

## Sutcliff's Academy at Olney.

**J**OHAN SUTCLIFF was originally of the Pennines in Yorkshire, born 9th August, 1752. When Dan Taylor started a day school at Birchcliffe, Sutcliff became his usher, or assistant, and learned Latin with Taylor's help. He was baptized in 1769 by John Fawcett, and moved to Wainsgate that he might the better prepare for Bristol Academy. When ready, he spent a winter week in walking down to Bristol, where he was admitted in 1772. Three years later he settled at Olney, where Fawcett ordained him, and here he laboured till his death on 22nd June, 1814. His services to the Northants. Association, to the B.M.S., to the Home Missionary Society, are well known; and he lived just long enough to help found the Baptist Union. Remembering his early home and struggles, he bequeathed his valuable library to the Northern Baptist Education Society, and many of his books are still at Rawdon.

It was the natural thing in those days for every educated minister to support himself by keeping a school, often styled an Academy; and Sutcliff followed the example of Taylor and Fawcett. Many of his pupils entered the Baptist ministry, and the following list shows some whom he thus influenced.

William Carey, shoemaker at Moulton, ten miles to the north, began a school there in 1785. He joined the Olney church, and feeling how poor was his education, enlisted as an out-pupil of Sutcliff, so that after one refusal he was accepted as a preacher, and presently became pastor at Moulton. With 1787 his studies under Sutcliff ended, and he guided his own education. In 1793 he sailed for Bengal, laboured there unsuccessfully for nearly six years, and wrote home for colleagues.

Daniel Brunson, born at Defford, his mother attending the Pershore church, of the Broadmead church under Ryland, was the first volunteer, and he was placed by the B.M.S. committee at Sutcliff's academy for a few months, sailing in 1799. He and his colleagues boldly declared themselves missionaries, and were therefore forbidden to land in British India; whence came about their settlement at Serampore under the Danish flag. The town was captured in 1801, and Brunson died that year in Calcutta. His letter of 20 Nov. 1800 pays high tribute to Sutcliff's influence.

John Chamberlain was a fellow-pupil in 1799, and three years later followed to Serampore. His labours in India were indefatigable till his death at sea in 1822.

John Biss was one of four prepared at the same time, 1802 and 1803, for Serampore. He was twenty-five years old, and married, a member at Plymouth Dock. His health did not last, and he died on the *Bremen* from Calcutta to Philadelphia in 1807, his widow and children returning to India.

Richard Mardon was of the same church, a year older. After exploring at Rangoon, whence arose the Burman mission, he worked at Goamulty, where he died of cholera in 1812.

Joshua Rowe, aged 20, came from Saffery's church at Salisbury. He was spared to labour twenty years, dying at Digah on 11 October, 1823.

William Moore came from Stogumber, about 25 when admitted. He was stationed first at Miniary in 1808, and lived till 1844.

William Robinson was himself of Olney, studied here 1804-5. He arrived at Calcutta 23 August 1806, and his presence became a test case as to the protection of the Danish flag. He was able to stay, and except for one exploration to Java, spent a long life in Bengal till 1853.

Christopher Anderson, at the academy the same time, supported the B.M.S. from Edinburgh, dying one year before Robinson.

Thomas Coles came from College Lane, Northampton; and was ordained at Gretton in May 1808.

A student named George, his contemporary, may possibly be the John George who settled at Shouldham-street in London 1816.

Davies, his fellow-student in 1806, may conceivably have been the Philip Davies who was at Oakingham five years later, and went on to Whitechurch 1819-1840. Or he may be the R. Davies who was at Middleton Cheney in 1809.

George Dobney was at Wallingford in 1814. His fellow-student Richards has not been traced.

J. Smith settled at Burton in May 1809.

Thomas Jarvis settled in July 1810 at a new church, Newark.

W. Brown settled at Keysoe by 1811, and died there 1818.

Eustace Carey, nephew of William, came in 1809; his grandparents wrote two years later that he was making great progress, and often preached in the neighbourhood. He went out to India in 1814.

William Gamby from Southill came at the same time for the same purpose, but died at Olney, aged 23.

Richard Moss Worth was a fellow-student in 1810, but he inherited a baronetcy, and made no mark as a Baptist pastor.

Thomas Welsh settled at Lynn in 1811, afterwards at Newbury for twenty-five years, at Uxbridge in 1840.

