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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

*Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.*

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### A METHODIST PACIFIST AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR: HENRY CARTER IN REPUBLICAN SPAIN

**A**LTHOUGH extensive scholarly enquiry has illuminated many aspects of the general history of British responses to the Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939, their specifically religious components have remained largely tenebrous. To be sure, the pertinent scholarship has progressed on an uneven front, as one must expect which considering a broad phenomenon which entailed many kinds of reactions.

In his workmanlike general survey of *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, the eminent Oxford historian Tom Buchanan identified those dealing with religion as 'the least-researched aspect of the British response to the Civil War'.<sup>1</sup>

Certain aspects of the general topic have been subjected to more scholarly analysis than others. Very generally speaking, Roman Catholic interpretations of and responses to the War have received more attention than those by Anglicans and members of the Free Churches; many adherents of the Church of Rome saw in the tribulations which Catholic religious personnel and property were enduring in 1936 a major crisis not only for Christianity but also for European civilisation generally at a time when dictatorships of the Left and the Right had already created stressful situations for religious institutions in the Soviet Union, Italy, Germany, and some smaller European countries. Anyone fishing for scholarly publications pertaining to British Protestant reactions to the conflict in Spain, however, will haul in a virtually empty net.<sup>2</sup>

The present article is intended as one step in the direction of filling that *lacuna*. It will focus on the Methodist minister Henry Carter (1874-1951),

<sup>1</sup> Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 228.

<sup>2</sup> See, however, Frederick Hale, 'The World's Evangelical Alliance and the Spanish Civil War,' *Acta Theologica*, XX, no. 2 (December 2000), 70-87.

a prominent pacifist, temperance advocate, and specialist in social ministry, who in 1937 played a key role in an interdenominational delegation of English churchmen who visited Republican Spain in order to investigate allegations that its government had placed stultifying restrictions on religious freedom.<sup>3</sup> This group of visitors as a body and some of its members (including Carter) as individuals lent almost unqualified support for the Republican government in Madrid and were thus both lauded and vilified by readers in the sharply divided British public. The ensuing debates shed further light on the general issue of responses to the Spanish Civil War. Carter's part in this will not be treated in isolation but rather, placed into the broader context of perceptions of the question of religious toleration during the conflict. Accordingly, we shall include remarks made by British visitors to war-torn Spain before Carter's party set foot in that country and by the other Free Church members of that delegation.

During the early phases of the Spanish Civil War a small number of British ecclesiastical delegations toured regions of Spain, chiefly to ascertain what the general situation was for the churches there. The violent persecution of the Spanish clergy and other religious personnel as well as devastation of ecclesiastical property early in 1936 had been promptly and widely reported in the British daily and religious press. The veracity of this journalistic coverage was challenged to some degree in one dimension of the British debate about who was to blame for what few questioned were widespread atrocities. A second issue was that of religious freedom. To what extent was the closure of the Roman Catholic churches in Republican-dominated areas emblematic of a general persecution of Christianity there? Was the quasi-socialistic régime in Madrid bent on suppressing the church and gradually implementing a post-Christian secular state? These and intimately related concerns prompted various British churchmen - Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Nonconformist - either to travel to Spain on their own initiative or to accept invitations from the government in Madrid to visit the country and seek at first-hand to disinter the truth from beneath what were recognised to be thick layers of propaganda.

That at least, was the stated purpose. The consequences, however, were more complicated. These junkets were not only responses to the British public debate about the war; they also fuelled it. Reports which either the delegations in question or individual members of them published in the daily press and in religious or other periodicals were by no means universally accepted as accurate representations of the situation in Spain. Indeed, they were often perceived as highly tendentious and erroneous; critics called attention to ellipses in the reporting and at times accused the writers of deliberately

<sup>3</sup> The standard biography, E. C. Urwin, *Henry Carter, C.B.E., A Memoir* (1955), does not mention his involvement in the Spanish Civil War.

misrepresenting facts in order to achieve rhetorical ends. Most frequently, groups which visited only Republican Spain drew the fire of pro-Franco Britons, both Catholic and non-Catholic, for inherently presenting a one-sided and geographically truncated portrait of the nation and its religious-political landscape. Returned delegates did not always accept the criticism but chose to fire volleys of their own at their detractors in the shooting gallery of the printed media. These debates magnified the significance of the visits and resulting reports.

Although the reports which members of these delegations published shortly after they returned to London occasioned debates, verbal clashes which yielded far more heat than light, in both the secular and the religious press, very little of a retrospective scholarly nature has been written about their importance. In the chapter which treats religious themes in his commendable survey of *Britain and the Spanish Civil War*, Buchanan devoted two pages to summarizing the two most noted delegations. He described the composition of the parties and pointed out that the second was ideologically more liberal than the former.<sup>4</sup> Otherwise, however, one will search almost entirely in vain for even the briefest mention of this theme in histories of the war and of Christianity in twentieth-century England.

### The Methodist Press and the Francoite Insurgency

It must be pointed out that to a considerable extent British Christian perceptions of the origins of the Spanish Civil War reflected denominational affinities. For the most part (though there were prominent exceptions), the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United Kingdom and most of the British Catholic press stood squarely behind the Nationalist cause and saw in Francisco Franco the man who would end leftist anticlericalism and restore the Church of Rome to its centuries-old perch of privilege in Spain. At the opposite pole, most Free Churchmen who expressed opinions on the war, and certainly the editors of the various Nonconformist denominational and nondenominational press, favoured the Republican cause, as it promised to preserve the religious freedom which had been enshrined in the constitution of the Second Republic in 1931. Protestant churches and schools had gained numerous footholds since the latter half of the nineteenth-century, and a Nationalist victory was feared as a threat to their continuation. Within the Church of England opinion was divided, although the pro-Republican position was represented by the editors of such Anglican periodicals as *The Church Times*, *The Guardian*, and the *Church of England News*.

Unquestionably, some of the most detailed (and, arguably, least theological or religious) Free Church commentary on the early stages of

<sup>4</sup> Tom Buchanan, *Britain and the Spanish Civil War* (Cambridge: 1997), pp. 172-174.



the Franco insurgency appeared in the columns of *The Methodist Recorder*. The editor of that major denominational weekly, Frederick D. Wiseman, wrote at length on the war from its outset, but rarely did he make remarks about it which differed from those which one could find in secular newspapers. His interpretation of the hostilities in Spain and those of, for example, Joseph Keating at the Jesuit monthly *The Month* and Victor White at the Dominican organ *Blackfriars*, were virtually poles apart.

Much of what appeared in *The Methodist Recorder* in this regard could justifiably be called summaries of weekly news about the Spanish conflict. That said, it must immediately be added that Wiseman was not a neutral observer, nor did he try to pose as such. On 23 July 1936 he identified the rebellious forces as comprising the Spanish army, the 'Fascists' (whom he did not identify), followers of Gil Robles of Catholic Action, and 'the Roman Church (especially through its influence on the peasantry', and predicted that if this powerful coalition stayed united the government in Madrid could not be expected to prevail against it.<sup>5</sup> Drawing parallels between Russia in 1917 and Spain in 1936, a week later Wiseman expressed his fear that a communist régime could emerge in the latter country. Like several other commentators, including a few already quoted in this study, he predicted that regardless of the outcome of the war 'some form of military dictatorship must almost inevitably be set up.' If the Nationalists won, that dictatorship would be led by 'Army leaders and Fascists'. Regardless, he predicted, Spain would not quickly recover from this traumatic tragedy in which, he lamented, women had taken part in the fighting.<sup>6</sup>

Part of the great British Methodist interest in and concern about the course of events in war-torn Spain stemmed from the fact that for many years there had been active Methodist missionary endeavours there. From time to time, therefore, *The Methodist Recorder* carried news about its British and Spanish personnel in Spain and urged readers to pray for their safety. The fact that the Methodist institutions in Barcelona and elsewhere largely escaped the wrath of anticlerical mobs which devastated Catholic churches probably undergirded fairly widespread pro-Republican sentiment in the denomination. The wrecking of the Methodist building at Pueblo Nuevo near Barcelona seemed entirely anomalous. As one missionary, Isobel Adam, in Barcelona wrote to G.E. Hickman Johnson in August 1936, 'I think I may safely say that the feeling towards evangelicals is good. Many of the people, as they pass Pueblo Nuevo and see the place so damaged, are saying, "But why? They are good Republicans!"'<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> 'Revolt in Spain', *The Methodist Recorder*, (July 1936), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> 'The Spanish Civil War', *The Methodist Recorder*, (30 July 1936), p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> G. E. Hickman Johnson (unspecified provenance) to *The Methodist Recorder*, undated, in *The Methodist Recorder*, (20 August 1936), p. 19.

### Members of Parliament Visit Spain

The ecclesiastical travellers of early 1937 were not the first high-profile Britons to make inspection tours of Spain during the war. Before the end of 1936 two delegations comprising Members of Parliament visited parts of the country and reported their findings in ways which in certain respects presaged what the religious groups would write about conditions there. The first of these two was organised by Labourite F. Seymour Cocks and also included two Liberals and three Conservatives. In the words of one delegate, Wilfred Roberts, their purposes were to 'further the humanitarian objects of the British Government and to try to bring influence to bear on both sides'.<sup>8</sup> When they left London on 19 November, they carried a statement signed by members of all parties represented in the House of Commons stating that the British public was deeply concerned about the war, especially atrocities inflicted on non-combatants. This document was addressed to both the government in Madrid and the insurgents.<sup>9</sup> These Members of Parliament, however, spent all their time on Spanish soil in Republican territory, much of it in Madrid, where they experienced an air raid within hours of their arrival on 25 November.<sup>10</sup>

When the delegates returned to London after less than a fortnight in Spain, they published a relatively lengthy report which included sections dealing with such topics as the political situation in Spain, life in besieged Madrid, the treatment of prisoners of war, and prospects for the evacuation of women and children. Their findings were not entirely one-sided and included indictments of both belligerents. Nevertheless, the lion's share of the criticism therein was directed at the conduct of the Nationalists, especially their aerial assaults on the Spanish capital. 'We conclude that the bombardment of non-military objects was intended to terrorize the civil population,' they declared. 'The attempt to break the moral [*sic*] of the people seems to have had exactly the opposite effect to that intended.' These Members of Parliament also stated that they had reason to believe that the insurgents had employed a 'small number of gas shells' in their bombardment of Madrid and that if that were the case, 'the effect upon the civilian population cannot fail to be absolutely appalling.' On the other hand, they lauded the endeavours of the Republican government to cope with severe shortages of both food and fuel during the siege of the capital. Not all members of this multiparty delegation had viewed the situation in Spain through the same eyes, however. Crawford Greene, a Conservative, informed Cocks a week after returning to London that he would not sign the report because he regarded it as a compromised document whose drafters had manifestly

<sup>8</sup> 'M.P.s. to Visit Madrid', *The Times* 19 November 1936, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> 'British M.P.s Visit to Madrid', *The Times*, 20 November 1936, p. 18

<sup>10</sup> 'M.P.s Back from Spain', *The Times*, 8 December 1936, p. 8.

refrained from saying anything which might offend any member or members of the delegation. The result had therefore been an 'emasculated' statement.<sup>11</sup>

### The Bishop of Gibraltar's Tour

One of the first British ecclesiastical delegations, to use the term liberally, to visit Spain during the war consisted of two men, namely the Bishop of Gibraltar, Harold Buxton, and Arthur Buxton, who toured certain regions held by the Nationalists during the last week of January, 1937. Administering Anglican dioceses in a dozen Mediterranean countries, the Bishop had found it necessary to visit Spain annually since his consecration in 1933. His most recent previous *visitas* had taken place early in 1936, shortly after the crucial elections, when he had called at Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, and Rio Tinto. According to published reports, the object of the two Buxtons' tour in 1937 was 'to get into touch with our people who remain in those parts, and to visit Anglican churches closed since the outbreak of the civil war'.<sup>12</sup>

