

WILLIAM SHAW

William Shaw was born in Tickhill, Doncaster in 1855

He entered the Primitive Methodist ministry in 1875

He married Sarah (?) and they had five sons and one daughter

The following newspaper paper cuttings add colour to his life

Early in his ministry William was involved in building a church in Stickney, nr Boston , Lincs



BOSTON COUNTY COURT

Before J Stephen Esq. LLD, Judge, and R W Stanniland Registrar.

There were 90 plaintiffs and 20 judgement summonses. J H Wallace & Sons Spalding v John Chambers clothier, Market Place Boston and the Rev William Shaw, Primitive Methodist Minister, Boston. Mr. H. S. Maples, Spalding, appeared for the plaintiff, and Dyer for the defendants. Mr. Maples said in 1882 the plaintiffs entered into a contract with Mr. Chambers for the building of a chapel at Stickney, for the sum of £199. There had been certain extras amounting to about £20, and it was in part for these extras and in part for the contract they were now suing for the balance of £12 13s. 1d. The plaintiffs had received £197 1s, and they had repeatedly applied for the balance from the defendant, but without effect. Thos. Harper Wallis, one of the plaintiffs, said in the month of September, 1882, he entered into a contract with the defendant for the erection of the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Stickney, in accordance with plans and specifications drawn by Mr. Greenfield, builder, Boston. He commenced the work soon after signing the contract. on the 4th September, and he finished it about last Christmas. During the progress of the work several alterations were made by Mr. Shaw and Mr. Greenfield. In the first instance he had some difficulty in getting a cheque for £50, and soon after Christmas he applied for the balance of the contract and the extras, and Mr. Shaw told him he should be paid at Easter. He had received £197 1s. on the contract, and £12 for extras. He had several times offered to agree to an independent valuer going over the premises. He finished the painting, and had done more than his contract specified. His Honour. without hearing the case out, gave a verdict for the defendants, with costs.

(Lincolnshire Chronicle Friday 14th December 1883)

William soon got involved with District matters as in the following rather exhausting newspaper extract which however does throw light on the problems facing village Methodism generally:

CONFERENCE OF PRIMITIVE METHODIST MINISTERS. THE DECAY OF METHODISM IN THE VILLAGES

A Conference of the Nottingham and Sheffield District Association of Primitive Methodist Ministers was opened yesterday afternoon in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Langsett road, Sheffield.

.....

The Rev. T. SCRIMSHAW (Melton Mowbray) then read a paper on "Village Methodism ; its difficulties and needs."

The flag of village Methodism, he declared. was in danger; the enemy was making fierce attacks upon its ranks, and if there be any want of courage it would be driven from its stronghold in ignominy and defeat. During the last 20 years the whole aspect of village Methodism had changed. The methods employed so successfully in a past age produced little or no success to-day; in fact, they were very much of an anachronism. The old chapel with its uncomfortable seats, neglected and untrained choir, inefficient preacher, its often closed doors,, and officials with little knowledge and of inferior social position could not possibly compete with any success against the educated clergyman, with his days and weeks of earnest toil in the cause of the people, his band of devoted church workers ministering to the poor sick, his clean, beautiful, and picturesque church, his social advantages and influence with men of wealth, and his well-trained choir giving interest and often delight in the services of song and praise.

Modern work in the villages was as different as could be imagined from that of former times. When parties preached up the old methods, and advocated the singing of old hymns, and told them to adhere to the old practices and doctrines as the panacea for success, they were ignorant of the subject, or were intentionally indulging in claptrap for the sake of gaining applause or eliciting a cheer. They lived in new times, and that man or church who failed to catch the spirit of the age would be left to struggle against great odds, or left to expire for want of vitality and strength. Unless they dealt with life and society just as they found it, other men and churches would, and while they succeeded the Methodists would be destroyed.

