular and successful local preacher, and some years ago finished his course and entered into rest. Three sisters still survive, and are members of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. Mr. Wood's conversion took place when he was between sixteen and seventeen years of age. A year after this his name appeared on the preachers' plan as an "exhorter," and at twenty-one he was invited to enter the ministry. He hesitated, then refused. Good business prospects, a restless longing for the stir and bustle of life, and a consciousness of capacity to play no mean part in the commercial world, combined with the entreaties of friends, all made it difficult to accept the clearly expressed call of the Church to the ministry of the Gospel. Fortunately, however, there was one at hand capable of discerning the exact state of the case, and possessing sufficient honesty of character and directness of speech to bring it home to the youthful would-be Jonah. "If you do not go into the work," said the Rev. Adolphus Beckerlegge, "the Lord will kill you, and send

you to hell." That was sufficiently strong language, but perhaps not less true than strong. At such a time force is of more consequence than elegance. The good man's insight showed him that the youth had reached a serious crisis in life, at which a false step might prove irreparable. How many at such a time have weakly chosen worldly advantages and selfish indulgence, in preference to the hardships and comparative poverty of the ministerial calling! And, alas! in how many instances the consequences have been disastrous! Nothing has prospered with them; and in some cases, not only has the coveted worldly good eluded their grasp, but their religious life has waned and died.

Happily Mr. Wood consented to obey the Church's call and enter the regular ministry. His continuance therein he, however, conditioned on the Lord's granting success. He resolved that if the divine nature of his call was not confirmed by signs following his ministry, in the shape of conversions, he would conclude he had mistaken his vocation and return home. In January, 1851, he commenced his labours in the Hull Second circuit. As is well known, Hull is the metropolis of Primitive Methodism, and the demands upon the mental resources of a young probationer would be at least equal to those of any part of the Connexion. It soon became evident that the young preacher was of more than ordinary ability and promise; his sermons were from the first remarkable for clearness, vigour, and freshness, and were accompanied by such spiritual power that he hardly knew what it was to preach on a Sabbath without seeing somebody converted. It is not surprising that he was not long in abandoning all idea of returning home. By diligent reading and hard study he set himself to secure a thorough qualification for his work, and the four years of probation rapidly passed away. In recent years it has become by no means an uncommon thing for a young minister to travel four and even five years on his first station. But it was almost, if not quite, unprecedented in the Connexion when Mr. Wood entered the ministry. Yet such was the esteem in which he was held, that, in spite of law and custom, he remained in Hull Second till the close of his probation. On finishing probation he married, in 1855, Miss Henrietta Leonard, fourth daughter of Mr. John Leonard, a corn merchant of Patrington,

in Holderness. He has had five sons and six daughters, eight of whom are now living. His second circuit was Hull First. Such a short removal is of itself conclusive evidence that he had a "good report among the brethren," and indicates that he must have gained some reputation for mental wealth and pulpit freshness. At this time he attended with great care to the cultivation of his mind. For several years he studied under several masters with a view to matriculation at one of the universities, but the multifarious duties of a minister's life, the care of large circuits, and the distraction consequent upon becoming engaged in various Connexional affairs, upset his plans. He subsequently travelled in the largest circuits in the Hull district. Doncaster, Driffield, Scarborough, Louth, Grimsby, Hull Second a second time, Leeds Third, and Grimsby a second time, have been favoured with his ministry. Every circuit in which he has travelled has enjoyed prosperity. In several instances this prosperity has been very remarkable. Grimsby circuit became three, and its four ministers are now increased to eight. During his superintendency of the Leeds Third circuit, in three years the membership increased sixty per cent., the income was doubled, and considerable progress was made in every department. Mr. Wood's popularity as a preacher soon extended beyond his own district, and early in life he became known to the Connexion at large. His writings greatly increased and extended his fame. He has long been well known as an able contributor to the Connexional periodicals, especially the *Quarterly Review*. Subjects suited to the times on questions theological and political have been brought before the readers of the *Review* by his facile pen. Turkey and the Eastern Question, Ireland and the Irish Question, and Gloucester and its Worthies, have received exhaustive treatment at his hands. But the work which has done most to make him known as a writer, and which is likely to live in future years, is his charming biography entitled, "Sunset at Noonday; or, Memorials of Mrs. J. T. Robson, of Hull." Mrs. Robson was a gifted and devoted member of the Primitive Methodist Church, who was suddenly cut off in the midst of life and usefulness. On the title page of those beautiful memorials of a holy and useful life, is the touching and appropriate motto, "Her sun has gone down while it was yet day," and the work is fitly

dedicated to the Christian Sisterhood of all Evangelical Churches. The book is remarkably well written, and displays unquestionable ability throughout. The interest is sustained from the first page to the last. The parentage, childhood, early womanhood, and married life of Mrs. Robson, are skilfully passed under review, and the whole abounds with wise counsel in relation to each of these periods of life. A more touching and beautiful description of a Christian character, a Christian home, and a Christian life it would be hard to find, while the pathos of Mrs. Robson's early death is well brought out by the writer. The work is marked by originality, literary culture, great insight into character, great mastery of principles, and a considerable faculty of arrangement and description. It is in fact one of the best-written and most popular biographies in the Connexion. It has run through several editions, and Her Majesty Queen Victoria has been graciously pleased to receive it into her household, and has testified her high appreciation of its merits.

Mr. Wood was early honoured by being elected a delegate to the Annual Conference, and perhaps he has been as frequently, if not more frequently, a member of the Conference than any man of his age. And he has never been an obscure member of that assembly. He is not the man, under any circumstances, to hide his light under a bushel. He has too much natural ability, aspiration, and conscious power for that. Moreover, we should judge he is by no means weighted with any undue deference for authority, and being a man of convictions, he will not fail to find an opportunity for giving them expression on all occasions when he deems it desirable to do so. Another circumstance which has given him prominence in the Conference is the possession of considerable legislative faculty; he has never been impressed with the idea that finality has been reached in regard to Church polity, and for the last twelve years there has been only a single Conference that has not had some of his legislation before it. And as none of this legislation has been rejected, all having passed into law, it is evident he will leave no inconsiderable mark upon the polity of his Church. This will be all the more evident if we remember the radical and sweeping character of many of the movements with which he has been associated. Among these may be mentioned the Equalisation Fund, which for

good or evil has nearly become Connexional; the enlargement of representation in Conference; the system of stationing ministers by invitation; the Connexional system of stationing, or the "breaking down of the district barriers," as it was called; and the movement in favour of a new hymn-book. We have already intimated that Mr. Wood was closely identified with the formation of the Connexional Sunday-School Union. When it was first decided to form such a Union, difficulties of no common kind stood in the way; many of the schools were identified with other Unions, and large numbers looked with distrust and suspicion upon the new Union, fearing undue interference with their management and independence in general. Under such circumstances, it was of the utmost importance that a suitable Secretary should be secured for the new union. Mr. Wood's well-known administrative ability and organising power, his unquestionable capacity and sympathy with the young, pointed him out to the Conference, and to the Committee of the Connexional Sunday-School Union, as eminently fitted for the position. He became Secretary of the Union in 1874, and the following year he was set apart for the work as Agent and Secretary. The arduous and delicate duties of this office he discharged with consummate ability for seven years. During this period the Union was thoroughly organised; suspicion and distrust were allayed; the rules and regulations pertaining to Sunday schools revolutionised; and the entire Connexion aroused, as it had never been before, to the vast importance of Sunday-school work. Towards the realisation of these important results, we take it the Secretary contributed a very material share.

In June, 1875, a great trouble—for so he appears to have regarded it—overtook Mr. Wood. For months he did his best to keep this trouble a secret, and had it not been published in a paper by the representative of a college, it would probably have been unknown to this day. The council of the Indiana Asbury University, which is located in Greencastle, some forty miles west of Indianapolis, conferred upon him the honorary degree of M.A.

"It may be necessary," said a writer at the time in the *Primitive Methodist*, "as we have heard so much about American degrees and American colleges, to say that the University that has done our friend the honour is no 'Livingstone University,' whose

history is brief and partly written of fancy, and which has done a good, or rather an extensive traffic in degrees in this country. In the magnificent halls of the Indiana Asbury University are found upwards of four hundred and fifty students, and its 'faculty' is made up of gentlemen whose names figure among the scholarly of the world. It is under the control of the several conferences of the State of Indiana, and is conducted on the most liberal principles. It was founded and is maintained for the benefit of every class of citizens and of every religious denomination, whose sons are admitted to equal advantages and privileges of education and to all literary honours according to their merits. The University is too exalted in character and too good in purpose, either to give away or sell the honours which the Government by charter has put into its keeping. It is dishonourable to the last degree either to beg or buy a degree, as too many have done, in and out of the Church; but when conferred, as in the case of Mr. Wood, in recognition of personal ability, or, as in other cases, in honour of our Connexion, they should be worn without shame."

In 1879 Mr. Wood was elected to the office of Conference Secretary. In 1881 he became Vice-President, and the following year his brethren elected him by a large majority President of the Conference—the highest honour they had it in their power to confer. The Presidential Address which he delivered on the occasion was quite unusual in its scope and ability, and made a considerable impression on the Conference and the Connexion at large. On the expiration of his term of office as Sunday-School Agent and Secretary, he resumed the active ministry as the superintendent of the Grimsby First Station, where he is now labouring with his accustomed acceptance and success.

Mr. Wood has a fine presence—no mean advantage to a preacher.

"He is tall, erect, rather slimly built, has a long neck and sloping shoulders, a high head, a long face, a long, flowing, and handsome beard of a ginger colour, and all the lines in his personal configuration show a marked tendency towards the perpendicular. His hair is light, straight, and of fine fibre, is getting thin on the top of the head, but still retains its original colour. His features are good, his eyes blue and rather full, with a sparkle of kindly humour playing about them. Indeed, he impresses an observer as rather good-looking, and on nearer acquaintance is found to be an exceedingly pleasant and agreeable man."

His power of endurance, and long-sustained mental effort, has been abundantly shown during his term of office as Sunday-School Agent and Secretary. The strain upon him during some of those years must have been very considerable. Having to travel about the country, preaching and lecturing, and holding conferences of teachers, in addition to the large correspondence entailed upon him, it may well be supposed that only a man of very considerable working power would

be equal to this office for seven years at a stretch. In mental perception he is quick and clear, while his power of concentration is equally developed, thus enabling him to fix his attention upon a given subject until he has thoroughly familiarised himself with all its bearings and details. His faculty of arrangement and organisation, while making him highly successful in circuit administration, also enables him to array facts and arguments, and present them in a lucid and telling form to others. His humour is considerable. This characteristic, which, as we have seen, runs in the family, comes out in various forms in the pulpit, the platform, and the Conference hall. It is however kept well under restraint, and made strictly subservient to the main purpose he has in view. His keen eye for the ludicrous enables him readily to turn the argument of an opponent into ridicule, and in debate especially his power of sarcasm is wielded with considerable effect.

Mr. Wood has been an extensive reader. A man's library is not always an evidence of the extent of his reading, or the character of his intellectual make-up. But where books are evidently purchased to satisfy the mental and moral cravings of the purchaser, and especially when considerable sacrifices are required to obtain them, as is generally the case with a Methodist minister, a large and valuable library may be taken as an indication of wide reading and considerable mental culture. Few Primitive Methodist ministers possess a library equal in variety and extent to that of Mr. Wood. An examination of its shelves will reveal pretty clearly the bent of his mind, if that is not already known. Theological, historical, practical, and especially poetical works, preponderate. Philosophy and science have evidently not been neglected, but the intellectual proclivities of the owner are evidently in the direction indicated. A goodly number of works on Christian evidences, all the standard Methodist works, such as those of Wesley, Fletcher, Clarke, Watson, Jackson, Pope, and a number of minor lights, have evidently been not only read but carefully studied. But the number of works of poetry, hymns and hymn-writers, is perhaps the most striking feature of the collection. Here are the whole of Gilfillan's Edition of the Poets, all Charles Wesley's poetic writings, and in all some two hundred and fifty volumes of hymns and poetry. We are not surprised that the owner of this splendid collection should have

taken the lead in the movement for a new Primitive Methodist Congregational Hymn-book. The characteristics of Mr. Wood as a preacher will be evident to those who have not heard him, from what has been said of his mental constitution and course of reading. As a preacher he is thoroughly Methodistic and eminently practical. He is earnest and devout, lucid and vigorous, fluent and occasionally eloquent. He possesses a fine voice, not deep, but clear and silvery, which is on the whole used with effect, his style being free and conversational, but just a trifle too level. His sermons are marked by clearness of arrangement, masculinity of thought, and directness of aim. There is no laboured rhetoric or turgid eloquence, but such an earnest, forceful and lucid presentation of the truth as rarely fails to reach the hearts of his hearers. He aims at being "apt to teach," and regulates the subjects of his discourses by the circumstances of the time and the requirements of his people. After one of those great ingatherings of converts to which he is no stranger, that the "babes in Christ" may not mistake their experience, and in order to their growth and nurture, he will deliver a series of discourses on the leading Methodist doctrines, suited to the capacity and condition of his hearers. He also believes in taking hold of the lessons of Providence in the great calamities that occur from time to time. On such occasions as the earthquake in the islands of Ischia and Java, the fall of the Bradford chimney, and the Tay Bridge disaster, he has preached sermons by special announcement to crowded congregations. This indicates not only the possession of abundant mental stores, but of a certain quickness of mental action. Mr. Wood's power in this direction has enabled him occasionally to render important service to the cause of Christianity. When stationed in Doncaster some twenty-six years ago, Charles Bradlaugh, then known as "Iconoclast," visited the town and lectured on "Jesus Christ, the Impossibility of His Life and Character as narrated in the Gospels." The lecture took the town by storm. The faith of many was shaken, especially among the employés of the Great Northern Railway, of whom there were about two thousand. "Where are the parsons?" was the common inquiry; "is there nobody can answer him?" Mr. Wood at once circulated bills announcing that he would preach a sermon on the following Sunday evening, in the Spring Gardens Chapel, on "Jesus Christ, the Certainty

of His Life and Character as narrated in the Gospels." The excitement in the town was tremendous. Some of the bills were sent to the infidels of Sheffield, and a number attended the service. The Chapel was crowded in every part, and large numbers could not gain admission. For an hour and twenty minutes the preacher discoursed on the theme announced, and the service was one of the most successful he ever held. It will be seen, therefore, that Mr. Wood is a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He is now fifty-five years of age, and has spent thirty-three years in the Primitive Methodist ministry; yet in physical strength and mental vigour he is still a young man, and will, we trust, be permitted for many years to employ his matured powers and ripened experience in the service of that Church of which he is a distinguished ornament, and which he has so long and so faithfully served.