E. Burdett settled at Sutton-in-the-Elms 1811.

C. Chown settled at Burford, also in 1811, June. It would

be pleasant if we might connect him with the William Chown who succeeded William Carey as schoolmaster at Moulton. There is some uncertainty as to his initial, and he may be the J. Chown who was at Harpole in 1827.

Samuel Peters was with Sutcliff in 1811, and was pastor at Shepshed for ten years after 1814.

John Lawson was a wood-engraver who offered to go and help Ward; the B.M.S. committee sent him here, and he reached Serampore in 1812, where he did fine service for thirteen years with oriental typography.

Franks left in February 1814. He may have been the John who was at Newport 1821, and/or at Kingston 1831-35.

Griffiths is an uncertain quantity. He may be the James who was ordained at Wotton-under-Edge in 1814, or the Thomas who, with his wife, arrived in Ceylon 1816 and spent five years before returning.

Harris is equally uncertain. As he was with Sutcliff in 1814, he may be the man who joined the Bristol Fund in 1817, and died 1821.

William Knowles was ordained at Hackleton in 1815, dying there in 1866 at the age of 80. He was perhaps son of the William who was at Rushden in 1790.

Benjamin Medlock was ordained at Sabden, near Sutcliff's first home, in 1817, and in 1832 went to Keysoe.

Lee Compere from Halstead became the second missionary of the B.M.S. to Jamaica, appointed 1815; but ill-health obliged him to go to the United States, where he continued missionary work among the Creek Indians at Withington in Alabama.

Pope is another enigma. He, with the five others last mentioned, was at the academy when Sutcliff died. Solomon Young came to carry on the work for two months; he was from Inkberrow in Worcestershire, had been trained at Bristol and held a pastorate at Truro. He was now invited to become classical tutor at Stepney, to help Newman and Cox. It would seem possible that he took on with him George Pope, who quitted Stepney in 1818, and was soon at the new church of Sutton-on-Trent, then by 1835 at North Collingham.

All these thirty-three pupils were men, not boys, when they went to Sutcliff; and many of them were sent to him by the B.M.S. It is a good illustration of how what were essentially mere private boarding-schools commanded such confidence that their proprietors were entrusted with the coaching of men for foreign missions; William Gray kept such a school at Chipping Norton, and was the next coach employed by the B.M.S. Sutcliff's school seems to have died on the departure of Young to London.

It may be noticed that Sutcliff gave the first impulse to Carey which directed his thoughts abroad; and that the next seven of these men followed. The B.M.S., in its earliest stages, owed as much to Sutcliff as to any man.

With Thomas Coles an old vein of ore was re-worked. It had been not unusual for a pastor to take a promising young man as a kind of apprentice, and so fit him for his life-work in England. Sutcliff himself had thus profited by his coaching from Fawcett. From 1808 onwards his contributors to the home pastorate were substantial. And perhaps he was the last of this line, for now, besides his Alma Mater at Bristol, the Northern Society at Bradford and the Welsh Society at Abergavenny were ensuring permanence to the work, while London was soon to begin.

Sutcliff's library went back to the Pennines, where another Bristol man, William Steadman, was thus carrying on the Fawcett tradition. The missionary spirit went with them, and soon Bradford students turned their attention for the first time to Jamaica, Canada, Australia, Calcutta, and South Africa. The good was not interred with his bones.

[The editor regrets that the name of the compiler of this list of pupils has been mislaid.]

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BATH. Josiah Thompson learned about 1770 that the Baptists began about 1744 in a private room, that Hugh Evans of Bristol opened at Kingsmead square in 1747, moving soon to Collett's back yard on Horn street. A church of nine members was organised in 1752, with six more baptised at Paulton, and joined the Western Association at once. Bernard Foskett opened a meeting-house in 1755, and Robert Parsons was ordained. In 1760 the church was strong enough to entertain the Association, and two years later it enlarged the meeting-house, acquired a burial-ground, and started to register births in its families. In 1769 it shifted to a new home on Garrott street, having ninety members. So far the story is consistent, but there is a puzzling fact that from 1689 to 1697 John Gay represented "Bath Haycomb" at various assemblies. And in 1837, when the church was at Somerset street, and William Peachey was pastor, and the church surrendered its registers to Somerset House, the claim was made that the church originated in 1720. The only justification seems to be that Henry Dolling, who was a trustee of the Presbyterian meeting in 1726, registered his house in Widcombe for public worship by Baptists; it is not certain that there is any continuity between that event and the organisation in 1752.