During the last 20 years village chapels and societies had been given up in large numbers. This applied to all Nonconformist communities. During that period the Primitive Methodists had abandoned no less than 400 villages. Through depression in the agricultural industry thousands of people had been driven from the country into the towns, and therefore it was preposterous to blame either ministers or officials for not succeeding. The fact was, the material on which their forerunners had worked had gone. Then small holdings were almost a thing of the past, but it was somewhat strange that as a rule it was the cottagers who were generally Nonconformists, while the large farmers and professional men were churchgoers. There had certainly been a conspiracy among the landlords to exterminate the yeomanry class, who were mostly Liberals.

There was also the question Methodist division, for in many villages there were two and even three Methodist chapels, when one would hold all the Nonconformist population. This necessitated needless expense and superfluous labour. (Hear, hear.) Could they, as Primitive Methodists, offer something to the people their Weelnyan friends could not ?. Could the Wesleyans give something to the advantage of the people which the Primitive Methodists withheld ? Whether they realised it or not, the constant talk in official circles, and on popular platforms about this was crippling their efforts, and weakening their interests.

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The Primitive Methodists saw no wisdom in contending for nothing. They had either principles to contend for or they had not. If they had, let them reformulate them, and demonstrate all along the line that the Wesleyans and other Nonconformists could not do the work of the Primitive Methodists, and that they held principles which could not be allowed to sleep, either for the sake of peace or compromise. He insisted that the Primitive Methodists could not be absorbed. (Hear, hear.). If there was to be union it must be union with honour. The lion and the lamb must lie down together, and the lion must not make any attempt to get the lamb to be satisfied with lying down inside him. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Their leaders often told them they would soon be one Methodist church. This feeling was weakening their country people for work, and was accountable for much of the existing lethargy. Let it no longer be insinuated that the founders of Primitive Methodism made a mistake when they originated a separate church. Let not their denominational name of Primitive be apologised for and explained away. (Hear, hear.) As far as their Wesleyan friends were concerned, they were far from being one with them.

It was a mistake to fancy all their difficulties and annoyances came from the State Church. Many of them came from parties who, on platforms and in newspapers, professed a greater fondness for them, and to be much nearer related to them. He had put himself into communication with a number of experienced ministerial brethren, with a view of finding out what were the difficulties they had to encounter in prosecuting their work in the agricultural villages. His correspondents gave a multitude of reasons why Primitive Methodism was declining, amongst them being the sparse population and too little scope afforded; the constant migration and emigration of the young to towns and foreign countries; clerical intolerance and tyranny; bad land laws, leading to the depopulation of the rural districts; lack of suitable men to manage their societies, financial embarrassment and pressure from numerous connexional funds, the great distance of villages from towns, the indifference of local preachers and the lack of ministerial labour and oversight.

These difficulties had increased in recent times by land going out of cultivation, and the consequent depopulation; by the spread of Ritualism in the Church of England, and the unscrupulous efforts on the part of the clergy; by the constant increase of connexions' liability, and the increasing demand for financial help; by bad harvests and trade depression by the modern development of gambling and by increased drunkenness among the farming classes and loose living. The remedial suggestions which had been made were the importation of the best ministers into country circuits, having additional men as evangelists, a sustentation fund to employ evangelists in village circuits, and to guarantee a better salary to country ministers; more sympathy and practical assistance rendered by the towns, greater attention to be paid to the Sunday schools, the readjustment of village circuits geographically, and by having a band of evangelists, under the Home Mission Committee, to render help to village circuits. (Applause.).

(The Rev C Tinn (Rugby) spoke and moved a vote of thanks to Rev Scrimshaw for his timely and exhaustive [!] paper)

The Rev. W. SHAW (Pudsey, Leeds) seconded the vote, and in doing so said while he recognised the ability of the paper he could not agree with all that had been said in it. He certainly did not believe farmers were anything like to blame so much as had been said for the depopulation of the villages. Farmers were among his best friends. It was not only of country clergymen they ought to complain for using undue influence upon the poor. This was quite as pronounced in the towns. He held a clergyman as morally guilty of sheep stealing who came and took away one of his congregation as was a man who stole a sheep from out his neighbour's field. (Hear, hear, and laughter.)