R. J.

John Atkinson.

[*Born*, 1833 : *Entered Ministry*, 1854 : *Still Living*.]

THE Rev. John Atkinson, the present Secretary of the General Missionary Committee, is one of the most active and influential ministers of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. He is now in the prime and vigour of life, and occupies a position for which he is peculiarly well fitted, and in which his influence is powerfully and generally felt in the denomination. He is above the medium height, well-proportioned, and firmly built, and enjoys general good health. His bearing is deliberate, his gait slow, and he has a tendency to stoop in the shoulders and lean forward. His hair is light brown, getting thin on the forehead and slightly sprinkled with grey. He wears a full beard and moustache. His face is of a Grecian type, his features being cleanly cut and regular in form. He has keen grey eyes, which in repose have a mild expression, but they can kindle into great brilliance; they are overhung by shaggy eyebrows; these fringe the base of a somewhat sloping and dovelike forehead, which shows a fair development of the perceptive and reflective organs. His complexion is pale but healthy. His intellectual and executive organs are all largely developed, and wonderfully well harmonised and balanced. The face and head indicate a cultured mind within; and it is clear to the most casual observer that he is a man of unusual clearness of perception, strength of reasoning faculty, and firm

determination. The general impression he first produces is, that he is calm and self-contained, knowing well his own mind, and confident of his opinions. He is susceptible of excitements, but they are of an intellectual character, and must have considerable volume of strength. Trifles do not disturb his mind, and he never wastes his strength. It is his great economy of power which enables him to do so much work without haste or weariness. He has nothing of the conventional "parson" in his external appearance. He dresses in rather a secular habit, and exhibits a contempt for the externalism and drapery of his profession. He might be a scientist, or college professor, or newspaper editor, from what can be known by his outward habit. He is a very prominent figure in the Conferences and general courts of the denomination, and wherever present he is felt to be a leading spirit. As he rises to speak in debate, he stands with his head projected forward, and his right hand stretched out, making emphatic use of the index finger. His voice is deep and strong, and well under control. He has an excellent command of choice, accurate, and clear language. When he gets into the heart of his subject, he speaks with a slow uniform emphasis which sounds like the measured tread of an army. His delivery is very forceful, and at times, when he allows his emotions play, full of tender persuasiveness. He speaks with an apparent strain upon his vocal organs, but this arises from the very strength of his ideas, and the power of his convictions. He speaks only what he believes and feels, and though it is evident he despises the tricks of oratory and the rules of eloquence, the truthfulness and moral sincerity of his speech make a powerful and lasting impression. Any person listening to him feels sure that he is speaking what he thinks to be true, and whether they agree with him or not, they cannot fail to respect him. He is manifestly endowed with great power of mental concentration, which, with his rapid facility of intellectual analysis, qualifies him to grasp at once the central principle of any subject in debate; and this, supported by his large logical faculties, enables him to follow an argument with careful precision, and to brush aside at once all irrelevant matter which mystifies and bewilders others. He is as good a thinker on his legs in the heat of a debate, as when calmly sitting in his study, and speaks always with the greatest

correctness. His keen perception, quick analysis, and relentless logic, backed by the great force of his character, and tenacity of purpose, make him an extremely awkward antagonist to have to meet in debate. Though his language is always clear and well chosen, there is nothing of an ornamental or poetical nature in it. He seldom uses a metaphor or figure of speech, and yet his style, though neither ornate nor flowing, is striking and effective on account of the severe accuracy and scientific precision of his language. He sees clearly himself, is fully convinced of the correctness of his view, and is self-possessed and calm in his statement. He strikes an observer as indifferent to applause, and as despising those tricks by which some flatter their hearers and win a momentary victory. If he carries his point in debate—and he usually does—it is by sheer force of conviction. He deals with the reason and judgment of his auditors, and not with their feelings. His comprehensive knowledge of Connexional law in principle and detail; his power of dealing with the most complicated cases; his great resource and patient mastery of detail, with his rare faculty for organisation, make him one of the most powerful men in the Conference, and have long singled him out as an administrator. He is one of the hardest-working men in the denomination. As a circuit minister, he superintended some of the largest circuits in the Sunderland district; and, during his term of office, built some of the largest and best chapels in the locality. He also acted as secretary for the District Committee and the Chapel Committee, which offices as he filled them involved as much work as was sufficient for any one man. He served on several Connexional committees, and, at the same time, did as much literary work as a person might do who was exclusively given to literature. Those who knew him intimately were surprised at the amount of work he got through; while, at the same time, he always seemed to have time to spare to entertain a friend or engage in the hospitalities of life. His knowledge of chapel building is so full and exact that he saved to the Connexion many thousands of pounds, and improved the whole character of our religious buildings. Since he has been in the office of Connexional Missionary Secretary he has largely reorganised the method of work, and has been enabled to clear the Society of a crushing debt that has paralysed it for years, and we are sure his term of office will

mark a new departure in the work of the Society. From his position, his talents, his personal character, his knowledge of Connexional law and usage, his power of organisation, and his management of men, no single man at this time is exercising a more powerful or beneficial influence upon the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

Mr. Atkinson is, in the best sense, a self-made and self-educated man. There is an unusual number of self-educated men in the Primitive Methodist ministry; men who, by force of character and native talent, have raised themselves from obscurity. The value of personal religion as an educative power is not sufficiently appreciated, because we are in the habit of confounding means with ends, and assuming that education consists in the use of certain forms. It is usually supposed that an educated person must necessarily be one that has passed through the forms of the schools; whereas it is often found, in the presence of the actualities of life, such men completely fail, and are helpless. They may have attained some theoretical knowledge, but have not learned to think or to use their own faculties; while other men, who have had little opportunity of school training, show a vigour and independence of mind, a perspicuity and precision of thought, and a clearness of perception and discrimination, which show them to be truly educated and intelligent. It is amazing the amount of superstition which still obtains in relation to this subject, and how people fail to see that the awakening of the mind to the independent use of its own powers, is true education, and that whatever tends to that is a means of education. The personal realisation of the great truths of religion is one of the most powerful mental stimulants that is experienced in life; they appeal directly to all that is deepest and most spiritual in our nature, and call into the most intense and sustained activity the faculties of the soul. He who has wrestled with the great problems of religion, who has fought his way through darkness to light and confidence, who has communed in the depths of his own heart with the mysteries, and has solved for himself the great questions of God and immortality, has passed through an educational process grander than that of any of the schools, and cannot fail to be an intelligent man.

Concerning Mr. Atkinson's childhood and early life little is known.

He was born in 1833, at Kirby Lonsdale, near to Kendal, in Westmoreland. When nine years of age he was left an orphan in the world, with no relative to exercise oversight or take care of him. A mere child, and friendless, he began the sore fight with the hard world for a bit of bread, and knew the pinch and sorrow of the poor. His early experience has left a deep and lasting impression upon his nature, and is one of the most powerful constraints in his ministry. To a casual observer he seems cold and severe, but he is easily moved by a tale of pity, and is immediately responsive to the cry of need. His sympathies are with the poor, and his knowledge of their sorrows enables him to adjust his work for their help. He is not simply careful for their highest—their spiritual—interests, but also for their temporal well-being, and is in most hearty sympathy with all action to improve the conditions of their life. In consequence of having to go to work at so early an age, he had not much opportunity for schooling, but he profited by such advantages as he possessed. He attended a Sunday school in connection with St. Thomas' Episcopal Church, Kendal. His Sunday-school teacher was a man of rare devotion, tact, and ability. He was named Robert Wallace. It is probable he passed through life unknown beyond a very limited circle, and unconscious himself of the work he had done for the Church and the world, and that now he sleeps peaceably in some quiet, unknown grave, yet he did a service for Mr. Atkinson, of which the world may be grateful. He was a bank-clerk, and lived in a quiet way. He was a bachelor, and had no immediate relations. He took a personal interest in his scholars, and acted as a guardian, seeking to advance their interests in every way possible. His sweet mild disposition, and gentle manners, his kindness and self-denial, presented to the boys a noble example. He was most untiring in his endeavours to teach his scholars the truths of the Bible, and especially to show their bearing upon practical life. He was the teacher, friend, and counsellor, of the boys, by whom he was loved and respected. He seems to have been particularly drawn to the orphan boy, and over Mr. Atkinson he exercised a most powerful influence for good. Through him his mind was early disposed God-ward, and to self-culture. When he was about twelve years of age, Mr. Atkinson formed a companionship with

a printer's apprentice, who was a few years his senior, and who introduced him to the Mechanics' Institute and the Working Men's Library. This companion was very imperfectly instructed himself, but he was enabled to afford a little help and guidance to his friend, and the two diligently devoted themselves to repair the accident of their birth and circumstances. There is something heroic and ennobling in the sight of those two poor boys, impelled by no influence but the native love of knowledge, spending their spare hours at the Mechanics' Institute, or groping their way in company through some instructive treatise. These two men—Robert Wallace the banker's clerk, and Henry Brockelbank the printer's apprentice—influenced the early life of Mr. Atkinson more than any other persons, and did a great deal towards the formation of those first principles and ideals which have so powerfully, though perhaps unconsciously, moulded his life and determined its course.

At fifteen years of age he went to Staveley, a village about equi-distant between Kendal and Windermere, to learn the trade of bobbin-turner. The relationship between the employers and the apprentices was on the paternal basis, but the condition of the latter was often hard and rough. Separated from the early ties and from the kindly services of his two friends, Mr. Atkinson suffered at first great mental depression ; but he fell back upon his own native strength, and in the midst of most unhappy environment preserved his love of mental culture. All the outward surroundings of his life were cold and uninviting, there was nothing to keep alive in his soul the higher elements that had been awakened, or to urge him to further endeavours to reach a nobler manhood, and wistfully he looked back to the happy days in Kendal, which he thought were gone for ever. The influences from without were too strong, and he was yielding to the rough, coarse life of the place when the great change occurred which altered the whole current of his life, and lifted him into the position for which he was naturally so well fitted.

The Primitive Methodists had a small chapel in the village, and were intensely active in evangelistic work. Several bobbin-turners had been converted, and were local preachers ; and these, with the ministers from Kendal, kept up a series of revival services. The apprentices often went

to create disturbance and spend an idle hour. Among others, Mr. Atkinson went one evening, with no thought but of sport. The preacher was Mr. Edward Almond, who still resides in the village, and is facetiously known as "The Bishop." When Mr. Atkinson entered the room the preacher gave out Charles Wesley's hymn—

"Depth of mercy, can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God His wrath forbear?
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?"

The solemn manner in which the hymn was given out, the personal character of the words, and the peculiar experiences through which he had passed, made our friend feel very serious, and when the preacher repeated the lines—

"Lord, incline me to repent;
Let me now my sins lament;
Now my foul revolt deplore,
Weep, believe, and sin no more,"

he felt his heart going out with the prayer. Before the service closed, he felt the burden of his sin weighing upon his conscience, and he resolved to seek the love and forgiveness of God as the chief end of life. As might be supposed from the character of his mind, he had a long and weary search to find the entrance to the way of the blessed life. He was not to be deceived by a strong surge of emotional excitement, he needed satisfaction for his mind; and only through a dark travail of sorrow is it possible to reach confidence. In his perplexity and search for Christ, Mr. Mathew Taylor,—"Father" Taylor as he is well and worthily called,—rendered him great help, and watched over him with paternal solicitude. Here, among these simple unsophisticated people, in the quiet village hid among the hills, he found the great treasure, the pearl of great price, and became consciously an accepted and forgiven son of God.

A number of young men were converted in the revival which followed, and these were formed into a class for mutual improvement, without any person of education among them; and with few books, and little means of procuring such, these young men went through a course of training which was so thorough, that at least a dozen of them passed

into the ministry of our own and other Churches. Several of them are Congregational ministers, some are serving in the Established Church, and others in the various denominations of Methodism. The course of study included grammar, logic, philosophy, and theology. The travelling preachers, on their occasional visits, gave great encouragement to the class, and rendered assistance in books and counsel.