Harold Buxton reported his findings in several contexts, including a publicised lecture to the League of Clergy for Peace after returning to London in the summer of 1937. Speaking to a 'large audience' near Westminster Abbey, he explained that there would always be an aura of mystery around Spain as far as foreigners were concerned and asserted that 'the real mentality of the Spaniard was more difficult to understand than that of any other race.' This apparently tempered his willingness to assign specific guilt to either the Left or the Francoites for that country's current tribulations, other than to say that 'the growth of disorder. . . was going to serve the interests of someone.' Buxton prudently refrained from attempting to assess the condition of all churches but could report that in Nationalist Spain most of the British ones were intact. Apparently referring primarily to the Roman Catholic edifices, he thought that their condition was 'almost normal' in Seville, where the cathedral remained open and was being used for weddings and funerals. Addressing what at an early stage of the war had become a central rhetorical issue in the United Kingdom, Buxton judged that 'there was nothing to choose between the two sides with regard to atrocities' and attributed a propensity for them 'to the nature of the Spaniard, which it is very difficult to fathom and understand'.<sup>13</sup>

The Bishop of Gibraltar also visited Republican Spain in February 1937

<sup>11</sup> 'Conditions in Madrid', *The Times*, 18 December 1936, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup> 'Ecclesiastical News. Bishop's Tour in Spain', *The Times*, 1 February 1937, p. 17; 'Situation in Spain. Bishop of Gibraltar's Experience', *Church of England Newspaper*, (16 July 1937), p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> 'Situation in Spain. Bishop of Gibraltar's Experience', *The Church of England Newspaper*, (16 July 1937), p. 14.

and published some of his observations in *The Church Times* before the end of that month. Valencia seemed 'terribly crowded' and a place where living conditions were deteriorating daily as large numbers of refugees from Madrid and other areas streamed in. In Barcelona, which was then widely known in London as a hotbed of Marxism and a centre of anticlericalism, Buxton enquired specifically about ecclesiastical life, virtually no signs of which he noticed on the streets or elsewhere in public. No clergymen or other religious personnel were in sight. 'In this huge city. . . there are no churches left unburned, except the Cathedral,' he reported with pointed reference to six months of havoc immediately before the Francoite insurgency. Seeking to answer why 'this hatred of the Spanish church' had reached such gargantuan proportions, Buxton found it in the governance of the *ecclesia* itself, which he believed militated against the faith.' In spite of its unique opportunity in the past, the Roman Catholic Church in Spain has failed, and failed lamentably, to present Christianity faithfully to the nation,' he charged. Rather than faulting the humble rural clergy, who were 'the victims of a bad system and a bad tradition', this visiting Bishop pinned the tail of guilt on 'the power of the monarchy over the appointment of Bishops', Such Caesaropapism had led to the consecration of men 'for political and party reasons' with little regard to their spiritual credentials. Buxton also faulted the monopoly the clergy had held on religious education. Shooting at a popular target of Protestant marksmen, this Anglican asserted that from their position of mental and emotional domination, the Catholic priests had 'found that to inculcate fear of the pains of purgatory was a means to power'. They had created a climate of belief in which 'the masses lived in constant dread of this and paid almost their last pesetas to obtain remission by payments to the priest.' Buxton did not say so in so many words, but it must have seemed to him that the Reformation of the sixteenth century, with its reaction against the sale of such indulgences, was being replayed in contemporary Spain. 'Through and by its present martyrdom,' he concluded, 'the Church in Spain will surely seek a radical change, both in its system and tradition.'<sup>14</sup>

### The First Interdenominational Delegation

Britons could read in *The Times* on 27 January 1937 that an interdenominational group of English Protestants were preparing to embark on an inspection tour of Republican Spain 'in order to try and see as far as possible what the religious situation is in that country'. The six-man delegation unofficially represented a relatively broad swathe of the Protestant matrix of the country but was dominated by clerics from the Church of England. Headed by the Dean of Chichester, Dr A. S. Duncan-

<sup>14</sup> 'The Spanish Tragedy. The Failure of the Church', *The Church Times*, 26 February 1937, p. 268.

Jones, it included another high-ranking Anglican, namely the Dean of Rochester, Francis Underhill, as well as the chaplain to the Bishop of Gloucester, Philip Usher, and an Anglican layman, Henry Brinton. From the ranks of British Nonconformity came Henry Carter, the general secretary of the Methodist Social Welfare Department, who a few years earlier had been a founder of the Methodist Peace Fellowship, and Percy Bartlett of the Society of Friends.<sup>15</sup> The purpose of their journey, as Duncan-Jones defined it in *The Times* three days later, was 'to investigate reports which have reached London of alleged anti-clerical activities among the Government supporters'. They would fly from London to Paris, travel by rail to Toulouse in south-western France, and fly to Barcelona. The group expected to spend a fortnight in Spain visiting several cities still under the nominal control of the Madrid government, including Barcelona, Valencia, and Bilbao. They had also considered visiting Nationalist Spain but, for reasons discussed below, chosen not to do so. Duncan-Jones assured readers that he and his colleagues would submit a report to a committee comprising both Anglicans and Free Churchmen. Among them, he noted, were Archbishop of York, William Temple, the Bishop of Bradford, the Bishop of Ripon, the Bishop of Croydon, and the Bishop of Southwell.<sup>16</sup>

### The Published Report of the Delegation

The promised report was made public in mid-February, a week after the delegation returned to England. These churchmen made no effort to veil their sympathies for the Republican government in Madrid, and their findings clearly suggested that in the main they approved of the religious conditions they had witnessed and were not greatly disturbed by any of them. Directly challenging reports which had so frequently appeared in both the Roman Catholic press and certain secular newspapers in England, especially the right-wing *Daily Mail*, they stated categorically: 'We found no evidence of an organized "Godless" propaganda such as has existed in Soviet Russia. We were unable on inquiry to hear of any caricature of God, of Christ, or of the Virgin and Saints, such as have been features of "anti-God" propaganda in other countries.' On the contrary, far from being a persecuted or suppressed book, some members of the delegation had found copies of the Bible for sale in bookstalls in the streets of Spanish cities. The visiting churchmen believed that the rhetorical combat which had been waged in the British press had confused two related but nevertheless discrete phenomena: 'The situation in regard to religion in Spain was summed up to us by a very acute English observer of dispassionate views, one who knows

<sup>15</sup> 'Religious Situation in Spain', *The Times*, 27 January 1937, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup> 'Churches' Mission to Spain', *The Times*, 30 January 1937, p. 14.

Spain well and is himself a practising Catholic, in the following terms: "There is a strong anti-clerical movement but no anti-God movement in Spain"<sup>17</sup>

The report inevitably addressed in considerable interpretative detail the predicament of the institutional Roman Catholic Church in that war-torn country. This section of the account did not whitewash current conditions but certainly minimised the extent of the persecution and thus almost diametrically contradicted much of the blood-curdling news about massacres of the clergy and other religious personnel which had been printed for nearly a year in the Catholic press as well as in various secular newspapers. Duncan-Jones and his fellows sought to present a fairly nuanced image of the general situation in which the Church of Rome found itself in Republican Spain. They readily acknowledged that all the Catholic churches they had visited had been: 'either closed or secularised and no religious services were being held in them' These edifices they divided into three categories. Some, especially those of 'special historical and artistic interest', such as the Abbey of Montserrat and the cathedral at Barcelona, were 'closed but uninjured'. Secondly, other buildings were undamaged but 'the signs of religion had been removed' from them. Finally, many churches had fallen victim to either 'fire or military operations'. That prospects for the prompt re-opening of the churches were apparently slim did not seem to worry the English visitors. They accepted assurances of the Republican government that 'a good number of churches' would be reopened after the conclusion of hostilities, even though it was feared that they 'might become centres of political opposition again'. In a related vein, the report did not exclude the possibility that Spanish anti-clericalism was largely justified. 'In the eyes of considerable masses of the population the Church has come to be regarded - rightly or wrongly - as an instrument used by the powerful to keep them both ignorant and poor,' it stated. 'On the other hand it has to be remembered that there has grown up in Spain a section which believed in violence and terrorism and whose activities were specially directed against the Church and the observance of religion.' Where the church evinced solidarity with the populace, the English ecclesiastics believed, it escaped the wrath of the people. The Basque country seemed to offer irrefutable proof of this, for there 'where the clergy have lived in close sympathy and contact with their people and where a vigorous effort is being made to build up a society on the principles of Catholic social justice, anti-clericalism is a negligible force.'<sup>18</sup>

These English churchmen echoed a widely sung tune by contending that the Roman Catholic Church bore at least part of the responsibility for its own estrangement from much of the Spanish population, not least by

<sup>17</sup> 'The Church in Spain. Report on Conditions by British Clergy', *The Times*, 16 February 1937, p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

shot, Woodlock sought to cast ideological aspersions on the report by noting that the government of the Soviet Union had been sufficiently pleased with the report as to broadcast it 'with further embellishing comments in praise of the Spanish Government' on 17 February.<sup>21</sup>

From the Tory benches in the House of Commons came a similar blast. Sir Henry Page Croft wrote a lengthy letter to *The Times* stating that Christians could only read the report with 'amazement' that fellow believers would make the assertions it contained 'with so little evidence to support them'. This Conservative dismissed as rhetorically absurd the statement made by one observer, approvingly quoted in the report, that there was, 'no anti-God movement in Spain', merely an anticlerical one. Had that been the case, Croft countered, it would have been disastrous enough, given the violent form it had taken, but it was also 'strange that those who murdered in such wholesale slaughter the priests and members of religious orders should then proceed to destroy or desecrate the vast majority of the churches under Red rule'. Relying on the testimony of two unnamed 'English witnesses' and 'an impartial American observer' in Barcelona, Croft declared that 'when the nearest Franco troops were hundreds of miles distant' no fewer than thirty-seven churches in that city had been destroyed. Had analogous wanton devastation taken place at the hands of mobs in England, he reasoned, 'these gentlemen would hardly remain so complacent in describing this class.' Moreover, he thought the members of the Duncan-Jones party were either chronologically confused or disingenuous in their explanation of the timing and cause of the damage done to Catholic churches in Spain, having dismissed it as essentially a response to the allegation that these buildings had been put to military use during the insurgency the previous July. 'Are they aware that something like 1,100 churches were destroyed or damaged before the revolution took place?' Croft asked. He also thought it outrageous that the report came close to excusing the murder of priests in that it had pointed out that only those who were unpopular with their parishioners had been put to death. The hypothetical analogy with which he concluded his letter was poignant:

Supposing in the two Conservative counties of Kent and Sussex the leading clergy, such as the Dean of Rochester and the Dean of Chichester, were Socialists - which I am far from suggesting - and therefore unpopular in these areas, causing anti-clerical feeling, could there be any justification for their being dragged out into the streets and killed, and even if the clericals of Kent and Sussex, being 'unpopular,' had incurred the wrath of their political opponents in those counties, is it compatible with Christianity that practically the whole of the churches in those counties should be destroyed, burned, or damaged, leaving the. Cathedrals of

<sup>21</sup> Francis Woodlock (London) to *The Times*, 26 February 1937, in *The Times*, 1 March 1937, p. 10.



Canterbury and Chichester standing only because of historic or artistic interest? If all religion ceased to be practised throughout that area could it be said that the condition would be other than that of 'anti-God'?<sup>22</sup>

Duncan-Jones' reply three days later indicated that these two men were talking past each other. He acknowledged that 'many' churches had been burned or desecrated but expressed his doubt, and that of his travelling companions, that 'the motive behind it was in the main atheistic.' This Dean briefly repeated his argument that they had seen no evidence of blaspheming of God in Republican Spain and that the violence against the priests had 'an economic and political basis rather than being inspired by religious factors.'<sup>23</sup>

### Henry Carter's Private Report in *The Methodist Recorder*

Apparently the most complete individual report of the excursion was written by Henry Carter, who acceded to a request from the editor of *The Methodist Recorder* to send a series of articles about the excursion to that denominational weekly. A seasoned author, Carter displayed considerable facility with the pen in providing a wealth of information for its readers. A goodly portion of it related to logistical matters; Carter gave details of the delegation's Air France flight from Croydon to Le Bourget in Paris, for example, and of several of the interviews which he and the other visiting English churchmen conducted.