(Sheffield Independent - 19 March 1891)

William was an ardent advocate of Primitive Methodist principles:

PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION AT LEICESTER

The Sunday School convention of the Nottingham District of the Primitive Methodist Connexion was opened on Monday at St Nicholas Street Chapel, Leicester.

..... The Rev W Shaw read the first paper, the title of which was "The need of distinctive doctrinal teaching in connection with Sunday-school work."

In introducing his paper, the rev. gentleman said that he hoped the question thus raised would be productive of some increased attention being paid to the study of Christian doctrine and of better qualifications realised by teachers for their Sunday-school work. It was, he said, obligatory upon Christians to know the truth; but it was not only obligatory but also a glorious heritage. It should be a matter of much moment to them that certain truths were being attacked by the opponents of Christian religion.

For a scientific pruning of untenable dogmas they might be thankful, but much skill was required in the process or the truth might be temporarily injured. Whatever new doctrines might be formulated they should not relinquish the old truths, and adopt the new only as they agreed with or disproved those which had borne the test of long experience. The Sunday-school work of the future would have to be well in advance of the work of today. The teacher would have to pay special attention to himself, to the subject matter of his teaching, and to the manner in which he should impart that tuition to the mind of his scholar.

That doctrine must necessarily be scriptural, sound and pure. He feared that the amount of religious literature published in the present day had a tendency to diminish rather than increase the amount of real study of the word and doctrine on the part of Sunday-school teachers generally. Some said it mattered not what they believed if their life be right; but to his thinking personal salvation was only the result of personal faith, and faith was only possible as it accepted the truth and built thereon. The integrity of the life would be the outcome of a correct doctrine; a false creed would mean a misguided and often a wasted life.

In conclusion, the rev. gentleman made a few suggestions. For the sake of consistency, he suggested the desirability of examinations for Sunday-school teachers: and also that it was desirable to establish theological training for their Sunday-school teachers and senior scholars. He thought that a greater number of Christian evidence classes would subsequently be to the decided advantage of the Connexion at large. The technical education of today deserved the attention of Sunday-school workers: definiteness, thoroughness and practicalness formed the leading features of what was undoubtedly an advance upon past methods of teaching. The same three characteristics might advantageously be applied to Sunday-school teaching. Then would it not be possible to appoint certain teachers for special subjects to be dealt with in the higher classes of their schools? Personally he thought that the system of classifying scholars according to age or size was a detrimental one and he wished that the basis of membership in the classes were knowledge of the Bible and Bible subjects. (Applause).
(Leicester Chronicle Saturday 6 October 1894)

PASSIVE RESISTANCE

At Banbury Borough Police Court on Monday the Rev William Shaw, Middleton-road Primitive Methodist minister, was summoned for non-payment of the education rate, 9s. 11d. Mr. Shaw said he found there was one school at which there was no sectarian teaching, therefore he tendered one third of the amount claimed (3s. 4d.). This sum was accepted by the assistant overseer and the Bench granted a distress warrant for the balance.

(Northampton Mercury - Friday 25 August 1905)

William appears to have made his mark, in several ways, while at Gloucester:

SITUATIONS WANTED

In Solicitor's Merchants or other Office, Situation for well educated Youth 17, also another 15.
Rev W Shaw Regent House, Regent Street, Gloucester. (Gloucester Journal - Saturday 08 September 1906)

(Presumably the two youths were his two eldest sons Frank and Robert)

MELBOURNE STREET CHAPEL GLOUCESTER

The Rev W. Shaw, superintendent of the circuit, presided at the onening ceremony, and supporting him were the Revs. Thomas Randall, G. M. Smith, W. J. Porter, H. Ward-Kelley, and W. Daw, Messrs. W. Walwin, J. Dimelow, H. A. Lansley (circuit steward), T. Ascough, R. Gardner. J. Phillips, and P. Whitey.