Shortly after entering the Church Mr. Atkinson's name appeared on the plan as a local preacher, and in this capacity he gave evidence of great gifts and fitness for the work of the ministry. He was noted for his zeal, earnestness, and ability. After doing his duty all the week in the factory, on the Sundays he would travel great distances in that rough country district to preach to the outlying population, and he had the satisfaction of seeing many souls converted. He was known as a zealous and successful evangelist, and as soon as he was freed from the bond of his apprenticeship he was called to enter the regular ministry.

His first circuit was Shotley Bridge, in the county of Durham, which then covered a wide area, where there are at present several circuits. His first superintendent was the Rev. Moses Lupton, one of the most able men then in the ministry. He was familiarly known in the Connexion as "Moses, the Lawgiver." He was a severe disciplinarian, methodical, firm, and decisive. His influence upon our friend was very considerable; and to him he is in some measure indebted for his business habits, his love of ecclesiastical law, and his acquaintance with Connexional usages. In the later years of his probation he passed under the influence of Rev. C. C. M'Kechnie, which was altogether of a higher and more spiritual order. Under Mr. M'Kechnie's guidance he recommenced the study of philosophy, and soon made himself acquainted with the English and Scotch schools, and the famous masters of Germany. His intellect is of a peculiarly metaphysical cast, and in the subtleties of the master-science he found himself at home. Through the assistance of Clark's Foreign Theological Library he also familiarised his mind with German theology, and is deeply and widely read in the various schools. Immediately after finishing his probation he was appointed to the superintendency of the Stokesley circuit, which involved the cares of a station; but he did not allow this to interfere with the work of self-culture, or the pursuit of knowledge.

He has since superintended some of the largest circuits in the Sunderland district, and at a critical period was elected the Secretary for the General Missionary Committee.

From an early period in his ministry Mr. Atkinson became a writer in the Connexional *Quarterly Review*, and through its pages has contributed largely toward the higher education of the denomination. Many of his articles on philosophy and theology are worthy of finding a more permanent form, and of having a wide publicity. His contributions frequently brought him into correspondence with the leaders of thought in the philosophic and theological world, and the late author of "The *à priori* Argument for the Existence of God," thanked him for his exposition and defence, which he has acknowledged was the ablest he had seen. His habit of thought and course of study had been exclusively of a severe character, and it was thought that he was wanting in imagination and the lighter movements of the imagination; but the series of articles he contributed to the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* on the English Lake District, vindicated his right to poetic sensibility and graphic descriptive power. Besides his contributions to the *Quarterly Review*, and the various magazines of the denomination, we are disclosing only an open secret in stating that he is the principal on the staff of the judiciously-conducted newspaper, *The Primitive Methodist*.

A casual observer is apt to regard him as rather unsocial, but on closer acquaintance this impression is wholly removed by the geniality of his manners, the kindness of his disposition, the warmth of his heart, and his large considerateness. He is one of the truest friends, the most unselfish companion, and the kindest neighbour whom a man could know. He has the power of attaching others to him with indissoluble bands, and exciting in them a love and attachment that nothing can sever. We judge he has lost few friends in the journey of life. A man of such a positive temper could not fail to make opponents and drive some from him, but they have been few in comparison to the number he has won, and by his influence, example, and precept, helped up to a larger and fuller life. He has known the discipline of sorrow. He has been called to bear a full share of the bereavements and trials of life, but they have in no way embittered

his spirit or lessened the bright hopefulness of his heart; in fact, they have deepened his sympathies and enriched his life, and made him a more spiritual and able minister of the gospel of God.

Mr. Atkinson is recognised throughout the Connexion as one of the leading mėn of the denomination; he has already rendered service as Conference Secretary, and we are sure that it cannot be long before he is called to occupy the chair as President, and he is well fitted to grace that position. Apparently there are many years of useful labour before him, in which he may render great service to the Connexion which has done so much for him and many others, and to which he is so loyally attached, and such a worthy son and servant.

H. G.

William Graham.

[*Born*, 1835 : *Entered the Ministry*, 1860 : *Still Living.*]

WHEN in 1860 William Graham entered the Primitive Methodist ministry, the Connexion was celebrating its jubilee. During the fifty years of its history a marked change had been effected in the practical life of the people of England. The social condition of the working classes had been improved, the conscience of the nation had been quickened, and the morality of the people was better than that which obtained at the beginning of the century. The Primitive Methodist missionaries had succeeded in establishing churches in every quarter of the United Kingdom. As these churches had been built up almost entirely on ground unoccupied by other sections of Christians, and in not a few instances out of material regarded as hopelessly bad, it may be fairly claimed that the work of the Connexion had contributed partly to the improvement which had come over the morals and life of the country. Men were not rare at that time who had known Primitive Methodism from the commencement of its history, and the more observant were not slow to discern that a change was coming over the Connexion itself. The old methods were not wholly abandoned, but they were undergoing considerable modification, and the men who were now the most active agents of the cause differed distinctly in character from their fathers. The change was both natural and necessary. The new conditions

demanded work of a different type from that which had hitherto succeeded. The marked intellectual activity of the working classes required a fresh presentment of the truth; besides, there were many whose godliness had enabled them to rise into positions of comparative affluence, whose families had enjoyed considerable educational advantages, thus making a cultivated ministry a necessity. The type of minister needed was forthcoming. Apart from schools and universities, there were forces operating that gave the Connexion the men it wanted. Railway communication, the press, the complexity of the life of society, and the higher organisation to which the Primitive Methodist Church had been brought, in addition to other remoter influences, all worked to meet the requirements of the times. When William Graham was appointed to a circuit in Primitive Methodism, it secured the services of a man whose endowments fitted him for rendering services of the highest kind.

William Graham was born on 16th November, 1835, at the Moat, on the Esk, a mile and a-half from the village of Netherby, West Cumberland. There are reasons for concluding him to be a descendant of the Border clan, the Grahams of Netherby, who in more lawless times distinguished themselves as freebooters, and who showed themselves a match for the Howards and their other neighbours on both sides of the Border, alike in the small intrigues of baronial life and the use of warlike weapons, amongst the hills and passes they loved so well. William Graham's lot was cast amidst scenes less exciting than those in which his chivalrous ancestors lived. His father was a miller. When he was seven years of age he was sent to a school in Liverpool, remaining there about four years, during which he obtained, in addition to something of technical education, a knowledge of town life. Afterwards for about six months he lived with an uncle as farm boy near Preston, where he obtained some insight into Lancashire country life. So far he had known nothing of hardship, but about this time his father was taken ill. The necessities of his home required him to return to West Cumberland, and in the rough work and questionable associations of a coal mine contribute to its maintenance. This was a sore trial to him. Apart from the reverses in the family fortunes and the hard work to which he had to apply himself, the

rudeness with which he was brought into contact was altogether out of harmony with his naturally fine sensibilities. He never sunk to the level of his coarse companions, however; and in one respect the rough life amidst which he was compelled to live, but against which his heart was in a constant state of rebellion, produced a good effect,—it taught him to appreciate as he might not otherwise have done the services of the house of God, whose atmosphere he found more congenial to his nature than that which he was compelled to breathe during the week. He was accustomed to attend the Baptist chapel and Sunday school at Broughton along with the Rev. John Snaith, who afterwards became a Primitive Methodist minister also, and whose family were members of that church, and occasionally he might have been seen at the Wesleyan chapel. At this time his mind was often stirred with serious thoughts, but no decided step was taken towards the commencement of the religious life.

Another influence had to be felt by William Graham before this crisis was reached. Primitive Methodism was not much known in those parts, never having been quite so successful in the north-west as in the north-east. A few churches, none of which were of vigorous, robust life, had, however, been planted, and in connection with them religious services were regularly conducted. At a missionary meeting addressed by the Rev. Joseph Spoor, whose power as a public speaker will not soon be forgotten in the north of England, a deep impression was made on the mind of William Graham. The missionary platform was the place in which Mr. Spoor found the freest exercise for his gifts. In this instance his impassioned utterances did more than create a passing sympathy in his audience with the missionary enterprise. In the heart of William Graham they produced an intense desire to serve with his life a cause so worthy in itself and so full of benefit to man. It would be unwise to attribute his conversion wholly to the feelings aroused within him at this meeting. Sunday school teaching and the preaching of both Baptist and Wesleyan ministers had their effect; but his contact with Mr. Spoor, first of all at the missionary meeting and afterwards at a cottage preaching service, so far deepened his former good impressions as to lead him to consent, along with some other young men, to have his name put upon the class-book.

That he was ever thought of as a public speaker is to be accounted for largely by the strength of his personality. He was seventeen years of age when he became a member of the Church, and a few months only had elapsed when he made his first appearance as a local preacher. Nothing is more certain than that he was forced into this work. Naturally fearful, and inclined to seek a back place, a public position had no charms for him. Despite his natural modesty, however, he succeeded in impressing the churches in his favour. At the foundations of his life was working a spiritual fervour which made him sympathise with all the movements of the neighbourhood that were of a religious character. Into any quiet church work not likely to attract attention he threw himself with a heartiness and enthusiasm which obtained for him the reputation of being extremely pious. Though constitutionally vastly different from the passionately eloquent preacher, Mr. Spoor, whose words had fired his soul the first time he had been privileged to listen to him, it became evident that he had caught his spirit. It was seen too that there was more in him than a devout mind. He was thoughtful beyond his years. His discourses were not what the sermons of young preachers too often are, adaptations from popular authors, and scraps of eloquence culled from various sources. His utterances were distinguished by a freshness and naturalness which stamped them as the outgrowth of his own mind. The reputation he had made for himself at the beginning was well-sustained. Those who were watching him became confirmed in their conviction, that with fair opportunities he was destined to become a leading spirit in the religious movements of the neighbourhood. When he was yet a lad he was appointed to the leadership of a class. There were others with more lengthened religious experience, and whose age might have entitled them to the position in preference to a young man barely twenty. Yet the choice was regarded as a prudent one. His wise counsels were wholly free from priestliness, and whilst commending themselves to the judgment of his members, strengthened them in holy purpose and desire, and refined and deepened their religious experience.

All this religious work added to his secular duties did not prevent him seeking mental improvement. Time and opportunity were not

over abundant, but what was lacking in privilege was atoned for by diligence. Some idea of his earnestness of desire for the cultivation of his mind may be formed by the fact that, in those days of hard work and small leisure, he acquired a good knowledge of English grammar by studying it as he went to and from his place of employment. Other forces in addition to his own efforts were contributing to the formation of his mind, and the increase of his store of information. The ministers lodged at his home when they were in that locality, and the fortnightly visit was looked forward to as a time of real enjoyment and interest. The early preachers of the Connexion gave a good deal of attention to pulpit preparation, and many of their discourses were brimful of instruction. But to the favoured few who had the chance of hearing their conversations after the service, and of taking part in the discussions on metaphysics, philosophy, and theology, these visits were especially interesting. It was impossible to come under the influence of Mr. Spoor without having a religious earnestness awakened in the heart, and William Graham's contact with him created a kind of demonstrativeness, which carried him out of his natural diffidence and led him to give greater freedom to the exercise of his gifts. There were other ministers who affected him differently. Some encouraged reading, and gave valuable direction in the choice of books, others advised him to practise composition and sermonising. A band of young men was formed who, during the absence of the ministers, discussed amongst themselves the hard problems raised by Scotch metaphysics, and the bulky volumes of Christian evidences, which at that time constituted the most profitable investments of publishers, and were regarded as the main defences of the Faith. When the ministers paid their next visit they were plied with questions which threatened to confuse the masters as much as they had confused the pupils. In their readings they did not confine themselves to English productions. The works of Edwards, Finney, Hodge, and other American divines were eagerly examined, and made the ground for much argumentative warfare. Much of that literature is now out of date, but these studies had at least one beneficial effect, they produced intellectual activity. A chief danger of village life, the tendency to mental stagnation, was avoided. Whenever a new position was

mastered, the sense of victory gave them stimulus to new efforts, which more than counterbalanced the temptation to ease and self-indulgence. None of them profited more by these influences than William Graham. Indeed he was regarded by his companions as an authority only second to the preachers.

In the year 1859, when he was twenty-four, he was recommended for the ministry by the Rev. Moses Lupton, who was then occupying a leading position amongst the ministers of the Connexion in the north of England. Mr. Lupton was severe in his temperament, and not over-inclined to take a favourable view of young men generally. He recognised also the importance of the work of a minister of Jesus Christ. In his estimation no other could be compared with it; and he was firm in his conviction that none but the best men—men sound of heart, capable of intellect, and in the case of a Primitive Methodist, having a fair share of physical stamina—should aspire to the position. That he should have thought of William Graham as suitable was in itself no mean recommendation. But, in addition to this, the terms of his recommendation were hearty and earnest. The Sunderland Circuit was the largest and most influential in the North. The town congregation, too, bore the reputation of being critical and difficult to please, and in their social life made heavy demands upon their preachers. Mr. Lupton knew this, but he was sure of his man, and without reserve advised the circuit to give the call to William Graham; and the circuit, having ample confidence in the sagacity of Mr. Lupton, acted upon his advice.