The general impression of Republican Spain and its loyal supporters which Carter conveyed was firmly positive. The representative of its government who co-ordinated their stay in Valencia, Don Vicente Herrero, for example, was 'courteous and unfailingly helpful', while the chauffeur whom the government provided was an 'amazingly skilful driver'. When Carter and two of the other visitors were driven towards Madrid, an obliging villager some seventy miles from that city provided housing on extremely short notice close to midnight. The following morning this host refused payment for his service, insisting that 'it was impossible for a loyal Spaniard to accept money at such a time from the friends of his nation.'<sup>24</sup>

Carter juxtaposed the civility of the Republicans whom he encountered with the 'barbarism' of Franco's insurgents. The bombing of Madrid especially angered this pacifistic Methodist. In Tetuan, which had 'no military objective', he witnessed the utter devastation of such aerial

<sup>22</sup> Henry Page Croft (House of Commons) to *The Times*, 19 February 1937, in *The Times*, 23 February 1937, p. 10.

<sup>23</sup> A.S. Duncan-Jones (Chichester) to *The Times*, 24 February 1937, in *The Times*, 26 February 1937, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Carter, 'Republican Spain in Wartime. We Go to Madrid', *The Methodist Recorder*, 18 February 1937, p. 9.



bombardment. Taking readers on a verbal tour of the wreckage, he asked them to 'stop for a moment to mark the meaning of this pile of rusty iron, almost house-high; it is a mound of bedsteads, twisted and broken. What, think you, happened that night when the sleepers-fathers and mothers and children - were twisted and broken, too?' A stream of such pathos with its undeniably partisan dimension ran through parts of his narrative without dominating it entirely.<sup>25</sup>

In his second instalment Carter directly addressed the question of freedom for Roman Catholics and Protestants in Spain during the war. His presentation of this general matter appears to have been quite ingenuous and balanced. Carter did not veil his general distaste for the near-monopoly the Roman Catholic Church had held on the spiritual formation of the people for centuries and his contempt for the Inquisition, which during the Middle Ages had been directed against Jews and Muslims, and eventually been used to stamp out Protestantism. Yet he did not deny that in Barcelona, the first city he and his colleagues visited, 'no public Christian worship was held.' The previous year, moreover, most of the city's Catholic churches had been vandalised and their clergy either slain or compelled to flee. Precisely how Carter meant his categorical generalisation about the absence of public worship he did not clarify until he wrote a second article for *The Methodist Recorder*; because in this one he also informed his denominational readers that the Protestant churches of Barcelona had suffered very little damage, and Methodist educational work was still being carried out there. Early in this segment of his report, he frankly addressed the question of his own biases, stating that he was at heart ecumenically inclined and had considerable respect for Spanish Catholicism in so far as it limited itself to the spiritual nurture of the people. Carter expressed his belief that many Catholics in Spain fitted that category. On the other hand, he tempered his enthusiasm by pointing to two 'utterly contrary factors', namely the control which the Roman Catholic Church had historically exercised over the state, and the church's 'neglect of social justice on the part of a powerful section of the Church, evidenced by the impoverishment of the peasantry, and the extraordinary extent of illiteracy'. To this English specialist in social ministry, the latter indictment was no less severe than the former.<sup>26</sup>

Placing contemporary developments into the context of very recent history, the scholarly Carter related the closure of the Catholic churches, especially in Barcelona, to their alleged political captivity. He briefly related the outbreak of Franco's insurgency the previous July, pointedly calling it a 'conspiracy' and a 'revolt against the Republic' (whereas pro-Franco Englishmen generally described it as an act of national salvation from socialist and anarchist chaos) and declared that outside the Basque

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Henry Carter, 'Republican Spain in Wartime. The Religious Issue, Roman Catholic and Protestant', *The Methodist Recorder*, 25 February 1937, p. 11.

country 'the active sympathy of the hierarchy of the Roman Church was and is with Franco.' To this political liberal, that linkage of Catholicism with reactionally politics inescapably reduced sympathy for the former. Carter related how, according to what he believed was reliable testimony, Francoite troops in Barcelona had fled resistance on the Plaza de Cataluña and taken refuge in churches which 'had actually been used to store arms for the rebels'. He thereby echoed an accusation which had been current in the British press for more than six months. One consequence of these events, he explained, was a confirmation of long-standing anticlerical attitudes: 'It is no exaggeration to say that, to the mind of the people of Barcelona, the Roman Catholic Church was a belligerent, and it is as a defeated belligerent that they despoiled her.' Methodist readers in England, Carter believed, could thus countenance the action of the populace against the institutions of their birthright religious tradition. 'Picture the excited mobs when Churches became citadels, the last defences to yield,' he asked. 'You will not find it difficult to understand why today in Barcelona, excepting the Cathedral and a very few parish churches, Roman Catholic churches and other ecclesiastical buildings are closed and stripped of the symbols of religion, and why many churches have been destroyed internally by fire.'<sup>27</sup>

Given the presumably overwhelmingly Methodist loyalties of most of his readers, it was only natural for Carter to devote considerable space to his observations of Protestantism, and especially Methodism, in Republican Spain. Armed with letters of introduction from his friend Hickman Johnson at Mission House, he had been able to make revealing contacts with Spanish Methodists in Barcelona, perhaps most notably with the local denominational superintendent, Pastor José Capo. Carter disclosed that no more than their Catholic counterparts were the Protestants of that city allowed to worship publicly at that time. The President of Catalonia, Luis Companys, had told him that owing to 'bitter and violent' anticlerical sentiments in the region, all public worship had been suspended. 'I do not at present question the wisdom of this decision,' Carter stated. He assured readers that Christian ministry was nevertheless continuing, albeit necessarily in different forms. Illustrating the point, Carter explained that among Protestants generally worship was still being conducted in private homes and drew a parallel between that and the situation in the apostolic church: 'Pastoral visitation, and prayer in the homes of the people, have replaced public assembly' Two Methodist pastors were devoting their time to translating the New Testament into the Catalan language. Furthermore, the Methodist day-schools in Rubi near Barcelona were 'flourishing', Carter conveyed the belief of their administrators that they would be 'crowded' when the church there could finally reopen. On the Republican-held

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

Mediterranean island of Minorca, moreover, which neither Carter nor his travelling companions visited, Methodist services were still being conducted every Sunday. He concluded this segment of his report by quoting approvingly Foreign Minister Julio Alvarez del Vayo, who had stated, 'Republican Spain is anti-clerical but not anti-religious. Our policy is freedom for both creeds, Catholic and Protestant, subject to safeguards against the misuse of liberty to conspire against the Republic.'<sup>28</sup>

In a final instalment, published in March, Carter commented on the general political climate of the Republic and described his vision of Spain's future. That he remained in general favourably disposed to the government of the country was beyond dispute. His perceptions were based in large measure on observations in Valencia, to which the government had moved because of the siege of Madrid.

Carter first sought to dispel the notion widely held in Britain that the Republic was little more than a satellite of the Kremlin. 'To say - as some London newspapers do - that the Republic is in the grip of the 'Red Terror', by which is meant Russian Communism, is farcical,' he declared. Far from being in the hands of a Leftist oligarchy, its government enjoyed broad support from several political parties, ideological groupings, trade unions, professional people, regional separatists, and academics. Demonstrating the point statistically, Carter stated that merely sixteen of the deputies in the Parliament were communists. In any case, he clearly thought the new order was vastly superior to that of monarchical Spain: 'Here is, in truth, a release of the human spirit from the centuries-old bondage of clericalism, economic oppression, class privilege and illiteracy.' In the clash of modernisation and tradition Carter found the essence of the conflict: 'In effect the present war is between old Spain and new Spain.' He found it particularly lamentable that 'General Franco, the Roman Catholic hierarchy, the land-owning and the wealth-owning classes aim to "rescue" Spain from the vortex of social revolution.'<sup>29</sup> His overall perception of the country past and present was virtually dualistic; he knew of practically nothing positive in pre-Republican Spanish society and wrote little that revealed a critical spirit towards that which the Republicans whom he had met were interested in creating.

Carter concluded his report by suggesting several developments which were essential to the future stability and prosperity of Spain. They included a generous measure of regional autonomy, possibly in the form of a confederation on the Swiss model; full religious freedom for both Roman Catholics and Protestants; extensive land reform, 'without which there can be little advance in the standard of life in rural Spain'; undefined 'industrial reorganisation to secure substantial betterment in the lot of wage-earners'; and a comprehensive system of modern education to nurture modern social reform generally.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

### Critical Methodist Responses to Carter's Report

Carter's articles touched off a minor dispute in Methodist and other circles. Sir Henry Lunn, an ecumenically inclined former Methodist missionary, fired some of the first shots in the ensuing exchange in *The Methodist Recorder*. The father of Arnold Lunn, who had converted to Roman Catholicism and begun to play a prominent role in the rhetorical defence of the Nationalists, this already prominent Methodist would gain further attention later in 1937 owing to his leadership of efforts to establish a Protestant-Catholic 'United Christian Front' in favour of Franco. Writing in *The Methodist Recorder* in March 1937, he took to task both the report of the Duncan-Jones Anglican Free Church delegation and the articles which Carter had contributed to that denominational periodical. Most of his critical comments were directed at the former, which he accused of reflecting biased and naïve research. He found it utterly lamentable that an ecclesiastical delegation would 'issue a pronouncement. . . without consulting both sides in the matter'. To Lunn, this seemed virtually unprecedented.<sup>31</sup>

At virtually the same time, layman Ernest Oldmeadow of London wrote in the same newspaper that while Carter was entitled to publish his observations, it was lamentable that he had 'pretended to guide' English readers through very recent Spanish history which he - at least in the view of this detractor - was not competent to do. Even more seriously, Oldmeadow felt obliged to protest against 'Mr Carter's distortion of major facts'. He seemed particularly incensed that this Methodist minister had called Franco's insurgency a wanton clerico-military 'conspiracy' intended to undermine 'the worthy guardians of law and order'. In Oldmeadow's view, by contrast, the rebellion was a legitimate action triggered by 'six months of church-burnings, murders, spoliations and outrages by the hundred' and the assassination of Falangist leader José Calvo Sotelo. Would British Methodists, he wondered, accept with passive equanimity the destruction of hundreds of Methodist churches, the murders of scores of ministers and lay workers, and the vandalism of the offices of *The Methodist Recorder*?<sup>32</sup>

Yet Carter also had his allies, particularly in his own denominational ranks. One colleague, J. Johns, replied almost immediately in his defence, excoriating both Lunn and Oldmeadow for what he regarded as gratuitous criticism. Most of the case which he presented, however, consisted of little more than a lambasting of the Roman Catholic Church which Carter had also subjected to criticism in so far as it had allegedly

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Henry S. Lunn (unspecified provenance) to *The Methodist Recorder*, undated, in *The Methodist Recorder*, 25 March 1937, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Ernest Oldmeadow (London) to *The Methodist Recorder*, undated, in *The Methodist Recorder*, 25 March 1937, p. 23.

become enmeshed in politics and frustrated social justice. The current Spanish Civil War, Johns believed, was essentially a consequence of six centuries of ecclesiastical misconduct. He broached such well-worn topics as the expulsion and burning of Spain's Jews during the late Middle Ages, the Inquisition, and the genocidal conquest of much of the Western Hemisphere with papal blessing by the Spanish Crown. Small wonder, Johns thought, that 'there has been a saying in Spain for long, "Bad as a priest."' <sup>33</sup>

Support also came from Spain. Writing from Billericay, Frances L. Cleves thought the challenges by Lunn and Oldmeadow to Carter and his colleagues regarding religious freedom in the Spanish Republic were ill-founded. The recent visitors to Spain, she contended, were correct in their insistence that Protestant liberty was at stake and that the restrictions placed on the Roman Catholic Church were justified. Quoting the most recent annual report of the Spanish Gospel Mission, Cleves argued that the 'Fascists and their allies are really fighting to restore the Roman Catholic Church to its former prestige and power (which it lost with the fall of the monarchy)' and that 'the Government and its allies are not fighting religion as religion; they are fighting against the Roman Catholic Church as a political force.' <sup>34</sup>