The Rev. W. Shaw said, as many of them knew, they had had a chapel there for 26 years. The seating accommodation was for 130, and he was happy to add that though their morning adult congregation was not very large they had a good congregation for the evening service The total cost of the chapel and school was £622, and there was a debt on the premises now of £273, which seemed large after so many years occupation and work. but it must be remembered in this relation that they were in an almost purely working class district, and in a district where many of the workers did not get very high wages. Besides that debt they had some outstanding debts on current accounts.

(Gloucester Citizen - 15 November 1906)

(The debt on Melbourne Street Chapel might have something to do with the two following advertisements:)

Cycles and Motors for Sale.

GENTS Free Wheel bicycles - Rover 28inch, capital condition. Cost £10 10s, £4 4s. Raleigh 25inch serviceable £2 2s. Tandem Hobart, easy, fast 4 ½ guineas. Boy's Canadian fixed wheel needs new cover, £1 1s. - Rev W Shaw, Regent House, Regent Street Gloucester.

Musical

MAGNIFICENT Alexander Organ-Harmonium. Finest walnut, double manual, 22 stops, knee swell; maker's list price £126, expert's valuation £84; lovely instrument; Forty Guineas cash. - Rev W Shaw, Regent House, Regent Street Gloucester, (Gloucester Citizen 13 May 1907)

(In any case the debts on Melbourne Street Chaepel seem o persist long after William left the circuit viz:)

WANTED to Borrow, on promissory el note, £210 at 5 per cent. per annum, on Melbourne Street Primitive Methodist Gloucester; in one or smaller amounts - Apply, Rev. T. R. Holtby, Regent House, Regent Street, Gloucester.
(Primitive Methodist Leader May 2 1912)

On Saturday 1st December 1906 the Cheltenham Chronicle published the texts of several sermons preached in the District on the previous Sunday under title "Sunday Sermons".

William Shaw's was among them:

THE BEAUTY OF THE KING.

The Rev. W. Shaw, of Gloucester, preached in King-street Primitive Methodist Church on Sunday morning, and chose as his text Isaiah 17: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty".

He commenced by calling attention to the dominating theme in the book of Isaiah. "This," said he "is hopefulness; and there is no book in the Old Testaments so well calculated to fire the soul with ardent hope as this book. From beginning to end its tone is one of expectancy - the expectancy of a bright future. This text has a historical meaning. The Assyrians are threatening the Jews at this time, and Sennacherib has sent insulting and blasphemous letters to Hezekiah insulting both him and his God, full of self-confidence and vainglory. Had not Hezekiah trusted in God, it must have terrorised him into submission; but he goes broken-spirited to his God, with all his royal robes laid aside, and wearing the signs of grief and sorrow of mind. The prophet Isaiah is sent for to pray for the people, and he encourages them and strengthens their hearts. In some of the prophecies which he utters at this period occurs our text: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty". This is the first meaning of the text, but there is a higher significance attached to it; it points to a higher king than any earthly one, to Him who once came to earth, and who will come again. We are to look for His coming, for we shall see Him in His beauty. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?". There is a good time coming for us if we are faithful. When people only number a few they are apt to lose heart and become despondent.

The Apostle Paul, even while on his way to Rome, found cause to thank God for His goodness. We should always remember our Master's promise: "Lo I am with you all the days" in bleak winter as well as in verdant spring. The outlook of the believer is not always unpromising; the harp is not always on the willow. Of course we cannot help noticing the things that are wrong, but if we see the things as they should be, and try to work so that that state may be arrived at, we may do much; and perhaps we shall see a manifestation of the Divine glory which has seemed to be absent hitherto. We wonder when heathendom is to be replaced on all hands by the gospel of Christ; we look at things as they are, and ask ourselves, "Will the powers of darkness or light and truth be victorious in the end?". Look how much more has been done in the name of Christ during the last seventy years than in all the preceding centuries; see what great moral and spiritual enlightenment has already come to the nations; and then can we doubt the ultimate triumph of good over evil?. The Church of God is making more rapid strides now than ever before, and surely it will not be long before the whole world shall be evangelised. The Christian believer lives in two worlds - the actual world as it is, and the ideal world as God would have it; and while we pay due regard to this world we look forward hopefully to the time when the dream of the ideal world shall be realised. and when we shall see the King in His beauty. Hope, reanimates our lagging souls, and we are encouraged by the first beams of a brighter day.