If William Graham had worked hard up to this period, his industry did not abate with the changes of life that were overtaking him. He had never looked upon his entrance into the ministry as the reward of his efforts and the beginning of a life of comfort and ease. In his boyhood he had not been troubled with dreams of a ministerial career, which are as often the outcome of a spirit of vanity as of the divine operations. Since his conversion there had doubtless been in him an impatience with the hard rough surroundings of his life. It was no vanity, but the necessary consciousness of superior talent, that told him he had been made for better things, and which led him to think that a career in which he would have access to books, be allowed to associate

with intelligent and educated men, and in other ways find exercise for his gifts, would be a desirable change. And with his soul fired with the religious zeal which was the secret of the power of the early Primitive Methodist preachers whom he had known, he felt that no career could have met his tastes better than the one upon which he was now entering. But he never thought that the day of effort was over. He continued to study hard, and must have had something like an instinct for choosing books. In those, the first years of his ministerial life, he read Milton, and that other English poet who has had more to do with moulding the minds and determining the character of the work of the other poets of this country, during the last two centuries, than any one else, Edmund Spenser. "Paradise Lost" and the "Faerie Queen" are books that most people can talk about. The results of an attempt to ascertain how many even of those who pretend to at least a moderately good acquaintance with English literature have read them, might be startling, and the opposite of complimentary to the persons concerned. The books in question are not easy reading, and students who can revel in Herbert Spencer, and get excited over the famous "Analogy," do not always feel themselves equal to the majestic dignity and gorgeous imagery of John Milton, or the grotesque although magnificent romance and serious tone of Edmund Spenser. These authors took a firm hold of the heart and mind of William Graham. Their religiousness suited his feelings, the play of fancy in the conception and arrangement of the strange figures who play their parts in the two stories awakened his profoundest wonder, and the classic style, which never once lapses into commonplace, created in him a delight in the mere sound of the words,—words which only the highest genius could have marshalled into such fine combinations. He read these works until he could quote with ease the passages in them that are the least known, and felt himself living with the forms of good and evil which these masters had called into being. His study of these two English classics has not only given him a purity of style and fineness of diction seldom found in self-educated men, but likewise a quickening of the imagination, which has ever since manifested itself in his wealth of illustration and general mental resource.

It is a far cry from Paradise Lost and the Faerie Queen to the

metaphysics of Hamilton, Reid, and Mansel. But William Graham's energetic mind found in these masters of the Scotch school of philosophy matter interesting enough to command his attention. It is not too much to say that they determined his theory of the universe. More recent thinkers have sought to prove that the doctrine of the unknowable is self-contradictory, and out of harmony with the facts of human experience. The doctrine may or may not be true, but at least it must be allowed that it has fascinations for those who have sought to take a large view of the mysteries of being and who see that unanswerable questions will arise out of every possible philosophical position. Few men will see more clearly than William Graham the objections that may be raised to the theories which he may have adopted. In listening to his conversation on the deeper problems of life and morals, one is impressed with the diffidence of his mental attitude, a diffidence which makes him afraid of stating his conclusions, and the care with which he seeks to avoid error. The unknown back-ground of being has assumed in his imagination such large proportions, and he is wont to gaze with such intense desire on the dark outline of things invisible, that he is scarcely conscious of the near and comprehensible. Calmly, and by a road that looks easy and clear so long as he is the guide, he leads one on to the very confines of the "immensities and eternities," until confronted by obstinate questionings he suddenly stops. The fortunate listener finds himself in regions he has never traversed before, and wonders at the reach of the intellect that has led him thither; but he also sees that this powerful intellect is baffled, and that beyond its best efforts there lies the awful and mysterious. To a mind thus constituted perhaps the philosophy of Hamilton affords the surest hope of finding repose, and hence, although he has given impartial consideration to other theories, he has never got beyond the influence of his first masters.

When William Graham had been in the ministry about ten years, he was recognised as a man of mark. There have been less powerful intellects who have been noticed in half the time. But even now he is self-repressive to a fault, and then this quality amounted to actual shyness. It was impossible, however, for such talent to be permanently obscured, although it might have to wait awhile for its opportunity.

The chance was presented when he had to give an address before the ministers of the district on "Rationalism among the working classes." The keen apprehension of the causes of the rationalistic tendency in their own inner life, and in their environments, the discrimination between a transient feeling and what might prove permanently dangerous, the fairness and lucidity of the argumentation and the comprehensiveness of his grasp of the subject which he displayed, fairly surprised those who had not known that a man was amongst them of extraordinary gifts. His influence ever since has steadily increased, and has been specially powerful in affecting the minds of the other Primitive Methodist ministers in the north of England. He is loved and honoured alike by those whose tendency is towards evangelicalism, and by those who claim to belong to a broader school of thinkers. There are in him qualities which account amply for the high esteem in which he is held. A stranger meeting him for the first time will be struck with his appearance. He is above the average height, well-proportioned and powerfully built, with large limbs and broad chest. After admiring for a moment a physique so magnificent, the eyes are fascinated by the head, which any artist, wishing to realise that of a Greek philosopher, might covet for a model: a head broad, high, massive in every way, and well-formed, and crowned with a profusion of silken hair, which even now when he is under fifty years of age is white as silver; sallow of complexion, with features wanting a little in brightness, there is nevertheless indicated in the fire of his eyes, which have in them a restless roll and intensity of gaze, far more of vigour and energy than he is often credited with. The general impression which is conveyed by those who feel his presence is massiveness. Those who are best acquainted with him have a difficulty in realising that he is not a young man despite the slowness of his movements. Being devoid of the severity which generally characterises those who have reached middle life, and possessing a large share of playfulness of disposition, he is able to enter sympathetically into the feelings of people much younger than himself. Beyond doubt this quality gives him a great influence with young ministers. Besides, he never drives them away or causes them to close their minds against him by any show of a spirit of intolerance. He encourages rather than checks

their intellectual activities, having too much confidence in goodness and truth to think that an honest heart will wander permanently, and lose itself forever in error. A temper so tolerant has naturally inspired the younger ministers with confidence in him, and led them to seek his aid often in connection with their difficulties. His helpfulness may be accounted for partly by the fact of his own earlier struggles. He has himself known something of the temptations to doubt Christian doctrine. But his righteousness of nature, even more than his intellectual gifts, has kept him near the truth. After wandering awhile in solitary places seeking for rest, he has invariably found it necessary to return to the old paths. The ancient doctrines of the faith are not held by him as credal statements which he has been taught to repeat and accept. They live in his soul as truths necessary for his peace and salvation; and having battled with the difficulties which beset others, and to some extent overcome them, he is able to give counsel to such as are feeling after divine things if haply they may find them. Whilst holding firmly by the orthodox statement of Christian doctrine, he has read into it a large meaning which saves him from being considered old-fashioned in his method of thinking. There is a story told of his interpretation of the passage in Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. A young minister had been preaching from the text, and had combated the notion held by some, that the patriarch was making reference to the advent of the Son of God, arguing that Job's mind was busy with thoughts of his own griefs and wrongs, and that he was only asserting his faith in God as the Supreme Righteousness, and the Vindicator of the suffering. William Graham heard the sermon, and in a kindly spirit afterwards asked the preacher if there was not more in the passage than he had been willing to admit. He granted that the thought uppermost in the mind of the suffering patriarch was the one indicated, but still he believed there were notions, sometimes faint, sometimes more definite, underlying their utterances that righteousness would be established upon the earth by some person whom God would send for the purpose. Here was a flood of light for the young preacher. It gave him a clearer understanding of the passage in question, and also, what was more valuable, a key to the proper interpretation of other difficult parts of the Word.

William Graham is no iconoclast. The ideas of other men he seldom interferes with, but for the most part contents himself with a presentation of his own views about Scripture teaching. Although many of his sermons may be fairly regarded as the productions of a genius, it is never difficult to discover the purpose of them. His power of analysis is equalled by that of few living men, and his magnificent sweep of intellectual vision enables him to see so many sides of a subject, that the synthetical process would be an impossibility to a mind less strong and philosophical. It is this combination of gifts that enables him to clothe with freshness the most ordinary texts, and also to draw moral and religious lessons of the highest practical use, out of the passages which seldom receive attention at the hands of the ordinary preacher. Especially is he happy in giving moral instruction when dealing with one of those peculiar historical narratives of the Old Testament, which a student possessing less spiritual insight might regard as out of place in a Book whose one end is moral. But when William Graham has cast upon it the light of his penetrating eye, it is no longer difficult to see that all Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness. Out of passages which the less ingenious could regard only with a certain intellectual interest, as maintaining the thread of the history, he brings reproofs of the evil of the time, and helpful stimulus to virtue. A severe critic, when he listens to his preaching for the first time, might be inclined to say that his style of speaking is slow and heavy, but before long this feeling wears off. His words are uttered slowly, but they are charged with no ordinary weight of signification; and if there are fewer of them than more rapid speakers might have given in the same time, not much reflection is needed to see that the few words have expressed more meaning than is usually conveyed in a single discourse. Besides, his language is so chaste and poetic, so fresh and varied, and the style so well adapted to the character of the thought, that it is soon discovered, if he does not possess all the qualifications of an orator of the first rank, he has the essential characteristic of the effective speaker—naturalness. In his nature, too, there is a remarkable mingling of quaint humour with genuine pathos, which is manifest in his utterances. He never fails to see the side of his subject calculated to arouse amusement. Even in the pulpit his mirthful sallies often light up the

faces of his audience with a quiet smile. On the other hand, he feels so keenly the sorrow and perplexity of human life, and realises so vividly the mysteries of being, that at times his voice trembles, descends to a deep bass note, and ends almost in a whisper, whilst an expression of intense sadness and pity suffuses his countenance as he exclaims like one in an agony of pain, "the truest wisdom is to have faith in God."

Only a passing mention need be given to his judicial temper, which, however, contributes to the fineness of his interpretations of the Scriptures. That quality, however, which gives character to his discourses more than any other, is the vivid and profuse imagination, which, whether it be regarded as a natural gift, or as largely acquired by his study of Milton and Spenser, constitutes him a prose poet of no mean order. If imagination

> "Is but another name for absolute power,
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And reason in her most exalted mood,"

the possession of this quality is one of the first privileges of an intelligent mind. It is possessed by William Graham, giving an artistic unity and completeness to his conceptions, enabling him to express his thought in the finest combinations of words, and imparting to him a play of fancy which refines and beautifies all his utterances.

A man of such separate personality and strong parts, could not help taking a leading position in the various Connexional movements that have arisen in his time. A new intellectual life was just springing up amongst the ministers of his Church when he began his career as a preacher. Its pioneers had presented the truth to men in a rough, literal, realistic manner. There had been a peculiar power in their messages too. But the younger men felt the need of a larger creed, and of new methods of interpreting the Scriptures. They were troubled with questionings of which the fathers had never dreamt. The hard theological systems which had once been sufficient to settle every difficulty, were now seen to be faulty in their logic, unsatisfying to the heart, and as defences of the faith, weak. They had served a useful purpose, for although the younger men refused to pin their faith to them, they had awakened a spirit of inquiry and an intellectual restlessness which could result only beneficially. As the outcome of

this new movement, a Ministers' Literary Association was formed, the aim of which was to bring before the attention of its members the leading religious, philosophical, and scientific questions of the day. It was started about the time that William Graham began his ministerial life, and at the present time is as interesting as at any period of its history. From the time that he was made a member of it, William Graham has always taken a leading part in its debates, whilst the higher mental culture, of which it may be regarded as the expression, owes considerably to the influence of his individuality.

The work he has done directly for Primitive Methodism has been of the most valuable kind. Early in life he was stationed at Lowick, and there succeeded in giving the cause a position which it had not previously enjoyed. From Lowick as a centre he missioned the villages which now constitute the North Sunderland circuit, and in each place to which he carried the message of the Gospel, formed a society. Where circuits and societies have been torn by dissensions, he has often rendered efficient service. In 1874, an unfortunate circumstance led to the severance of several hundreds of the members from Primitive Methodism in Sunderland, and the establishment of a new rival Church. Disloyalty and bitterness prevailed to a great extent even amongst those who did not forsake the religious community with which they had been connected from their early days. It was difficult to find men who could be trusted to effect a pacification of the people and a reorganisation of the circuit. William Graham was appointed, and succeeded far beyond the expectations of those who had a true conception of the magnitude of the difficulties with which he was confronted. The spirit of conciliation, which he is always able to show in emergencies of this kind, when the work to be done is of the most delicate nature, constitutes him an admirable manager of men; and yet the most irritable and unreasonable who have any acquaintance with him would never think of attributing his desire to conciliate to weakness. In his circuits he is always trusted and loved. Considering the character of his own intellectual and religious life, it might be thought that the more simple-minded and ignorant of his people would scarcely be able to appreciate him. And perhaps they do not always realise the value of his utterances, or understand how precious are the thoughts which

he gives them with so much quiet and unpretension. But it is impossible for them to fail to appreciate his manly Christian spirit and kindliness of heart. And even amongst the crudest and least informed of his congregation it is not unusual to hear them saying one to another, "What a wise man William Graham is," indicating that even they have an idea that he is gifted above the average.

William Graham's work has not been confined to the pulpit and platform. For many years he has been a contributor to the Connexional magazines. The following are a few of the subjects upon which he has written :—"Mohammedanism;" "Buddhism and Christianity;" "The Intuitive Theory of Morals;" "Neighbourliness;" "The Image of God in Man;" "The Characteristics of Christ's Teachings;" a few short tales and one serial, which is remarkable for the marked individuality of its leading characters, and the originality yet naturalness of its situations. But the two literary performances which reflect upon him the greatest credit are his reviews of Tennyson's "Harold" and "Queen Mary." His friends were aware how thoroughly he had studied the English poets who were not dramatists, but they were hardly prepared for the evidence given in these reviews of his acquaintance with Shakespeare. And yet no one who had not studied the great dramatist could have written the articles in question. Those who knew the man who had penned them were prepared for a high appreciation of Tennyson's genius and spiritual insight, his subtle questionings about invisible things, and the healthiness of his moral teaching. But they did not expect the discriminating judgments from the point of view of the dramatist, nor anything like so much of keen criticism of what were evidently great efforts on the part of the Laureate. At the same time, the nervousness of the reviewer's style, as opposed to anything like dogmatism, made his strictures all the more weighty and pungent, and caused his articles to be regarded as valuable contributions to the discussion of these dramas.