Carter took up the verbal cudgels in his own behalf, issuing a public rejoinder in *The Methodist Recorder* to what he termed Lunn's 'somewhat vehement letter' in the same periodical. His denominational fellow, he believed, had overlooked certain fundamental points of which he apprised readers. Far from proceeding to Spain without adequate preparation or taking into account their possible biases, Carter explained, he and the other members of his group had 'seriously considered' ways of obtaining information from both Protestant and Catholic sources in areas which Franco controlled. Having secured official assurances from Republican Spain that they would have full freedom to conduct their enquiry as they saw fit, they had sought similar promises from the Nationalist side, but they were not forthcoming. Carter noted that this had been stated quite explicitly in a letter which the Dean of Chichester had sent to *The Times* more than a month earlier, i.e. before their departure for Spain. Duncan-Jones had pointed out that another Anglican clergyman had received permission from Franco to visit occupied territory 'on one condition - that he was on parole to say nothing of what he saw when he returned'. These were declined, for the Englishman in question had thought it bootless to 'avail himself of so useless a permission'. Furthermore, a second party of English Christians, whom Carter did not identify, had contacted Franco in attempt to get a guarantee of religious liberty for Protestants in Spain, but this had not

<sup>33</sup> J. Johns (unspecified provenance) to *The Methodist Recorder*, undated, in *The Methodist Recorder*, 1 April 1937, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> Frances L. Cleves (Billericay) to *The Methodist Recorder*, undated, in *The Methodist Recorder*, 1 April 1937, p. 21.

been forthcoming in the reply from the *Generalissimo*. Precisely what Franco's response included was not disclosed, but Carter stated obliquely that people who were concerned 'for the safety of the Protestant minority in Spain . . . have serious grounds for anxiety'.<sup>35</sup>

Secondly, Carter rejected Lunn's critique regarding the status of the Protestant congregations in Republican Spain, particularly his sarcastic question, 'Why cannot Methodism be allowed to worship God under this magnificent Government, as the clergy [in the Duncan-Jones party] would describe it?' Carter did not allow Lunn to put words into his mouth and replied sharply that he had never called any government 'magnificent'. Addressing the question of freedom of worship during the present war, he repeated that this was still quite possible in private settings. The closure of the churches, moreover, had considerable Protestant support, as 'no Methodist preacher in Barcelona would ask under existing conditions for the re-opening of our churches for public worship, for in their judgment the Catalonian Government has acted wisely in temporarily forbidding public assemblies in a city constantly exposed to bombardment from sea and air, and where political rivalries may at any time break into open conflict.'<sup>36</sup>

Carter concluded his response to Lunn by explaining that angry reactions to his party's report should be considered in the context of the irresponsible rhetoric which had beclouded public debate in the United Kingdom over the war, particularly as it was represented in the press. 'At the time we went to Spain widely-circulated English newspapers were claiming the Franco rebellion as "a fight for Christianity," and denouncing the Spanish Republic as engaged in "an anti-God propaganda directed from Moscow,"' he recalled. The brief report of the Duncan-Jones party, which had encompassed men with 'widely differing opinions', had nevertheless presented '*unanimous findings*', and these squarely contradicted that segment of public opinion previously informed by the tabloids. The most recent events, Carter argued, had further vindicated the report.<sup>37</sup>

### Percy Bartlett's Report from a Quaker Perspective

The representative of the Society of Friends in this interdenominational delegation was Percy Bartlett, who for many years had been active in the Friends Service Committee and other Quaker organisations in England. He perceived the Spanish tragedy through Nonconformist pacifist eyes and as one who was unquestionably disturbed by the alignment of the Spanish Catholic hierarchy with the *Falange*. His report of the tour embodies these sentiments and concerns.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Carter (London) to *The Methodist Recorder*, undated, in *The Methodist Recorder*, 8 April 1937, p. 21.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

## IN SICKNESS AND IN HEALTH THE TRAGIC CASE OF A PRIMITIVE METHODIST MINISTER

One midsummer morning, immediately following the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1878, a young man set out from his home in King's Lynn and took the train to Norwich. On his arrival, he made his way to the house of the superintendent minister who lived in Queen's Road close to the Primitive Methodist chapel. Jabez Lincoln was at the outset of his career as a Primitive Methodist minister.

At this time, there was just one Primitive Methodist circuit in Norwich with 636 members. There were well over 1700 regular attenders at the ten chapels, but no list now survives of attenders at the seven other rented preaching places. There were 51 local preachers in the circuit as well as twelve Sunday schools with 1189 scholars.<sup>1</sup> It was a medium-sized, busy circuit with three new chapels built in the previous few years. One of these was the vast Queen's Road complex, the head chapel in the circuit, built in 1872 and designed by the Norwich architect, Edward Boardman.<sup>2</sup>

The superintendent, Edmund Shields, was a native of Norwich and a minister of nineteen years' standing. He was likely to have been known already to Jabez Lincoln, for Shields was married to Maria Lift, daughter of the Lynn circuit steward, William Lift. It was William Lift, who, with Jabez Lincoln's father, Thomas, shouldered much of the work in that circuit.

The Lincoln family had had a long career in Primitive Methodism. Born at Weasenham All Saints in Norfolk, Thomas Lincoln moved to Walsoken and his first child was baptised in the nearby Primitive Methodist chapel at Wisbech. The family must have settled in Lynn between the baptism of his oldest child, Sarah Ann, in October 1841 and the birth of his second, Lucza, in June 1844. All the subsequent seven children were born in Lynn. Jabez was the third son and seventh child.<sup>3</sup>

Thomas was an active and reliable member of the Lynn circuit. A local preacher who was never censured for neglecting an appointment, he was also a trustee of the chapels at Wiggenhall St Germans, Highgate, Clenchwarton and London Road, Lynn. He was instrumental in buying land as sites for new chapels, was treasurer of various circuit funds as well as for Clenchwarton and Providence chapels, provided hospitality in his home for visiting preachers, was a delegate to District Meetings, an intermediary for settling disputes, a speaker at meetings, anniversaries, Sunday school openings and revivals as well as overseeing building

<sup>1</sup> Norfolk Record Office, FC 73/61-140, Primitive Methodist Chapel Schedules and Station Reports to the District Meeting, 1871-1931

<sup>2</sup> The others were Newton St Faith's, 1872 and Shipfield, 1875

<sup>3</sup> I am very grateful to Brian Hart for this and other genealogical information. N.R.O., FC54/210, King's Lynn Primitive Methodist Baptismal Register, 1823-65



work at many places of worship and taking his part on a variety of committees. He was also, for very many years, the devoted leader of a huge class for whom he provided pastoral oversight.

Originally a brushmaker, Thomas Lincoln moved into general dealing with a shop in St John's Terrace. During the 1860s, the shop was used as a collecting point for clothes for the poor in Lancashire.<sup>4</sup> The cotton workers there were suffering from widespread unemployment and experiencing harsh times as a result of the fall in raw cotton exports from the Confederate southern states during the American civil war.<sup>5</sup> By 1881, Thomas described himself as the master of a furniture dealing business.<sup>6</sup>

The family lived opposite William Lift in Union Street and together the two men were Herculean figures in Primitive Methodist life in the large Lynn circuit.

The Lincoln children as they grew up began to play their part in chapel life. In June 1865, John, the eldest son, began to help his father with services prior to becoming a local preacher on trial.<sup>7</sup> In May 1872, Joseph Stephen Lincoln was asked by the superintendent minister at Lynn, Richard Howchin, to assist in the Sunday school at Highgate where teachers were in short supply. In June 1875 he was given 'liberty to speak' and in June 1879 the Quarterly meeting ordered he 'be requested to write out his Doctrinal document and be examined by Mr Edwards [the minister] and if satisfactory, he come on our next plan.'<sup>8</sup> John Lincoln and his sister, Emma, both members at Lynn, were given their satisfactory credentials when they moved to the Hull Second circuit in the spring of 1874. In January 1879, Joseph and Louisa Lincoln were invited to join the choir.

Like the rest of his family, Jabez was a dedicated attender at chapel. A Leaders' meeting on the 9 December 1870 recognised him as a full member of society. He was chosen to represent London Road Sunday school on the circuit School committee in November 1874 whilst in March 1875 the Quarterly meeting agreed that 'Jabez Lincoln's document be received as satisfactory and his name be put on the plan as exhorter.'<sup>9</sup> The following meeting raised him to come on trial and only one quarter later, he was placed on the full plan. His promotion had been meteoric.

Jabez felt he had been called to be a travelling preacher. The first indication of this in the circuit records was when the Quarterly meeting in June 1877 decided that consideration of the matter should be postponed until the return of the minister, then absent from the circuit. The following month, the Circuit Committee noted that the minister, George Seaman, was to inform Jabez Lincoln 'that he is requested to

<sup>4</sup> N.R.O., FC54/458, King's Lynn Primitive Methodist circuit minute book, 1862-70

<sup>5</sup> *British Historical Statistics*, B.R. Mitchell, 1988, chapter 6

<sup>6</sup> 1881 Census of Population, P.R.O., RGLI, Piece 2000, folio 54, p.3

<sup>7</sup> N.R.O., FC54/458, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> N.R.O., FC 54/459, King's Lynn Primitive Methodist circuit minute book, 1870-82

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



preach a sermon at London Road and to present himself for examination.<sup>10</sup> The next Committee meeting held on the 4 September 1877 reported on a successful examination according to Rule 223<sup>11</sup> and recommended favourable consideration by the forthcoming Quarterly meeting.

Speed continued to mark the young man's progress, for the Quarterly meeting was held the following week. It was agreed that the testimonial form for the required examination should be completed and that he should be recommended to the Southern Examination Committee as a candidate for the ministry. It was ominous, perhaps, that the Quarterly meeting directed Jabez Lincoln to obtain a medical certificate to accompany his application.

With the examination successfully behind him, the Circuit Committee ordered that his credentials be forwarded to the Bolton Second circuit from where he would attend the training provided by the Manchester Preachers' Association.<sup>12</sup>

The following summer, Jabez Lincoln was recommended to the Norwich circuit by the General Committee and was sent to the city to take up the reins of office as a Primitive Methodist minister. His lodgings were in Peter Street near the chapel in Dereham Road. One of his first official undertakings was the signing of pledges at the September Quarterly meeting. Ministers on their first appointment and the circuit employing them were both required to sign a statement of promise and guarantee. The minister solemnly promised that -

'I will promote peace, soul-saving and the general good of the Connexion as well as the spiritual good of the Stations with which I may be immediately connected.'

He went on to agree to study the Primitive Methodist rules and practice and to discharge his ministerial duties. If he failed to do this during his period of probation or if he was asked officially to withdraw from the ministry, he would do so

'without speaking ill of anyone in the Connexion or sowing any discord or exciting any sympathy or countenancing any petitions'

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Rule 223, *Consolidated Minutes*, 1870 - 'Before a station recommends a preacher for the itinerancy, it shall carefully examine him concerning his views of Christian doctrine, his ability to read and write, and his knowledge of the English language, arithmetic, geography and English and Church history; and if satisfactory to the Quarterly Board, it shall furnish the testimonials required by rule 224 to the Examining Committee, to whose jurisdiction it belongs.'

<sup>12</sup> This was a training course where aspiring ministers were placed under the supervision of established ministers who would direct their studies: see *A Little Primitive*, Kenneth Lyons, 2000, p. 70

and, at his own expense, return peaceably to the original station which pledged him or else to some other place to reside.

The station for its part pledged that if the man taken out failed in any way, it would 'give up a Preacher, according to Rule, instead of him.' In addition, it would send £40 to the Connexion over four years towards the cost of furnishing an additional preacher's house and agree to take a married preacher at the end of this time.<sup>13</sup>

Then followed the usual busy round of a minister's life for Jabez, with sermons to preach at Sunday services, at camp meetings, at protracted meetings and revivals; committees to attend; minutes to take; funds to collect for a multitude of causes and pastoral visits to be made. His name appeared, together with those of his colleagues and one of the circuit stewards, on one of the foundation stones of Nelson Street chapel in Norwich. The stone was laid on the 26 November 1878. One year's work at Norwich lengthened into two. He was reported as having preached at the Queen's Road anniversary and spoken at the tea meeting on the following Monday<sup>14</sup> as well as taking part in numerous other similar events. His first two years in the ministry had been a success.

