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**TWYFORD’S LOSS**

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PASSING OF MR JOHN CULLEY.

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Mr John Culley, an honoured and life long resident of Twyford, passed peacefully away at his home Portway Cottages on Thursday, August the 27th, at the age of eighty-seven. He was born on November 30th, 1848. He possessed a vivid memory, and it was a delight to hear him recall the events of the many years through which he had lived and the changes which he had seen in his long life. He leaves a widow, two daughters and two sons.

He was laid to rest in Twyford Churchyard on Monday last. The funeral service was conducted by the Rev. S.H.C. Wynne of Grendon Underwood. The hymns “Nearer my God to Thee” and “Peace perfect Peace” were sung. The family mourners were Miss E Culley (daughter) Mr J Culley (son) Mr and Mrs H Culley (son and daughter in law), Mrs G Culley (daughter in law) Mr W Culley and Master D Culley (grandsons), and Miss B Culley (granddaughter). Mrs Culley (widow) and Mrs W Hurst (daughter ) and family were unable to attend.

The large company of mourners included many members and friends from Twyford Congregational Church, of which the deceased was an honoured member and ardent worker, and representatives from other Congregational Churches in the Marsh Gibbon Group and the Methodist Church, Steeple Claydon.

The numerous floral tributes included wreaths from members and friends of the Twyford Congregational Church, from past and present scholars and teachers of Twyford Congregational Sunday school and from the Methodist Sunday school and friends, Steeple Claydon.

A memorial service will be held in the Twyford Congregational Chapel on Sunday and will take the place of the usual Sunday evening (6pm) service. This will be conducted by Mr W. H Hodges, a friend and colleague of Mr Culley in the work of the Congregational Church.

JOHN CULLEY : AN APRECIATION.

*“Mr Valiant-for-truth passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.” — John Bunyan “Pilgims Progress”*

An old friend has passed over to the other side. To those of us who grew to love him there is an inevitable feeling of sadness and yet there is a triumphant note about his passing. With the certitude of his faith he spoke of death as going home. He was looking forward with joy to the time when he would reach the other side. Now he has gone to receive his wonderful welcome of love and his reward. Death was for him was the victorious passing over to a new and nobler life.

My last memory of him is when I left his bedroom a few days before his death. He lifted his hand in farewell and a smile spread over his face. He looked so peaceful and happy, serenely happy. This is a golden memory.

Mr John Culley will be long remembered for many things. First and foremost he was a devoted and loyal disciple of Christ. His master and his Master’s service were his greatest joys. Right from boyhood he has been a faithful christian worker in the Twyford Congregational Church. He was a Sunday School teacher, but not only did the Sunday School enjoy his practical support; one could always count upon him to support and help forward every movement in the Church. He held the National Sunday School Union’s diploma for long service in the Sunday school. It was the writers privilege to be the first boy in his class and then to work with him as a fellow teacher. He constantly remembered the boys whose he had taught and often spoke how they had gone out far from their native village, some to lands beyond the seas. There are many removed from Twyford who will remember their faithful old teacher.

THREE TIMES ON A SUNDAY.

He was most regular in his attendance at the Congregational Chapel. For many years he has walked from his home, a mile from the Chapel, three times and back every Sunday, to Sunday school and services, and he was always present at week night meetings. He was able to attend worship up to July the 5th. Since that time it has seemed strange — and it will seem strange in the future — not to see him, with his snow white hair, sitting at the front of the Chapel close to the rostrum. This was a familiar site to worshipers at the Congregational Chapel. There is a sense of incompleteness — something lacking— with him not there nor in his accustomed place in the Sunday School. He will be sorely missed.

Not only did he serve God through the Church and Sunday School, but as a true Christian he continually witnessed to many folk with whom he came into contact in daily life. His kind influence has been a joy to many. Wherever one met him one could depend on a cheery word and a happy smile from him. He was full of the joy of life and gratitude was one of his most striking characteristics. He often spoke of the many both young and old whom he had outlived and seen laid to rest in the “silent tomb” yet never with an air of boastfulness, but always with gratitude to God for having spared his life and having blessed him with good health and strength. A few weeks before his death he remarked that God had given him a good innings. He led an active life and showed to us all how happy and useful life can be when lived in the companionship of Christ. That championship was a vital and abiding element in life.

He possessed a keen sense of humour and was noted for his quaint sayings.He figures in the book, “Reminiscences of the Bucks Countryside” by W. Harman, though his name is not disclosed. The author met him when on the way to Twyford and describes a conversation with him.

HIS HARVEST OFFERING.

He was a lover of beauty. He appreciated the natural beauty around him and was fond of flowers and gardening. Every harvest festival he used to wheel down a barrow-load of garden produce, his thank offering to God, and he used to help decorate the Chapel. That familiar sight will not be seen this year.

Music, too, was one of his delights. For many years he trained successive choirs for the Congregational Sunday School Anniversary, and on such occasions he used to accompany the singing and organ with his violin, or, as he usually called it his old fiddle. At one time he was organist at the Congregational Church Services and at Sunday School. Every year he used to help the choir of the Methodist Sunday school, Steeple Claydon, in their anniversary, and he has played he violin and sung in most of the Nonconformist chapels of the neighbourhood. Though he reached the age of eighty seven, yet he remained to the end young in spirit, it would be usual to think of him as being eighty seven years old, yet I prefer to think of him as eighty seven years young. He was never happier than when in the company of young people, and it was a familiar sight to see a band of children walk to meet him and accompany him on his way to Sunday school every Sunday morning.

His thoughts reached out not only to the life of the immediate neighbourhood: he took a keen interest in national and international affairs. He was fond of reading.

“OLD JOHN.”

There are many more happy remembrances which I could write of him. These and those which have been penned are enshrined forever in our memories.

Old John as he was affectionately called has passed over. For several years he reminded us young people how he was “going down the hill of time” towards his last great journey. Now he has gone. He set us a fine example. He carried the torch of Gospel Truth for many years. Now he has handed it on to us. Our best way of commemorating him is to throw ourselves with renewed energy and reconsecration into the work of the cause which lay so near to his heart and to which he devoted a lifetime of faithful service.

JOHN J HAYNES.