

Joseph Sharp

Transcription of Obituary in the Primitive Methodist Conference Minutes by E. Ward

JOSEPH SHARP. - It came as a great surprise, and much sorrow, to very many ex-Primitive Methodists, throughout New Zealand, when they learned that the Rev. Joseph Sharp had died suddenly at his residence, Mount Eden, Auckland, on Tuesday morning, August 15th, 1916. The late Joseph Sharp was born at Maidstone, Kent, England, March 12th, 1849. He was English of the English. He entered the Primitive Methodist ministry in 1871. His first station was Ramsgate. He came to New Zealand about 1875. His personal appearance won everyone in his favour, for he 'was a goodly person and well favoured.' He was a man of many excellent qualities, naturally of a buoyant, hopeful, cheerful disposition. He was a firm believer of Methodist doctrine. As a preacher he was always acceptable, for while making no attempt at rhetorical display, he never failed to interest and instruct. He was a useful preacher, a man very much of one aim and one theme. There were other themes on which he at times spoke, and always from a Christian standpoint, for he had clear Scriptural views of truth and duty - but his cardinal doctrine was Jesus Christ: His life, His example, His teaching: His death, His Resurrection, His intercession, His Gospel: man as a sinner, God as a merciful and gracious Saviour. Joseph Sharp never wandered far from Christ and His Cross. In revival work he was happy, and ever manifested great joy in leading souls to God. He had the gift of making religion attractive to children. On the platform he was humourous and happy. We have heard him many times, and always with pleasure and profit. His chaff and his wheat were always food. He was a good pastor. He learned the needs, trials, difficulties, and joys of his people by personal, kindly contact with them. In visiting he had great pleasure, and much success: his cheer and sunshine made him ever welcome in the homes. In many important matters, as a Christian minister, his superiors were his inferiors. His business aptitude and skilful penmanship marked him out for secretarial work. He was perhaps the best Conference Secretary the New Zealand Primitive Methodist Church ever had. He was twice elected President of the New Zealand Primitive Methodist Conference, in 1889 and in 1906. He laboured on most of the stations in New Zealand, and after his superannuation, in 1914, when the supply of ministers was short, he offered his services to the New Zealand Methodist Conference, which were gladly accepted. The Rev. W. J. Elliott, of Auckland, writes us: 'He was engaged after last Conference to help us here, and had gained the love and confidence of the people to a most praiseworthy extent. He and I were working beautifully together, and I keenly regret his death and severance from us at this stage. He was a genial, cheery, large-hearted brother, and possessed a good general knowledge of human nature and common affairs.' The last Sunday of his life on earth was very boisterous, yet he preached twice, as per plan. On the Tuesday (August 15th) he complained of pain in his chest, and in half an hour he was dead:-

'His body with his charge laid down,
And ceased at once to work and live.'

'The night cometh when no man can work.' 'God buries his workers, but carries on His work.' Mr. Sharp leaves behind him a widow, two sons, and a daughter They have our sincere sympathy.

References

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