A large share of official work has fallen into the hands of William Graham. Enjoying the confidence of his brethren, he has been appointed to various secretaryships, has served on examining and other committees, and once has been secretary to the Conference. And yet, busy as his life has been, his friends have the impression that he

is capable of better things than up to the present he has done. Men whose natural abilities are inferior have made more stir in the world, and attracted attention with less labour. His fault is not a lack of energy. Although his outward movements are not rapid, his intellect is always busy. At times he manifests a power of concentration, and when there is work that must be done, a dogged perseverance that enables him to sit at his desk right through the night in order to finish his secretarial or literary work. But he has no personal ambition. Thoroughly devoted to the Church to which he has given his life, and always anxious for its welfare, he never seeks for his own fame. In William Graham Primitive Methodism possesses one of the few men in the world who have illustrated in their action the principle given in the Book,—"In honour preferring one another." But for this virtue, so rare, and yet so admirable, he might have been as much honoured over the whole area of the Connexion as he is in the north of England, where all his work has been done.

R. H.

John Gordon Black.

[*Born*, 1791 : *Died*, 1851.]

AFTER the Poll Deed—which gave legal status and establishment to the Primitive Methodist Connexion—had been enrolled in Chancery, in the beginning of 1830, the names of twelve persons—four ministers and eight laymen—were inscribed in it as permanent or life members of the Annual Assembly or Conference. The last of these twelve names is that of John Gordon Black, lime manufacturer, of Sunderland. Though he had then been a member of the Connexion barely seven years, his conspicuous business energy and ability, and his great devotedness to the infant cause, had made it impossible for him to be overlooked when the Conference selected its most prominent adherents for the honour of enrolment in the legal charter of the new community. "For many years," as one has said, "he was, taking him for all in all, unquestionably the most powerful man in the Primitive Methodist Connexion in the north of England."

John Gordon Black was born at Silksworth, near Sunderland, 21st May, 1791. His early life was marked by not a little of the strong sense, thoughtfulness, keen intelligence, and enterprising spirit which afterwards, in their fuller development, made him so influential, both in the Church and out of it. He was twenty-one years of age before he became converted, and in the summer of 1823, joined the Primitive Methodists in the town of Sunderland, whither he had just previously

gone to reside. At that time, the project for a large chapel in Flag Lane was on the point of being launched. Mr. Black became a trustee for the contemplated new property, and by his energy and wise counsel rendered great help in what was for those early days a most serious and weighty undertaking. He also soon became a class-leader in the Church, and continued in that capacity until his death. Some of his friends, impressed by his conversational gifts, prevailed on him to begin to preach; but though he gave several public addresses, which were well received by his hearers, he himself was so completely convinced of his unfitness for the pulpit, that he quickly caused his name to be removed from the plan, and could never afterwards be persuaded to renew the attempt.

It was in theological debate, and in matters of business that Mr. Black's powers appeared to the best advantage. He was a man of quick, clear, penetrating perception, with a full Melanchthon-like forehead, dark visage, and keen, glittering bluish-grey eyes. His mind was of logical cast, and he took great delight in argument. Being also of hospitable turn, nothing was more agreeable to him than to have gathered round his table ministers of his own and other Churches, and to engage them and himself in various theological and ecclesiastical discussions. He had wonderful adroitness in guiding and moderating these friendly debates. In theology, his own sympathies were somewhat strongly Calvinistic. He was an enthusiastic admirer of the old Puritan divines—Howe, Baxter, Owen, and Henry being his chief favourites, but he was well versed also in other schools of theology. Still he was essentially a Puritan, and looked at all questions from the Puritan point of view. His strong, practical sympathy with the temperance cause, and his conscientious regard for the sanctity of the Sabbath, were the direct and natural product of his Puritan temperament.

He was a Puritan also in his love of rule and power of administration. He impressed all who had any dealings with him as the type of a statesman. The stern energy of character, which made him so successful as he was in his own business, was even more conspicuously displayed in the various ecclesiastical assemblies of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. His influence at the Quarterly Meetings of the Sunderland circuit (which have been the scene of many a pitched

battle) was potent. He was the acknowledged leader of what might be called the ministerial and oligarchical party; and though he was occasionally worsted by the strong democratic feeling which even then often manifested itself, his rare natural force and shrewdness enabled him usually to score a victory.

In district meeting and Conference, his debating ability found, of course, wider scope, and he never failed to make a deep impression whenever he spoke. Among the lay members of the Conference, no one but Thomas Dawson could fairly compete with him in debate. "Dawson," says one who knew both men well, "was undoubtedly one of the most acute and powerful reasoners I ever knew, but Black was a match for him. He was, indeed, inferior to Dawson in oratorical reasoning, or, as I should say, in the oratorical adjuncts of reasoning, and hence, he could not so powerfully impress an ordinary jury. But for sheer cogency in arguing a case, I have seldom met his superior. I have seen him beat Dawson hollow." Mr. Black's manner in debate was perhaps not the most prepossessing. His language was often needlessly strong, and his tone somewhat intolerant and dictatorial. He failed very frequently—as such men naturally will—to fairly recognise and admit the merits of his opponent's case, but none who heard him could doubt either his sincerity or his strength. He had indeed the thews of a son of Anak, and wielded his polemic lance with great skill and effect. A dash of satire often gave pungent flavour to his words, especially when he was dealing with a pompous and pretentious antagonist.

It was impossible, indeed, to associate with Mr. Black in any capacity without being impressed and influenced by his strong, intense personality. His personal endowments, backed by his success in business, gave him great social influence, and he would undoubtedly have become a sort of minor civic king, if his constant ill-health had not kept him back. During his day Primitive Methodism was a great social power in Sunderland, and in large measure this was due to Mr. Black. He may almost literally be said to have lived, moved, and had his being in Primitive Methodism. He drew all his family (and he had a large number of children), and immediate relatives, into membership with the Primitive Methodist Church, and was always

busily engaged, directly or indirectly, in promoting the interests of that community. He never lost an opportunity of publicly proclaiming, and glorying in, his identification with it. A more loyal or devoted Primitive Methodist never lived than Mr. Black.

At the same time, he was large hearted in his sympathies with other Churches. He opened his house to the ministers of other communities as freely as to those of his own. He was a member of the Evangelical Alliance, and took great delight in attending its meetings, and advancing its interests. On one occasion he wrote :—"I am sure the meetings were sanctioned by the Great Head of the Church. Myself and many others hardly knew whether we were in the body, or in the Paradise of God. I ardently desire that I may retain the savour I then felt, and never lose it more. I pray that this day's services may make an impression on the Churches and people of the town that will not easily be obliterated." Only a week before his death he was announced to take the chair at a meeting of the London Missionary Society in Bethel Chapel, Sunderland. He was for many years a prominent member of the committee of the Town Mission, and of the committee of the Protection of Women and House of Refuge Society. Some of the last words he spoke were in reference to the prosperity of these institutions. Though hospitable he was not particularly liberal in the dispensing of his wealth, owing perhaps rather to faults of training than of nature. Many of his friends always thought him seriously lacking in this respect, though he took some considerable interest in missions, and aided the Sunderland circuit to send missionaries to Scotland, the Norman Isles, and the South of England. He also built a chapel, chiefly at his own expense, at Kintsley Grange in the Shotley Bridge Circuit, and made it over to the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

His death took place at Sunderland, in the early morning of 9th September, 1851, at the age of sixty, and his funeral three days later. He was interred in the churchyard of the old church at Bishopwearmouth, and his remains were followed to the grave by the whole of the Nonconformist ministers of the town, and several members of the Society of Friends, besides a very large number of Primitive Methodist ministers and laymen. We close our sketch of him by quoting two or

three testimonies to his worth and usefulness. Dr. Paterson, of the Free Church of Scotland, says:—"He was one of the few worthies to whose warm and unsectarian zeal, the friends of vital godliness in all denominations are much indebted, and whose memory they cannot but cherish with great respect. He was a constant supporter and useful friend of our Evangelical Alliance. His hand was ever ready to every good work. And now that he has gone to his reward, he will be greatly missed. It is right and profitable that such a man in going down into his grave should be followed by those marks of honour to which his memory is entitled, and which may help to fix the attention of many to consider the good example he has left behind him." The Rev. T. Morris, of the Scotch Secession Church, one of the patriarchs of Presbyterianism in Sunderland, writes:—"He was a good man, who loved his God, honoured his Saviour, and laboured to advance His kingdom's interests. The town has lost a valuable citizen; the kingdom a true patriot; and the Church of God a devoted servant." The venerable Hugh Bourne, one of the founders and fathers of the Primitive Methodist Church, also wrote:—"Your letter informing me of the decease of our highly respected friend and brother in the Lord, Mr. John Gordon Black, filled my heart with sorrow, not on his account, for in regard to himself his removal, we have cause to believe, is glorious, but to part with a man who for so many years has been such a friend and father in the Primitive Methodist Connexion is both weighty and important." In little more than a year from that time Mr. Bourne had joined his departed friend in the land of light and peace.

J. D. T.

Thomas Bateman.

[*Born*, 1799: *Still Living.*]

THE most impartial and by far the ablest of Wesley's biographers claims that "Methodism is the greatest fact in the history of the Church of Christ." Comparing its history with the first two centuries of the Christian era, and with the Reformation begun by Luther in 1517, he argues—after pointing out the value and importance of these earlier movements—that Methodism is greatly superior to either, both in the progress realised and in the extent of country over which it has spread itself. Now, what Tyerman claims for the Methodist movement as compared with other religious movements, may, with equal truth, be claimed for Primitive Methodism when compared with the various sections of the great Methodist Church. During the first forty years of its history, its rate of progress more than doubled that of the great movement under Wesley, and since that period, its success has been greater than that claimed by any of the younger branches of Methodism. This marvellous success is doubtless attributable in a great measure to the zeal and devotion of its ministers; but, while not disparaging their work, we claim that it has been largely realised by the voluntary and self-denying labours of its laymen. We, of course, admit that this may be said to apply to the older Methodist Church, but not to the same extent; for, while Wesleyanism has always restricted the rights of laymen, in Primitive

Methodism those rights are absolute and universal. From the first this community has sought to give scope for the exercise and development of the lay talent in its midst. All its courts are open to them, and they stand on the same level as those who have been set apart to the work of the ministry. They share not only in the evangelistic efforts and secular affairs of the Church, but in all matters, whether affecting the ministry or the general government of the Churches; and they have thus contributed largely to its growth and success. To its laymen—to their devotion and loyalty, and to their voluntary service, as much, perhaps, as to any other cause—Primitive Methodism owes its present position among the Churches in the land. Its 15,000 lay preachers, drawn mainly from the working-classes, constitute a source of strength and a capacity for effective service, which forms one of the most hopeful features of our connexional life.

In this honourable and useful body of Christian labourers there is no more prominent figure than Thomas Bateman, of Chorley. Born at Chorley, in Cheshire, in October, 1799, he is now in the eighty-fifth year of his age. His parents were farmers, but beyond that we know nothing, except that they were associated with the Established Church, and that his father devoted himself with untiring industry to parochial matters for a period of forty years. In early life he attended the services of the Episcopal Church with his parents, and became a scholar and afterwards a teacher in the Sunday school. Here he continued for some years, and, possessing a nature that was open to spiritual influences, the instruction he received impressed his mind and favourably disposed him to religion. These early impressions were deepened under the earnest and pointed ministry of the Wesleyans, at whose place of worship he occasionally attended during his early youth. His conversion, however, Mr. Bateman ascribes directly to the Holy Spirit, whose influences he plentifully enjoyed. Having realised this spiritual change, he at once connected himself with the Wesleyan Church, and became strongly attached to its services. His attention was first directed to Primitive Methodism by reports of a gracious awakening that had taken place in a neighbouring village under the ministry of Mr. John Wedgewood, one of its most successful missionaries. But his ardent attachment to the Wesleyans led him for some time to hold

aloof from the new movement. At length, however,—his brother having received spiritual good from Mr. Wedgewood's ministry,—he was induced to go and hear him; and so marked were the manifestations of the presence and power of God connected with his ministrations, that he felt drawn towards the infant cause. The "older Church" had strong attractions for him, but after much serious thought and prayer he united himself with the Primitive Methodist Society. This important decision took place towards the close of 1819, and since then he has devoted himself with great earnestness and ability to the furtherance of its interests. As soon as it became known that he had identified himself with this youthful society, the members of the Wesleyan Church made vigorous efforts to induce him to enter their ministry. Others connected with the Episcopal Church, who recognised his abilities, desired his father to send him to one of their colleges to study for holy orders. But Mr. Bateman was immovable. He had calmly and deliberately made his choice, and though convinced of the sincerity of the offers that were made, they were powerless to move him; to use his own words, "Trying to move me by talking about honour, exaltation, or gain, was like trying to beat down a rampart with a snowball."