On the 18 March 1880, the Lowestoft circuit held its Quarterly meeting. There it was resolved to ask William Batterbee, a Norfolk man, to remain as their superintendent for a second year and to invite Jabez Lincoln as their second minister. These invitations were confirmed two months later by the District Meeting and in September Jabez Lincoln's credentials were received and he began work in his new circuit. One of his first tasks was to look at the accounts from around the circuit and at the Quarterly meeting at the beginning of September, it was agreed that 'the analysis of society payments prepared by Bro. Lincoln be made use of at Society meetings when and where needed.'<sup>15</sup>

Both ministers were 'requested to deliver Lectures in the Circuit for the liquidation of the Kessingland debt,' a preaching place that was being closed, but on which money was owing.<sup>16</sup> An outing of the Lowestoft chapel society and their friends to Burgh St Peter was organised and Jabez Lincoln went along, too, to enjoy the day. He was, however, keen to move on and a Circuit Committee meeting held at St Peter's Street on the 25 February 1881 resolved that 'Brother Lincoln's notice of removing from the Circuit in July be accepted.'<sup>17</sup> So Jabez Lincoln left Lowestoft in June and his credentials were sent on to the Bury St Edmund's circuit. No appreciation of his work and character appeared in the circuit minute book.

<sup>13</sup> Pledges were printed on Chapel Schedule forms, eg. N.R.O., FC74/366, King's Lynn Chapel Schedules, 18

<sup>14</sup> *Daylight Newspaper*, 25 Oct. 1873, p. 3

<sup>15</sup> Lowestoft Record Office, FC47/C2/1, Lowestoft Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting minutes, 1865-80

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Almost immediately, it became apparent that he was not well and by the beginning of December he had become totally incapacitated and quite unable to carry out his duties. The problem appeared to be a mental one, with Lincoln extremely agitated and unable to settle. His superintendent, Robert Betts, sought medical advice. He was warned to prevent Lincoln from trying to carry out his ministerial obligations and, in consequence, he felt obliged to move the young man into his own home. It proved a difficult task. On several occasions, Jabez Lincoln escaped from the house, returned to his lodgings and attempted to pick up the threads of his profession, but it seems that local Methodists were frightened to allow him into their houses. So Robert Betts took him to his family at Lynn where he remained for a few weeks. Then he returned to Bury St Edmund's together with his sister, Louisa, who was to look after him as he was incapable of resuming work.

News of his illness quickly spread through the Norwich District. As a result, no circuit issued an invitation to him for the forthcoming Connexional year and when the preliminary appointments were issued by Conference, Lincoln was included in the list of uninvited preachers. The Norwich delegates did not feel they could be so duplicitous as to attempt to have him removed to another District and, consequently, could see no alternative other than to agree to his name being put down for Norwich, his pledging station.

Immediately the final list of stations was published, a meeting of officials was called in the Norwich circuit, chaired by the superintendent and former colleague of Lincoln, Ephraim Blake. They discussed the situation at length, finally resolving -

'we regret to find from the copy of the Stations sent to us, that the Rev. J. Lincoln is returned to us on his pledge; and as we have reason to believe there is no prospect of his being able to take work, we ask the Conference to remove him....'

They asked for a young man to be sent to take his place. They suggested the Conference might allow, Jabez Lincoln a year's rest, but wanted Conference to provide the money to pay him some salary.

'We do not wish for the painful responsibility of sending him home, as undoubtedly would be the case should the Station be left as sent to us.'<sup>18</sup>

This appeal was sent to Conference, but although it was read by the delegates to the General Committee, it was never officially presented to Conference itself. When the Norwich circuit demanded to know why its legal right to be heard had been set aside, it was told that so many

<sup>18</sup> N.R.O., FC73/143, *The Case of Jabez Lincoln*, John Hammond, 1883, p. 3

appeals had been made, Conference had not had the time to examine them all. It was further told that there appeared to be little that could be done regarding their problem with Jabez Lincoln and so his stationing in Norwich was confirmed.

Not all the circuit officials were prepared to accept this judgement. Angry that their right of appeal had not been allowed, they pointed out that Conference had used only ten days for its business affairs when sixteen days were available, hence the claim that there had been insufficient time to hear the appeals was a false one. They declared it likely that they would make a formal protest about the Conference of 1882 to the Conference of 1883.

It was during this fevered activity concerning the stationing dispute, that Jabez Lincoln was admitted to St Clement's Hospital in Ipswich on the 16 June as a private patient.<sup>19</sup> The hospital, popularly known as 'the Ipswich Asylum' was exclusively for the treatment and care of the mentally ill. It had 263 patients at this time. In an attempt to alleviate the tedium of hospital life, a monthly entertainment was arranged to amuse the patients. The diversions immediately following Jabez Lincoln's arrival at the hospital included a visit to Felixstowe by a large party of 198 patients although they were 'obliged to return by an earlier train than intended on account of persistent rain - the patients enjoyed themselves all the same.'<sup>20</sup> There was a 'Harvest Home' in late August 'with steam horses, races for prizes, etc,' a vocal and instrumental entertainment with dancing in September and in October a theatrical show with music provided by one of the patients. At Christmas, there were days of celebration as well as a service in the chapel; there was music, recitations and other entertainments including some splendid conjuring, 'the patients much amused.'<sup>21</sup> It is impossible to know if Jabez Lincoln attended any of these events or whether he was too agitated and excitable to do so.

There is no evidence as to how long Lincoln remained at St Clement's. The medical superintendent noted all admissions in his journal and all transfers to and from other hospitals, but, strangely, did not record discharges.

The Norwich Quarterly meeting decided to write and ask the Connexion's General Committee for advice. They set out the history of the case, pointing out that this was not the first such attack that Jabez Lincoln had experienced, but that the officials in Norwich had not been aware of this when they had invited him to join them as a minister 'or else we would have hesitated and made enquiry.'<sup>22</sup>

Is there a clue to this earlier illness in the Lynn Quarterly meeting

<sup>19</sup> Ipswich Record Office, ID408/A3/1, St Clement's Hospital, Medical Superintendent's Journal, 1870-91

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> N.R.O., FC73/143, op. cit.

minutes? The record of the meeting held on the 18 September 1876 includes the decision, 'Bro. J. Lincoln have a few appointments on the next plan, but his Father must be appointed out at the same time.' Perhaps this suggests there was some concern about the capacity of Jabez to preach at this particular time and that it was advisable to enlist his father's help and presence at the service. It may also explain why the meeting insisted that Jabez should provide a medical certificate when he applied to the Examination Committee as a candidate for the ministry.<sup>23</sup> Presumably the Lynn meeting hoped and expected that this episode would be an isolated one rather than a recurrent problem.

The Norwich Quarterly meeting continued its letter to the General Committee with an evaluation of Lincoln's work whilst he was a minister in the circuit. 'His conduct,' they said, was 'most exemplary and he bid fair to become a most efficient minister of the gospel. He has our heartfelt sympathy and most deeply do we regret that a young man of so much promise is smitten down by such a malady.'<sup>24</sup>

They went on to point out that the Norwich circuit desperately needed a third active minister to work there and that it seemed a hopeless prospect to expect Jabez Lincoln would be well enough to take up his ministerial duties. They insisted that Norwich did not have the financial resources to support Lincoln and, at the same time, pay for an additional preacher to deputise for him.

A reply to this letter reached Norwich three days later, suggesting that the circuit should employ one of the young men who had just completed their training and recommending Henry Pickett. Hence, an adjourned Quarterly meeting, held on the 26 June 1882, agreed to invite Pickett to come to Norwich to cover for Lincoln and with official confirmation from the General Committee, Pickett arrived in Norwich for the beginning of the Connexional year.

With the arrival of the forceful John Hammond in the circuit as superintendent in the late summer of 1882, the protests became more determined. Complaining that there was no up-to-date news of Jabez Lincoln's state of health from his friends or family, neither had his credentials been received from the Bury St Edmund's circuit, Hammond resolved to make his own enquiries. On the 20 August, he wrote to Jabez at the Ipswich Asylum and received an immediate reply.

Dear Bro. Hammond,

In answer to your letter received this morning, I think I may say that improvement has taken place since I came here two months ago. I cannot enter into a detailed explanation of my mental experience during that period: the conflict has been very terrible, but I think I see some light in the darkness. I must leave all in God's hands and He will work out His own

<sup>23</sup> N.R.O., FC54/459, op. cit., p. 4

<sup>24</sup> N.R.O., FC73/459, op. cit., p. 6

purposes. Only last night after retiring to rest, I lay a long time wondering if the way would be opened back into the vineyard of Christ or whether every avenue of return was closed against me; this morning your letter seemed an answer to my thoughts. I think I should be able to undertake some amount of Circuit work, if the station in kindly forbearance and sympathy, would accept such services as would be rendered in much weakness, but in dependence on Him who giveth power unto the faint. I remain yours in Christ Jesus,

Jabez Lincoln

John Hammond presented this letter to the Norwich September Quarterly meeting which discussed the situation for two hours. The letter demonstrated, Hammond told the meeting, that Jabez Lincoln was lucid at times, but it was quite impossible to consider employing a minister who was an inmate of an asylum, that his case had always been considered a hopeless one and that he was judged unfit to be released from hospital. He did not, however, present any evidence as to his sources for these last two assertions.

The Norwich meeting believed that Lincoln had been forced on the circuit in order that it would pay his maintenance. They insisted that by invoking the pledge taken at the outset of Lincoln's ministerial career, they were simply employing the rules of the Connexion itself. As the young man had not withdrawn from the ministry voluntarily, the circuit was compelled to insist that he did so immediately. He was to be paid a quarter's salary and allowances, but receive no further money. They felt the Connexion had broken its own rules by insisting he be stationed in Norwich.

As well as these determined resolutions, the meeting was generous enough to recognise that Jabez Lincoln was

'a most honourable, devout and (apart from his affliction) promising young man; and that we record our great satisfaction with his labours and deportment whilst with us and our sincere grief under this painful and mysterious providence which has overtaken him'<sup>25</sup>

A copy of these resolutions was sent to Jabez Lincoln in hospital and another copy was sent to his father, Thomas, in Lynn.

The letter was, Thomas Lincoln said, 'a painful surprise.'<sup>26</sup> For him it was also a new blow. First, the Leaders' meeting at London Road chapel on the 2 September 1881 had heard that Emma and Louisa Lincoln, the two daughters of Thomas still living with him at Lynn, had resigned their membership. Then, ten days later, the Quarterly meeting was informed that their brother, Joseph Stephen, had asked for his credentials although

<sup>25</sup> N.R.O., FC73/459, op. cit., p. 7

<sup>26</sup> N.R.O., FC73/459, op. cit., p. 8

he was not moving away from the town. Two of the ministers were asked to see him and hear his reasons for his request and then report back to the meeting.

There is no evidence in the minutes of the various meetings about the cause of the upset between the church and the younger Lincolns, but the matter was referred through the autumn from Leaders' meeting to Leaders' meeting and from one Circuit Committee to the next.

A Leaders' meeting held at the very beginning of December 1881, at the precise time that Jabez broke down in health, offered to receive any complaint against the church in writing which the Lincoln sisters might make if only they would withdraw their resignations. The young women chose not to take up this offer and persisted in their resolve.

Two days later, the Local Preachers' meeting agreed to accept Joseph Lincoln's resignation and remove his name from the list of local preachers on the plan. His request for his credentials was dealt with by the Full Board. It decided that 'we do not feel ourselves justified in granting his credentials unless he withdraw his unwarranted statements against our Church and his Father.'<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no documents to throw further light on this anger in the Lincoln family and their resignations, but in March 1882, Thomas himself resigned as a Class Leader after more than two decades of service. His class had always been the largest in the circuit and had consistently contributed the greatest amount of money, so his loss must have been a keen one. Indeed, the Leaders' meeting expressed its deep regret at his resignation 'after so many years of faithful service' and expressed 'their continued confidence and sympathy with him in his affliction and trials.'<sup>28</sup> He did not, however, resign as a local preacher.