Thou art coming, O my Saviour,
Thou art coming, O my King.
In Thy beauty all resplendent
In Thy glory all transcendent.

* * * *

We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee.
We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee
All our hearts could never say;
What an anthem that will be,
Ringing out our love to Thee,
Pouring out our rapture sweet
At Thine own all-glorious feet.

(Continued overleaf)

("Sunday Sermons" Continued)

The desire to see Christ as King is perfectly natural and right; we all have natural cravings after God, for God is the ultimate end of all human existence. Not all the wealth of the wide world can satisfy the cravings of the human heart, apart from Christ; we are meant to long after the Deity. Let us not look upon ourselves as worms of the earth; we are sons of the Infinite.

The good men and women of all ages have looked forward rapturously to seeing Christ in His beauty. This thought, the image of the blessed vision of the glorified Lord, has brightened many a dull day, and has quickened the steps of many a weary pilgrim. Fancy's torque can say no more than this: "How great is His goodness, how great is His beauty". We see the various attributes of his character in nature - infinite power, combined with infinite mercy and goodness.

Out of our own experience we can furnish examples of Christ's great love and kindness. None other can compare with Him; He is the "Altogether Lovely One." A very popular idea some years ago was that when the soul commenced its existence in heaven the utmost happiness was experienced at once, perfection was attained at once. It is more in harmony with the development of mental life to suppose that throughout all eternity we shall more and more approximate to the Deity, and be changed from glory unto glory, ever becoming more like God, but never quite reaching that state of perfection. The vision of Christ's beauty is soul-entrancing, soul-satisfying, and soul-transforming.

The aged Simeon was satisfied that his eyes had seen God's salvation. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration was entranced, and said "It is good to be here". Christ is forever satisfying. In the third place, to see Christ will be to have the soul transformed into His own glorious image. A child that watches his father in various moods sees his face in various expressions, and learns to express his own feelings by seeing his father's expression of them. So we, by watching Christ, shall become endued with some of His beauty. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is!".

The vision of Christ glorifies, purifies, and exalts the spiritual standpoint. The pure in heart shall see God, and to them will the vision be granted. Their standpoint is greatly exalted, and therefore the range of vision and experience is very much extended. We do not see the grand view till we have climbed the hill and reached the heights, but then how charming is the landscape. May we ever realise an enlarged vision of Christ, the vision of the King in His glorious beauty."

William died in Bournemouth in July 1931

FORMER GLO'STER MINISTER DEATH OF THE REV. WILLIAM SHAW

The death of the Rev. William Shaw, which occurred suddenly at Cotehill, Parkstone, Bournemouth, has occasioned much regret in Primitive Methodist circles in Gloucester, Mr. Shaw having been Superintendent Minister at the Barton-street Church for three years.

From 1875 until 1917 when he retired, Mr. Shaw was actively engaged in the ministry, and before coming to Gloucester in 1906 had held appointments, amongst others, at Mansfield, Pontefract, Selby, Easingwold and Banbury. At the time he was Superintendent Minister in Gloucester, the circuit included Barton-street, Stroud-road, Melbourne-street and Coney-Hill. Mr. Shaw will be remembered as a very able preacher whose discourses aroused keen interest. After leaving Gloucester, he went to Maidenhead. His last circuit being at Newark.

Mr. Shaw, who was 76, leaves a widow, five sons and a daughter. One of his sons is Mr. Reg Shaw, organist of Whitfield Memorial Church, while Mr. Charles Shaw, another son, now at Poole Dorset, was a former Secretary of the Liberal Club, and organist at Rycroft Wesleyan Church.

The funeral took place at Bournemouth. (Gloucester Journal - Saturday 11 July 1931)