He soon gave promise of usefulness, and, in 1821, was called to fill the office of a lay preacher, in which capacity he has faithfully served the Connexion for sixty-three years. The exhausting toil involved by this office in the early history of Primitive Methodism can now only be faintly realised. The circuits were wide and the labourers few, and hence long journeys and hard labours fell to the lot of both laymen and ministers. Mr. Bateman took his full share of this arduous work. For the first ten or twelve years he devoted every Sabbath to evangelistic labours, and in addition, took from two to five preaching appointments almost every week. His journeys on Sundays were from ten to forty miles, and on week evenings from five to fifteen; and as he always took his place with the men on the farm from Monday morning till Saturday night, it will be readily seen that his labours must have been both heavy and exhausting. But his whole heart was in the work; feeling that he was called of God, he cheerfully obeyed the Divine voice, and went forward to his work in faith, and was made a blessing to many souls.

Those who have made themselves acquainted with the history of Primitive Methodism will be familiar with the character of its early religious services. They were marked by great simplicity and earnestness, and were often accompanied by marvellous manifestations of the Divine presence. Many of the early preachers were men of great spiritual power. Living in daily contact and fellowship with the unseen and eternal, the great verities of the spiritual realm were as real to them as their own existence. They dwelt in the secret of the Most High. And hence when they spoke to the people their voice was as the voice of God, calling them from the death of sin to a life of spiritual character and purity, and the services they conducted were seasons of great spiritual awakening. In his reminiscences of the early days of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, Mr. Bateman gives some interesting accounts of these services. Often when addressing the people in barns, at market crosses, and on village greens, he was favoured with striking tokens of the saving presence of God. We cannot forbear referring to one of those efforts, which serves to illustrate his pointed and forcible style of address. At March Lane, near Nantwich, he was called upon to improve the death of one of Mr. Wedgewood's early converts. A large concourse of people assembled in the open air to hear him. After discoursing at some length on the triumph and blessedness of the departed dead, he closed his address with the following earnest appeal :—

"Your neighbour and friend is gone—yes, gone in the strength of his manhood, in the blossom and vigour of his youth. You will hear his voice in the prayer meeting no more. You, too, are going—going quick ; and the fearful end that fixes your final doom may be nearer than you are aware. The pale horse and his rider are already on your track. Hark ! don't you already hear the click of his iron hoof. Nearer and still nearer the sound comes. Hell and destruction are close behind. Oh ! I beseech you, by all that is dear to you, as you value your souls, delay no longer—but fly. Oh ! instantly, earnestly fly to mercy's out-stretched arms ; or the door will be shut, and like the foolish virgins you will find yourself shut out. What will you do then ? Whither fly ? Or on whom call for help ? Your once loving Saviour turns from you, saying, "Once I would ; then ye would not. Now, I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh. Depart from me.' Your die will then be for ever cast—no ransom can deliver you—even mercy's strong arm will not be strong enough to save you. The day of grace for ever ended, the last hope gone, nothing before you but a fearful looking for of fiery indignation and the wrath of the Lamb. Oh ! my God, my God, save both me and all these dear souls from such a terrible end, for Christ's sake. Amen."

The effect produced by this impassioned appeal was most striking. As he spoke a deep and dread solemnity fell upon the vast audience, the Divine Spirit took hold of many hearts, and in the praying service which followed, many gave themselves to Christ; some of whom became useful lay preachers and fellow-labourers with him in the Gospel. Such results often attended his ministrations of the Word of Life. And as he went from village to village and from town to town in his native county, his audiences—often large—were moved to penitence, and multitudes sought and found the peace and rest of God. His fame as a preacher and platform speaker now spread far and near, so that his services were in constant requisition for all kinds of special work in connection with his own and other Churches. "His figure in the pulpit," says one, "will be remembered long after he has passed away. Homely in his diction, he yet possesses a marvellous command of language, and a perfectly inexhaustible store of illustration. When deeply moved by his subject, he is intensely earnest, and his words thrill and vibrate through his audience. His face, lighted up with eyes of peculiar penetration and brilliancy, is familiar from the borders of Staffordshire and Shropshire to the borders of Wales. And as the father of Methodism in Cheshire he presents a unique and loving figure in its religious history."

Besides the talent for preaching and public speaking, Mr. Bateman possesses business capabilities of a high order. It is therefore not surprising to find that he has been intimately connected with the legislative arrangements and general business of his Church for more than half-a-century. His abilities in this direction were early discovered, and hence the highest official position in his own circuit and district soon fell to his share. In discharging their varied duties he demonstrated his integrity, industry, and ability; and was shortly made a member of the General Committee—a court which manages the public business of the Connexion between the Annual Conferences—and was frequently elected by Tunstall District Meeting as one of its representatives in the Conference. In 1851, he was chosen to fill a vacancy in the list of Deed Poll members—a body of twelve persons in whom the Connexion is legally vested, and who, in virtue of office, are permanent members of the Conference. And since that time he

has always been found in his place in the annual assembly, and has devoted himself with intelligence and zeal to the duties of his high position.

During this term of years the Connexion has made rapid progress, and important legislative changes have taken place, permanently affecting the interests of the Church. These changes have been gradual, and, speaking generally, they have contributed to its strength and prosperity. In the consideration and discussion of these grave questions, Mr. Bateman has generally been to the front, and his contributions to important debates have not only evinced his tact and shrewd common sense, but his thorough knowledge of the constitution and laws of the Connexion. Being a man of strong individuality, fearless, and untrammelled either by fear, or by the desire to please, his speeches, as a matter of course, have sometimes been unpalatable to his opponents. Moreover, in later years, his natural conservatism, and his almost superstitious reverence for the past, have betrayed him into an impatience and nervous dread of change that is scarcely worthy of him, and brought him into conflict with the progressive and more radical section of the community. But even those who differ most widely from him, on these points, admire the bold fearlessness with which he maintains his views, and honour his sincerity and constant solicitude for the prosperity of the cause of God.

The most signal proof of the esteem and love with which Mr. Bateman is regarded by his brethren is to be found in the fact that he has twice been elected by considerable majorities to fill the presidential chair of the Conference. On both occasions, in 1857 and 1867, he discharged the duties pertaining to his high position with ability and acceptance, fully justifying the confidence reposed in him by the Connexion. On resigning his office to his successor, at Sunderland in 1868, he congratulated the Conference on the general prosperity of the Connexion; referred with deep emotion to the fathers with whom he had often associated in Christian labours, and to the feeling of isolation he experienced in consequence of their removal from us. But he hoped that the work of God would continue to move on, and that showers of blessing would descend on all parts of the Connexion. He concluded by urging all present to maintain their

Primitive simplicity, to live for God and the promotion of the public good.

It will be readily conceived that the discharge of these varied and important duties must have severely taxed both Mr. Bateman's time and abilities; and yet somehow he has found time to render efficient aid to other objects; and to other Churches to whom his services are always welcome. The British and Foreign Bible Society has always had his sympathy and hearty support; in fact he has attended its annual meeting at Nantwich for more than forty years in succession, besides acting as unpaid deputation at many other meetings in his own locality.

Though a staunch Nonconformist from principle, and a loyal supporter of its claims, he is perfectly free from bigotry; hence the Episcopal Church has derived great benefit from his exertions. Indeed few men in his sphere of life have rendered such valuable secular aid to the Establishment as Mr. Bateman. When a new peal of bells was needed for the church of his native parish of Wrenbury, the work of raising the money for obtaining them was cheerfully and successfully performed by him. And when a far more important thing than bells was needed—the augmentation of the scanty living of the clergyman—this valiant and generous-hearted dissenter set about this work also, and succeeded, with an incredible amount of labour, in raising the noble sum of £1200. This amount he invested in the purchase of land, the rent of which, £40 per annum, was added to the incumbent's salary. Other services, less brilliant perhaps, but not less valuable, extending over a period of fifty years, have been cheerfully rendered to his native parish—services by which its numerous charities have been rescued from misappropriation, and devoted exclusively to their legitimate objects,—the better support of the poor and the apprenticing of their sons to such trades as may render them respectable and useful members of society.

These important and disinterested public services were felt to demand public acknowledgment, and on 13th October, 1864, an influential meeting was held at Wrenbury, when a costly testimonial was presented to Mr. Bateman, with every expression of esteem and admiration. Its value was £75, and it consisted of a silver tea and

coffee service, toast-rack, black marble timepiece, and an album containing the congratulatory letters which had been sent by subscribers to the testimonial. The meeting was large and thoroughly representative; and those present seemed to vie with each other in their expressions of goodwill. The minister of the parish (the Rev. Mr. Aldis) paid a high tribute to Mr. Bateman's integrity, ability, and catholicity of spirit. He said:—

"When he came to the parish eighteen years ago, a certain legal gentleman said, 'Are you aware that you have a lion in your parish.' He confessed, however, that whatever lion-like qualities he had found in his good friend Bateman he had never had cause to be afraid of him, or tempted to get out of his way. He was looked upon by his co-religionists as a leader, and he was glad that he deserved that epithet. As clergyman of the parish he had experienced for many years the worth of his clever head, right mind, and kind heart. They had heard the singularity of one of his achievements spoken of that night, namely, the exertions he had made to benefit the temporalities of the Church. In view of this they might give out a challenge to his native place of Chorley, and say, 'Bring me a second like him;' nay, the parish might speak to the county, and the county to the country, in the same terms."

Mr. Bateman bore his honours meekly, and acknowledged the testimonial in appropriate terms. In the course of his remarks, after referring to his long connection with the parish, and modestly reviewing the work he had sought to perform, he replied to an objection which had been taken to his conduct. "Some say," he observed, "'I wonder why he does this? The Church is rich enough already; why can't he do something for his own people; they are poor enough.' I grant both these things; but I say further, when these objectors have travelled as many hundreds of miles as I have, and have given as many hundred addresses, and collected as many hundreds of pounds for their own people as I have done for mine, they will be in a better position for making such remarks."

As this reply indicates, Primitive Methodism has had by far the largest share of his valuable labours. The Church of his early choice has always been dear to his heart, and for more than sixty years he has devoted himself with untiring zeal to promote its best interests. In his own county of Cheshire, there is perhaps no man now living who has contributed so largely to the spread and progress of Methodism; and far beyond its limits his name is a household word in thousands of Methodist homes. It is therefore gratifying to find that the Church

he has served so faithfully and long, has not allowed his services to pass without public recognition. This took place on 20th March, 1871, when 700 people assembled in Nantwich Town Hall to do him honour. The meeting was most enthusiastic, and several ministers and gentlemen bore testimony to his high character and sterling worth, and to the important services he had rendered to the Church of Christ. During the proceedings, Mr. Thomas Wood, in the name of the assembly, presented a testimonial, consisting of a beautifully executed scroll, together with a purse of seventy-five guineas and a silver teapot. The scroll was worded as follows :—

"This scroll, with a purse containing seventy-five guineas, is presented to Mr. T. BATEMAN, of Chorley, Nantwich, by his Christian brethren of the Primitive Methodist denomination, to commemorate the jubilee year of his connection with that body as one of its earnest and faithful local preachers; and it is intended to express to him the great esteem in which he is held by them for his character and his work's sake, and to convey to him their heartfelt wishes and best desire for him, that the eventide of his life may be peaceful and happy, and the end safe and triumphant, through faith in Christ Jesus, his Saviour.

"It bears testimony to the abiding character of his life to the truth, and to his constant walk in obedience to his teachings for more than fifty years; to his fidelity to the denomination he joined in the freshness of his first love, notwithstanding various seductive influences; to his ability and eminent good sense as a leader and local preacher; to his humility, forbearance, and Christian charity; and to the respect in which he is held by good men of all denominations. To the honour due to him in his election to the presidency of the Conference in 1857 and 1867, and to the efficient and wise manner in which he discharged those duties. It speaks of his courage and endurance as a soldier of Christ; and it testifies on his behalf, and at his request, to the abounding grace of God to him at every period of his history, and of his confidence in the continuance of the same grace until he stands up in the richness of Christ among the redeemed in glory.—NANTWICH, 20*th March*, 1871."

Mr. Bateman suitably replied in an address at once worthy of the occasion and of the man. Thirteen years have passed since then, and the venerable old man is still with us; and though in the eighty-fifth year of his age, his activity of mind and energy of body may well excite the envy of many a younger man. His long experience, now mellow and ripe, is sanctified to God and the public good.

As a guardian of the Nantwich Union, he still officiates as vice-chairman of the Board, and continues to manifest the same unswerving and faithful devotion to his trust, and the same kind and sympathetic

regard for the poor, which for forty years have characterised his earnest and eventful public life.

In reviewing his laborious and successful career, we are at a loss which to admire most—the man or his work. He is truly a representative man. A man of keen intelligence, of sound judgment, of broad sympathies, and of deep Christian piety; a man whom you can love much, but venerate and trust still more. Throughout his remarkable life, his private character and public career have been marked by an unflinching constancy, by an uncompromising integrity, by a fearless courage in the cause of truth and honour, by a calm indifference to the voice of censure or praise, in all matters of conscience and right, and by an earnest, moral purpose, and self-abnegation, which have rendered his life a daily sacrifice to the public good.

"He never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with eternal God for power;
Who lets the turbid streams of rumour flow,
Through either babbling worlds of high and low;
Whose life is work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life:
Who never speaks against a foe,
Whose sixty winters freeze with one rebuke,
All great self-seekers' trampling on the right."—TENNYSON.

J. G. B.

George Charlton.

[*Born*, 1808: *Died*, 1885.]