On the 20 September 1882, Thomas Lincoln replied to the letter sent to him by the Norwich officials. He expressed great surprise at their resolutions as he had been interviewed by Mr Ladd, the Norwich steward, in the presence of the Lynn minister, John Smith, only a few days after Conference had ended. They had discussed the situation and arrangements were agreed whereby the interests of the Norwich circuit would be guarded whilst Jabez would be given time to recover from his illness. Thomas agreed to accept on his son's behalf only a small sum in order that the rest of his salary together with the sick fund payments would allow a supply preacher to be employed without financial hardship to the circuit. He also agreed that Jabez would not go to Norwich without a medical certificate to state that he was well, neither would he arrive in the middle of a quarter. Now, it seemed, this agreement had been peremptorily overturned without any consultation and Jabez had been cut off by a single stroke from his position and privileges as a minister. He went on to point out that Connexional rules

<sup>27</sup> N.R.O., FC54/459, op. cit.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

allowed 78 weeks for a minister to recover from illness. His son had been sick for a much shorter time than this.

Thomas regretted that these decisions had been sent to Jabez. They had

greatly upset him as they seem to close the door of hope and have doubtless hindered his recovery.... prior to the receipt of your communication, he had shown signs of decided improvement.

Thomas asked for all future letters to be sent to him

as my son ought to be troubled with nothing in correspondence which would tend to cause excitement, anxiety or disappointment affecting his future life.<sup>29</sup>

When Thomas Lincoln's letter was examined in Norwich, it received short shrift. Refusing to accept that the station steward had acted in any official capacity whatsoever, they also declined to accede to the proposition that they had acted over-hastily. They rejected the request that Thomas be regarded as the legal representative for his son during his incapacity, expressed surprise that Thomas had not urged his son to resign from the ministry and vigorously asserted that the meeting would not reconsider the case.

The Norwich officials continued in the protests to the Connexion. They were reassured that the Sick Fund would cover Jabez Lincoln's salary and if he remained ill throughout the whole of the Connexion year, the circuit would receive 52 weeks' allowances for him. However, the circuit would remain responsible for his maintenance. The Connexion insisted that Lincoln remain as one of the Norwich ministers.

Faced with the intransigence of the circuit officials in Norwich, Thomas Lincoln appealed to the District Meeting. In response, the secretary, John Smith, who was also Thomas Lincoln's minister, wrote to the Norwich station to ask that copies of all relevant letters and minutes be forwarded to the meeting. The following Quarterly meeting on the 5 March 1883 was a resolute one. It determined that 'as Thomas Lincoln has no legal right of interference on this matter, we decline to send on the papers at the insistence of an illegal proceeding.' It went on to say that if the District Meeting referred the matter to Conference, they wished John Hammond to be elected as one of the delegates, 'that the circuit's action may be represented.'<sup>30</sup>

At this point, John Hammond in anticipation of a request to present the matter to Conference, gathered together all the letters and minutes from the various meetings which pertained to the case and had them

<sup>29</sup> N.R.O., FC73/143, op. cit., p. 8-9

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13



printed in a small pamphlet entitled *The Case of Jabez Lincoln*. The documents were arranged to support the position of the Norwich circuit, but were put together in a repetitive and confused way so that the work appears to have been compiled hurriedly. The final section set out the circuit's case yet again and as well as presenting the relevant points, it went on to point out a mistake made by the Connexion - that a year's maintenance for Lincoln would cost £25.4.0, but, as a probationer, he would only be allowed two shillings a week for medical aid. Conference paid for medical care for a sick preacher, but very little for a probationer. It chose to ignore the generous offer made by Thomas Lincoln. Moreover, it argued, as Lincoln was a probationer, the Bury St Edmund's circuit should have returned him on his pledge immediately he had broken down and Conference was powerless to order his new stationing if, in that station's judgement, he had failed on his pledge. It closed with an attack on Thomas Lincoln and the part he had played in supporting his son.

The District Meeting decided to censure the Norwich circuit for insisting on returning Jabez Lincoln on his pledge. This prompted a protest by Norwich to the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1883 against the censure, but this protest appears to have had no success.

Taking an overview of the situation, it would appear that both Lincolns, father and son, had behaved well. Jabez, according to his promise, had made no move to excite sympathy for his dreadful situation nor had he attempted to drum up support against the Norwich authorities. Thomas had tried to spare his son further anxiety and had made generous offers to secure the finances of the Norwich circuit during his son's illness. His stance was, presumably, regarded as acceptable by his own minister who had been present during the discussion with the Norwich circuit steward.

On the other hand, the Norwich circuit had failed to allow Jabez the requisite number of months permitted by the Connexion in which to recover. It had not been willing, as it had pledged, to employ one fewer minister in place of Lincoln and accept his return. It had been callous in its correspondence with the young man in spite of being begged by his father to refrain from upsetting him in his vulnerable state and it had been hostile to Thomas in spite of his willingness to make a generous agreement which would protect the finances of the circuit. Once having got the bit between its teeth, it doggedly protested again and again, refusing to accept decisions of the District Meeting and Conference.

Meanwhile, Jabez left St Clement's Hospital and returned home, but his state of mind deteriorated once more. On the 11 January 1883, he was admitted on the application of his father, to the Bethel Hospital, a private mental hospital in Norwich. His mental disorder was classed as 'mania'

and the supposed cause of his insanity was described as 'over-work and study.'<sup>31</sup>

The Medical Superintendent examined him on his arrival and found him to be

'a man of average height with fair hair, beard and moustache and light eyes. He appears to be in a very happy frame of mind and states he passes most of his time in deep thought. He contemplates marriage, occasionally swears and has religious delusions....He is not suicidal, epileptic or dangerous to others.'<sup>32</sup>

On the 18 January, it was noted that he 'amuses himself by writing sermons etc in which he expresses exaggerated ideas of religion.' By the end of February, he was 'excited and irritable, destroys the books and annoys the other patients, but generally [is] pretty well behaved.' In May, he had to be segregated as he had become 'noisy and very troublesome, tears his clothes and destroys papers and books, is most untidy in appearance and abusive,' but by the following January, he was much better. Although he 'walks about in a hurried, nervous manner,' he was 'coherent in his remarks.' The Medical Superintendent, Horace Turner, wrote in his case book, 'appears to me to be perfectly rational in both his conduct and conversation.'<sup>33</sup>

At the beginning of the following month, Jabez Lincoln left the Bethel Hospital on a month's leave of absence which lengthened into a final discharge. The Consulting Physician, Dr Frederick Bateman, wrote at this time that six months ago, the case of Jabez 'seemed one of the most hopeless in the Asylum, but under proper management, he has unexpectedly improved and seems likely to be able to resume his occupation of a Nonconformist Minister.'<sup>34</sup>

Jabez Lincoln did not return to the ministry in the Primitive Methodist Church. What happened to him is not known apart from the information in the 1901 Census which recorded that he was living in King's Lynn and still called himself a Methodist minister. With the younger members of the family severing their relations with London Road chapel and the absence of contemporary documents, there are only a few glimpses of the family to be had.

The Lincolns moved from their house in Union Street, Lynn in late 1881 or early 1882 to another in Norfolk Street and the Union Street house was bought by their neighbour, William Lift. He was still its owner in 1891 when the census enumerator noted that it was standing empty. Later they moved to South Everard Street where Thomas died in December 1889. In 1894, London Road chapel Leaders and Trustees decided to put

<sup>31</sup> N.R.O., BH79, Bethel Hospital, Registry of Admissions, 1814-90

<sup>32</sup> N.R.O., BH57, Bethel Hospital, Medical Superintendent's Male Case Book, 1878-93

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> N.R.O., BH38, Bethel Hospital, Consulting Physician's Report Book, 1883-9

up a brass tablet on the wall above the gallery commemorating Thomas Lincoln's life and work in the circuit.

It is, perhaps, a little curious to see that in 1881 four of the Lincoln children were living at home with their father, all of them in their twenties and none of them married. Could it be that they were aware of the family frailty of mental illness and, as a result, had deliberately refrained from marriage? Jabez was not the first of his generation to be affected. His older sister, Emma, had been admitted to the Bethel Hospital in July 1871 when she was only nineteen. The diagnosis then was 'mania'. She was admitted again in August 1874 and remained a patient for a year. It seems her relapse had been occasioned by the strain of keeping house for her brother, John, in Hull where he went to set up a business for himself. During this second admission, she suffered from delusions as well as mania and was at times 'screaming incessantly, refuses food, makes most determined efforts to destroy herself.'<sup>35</sup> At times she was restrained by a strait jacket. She was discharged the following June at Thomas's request and against the advice of the Superintendent Physician, Dr Robert Gibson. He noted, however,

'we have since heard that Miss Lincoln went to bed very insane the night she left, but that Catamania came on during the night and she woke up in the morning quite well.'<sup>36</sup>

Emma and Louisa Lincoln lived together in Gayton Road, King's Lynn, for many years. Joseph Stephen joined the Methodist New Connexion for a time. Then, in 1905, he applied to become a Primitive Methodist local preacher once again in the King's Lynn circuit and was restored to his old place on the plan. He took over his father's furniture shop in the Saturday Market Place and transformed it into an antique shop where he was still trading in 1916. Their eldest sister, Mary Ann, also unmarried and staying with a friend at Snettisham on the north Norfolk coast, died on the 14 May 1907. The inquest, which was held the following day, concluded that she 'died by hanging herself with a piece of worsted from a bed post while temporarily insane.'<sup>37</sup>

NORMA VIRGOE

(Norma Virgoe is editor of the East Anglia Branch bulletin)

<sup>35</sup> N.R.O., BH50, Bethel Hospital, Female Case Book, 1871-99

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> N.R.O., COR1/1/3, Coroner's Inquests for the Liberty of the Duchy of Lancaster in Norfolk, 1853-1909

## NEWS FROM LOCAL BRANCHES

It is appropriate that the author of *Primitive Physic* continues to take the temperature of Methodism at intervals, as the celebrations of his birth and conversion roll round with the years. The programme of celebratory events in the tercentenary year just past suggests that the pulse of Methodism has slowed a bit, to mix the medical analogies, but of course there are not as many of us as there were in 1938 and 1903. Moreover we may not be quite as fascinated by Wesley as once we were and we may not be quite as reverential, encouraged in this by Henry Rack's *Reasonable Enthusiast*. In 2002 I invited our local branches to send me details of any tercentenary events they held and I am grateful for branch proceedings as well as programmes of branch, church and circuit events. While not comprising a large corpus they do give a picture of early twenty-first-century Methodist attitudes and will be deposited in our library for future historians.

Predictably, Cornwall has provided most material but has the advantage of historic chapels and sites and dramatic scenery. There is a quite traditional script for a complete service at Carharrack including a dramatisation of how Charles Wesley came to the area in 1743. Up on the north coast at Gwithian, things were yet more dramatic with Professor Charles Thomas and a friend on horseback in period costume. In the Down District in Ireland there was a 'Family day' on June culminating in a service in the Cathedral. Carlisle too had a cathedral service. The Old Rectory at Epworth produced a leaflet for general use containing a meditation about John, which seems a little old fashioned in its style, 'The man who felt fire in his heart.' Going offshore again, the Manx folk produced a substantial booklet to accompany a service at Bride of hymn singing and readings. They also had a coach trip in the steps of Wesley from Peel to Ramsey. The Mint church in Exeter hosted a circuit sing-along ending with 'And can it be' to *Sagina*. Of course Lincolnshire made a lot of the year including three lectures about Charles, John 'Depicted as Religious Hero' and John's 'Soul goes marching on.' A number of branch *proceedings* contained articles about Wesley in both the national and more importantly, the local context.

I am grateful for everything sent but should be glad to receive more especially an order of service and other details for the Lincoln Cathedral event.

ROGER THORNE  
(Local Branches Secretary)

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Christoph Gottlob Muller und die Anfänge des Methodismus in Deutschland.* by Friedemann Burkhardt, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Pp. 464 €79 ISBN 3-525-55828-7).

Christoph Gottlob Muller (1785-1858) was responsible for introducing Methodism into Germany. He was born at Winnenden in Württemberg, the son of a master butcher who was a Moravian pietist. There were books in the house, and a religious atmosphere: confirmation, for such families, was an important occasion. When Christoph left school in 1799, he carried on the butcher's craft as an apprentice in Strasbourg.

The first decisive step in his life was to move to London, where he had an uncle; partly because of the disturbance at home caused by the Napoleonic wars, and partly because his mother died and his father married again. Burkhardt paints a vivid picture of the young man, fresh from the beauty of the woods and fields of his native valley, confronted with the pre-Dickensian squalor of the London streets. He sought refuge in a Wesleyan Methodist society in Great Queen Street, where he found a place that ministered to his spiritual longings. He worked at Finchley in the meat market, and it was through his work there that he met the Claridge family, farmers, butchers and hotel-keepers. In 1813 he married Ann Claridge, in whom, as Burkhardt points out, he found not only a wife but a companion in the things of the Holy Spirit. Christoph became a class leader, a local preacher, and a church steward in the Finchley and Whetstone Circuit.

Müller went back to Germany in 1830. There he began a Great Awakening in Württemberg: he started class meetings in his home, and ministered to the Pietists and the merely curious. He began to preach in the surrounding area, travelling widely in Württemberg and the Black Forest, and translating some of John Wesley's writings into German. His work became officially recognised by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and on a return visit to England in 1840 he was given an enthusiastic reception at a rally at Exeter Hall. Some of his early converts left for North America, where they ministered to the German emigrant population, chiefly in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati; and in due course, missionaries from North America came back to help in the work in Germany. By the time of his death, Methodism in Germany had become firmly established as part of the world-wide church.

Burkhardt's book is an important contribution to the history of world Methodism. It is written in a style which is easy to understand and translate, with occasional passages of lyrical description and a lively appreciation of the scale of Muller's work. It is extraordinarily detailed in its contextualising of this: Methodism and its beliefs, the situation in England, the state of affairs in Germany in 1830, are all given serious treatment. The method is so thorough that it operates on three levels: (1) the main narrative, (2) copious footnotes,

and (3) 'Exkurs', or lengthy appendixes. My only regret is that there are not more quotations from the letters of Muller himself: the moments when he does speak for himself, especially during the period of revolution and disturbance in 1848-49, are vivid and appealing. There are a few errors in the spelling of place-names (Calpham, Quenn Street), but in a book of such density and detail these are insignificant. The overall impression is of a book which is a scholarly and definitive account of the founder of Methodism in Germany.

J. R. WATSON

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*Frank O. Salisbury "Painter Laureate"* by Nigel McMurray (2003, 1st Books. ISBN 1 4107 3326 2). No price stated.

Frank Salisbury was virtually contemporary with Picasso whose *Guernica* was painted nearly at the same time as Salisbury's 1937 patriotic and photo-realistic Coronation scene (which adorns the cover of this book). There, in cameo, you have the contradiction that was Frank Salisbury. Salisbury was an arch-establishment figure who kept company with royalty; an entrepreneurial portrait artist who made a fortune; a devoted Methodist yet keen ecumenist; an ebullient eccentric out of step with his own times and especially with twentieth century art. His portrayals of Wesley shaped the imagery of a generation. He has long needed a corrective biography to his own self-adulatory *Portrait and Pageant*, so I have awaited Nigel McMurray's work with interest.

Salisbury's achievements were an impressive series of portraits of many leading figures of the first half of the twentieth century, history pictures, child portraits, and his lavish depictions of royal occasions (hence 'painter laureate'). Yet he never lost his first love for stained glass, so evident in the colour and detail of his paintings. A staunch traditionalism characterised his work.

The weight of years of painstaking research is contained in these covers. The author has tracked down Salisbury's works and papers, and explored the legends and realities of his paintings and their genesis. He has visited Salisbury's homes and stood where he stood, even in the forlorn halls of 'Sarum Chase', Salisbury's monumental mansion in Hampstead. McMurray rehearses the sorry tale of the disposal of Salisbury's legacy by the British Council of Churches (now C.C.T.B.I.) to whom Salisbury had (naively perhaps) entrusted it.

Yet there are disappointments in this book. Perhaps the greatest is that it straddles the biography and *catalogue raisonné*, which makes it difficult to follow at times and results in some wearisome repetition, about his studios for instance. At times I wondered about the author's total objectivity - his

empathy for Salisbury is evident. Critical engagement and appraisal of this artist who so despised modern art and artists (and it was mutual!) is mostly kept for the final chapter: more would be welcome.

The quality of the (monochrome) illustrations, after the high promise of the cover, is poor and the quantity sparse. The book is produced by the 'print on demand' process, which tells on other aspects of quality. The text is unwittingly enlivened by some spelling errors - 'vault-face' (p207); 'a regular attainder of the Wesley Guild' (p221); and 'surplus' for 'surplice' (pp239, 240). Factual errors are annoying: Edward VII for Edward VIII, surely (p149), and 'Sir Charles' Oatley was actually Sir George (p236).

Salisbury was an unashamed capitalist, conservative and evangelical Christian. He believed passionately in painting humanity at its noblest. He was also an ardent supporter of the transatlantic alliance. These McMurray emphasises. What, I wondered, might Salisbury have made of a fellow Methodist as President of the U.S.A.? Undoubtedly he would have painted Bush's portrait, heroically, to add to the series from Woodrow Wilson to Eisenhower of which he boasted. Yet as a lifelong pacifist who abhorred the two world wars through which he lived. Such is the enigma of Frank Salisbury.

In *The Times* obituary to the railway painter Terence Cuneo, some years ago, I read of the artistic debt Cuneo owed to Frank Salisbury. Although Salisbury seemed even in his lifetime an outmoded and wayward survivor of a bygone era, the self-proclaimed final outpost of the English School, yet he did leave some lasting painterly legacy which, whatever its pomp and pageantry, this book usefully invites us to reconsider.

PETER FORSAITH

*Village Chapels: some aspects of rural Methodism in the east Cotswolds and south Midlands 1800-2000*, by Pauline Ashridge (2004. Hook Norton: Kershaw Publishing vi + 94 pp., illus £6.99 ISBN 0 9546632 0 9).

This is a charming, informative and yet curious book. It provides concise histories of Methodist chapels in 23 villages, that are well-researched in circuit archives and local memories, and makes use of Kate Tiller's scholarly published edition of the 1851 religious census for Oxfordshire. The book fills some gaps, describing, for example, the origins of Methodism in the large and important village of Adderbury, about which little has appeared in print, as well as the story of the chapel at Lower Boddington, already detailed in an excellent published history. There is much here that will provide thought-provoking reading for historians of Methodism who have no particular concern with the region under review.

The definition of the region is the book's principal curiosity. The chapels extend along a NE-SW axis of rather more than 20 miles from Lower Boddington to Bledington, and include examples from four counties, several circuits at any particular date, three Methodist connexions and the hinterlands of at least four market towns. Many villages within the area that have equally interesting Methodist chapels are not included. The introduction places the region within its national Methodist context, but perhaps concentrates its discussion of the significance of Methodism within English history too much on Elie Halévy, E.P. Thompson and the early nineteenth century, when there was certainly no threat of revolution in this particular quarter of England. The area was of rather more consequence in the late nineteenth century, when the agricultural trades unions, the co-operative movement, teetotalism and the anti-vaccination campaign were all strongly supported by Methodists, and others.

The book will appeal to those who see the local chapel as the heart of Methodism. The influence of the Archer family on nineteenth-century Methodism at Little Bourton is particularly well-described. Nevertheless the author provides no objective analysis of the link between chapels and particular families that was both a strength and a weakness of rural Methodism. The book's principal weakness is its failure to acknowledge that what distinguishes village Methodist chapels from many of those of other dissenting denominations is that they belong to circuits. Many of the chapels she described belonged to the contrasting Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist circuits based on Banbury. The ethos of the former, reflected in its local preachers' minutes and in biographies and obituaries, was the carrying of the Gospel from a large urban congregation to villages that lacked it. The latter was a coming together of societies established in the countryside by missioning from afar, that simply needed a convenient point of contact in the market town. William Mewburn, the railway stockbroker who became a prominent Wesleyan layman in the late nineteenth century, figures prominently in the book as a patron of chapel-building, and mention is made of the links with the area of Thomas Champness, publisher of *Joyful News*. The role of such men demonstrates that the history of Methodist chapels was also shaped by their membership of connexions. All village chapels have their own distinct histories, but village Methodist chapels should also be seen in wider contexts.

BARRIE TRINDER



*The Quiet Wise Spirit: Edwin W. Smith, 1876-1957, and Africa* by W. John Young (Epworth Press, Peterborough, 2002, pp. xviii(1) 292 £19.95 ISBN 0 7162 0553 X)

A Zimbabwean friend seeing my copy of Smith's *The Way of the White Fields in Rhodesia: a survey of Christian enterprise in Northern and Southern Rhodesia* (1928) was amazed both at the freshness of the contents and the cartographical accuracy in a book of this early date and still relevant over fifty years later. Perhaps no better tribute could be paid to the work of Edwin Smith.

Smith was born at Aliwal North into African Primitive Methodist missionary work where his father, who went on to become both the General Missionary Secretary and President, was then serving. Such missionaries as Blackburn, Buckenham and Smith's father had pioneered Connexional missionary work into 'darkest Africa'. Edwin Smith, who would spend most of his ministry associated with missionary activity, was equally a pioneer in a new direction with his essentially anthropological approach to the Africans. His literary output was considerable, Young referring to this in his text and including a substantial bibliography. Perhaps in the end such a remarkable person could not be solely confined within the Connexion; following a wartime chaplaincy he joined the British and Foreign Bible Society and on superannuating in 1939 significantly took a professorship in the USA.

In his time Smith made a major contribution to African studies, a great pioneer who laid the foundations even if the world has since moved on. His vast literary work was not primarily aimed at a popular Methodist readership and such books as his Hartley Lecture *The Golden Stool: some aspects of the conflict of cultures in modern Africa* (1926) and *African Beliefs and Christian Faith: an introduction to theology for African students, evangelists and pastors* (1936) reveal his sympathy to African beliefs and to the development of an African Christian theology. In this Smith was particularly influential on Colin Morris. Nor should his work in enabling the Ila language to be written, allowing both Bible and hymns to be printed, be underestimated. Was there something in the Primitive Methodist ethos, based on the experience of 'everywhere spoken against' that helped Smith to recognise he was not superior and could learn from the Africans?

In recent years Smith has been almost forgotten, perhaps in part because missionary work has become associated with a white, cultural and economic imperialism, but in his case not helped by the title of one of his books *The Religion of the Lower Races* (1923) leading to racist claims. Young's research has now established that Macmillan foisted this title on Smith despite his objections. Young's comprehensive research has produced an excellent biography of Edwin Smith and surely has restored the reputation of one who was prepared to learn from the Africans, to the extent of defending polygamy.

Some minor errors are noted, such as referring to Phil Fisher's *Khaki Vignettes* (1917) as a book of his poems (p. 129).

For anybody interested in Africa, Primitive Methodism or missionary work, this book is a fascinating, compulsive read and highly recommended.