THE name of George Charlton, Primitive Methodist Local Preacher, Temperance Reformer, Alderman, Poor-Law Guardian, and Justice of the Peace, has long been almost a household word in the North of England. His once tall, lithe, and firmly-knit, though somewhat stooping figure, surmounted by a large, well-formed head, with its covering of whitened, wavy hair; his strongly-marked features, deep-set, penetrating eyes, high cheekbones, slightly contracted brow, and strong, yet mobile mouth, are known more or less familiarly all over the six northern counties, and even beyond their limits; but best, of course, in Northumberland and Durham, where the work of his singularly busy life has been mainly achieved. By dint of sheer energy, and faithfulness to moral principle, he has risen to a position of high social honour and influence, and has won the sincere esteem of all sorts and conditions of men. He has finely illustrated the inscription on a monument to an old Ironside of Cromwell, in a certain Northern parish church, "A good man is a public good." Mr. Charlton's career has done much (and this is not one of the least of its merits), to show the falsity and viciousness of the popular distinction between what we call sacred and secular things. It has proved conclusively that Christianity, frankly and purely embodied in human life, is the best secularism; that a man may be an active,

earnest citizen, and social reformer, and yet abate not one jot of his religious faith; nay, to put the matter in its true light, may find in his religion the most effective and enduring inspiration for his public work in the world. In Mr. Charlton there is that synthesis of high religious fervour with practical sagacity and public spirit, which it is the fashion in some quarters, now-a-days, to pronounce impossible. The Christian faith in an individual, immortal future does not make men indifferent to the claims and duties of the present. Mr. Charlton's interest in the affairs of this world has not been less but more keen, has not been less but more influential, because he has believed unfalteringly and fervently in the world to come.

The intensely practical bent of Mr. Charlton's mind is undoubtedly due in large part to his Northumbrian origin. He was born near Hexham, 8th September, 1808. There is a tradition, which Mr. Charlton himself is disposed to doubt, that he is descended from certain moss-troopers of feudal times, who dwelt on the North Tyne, and helped to make the borders or marches of England and Scotland in those days a place of dread. It is certain, at anyrate, that his grandfather came from that region to settle on a farm near Hexham, and there is a leading family of the same name still living in the North Tyne valley, the members of which are said to be not a little proud of their imputed freebooting paternity. Probably Mr. Charlton owes much more of his characteristic practical energy to those lawless men than he is always willing to allow.

His religious life began in 1824. In that year he went to Blaydon-on-Tyne, to reside with his brother, and to be apprenticed to the occupation of a butcher. His brother was a local preacher among the Primitive Methodists, and entertained periodically the first Primitive Methodist missionaries who visited Tyneside. Here young George met such men as William Garner (whom he had heard before in the open air at Hexham), and William Suddards, and many others. The godly life and earnest preaching of these pioneers of Primitive Methodism deeply impressed him, and he quickly decided for Christ. In a year or two afterwards he began himself to preach. Mr. Charlton's religious history shows as clearly as any part of his career his strong practical bias. He is no *doctrinaire*, no theological theorist, no arm-

chair speculatist. His religion loves the broad, healthy open air of everyday life. It has little of the meditative or contemplative in it. The philosophy of religion, the speculations of theology have little if any attraction for him. He loves to dwell on its plain, experimental, homely aspects, and is indeed apt to be terribly impatient of all bookish and dainty theorisings. We have heard him speak, with a scorn which might almost be called withering, of anything approaching in the least to pulpit dandyism, or simpering pedantry. His own preaching has always been simple, natural, manly, sensible, and straightforward, couched in the purest Saxon, free from all tricks of oratory, and pervaded by an honest desire for the spiritual benefit of his hearers. Mr. Joseph Cowen, M.P., a life-long friend of Mr. Charlton, gives the following interesting description of the first time he saw him and heard him speak :—

"It was," says he, "when I was a lad, some five-and-twenty years ago,* and the impression of that meeting is more vividly implanted in my mind than events which have transpired within the last few months, and in which I have been concerned. There was to be a Primitive Methodist camp-meeting near where I lived, and at that meeting I was told that a lady was to speak—a good and honest lady, a distant relative of my own, Bessy Newton. Never having been at a camp-meeting, and never having heard a woman speak, I was induced to go. The place where the meeting was to be held was one of great natural beauty. It was a valley, a verdant valley then, now, however, it is built in by chemical works, factories, and coke ovens. The grass is blackened by coal smoke, and the leaves and branches of the trees are wizened by the chemical fumes. But at that time, sir, it was a place that might not inappropriately be likened to that almost classical spot which poor Burns made immortal as the trysting place of Highland Mary,—

"There summer first unfolds her robes,
And there she longest tarries."

The day on which the meeting was held was equally attractive. It was one of those quiet, still, peaceable, summer Sunday evenings; an evening such as can be seen, I believe, at greatest perfection still in rural England. The sun was declining behind the hill; the air was laden with the perfume of new-mown hay and wild flowers; and, as I approached the meeting, the congregation had just been singing the beautiful hymn by Bishop Heber, commencing—

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand."

And, with that, up rose a tall and manly frame, and in clear and ringing tones, and with a powerful and pathetic voice, pleaded on behalf of the moral principles of Christianity in a way that I have never heard surpassed. Since then, gentlemen, I have heard the

* This was spoken in October, 1875.

same cause advocated by distinguished dignitaries of the English and Romish Churches; I have heard some of the ablest ministers of the Presbyterian faith expound the Christian Gospel, amongst them the manly and eloquent Dr. Chalmers, one of the best and noblest of our modern divines; but I never heard the first truths of Christianity put with more power and pathos than by that plain Methodist preacher at the camp-meeting in the valley of the Tyne—the man whose services we have met this evening to recognise and to honour."

In 1828 Mr. Charlton left Blaydon for Newcastle-on-Tyne, to commence business there for himself. His great executive energy and steady business habits quickly won for him—if not a large fortune—a simple and modest competence, which set him free while yet hale and vigorous to devote himself to public affairs. His end in life was not to amass money, but to do good, though he has no false cynical contempt for money by any means. He has since his retirement from regular business been connected with several speculative enterprises, and in all these, as in his own occupation, he has exhibited a diligence, sagacity, and administrative skill which have proved him a thoroughly capable man of the world. For more than thirty years he has been a poor-law guardian, and his judiciousness and broad common sense in this capacity are acknowledged by all his colleagues. From a very early period of his life—in fact, from the date of his settlement in Newcastle-on-Tyne, he has taken a foremost part in the chief political movements of the times. The movement for Catholic Emancipation, or the removal of the Civil Disabilities of Roman Catholics (one of the most important controversies that ever agitated the inhabitants of any country—important for the principle of equal freedom of conscience for all involved in it) was then making rapid progress towards final success. Mr. Charlton threw himself into the fray with characteristic energy and ardour; and none was more sincerely rejoiced than he, when on the 13th of April, 1829, after little more than a month's debate in both Houses of Parliament, the famous Catholic Emancipation Act became the law of the land. The Reform agitation, which ended in the Act of 1832, and the movement for the abolition of the odious corn laws found Mr. Charlton once more to the front. Mr. Cowen says:—

"The second time I remember meeting my friend, was when impressed by the teachings of the great Italian, Mazzini, and inspired by the revolutionary ardour of the enthusiastic French poet, Lamartine, I crowded amongst the undistinguished throng

into the Guildhall, Newcastle. There I found Mr. Charlton enforcing the right of the people to complete enfranchisement. Since then Mr. Charlton and I have met many times on public matters. We have been on many committees together, and at numberless public meetings; and I can say that I do not think there is any great political movement, or any great social effort that has engaged the attention of the people of this district and of this country for the last twenty-five years, respecting which Mr. Charlton and myself have not seen substantially, face to face, and eye to eye."*

Referring to these early political struggles, Mr. Charlton has sometimes been heard to say playfully, that in those days, "he fought with beasts at Ephesus."

In November, 1873, he was unanimously elected Mayor of Gateshead-on-Tyne, and held that position for two successive years. Many of his warmest friends, as well as others who could scarcely be called friendly to him, knowing the restless vigour of his temperament, and the strength of his convictions on the subject of temperance, feared that he might not, as chief magistrate, hold the balance of justice with perfect equality—in a word, that he might be unduly hard both upon the liquor-sellers and their poor victims. And it must be confessed that this is precisely the danger of a temper like Mr. Charlton's. This is, as we may say, the defect of its quality—a certain dogmatic narrowness of view, an inability to enter into other minds, and to see the merits of the opposite side of the question. But to the credit of Mr. Charlton's shrewdness and self-knowledge be it said, that he himself felt the danger and did his best to guard against it. At the public meeting held in the Town Hall, Gateshead, to celebrate the completion of the second year of his mayoralty, he said, "When I was appointed to the position of chief magistrate, I determined, strictly and honourably, as far as I knew it, to discharge my duty. I did not want to stretch the law in order to carry out any crotchets so-called of my own." And at the same gathering, the late Archdeacon Prest testified to Mr. Charlton's fairness and integrity, in the administration of justice, in the following words:—

"When at the end of his first year's mayoralty, the question was put as to who should succeed him, it was felt that none but himself could be his parallel. When on the bench, where a man sat in the full light of public observation, where, undoubtedly, critical eyes and censorious minds were watching and weighing his words and his actions, none were found to wag a tongue against him. He had done his duty as a just judge,

* Speech in Gateshead Town Hall, 29th October, 1875.

with no weak or unworthy hand. He had administered a law which was meant to repress sin and to diminish misery; but at the same time, no man had come before him, and above all, no woman had come before him, who had been brought into distress by sin, without receiving from him words of such kindness, and deeds of such love, as showed that he was, while just and true, also good and merciful."

And from the address presented to him at the same meeting we quote the following passage to the same effect:—

"Your conduct while administering the law of the land, and presiding over municipal affairs as chief magistrate for Gateshead, has elicited unanimous expressions of satisfaction from your fellow-citizens. The urbanity that springs from high-toned benevolence has in your case availed to soften, without impairing the vigour, of an unbending rectitude."

As a fitting recognition of his services to the borough of Gateshead, he was created a Justice of the Peace towards the end of 1875, by the Conservative Lord Chancellor, and a memorial drinking-fountain was erected by his friends in the Gateshead park—acquired during his mayoralty. The fountain cost £200. It is of dressed free-stone, with polished granite and marble facings, polished granite basin, and various floral decorations and emblems. With the statue surmounting it, it is about twenty-one feet high. Mr. Charlton has been represented by the sculptor with mayor's robes and chain, and the likeness is a very striking one. The inscription, simple and dignified as befits the man, is as follows: "To George Charlton, Esq., J.P., Mayor of Gateshead, 1874 and 1875, in recognition of his labour in the cause of social reform." Though, perhaps, we may be allowed to doubt with Archdeacon Prest whether the bare name "George Charlton" would not have been an even more appropriate device.

This inscription, however, leads us to speak briefly, of what has after all been the main work of Mr. Charlton's busy life—his crusade against intemperance. This is the title by which he will be chiefly known and remembered, "The Apostle of Temperance in the northern counties." To the promotion of social sobriety the best energies of his life have been given. When he began to preach teetotalism it was scouted as a silly, fanatical craze, but he has lived to see the principles which were then so unpalatable, receive the sanction and adherence of the best and wisest in the land. He has been a member of the Committee of the United Kingdom Alliance almost ever since its origin;

for fourteen years he has acted as Secretary of the North of England Temperance League, and he has addressed innumerable meetings in all parts of the country on every aspect of the temperance question. As an illustration of the success which has followed his indefatigable toil, we may mention that in one year he rescued from intemperance no fewer than seventy persons. His style of temperance advocacy is strong and effective. He can say hard things, and sometimes *intemperate* things, but he says them with an evident sincerity, and with a racy humour and quiet drollery which completely disarm those who differ from him. His wit is sometimes sufficiently caustic, he can be bitingly sarcastic when he chooses; but we do not know that he has ever used his unquestionable power in this respect to needlessly wound or irritate an opponent—except, indeed a conceited and pretentious opponent. Then his satire, which is ordinarily mild and lambent, becomes most scathing. His addresses, like his sermons, are marked by sterling good sense, ripe experience, shrewdness and trenchancy. Mr. Charlton has always taken a rational view of the political aspects of the temperance question, and of its relation to religion. He has shown his wisdom in accepting thankfully even the smallest instalment of legislation for the promotion of the sobriety of the people. He is not one of those who pettishly refuse a part because they cannot secure the whole. Though an ardent radical, he has constantly recognised that progress, to be sure and stable, must be slow and gradual. He has united passion and patience in an admirable way. And he has never forgotten that the ameliorating of external circumstances by legislation is only the lesser half of the problem of how to deal with human sin and suffering; in a word, that regulation is not regeneration. Hence he has not failed to point out the deeper, inward remedy which the Gospel of Jesus Christ supplies, and to urge men to be content with nothing short of an entire renewal of heart; because in that lies their only safety and their only strength. "It has never been atheistic philosophers," he once said, "who have put the world right, but the men who have received the lessons of the grand old Book. And if England is to continue great, the teachings of that Book must take hold of the minds of the people, and in proportion to the reception of its great truths will the nation be lifted from thraldom, misery, and wretched-

ness, and be inspired by influences calculated to promote its best and highest interests."

We have only a word or two to add respecting his simplicity, and the courage and consistency with which he has proclaimed his convictions. When he was elected Mayor, he resolved to set his face like a flint against certain official customs—such as extravagant expenditure over mayoral and municipal banquets, and he carried through his intention with praiseworthy persistence. He dared to be simple and singular in this respect, and so administered a timely rebuke to the spirit of vulgar display and of mammon-worship which too often rules in such matters. As Mr. Burt, M.P., said, "Men ought to be put into the office of mayor for their intellectual and moral fitness, and not for simply having a long purse. I am glad that Mr. Charlton did not hesitate to break through many of these municipal customs, which are certainly more honoured in the breach than the observance." But besides his sturdy simplicity, Mr. Charlton has shown also the true English doggedness and resoluteness of temper. At the public breakfast, to which we have just referred in a note, given to him soon after his second election to the mayoralty (and at which Dr. Cairns delivered an able and sympathetic speech) Mr. Charlton said he was one of those individuals who had all his life laboured in the minority, and yet, strange to say, he had always been on the winning side. A minority was very frequently right; although it might be kicked, trampled upon, and scorned, yet it worked deep into the inner heart of the people, and eventually ruled the world. And on another occasion he urged young men not to be satisfied with merely assenting to principles. "You must carry them out," said he, "To faith add courage. The apostle knew that the difficulty in starting life was want of courage, and that was why he said, 'Add to your faith courage.'" Mr. Charlton himself held firmly and incorruptibly to the sound principles of social and religious progress with which he began public life. He died on Tuesday, 15th September, 1885, at his residence at Bensham, while the preceding sketch was passing through the press.

J. D. T.

William P. Hartley.

[*Born*, 1846 : *Still Living*.]

IN the development of Primitive Methodism the first stage was purely impulsive and evangelistic. The members, generally won from a life of sensuousness and ignorance, became enthusiastic evangelists, and devoted themselves with great earnestness to awaken their neighbours and friends to a sense of sin, and the knowledge of salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They were possessed of the true propagandist spirit, and were heroic in their self-denial and perseverance. They saw men moving forward thoughtlessly and carelessly toward a dark, frowning eternity, and with outstretched hands rushed forward to pluck them as brands from the burning. Their ideas of sin and salvation were rude and elementary, but they were vivid and intense; there was no indefiniteness, no haze, no bewilderment, no chilling doubt or division of thought. Sin to them was the transgression of the law; the law was inexorable, and demanded satisfaction. Christ met the claims of the law and paid the penalty due to our sin; and whosoever availed themselves of the work of Christ were saved, but whosoever failed to do so were damned. They literally interpreted the Scriptures, and materialised things unseen. Hell-fire was not a figure of speech representing a spiritual condition, but an objective reality. Hell was a real place where the unregenerate were cast, and where the smoke of their torments

ascended for ever and ever. They saw men moving forward in a solid phalanx toward that awful yawning chasm, which moved to meet them at their coming; and they were prepared to sacrifice any personal interest, to endure any hardship, if by any means they could rescue them; men and women, boys and girls, all became preachers. The women, rising above the timidity of their sex, and inspired with a pure passion of humanity, rushed into the streets, crying, "Turn to the Lord, and seek salvation." That was the battle cry that rang through the country, and which was heard on lonely village greens and at the market-crosses. The whole Connexion was an evangelistic society, and every member a worker. Salvation was principally interpreted in an objective sense, and therefore one condition which was attained instantaneously through the exercise of faith. God pardoned the guilty sinner and renewed the depraved heart when the penitent exercised faith in Christ as the propitiation for his sin, and thus men were freed from the condemnation of the law and the power of the Evil One.

As the number of converts increased and the experience of the leaders advanced, they began to see that it was not only necessary to get people converted, but to teach them the way of righteousness—the right way to live; and so a second stage was reached in the development of the Church life and organisation of the denomination. It is impossible to fix any date when this second stage was reached, because it varied in places according to the number and intelligence of the members. In some places it was early reached, and in others the process is even now in operation. The new phase which aimed at Christian culture demanded new conditions and new forms of sacrifice from the people. The first meeting-places of the denomination were the open-air, barns, stables, lofts, and dwelling-houses, any kind of place where a crowd of people could be gathered together; but now it became necessary to have more suitable and convenient places. The first chapels were rude and primitive structures, but as the temporal condition of the people improved, and as they became more educated, the chapels were built in a better form and more costly; so that now the Connexion is in possession of some very fine ecclesiastical buildings. Candid friends of the denomination have not scrupled to tell us that our advance in this matter has been too rapid, and that the energies of

the Connexion have been diverted from their legitimate object. But those who interpret the movement sympathetically recognise that the attention given to chapel building in late years has been a necessity. It has in fact been a natural step in the progressive development of the Church life and order of the denomination.

The new phase of the denominational development further required a more educated ministry. In the early days the possession of the natural gifts for the ministry was accounted sufficient, and literary culture was not demanded; but the spread of popular education, the necessarily improved social condition of the people, from the habits of temperance and righteousness under which they had been brought, and their advancement in spirituality, required a more educated ministry.

Considering the circumstances of the members generally, the giving for denominational purposes has reached a very high average, but we have wanted some plan by which the gifts could be more equitably distributed according to the necessities of the institutions. The ministers, who ought to have given guidance in this matter, and who, in some instances, have done so, have, however, generally failed. Being chosen as a rule for the poorest members of the Church, they seem to lack confidence and authority to speak upon the subject. God has raised up a man who by precept and example is teaching this most necessary and valuable lesson. This man is William P. Hartley. We recognise his presence and work in the Connexion as providential, and as marking a stage in the development of the denomination.

The story of the outer life of Mr. Hartley is soon told. He was born at Colne, in Yorkshire, in February, 1846. His father, John Hartley, was a whitesmith; his mother, Margaret Pickles, belonged to the operative class. His ancestors for many generations belonged to the labouring poor. The education of his parents was of a very elementary character; but his mother showed particular aptitude for business, and early in her married life commenced a small provision store. There were several children born, but the only one that survived infancy was the eldest, the subject of this sketch. From childhood he has been blessed with excellent physical health, and evidently inherited from both parents a good constitution. Though we are not absolute believers in the doctrine of heredity, yet we recognise an important truth in it.

The soul manifests itself through its organism, and in the early stages of development is subject to the organism. We attain very considerable development before the will asserts itself and gains dominance and can repair the accidents of birth and environment. Where the organism transmitted is unhealthy in fibre and unfortunate in distribution, it renders the battle more severe and limits the attainment which may be reached. Mr. Hartley's parents were humble people, but they were temperate, industrious, and God-fearing, and from them he inherited a healthy, well-balanced constitution.

It is often the ambition of poor people that their children may start upon a higher level of life than they occupy, and should have a better chance to wring out of the world's hard hand and grip success and fortune; and the struggles they make, and the self-denial they show to realise this are really heroic. But so close is the net in which they are held, so hard is the iron cage dividing the classes of society, that despite their efforts comparatively few succeed. Mr. Hartley, being an only child, was early sent to the National School, where he remained until he was thirteen years of age, and then was sent to the Grammar School for one year. Children in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire are sent to the factories at a very early age, and a case like that of Mr. Hartley was altogether exceptional. It was therefore assumed by his parents and neighbours that he would be an unusually well educated lad, and fit for something better than the common handicrafts of the neighbourhood. When his uncle, the Rev. Robert Hartley, was going to Australia, his nephew was attending the Grammar School, and the uncle confessed that he did not think his nephew would make much out in life. He acquired a taste for learning and books, which he has cultivated through life; but his real education began after he had left school, and his truest masters were the hard actualities of business life. His parents were very careful of his religious and moral training. They were both members of the Primitive Methodist Church, the father being a local preacher. The grandfather on the paternal side was one of the early local preachers of the denomination, who did a great amount of hard mission work in and around Burnley, and died in the Isle of Man while engaged in such work. The family were associated with Primitive Methodism from the establishment of the

cause in South Yorkshire, and had contributed largely to its success. The home influence brought to bear upon Mr. Hartley was of a high and healthy character. The patient, sweet, gentle disposition of his mother, and the robust manliness of his father, awakened early in him a high ideal of life. He was the child of many prayers. His parents kept him from the companionship of the rude children of the neighbourhood, and impressed upon his mind the value and importance of early piety. What though there might be a little narrowness and superstition in the views of these good people, they were rendering the best service that any couple could render to the Church and the world, —the religious training of their son. As an illustration of the scrupulousness, and ignorance also it may be, of his parents, it may be stated, that his mother refused to allow him to go to study to be a solicitor, lest the pursuit of the law should be hurtful to his spiritual interests.

Mr. Hartley was early taken to the Primitive Methodist chapel and attended the Sunday school as a scholar; he also became a teacher as soon as he was able. He held all the offices in the school at Colne for many years, and was one of the best workers and most liberal supporters of the institution. He was admitted a member of the Church at the earliest age members are enrolled. He had acquired a knowledge of music, and was appointed organist and choir-leader, which service he rendered gratuitously while he remained at Colne. He was appointed to the Trust body as treasurer and steward of the circuit. In fact he was the one most prominent and active spirit in the circuit, and to him Colne is indebted for a number of the finest country chapels in the Connexion, and that it is one of the most successful circuits in South Yorkshire. Mr. Hartley's religion developed itself not in intense pietism, but in severe conscientiousness and practical godliness. He is more governed by conscience than by the mystic sense, and is more noted for his practical benevolence and uprightness than sentimental piety.

At fourteen years of age he commenced the business of life, as assistant to his mother in her small grocery store. The amount of business transacted did not supply sufficient opportunity for his active temperament, and at sixteen he began to canvass the small shops in the adjacent villages, and soon secured a considerable trade in

grocer's sundries. It was by what worldly men would call a happy accident, and what religious men who believe that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, would call a good providence, that he entered upon the line of business in which he has realised marked success. A local maker of fruit preserves failed to fulfil an engagement into which he had entered with Mr. Hartley, and to supply his customers, he found it necessary to prepare the fruit himself. The commencement of this business was very humble, but from the first, the principles that have guided him in his great factory at Bootle were acted upon. He used only the best materials, and maintained the most scrupulous cleanliness in all his departments. He was careful to have oversight of every pound of jam he manufactured, and he still continues to do so. In a very short time he had an excellent business in this department alone, and despite the dissuasion of relatives and friends, who were certain that he was going to ruin, he determined to remove from Colne to Bootle, near Liverpool, in order to lessen the expense of carriage of fruit and sugar, and to gain the advantage of female labour. The first few years at Bootle were a time of great anxiety and excessive labour. Entering upon a large business with a limited capital, with few friends, and only an imperfect knowledge of the world, he had to pay the penalty that all men pay in one form or another who succeed in life : but he had early indications that the step was a right one, and that if he could only hold on for a few years he would realise success ; and this has been greater than he had ever hoped for. The first few years of his life at Bootle made such a demand upon his vital resources, that he slightly impaired his health, and he has since had to exercise great care to recuperate. His factory has gradually extended, and the number of hands employed by him has so rapidly increased, that recently he has found it necessary to purchase a large estate in the neighbourhood, where he is now engaged in building a model manufactory, and indeed a village, as residences for his workpeople.

Mr. Hartley early in life adopted the most severe and strict business principles. He is methodical, punctual, and exact. He has great firmness and self-reliance ; is a man of few words, but of decisive action. He is kind and sociable, but calm and self-possessed. He is communi-

cative, but confident. He knows his own mind, and is not easily changed in his opinion. His intellect is purely practical, and he wastes no energy in dreaming or speculation. He is venturesome but cautious, and knows well how far to go. He never enters upon an enterprise but he carries it out, and generally succeeds well in it.

At the beginning of his business life Mr. Hartley adopted the principle of systematic giving to religious and benevolent purposes. He put aside a portion of his income for such agencies, and as his income increased he raised the percentage, until the amount he gives to such objects is now very much larger than he uses for household and personal expenditure. He has been a most princely giver to the Primitive Methodist Connexion, and the method he has adopted has been of the most beneficial character. All his gifts have been conditional, and proportionate to the amount raised by the people he has helped. He never gives indiscriminately, he never gives without fully informing himself of all the circumstances of the case, and he gives to encourage self-help. He has largely helped many of the trustee estates of the Connexion, and recently he gave a thousand pounds to pay the debt of the Missionary Society. The missionary operations of the Connexion were for a number of years hampered because of the debt of the Society. Various attempts were made to reduce the burden, which had been lessened to six thousand pounds. Mr. Hartley then offered to give one thousand pounds on condition that the Connexion raised the other five; and at the missionary meeting held in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in May, 1885, the Society was declared free from debt. Mr. Hartley, in the Primitive Methodist Church, is really fulfilling an important mission, and has a distinct place and work. In any of the older Churches he would only be one among the many wealthy men and liberal givers, but in this denomination he holds at present an unique position, and is by example and precept teaching an important and needful lesson. Though the Primitive Methodist Church has been the largest sharer in his beneficence, he has by no means confined his liberality to the denomination. He is a subscriber to a great number of charitable and philanthropic societies, and his private acts of charity and almsgiving are of daily occurrence. He lives on very free and agreeable terms with his work-

people, and when they go on their yearly excursion, he endeavours to make them feel that he is amongst them as a man and a brother.

Mr. Hartley was married in 1867, to Martha, daughter of Henry and Ann Horsfield, grocers, of Colne, who has enriched his life with wifely sympathy. He has a family of seven daughters and one son. He is yet in the prime and vigour of life, and has such an active temperament, that business is a necessity of his life. We pray and hope that he may be spared to old age, and may see abundant blessing upon the noble mission which he is pursuing.

G. H.