D. COLIN DEWS

*Vincent Perronet (1693-1785) The Apostle of the Methodists* by Margaret Batty. More People Called Methodists No.5 (WMHS Publications 2002, pp. 123, ISBN 09517979 1 3). £5.50 post free from Dr. J. A. Vickers, 1A School Lane, Emsworth PO10 7ED

Vincent Perronet, the vicar of Shoreham in Sussex, is well-known, at least by name, as a friend and adviser of the Wesleys. His sons Charles and Edward also figure in the Wesleys' story as ardent helpers for several years although they distanced themselves from them later. They were involved in unauthorised lay administration of the Lord's Supper and Edward became a Dissenter who attacked the Church of England. Margaret Batty's study covers the whole family with much interesting new detail. It is illuminating to see how important Vincent was as a counsellor for John Wesley's personal problems as well as in more general crises within Methodism. Wesley was evidently under much more strain, especially in the 1750s, than he admitted in old age. But the Perronet family history is valuable and instructive in its own right. Like a number of other important Methodists (notably John and Mary Fletcher) they were of Huguenot or Swiss origin. Vincent was converted early in life, before the English Revival began. His early writings included defences of John Locke, criticisms of Butler's *Analogy* and Wesley's favourite Peter Browne and later of Calvinism. He was also subject to visions and attracted to millenarian expectations of the impending reign of Christ on earth. Charles Perronet was one of the select group of Methodists who had visions of the Trinity. Vincent lived into a serene old age, much loved and venerated by Methodists and, though faithfully attached to the Church of England, attacked locally for his Methodism. (Yet he seems to have been the first to use the term 'Methodist Church' in 1763).

This is an attractive study of an interesting family and revealing of the variety within early Evangelicalism. One small cavil. In Vincent's work on original sin in 1746 he expressed his belief in baptismal regeneration which Mrs Batty says John Wesley would have disagreed with, though Vincent added that it must be validated by conversion (p. 24). But in 1756 Wesley published a version of his father's treatise on baptism which includes baptismal regeneration. His sermon on *The New Birth* (published in 1760) still allows for it but insists that in view of subsequent sins 'You must be born again'. This sounds very like Perronet's position.

HENRY D. RACK

*My Dear Sally - the Life of Sarah Mallet - one of John Wesley's Preachers* By David East. (WMHS Publications More People called Methodists No. 6. 2003. pp 115. £5.50 post free from Dr J. A. Vickers, 1A School Lane, Emsworth PO10 7ED. Cheques to Dr Vickers).

There are many Methodisms. Village Norfolk is very different from Vincent Perronet's Shoreham or Jabez Bunting's Manchester. David East has a fascinating tale to tell of Sarah Mallet (1784-1845), a native of Loddon, whose preaching career spanned 55 years. Here we see John Wesley almost as a grandfather figure - he wrote charming letters to Sarah, whom he met in 1786 at Long Stratton.

The beginning of Sarah's preaching during 'fits' was somewhat bizarre. It seems almost certain that Wesley sent her a 'note' granting her authority to preach. That was at the Conference of 1787 which laid down 'let no person that is not in connexion with us preach in any of our chapels or preaching houses without a *note* from Mr Wesley or from the Assistant of the circuit from which he comes; which must be renewed yearly'. The word '*Note*' is still used on Plans as the first authorization to preach. But did Wesley indicate *more* than local preaching for Miss Mallet? - David East outlines that controversy. Certainly Sarah preached fairly widely, but that was characteristic of many local preachers. Her significance is that she continued to preach after Conference 'in general' forbade women to preach other than to their own sex in 1803.

Clearly preaching by women continued after 1803. Conference regulations were not always strictly adhered to, a matter of no surprise to Northern Methodists. After marriage, children and widowhood, Sarah, now Sarah Boyce, continued to preach along with the formidable widow Martha Grigson whose obituary did not mention that she preached - perhaps Jabez Bunting hushed it up. Mary Tooth - the last of Mary Fletcher's companions - was involved closely in Sarah's later life also. At the age of 72 Sarah carried out a six-week preaching tour of Norfolk, exceptional for anyone, especially for a woman, at the time.

The value of this book is the light it sheds not only on women preaching but on what it was like to be a Wesleyan in rural Norfolk at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The 'religion of the heart' described here fits the picture of rural Lincolnshire opened up by James Obelkevich in his *Religion and Rural Society, South Lindsey 1825-1875* (OUP 1976).

JOHN MUNSEY TURNER

*Ecumenism and History: Studies in Honour, of John H. Y. Briggs*, edited by Anthony R. Cross, (Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 2002, pp. 362. £24.95 Pb. ISBN 1 84227 1350).

As Anthony Cross remarks Professor John H.Y. Briggs 'has played an important part' in the 'larger framework of the ecumenical movement over many years as a Baptist, Free Churchman and committed ecumenist.' This volume, which concentrates on the inter-relationship between the ecumenical movement and history, contains a series of sixteen studies written in his honour. Following a foreword by Georges Lemopoulos, and an appreciation by Faith Bowers, the book is divided into two parts, the first of which contains studies in ecumenism and history. Brian Stanley writes on the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910, Clyde Binfield on the YMCA, YWCA and the WSCF, while others such as Richard Pierard, Paul Fiddes, Brian Haymes and William Brackney explore different facets of Free Church practice in the wider ecumenical process. Anthony Cross, as well as editing the volume, provides an appraisal of 'Baptism, Christology and the Creeds in the Early Church: Implications for Ecumenical Dialogue.'

In part two Keith Clements assesses the importance of biography in history, Ian Randall considers European Baptists while Haddon Willmer comments on 'Writing local Church history.' Other contributors include John Morgan-Wynne, David Bebbington, and Keith Robbins. The Methodist contribution is made by Herbert McGonigle who presents John Wesley as 'an exemplar of the Catholic Spirit', David Jeremy, who writes on 'business men as preachers among Methodists in the Early Twentieth Century' and Marjorie Reeves, whose study of 'The sociology of hymns in Western Christianity' contains the expected numerous references to the Wesley brothers. This book, fully indexed, with a select list of Briggs' voluminous publications, provides a useful contribution to ecumenical studies.

SIMON ROSS VALENTINE

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1563 TWO OXFORD DEDICATIONS

In commemoration of John Wesley's tercentenary, Lincoln College hosted a memorable weekend programme 21-23 June 2003. On Sunday 22 June, two dedications took place. In the Chapel Quad of Lincoln College a plaque now indicates the rooms in which John Wesley lived when a Fellow of Lincoln College. Dr Vivian Green (who was present at the unveiling) established this location through researches in the college's archives many years ago. The plaque was unveiled by Rt. Rev. John Saxbee, Bishop of Lincoln and Visitor to the College, and Rev. Nigel Collinson, Secretary to the Methodist Conference.

Memorial plaque in Lincoln College, Oxford

JOHN WESLEY

Fellow from 1726 to 1751

Resided in the rooms above during his early years at the College. The Holy Club, precursor of the Methodist movement, met here'

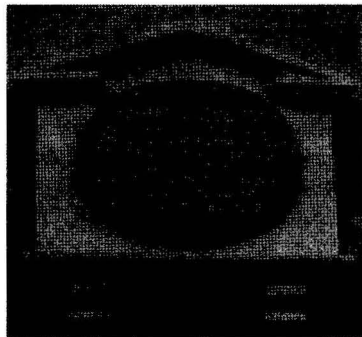
At evensong in the Cathedral, the Bishop of Oxford, Rt. Rev. Richard Harries dedicated a memorial flagstone to John and Charles Wesley, symbolically placed beside the pulpit steps. John and Charles, as well as their brother Samuel, were undergraduates at Christ Church so would have worshipped regularly in the Cathedral (which is also the College chapel) and were ordained here.

*Text of memorial flagstone in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford*

JOHN  
WESLEY  
1703-1791

Students of Christ Church  
Leaders of the Methodist Revival  
Ordained in this Cathedral

CHARLES  
WESLEY  
1707-1788



PETER FORSAITH

## 1564 UNITED METHODIST HANDBOOK, 1916.

Amongst the effects of the late Rev. Dr. O. A. Beckerlegge are two lined sheets of typed foolscap recording the minutes of the sub-committee which met at Brook Street United Methodist Church, Derby, on 2 March 1915, to discuss a proposal for a United Methodist Church Handbook. Present were four ministers and three laity, the President, the Rev. George Parker, who should have taken the chair, sending his apologies.

The United Methodist Free Churches had produced such a handbook in 1877, 1887 and 1899, the former being edited by the Revs. William Boyden and Edwin Askew, the latter solely by Askew. The Rev. W. J. Townsend had also produced a shorter handbook for the Methodist New Connexion in 1899, its origins perhaps being the Rev. William Baggaly's *Digest* produced both in 1862 and 1876. Only the Bible Christians do not appear to have produced a handbook; the nearest they came to this was a *Digest of the Rules*, running to seven editions between 1838 and 1902.

The minutes strongly point to Askew as the driving force behind the proposal and only he had experience of producing such a handbook. The sub-committee agreed to pay Askew's out-of-pocket expenses and an honorarium of £25 both from the Contingency Fund. Also present were the Rev. Henry Hooks, the Book Steward, and the Rev. Dr. David Brooks, both like Askew from the Free Methodist tradition. The Rev. Dr. George Packer came from the New Connexion and the Rev. J. B. Stedeford, who took the chair, from the Bible Christians. The only other surviving minister besides Askew, then almost eighty-one, with any experience of producing a handbook was Townsend, who coincidentally died five days later aged eighty.

The proposed contents were similar to that of the Free Methodist edition of 1899 but with additions, including the constitution, function of Connexional committees, and the scale of annuities to ministers and widows on retirement or death. Publication was intended in October 1916, for the handbook to be between 240 and 270 pages in length, and sell for half-a-crown (12.5p).

The sub-committee agreed to continue in existence but significantly did not arrange a further meeting. The handbook was never published. Perhaps wartime conditions took toll on what otherwise might have been.

D. COLIN DEWS

## 1565 'JOHN WESLEY AND THE MAID'

I wonder if any readers could help with ascertaining the story behind this picture below? It was painted by John Faed (1819-1902) in 1874, is in oils and measures 31" x 25". Faed was a member of a family of painters from the Kirkcudbright area of SW Scotland and many of his scene paintings were based on real events. It would be in keeping with Faed's practice if this was based on a locally known tradition. Wesley visited Gatehouse of Fleet, the painter's birthplace, in March 1767.

The scene is set on a woodland track. An elderly Wesley is seated: his stick effectively bars the maid's way forwards. At her back is a tree. He looks up to her and she down to him while their hands touch. Possibly she is pregnant. A chest, probably the maid's, has been placed by the path and Wesley's stick points towards it. It has to be said that the head and face do not resemble Wesley, although the costume is clearly that of an eighteenth century clergyman.





**THE 2004 ANNUAL LECTURE  
AND THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
LOUGHBOROUGH METHODIST CONFERENCE  
MONDAY 28TH JUNE 2004  
MOUNTSORREL METHODIST CHURCH  
Church Hill Road Mounsorrel, Loughborough. LE12 7JB**

TEA (for members £2.50) 5pm

(If you are coming to the tea please let the General Secretary Dr E Dorothy Graham know at least two weeks beforehand).

ANNUAL MEETING 6pm

LECTURE 7:30pm

Lecturer The Rev Dr Herbert B McGonigle

Chairman The Rev Dr John A Newton CBE

Lecture **'William Bramwell: A Reappraisal'**

**Nominations for a Member at Large to serve on the Executive Committee for a three-year term should be sent to the General Secretary by June 10th 2004.**

## **Travel Directions**

### **By car**

Mountsorrel is on the A6 about 5 miles south of Loughborough and about 9 miles north of Leicester. Mountsorrel Methodist Church is on Church Hill which is close to Rothley Road.

### **By train**

Loughborough Railway station and catch the regular shuttle bus to the town centre then catch the 127 bus.

### **By bus from Loughborough High Street**

The Arriva 127 bus from Loughborough High Street to Leicester via Mountsorrel. Ask for the stop on the corner of Rothley Road and Church Hill Mountsorrel.

### **By bus from the University of Loughborough**

The Arriva 127 bus in Epinal Way/Ashby Road to Leicester via Loughborough and Mountsorrel. Alight as above.

At the time of preparing this information the bus service from Loughborough and the University is a 10-minute service until 6pm and then it becomes a 30-minute service. The journey time is about 30 minutes.

Because of unknown changes at the time of preparing this information we advise you to check for yourself the route to Mountsorrel and the bus availability before you travel. [www.arriva.co.uk](http://www.arriva.co.uk) or telephone 0870 608 2 608 from 7am to 7pm.