

OBITUARY OF PHILIP MADDOCKS 1816-1906

pp 26-28 Primitive Methodist Minute Book, 1907

Held in the John Rylands University Library, Manchester

The Rev. Philip Maddocks was born at Sarn Bridge, in the county of Flint, on December 16th, 1816. His parents were poor, yet highly respectable and strict church people. In the year 1831, three local preachers of the Oswestry circuit missioned Sarn Bridge. Their earnest preaching had such an effect on Philip's father, that he opened his house for the preaching services and a large class was formed. They were amply repaid for their hospitality in the conversion of their son, who for so many years adorned the ranks of our ministry.

In his journal he has left an interesting account of his call to ministry: - *'It was in the month of May, 1835 when I was called upon to leave home to become a Primitive Methodist travelling preacher. A local preacher came and asked me if was willing to go to Chester, as their superintendent had died and the two younger preachers were ill, and they were left without a preacher. I started at once and arrived just in time to preach in the old Steam Mill chapel [Note 1]. After an hour's service the committee met and examined me on scriptural doctrines. The examination over, I was taken to a house for supper, which I sorely needed, having had nothing since breakfast, walked 15 miles, preached for an hour, and stood an hour in examination.'* His first day's experience was prophetic of the hardship and trials he would have to endure.

His first station was as third preacher in the Lisburn Mission, in Ireland, and among other circuits blessed by his ministry are Oswestry, Birmingham, Tunstall, Richall Mission in Ireland, Congleton, Belfast, Alderney, Jersey [Note 2], Newtonards, Donoughmore, Paisley, Lancaster, Wrexham [Note 3], Cardiff, Gloucester, Maidstone and Chattam, and Cardiff for a second term [Note 4]. In the early part of his ministry he did much pioneer work, *'enduring hardship as a good soldier of Christ.'* Whilst stationed at Coventry he missioned Nuneaton and was subjected to rough treatment. Taking his stand in the market place he commenced to sing 'Jesus the name high over all.' A constable came up and ordered him to stop. When he declined, the constable pulled him down, saying, *'Now, my little man, go quietly home. I have been commanded to take you to the Black Hole Prison, but I do not wish to.'* The preacher thanked him for his kindly advice, remounted the stool and sang, 'Jesus the name that charms our fears.' Up came the head constable with his son, one of them promptly knocked him down and they marched him off to prison singing 'Happy, if with my latest breath I may but gasp His name.' Arriving at the prison he was asked if he had a licence, *'Yes, I have two.'* *'Here's one, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.'* I pulled the other out of my pocket, held it up and shouted, *'This one is from Queen Victoria.'* Being liberated he returned to the old spot with joy in his heart and song on his lips 'Jesus the prisoner's fetters break.'

Living until his ninetieth year, in keen possession of his faculties, it was a rare treat to sit, and listen to the stories he related respecting the founders and the early history of our church. Whilst travelling in Birmingham, Hugh Bourne came to see him and was prevailed upon to preach. Mr Maddocks visited about forty families (the most prominent feature of his ministerial life was his devotion to the work of visitation) and the chapel was packed. Many were moved to tears and a goodly number converted. They had to share the same bed, the younger man hoping that he would have an opportunity of an interesting conversation, but in reply to a question, Hugh Bourne said, 'I came to bed to sleep, and not to talk.'

The writer has heard him relate with much glee his successful efforts at raising money. Under his superintendency a number of chapels were erected. His circuits were generally able to report progress in every department. Tactful, peaceable, ever striving for the extension of the Church to which he was passionately attached, the weakest cause received stimulus under his ministry. The General Missionary Committee sent him to Wrexham with instructions that he was to be mission steward, chapel steward, treasurer of the Sunday school, and seat-letter. It was a trying position, but during his three years ministry he built three chapels, and bought a Baptist chapel and reported an increase of ninety-six members, for which he received the hearty congratulations of the General Missionary Committee.

Whilst stationed at Portadown, Miss Beck, who afterwards became Mrs Maddocks, was converted under his ministry. She was a most devoted wife, quiet, very unassuming, but she strove to the utmost of her ability to assist her husband in doing good.

On retiring from the ranks of active ministry in 1876, he went to live at Cardiff, where he had previously spent nine years of successful service. His interest in our work was as great as ever. He was a regular attendant upon Divine worship, ready to assist in the work of preaching, and spent much time in visiting the poor. Knowing how intimately he was acquainted with the homes of the people, Cory Brothers [Note 5], who are so widely known for their philanthropy, made him the almoner of many of their gifts and showed their appreciation of his services by being present at the memorial service.

He suffered no sickness, simply the gradual decaying of his physical powers, and passed away as easily as a child falling asleep. A fortnight before his going home he said to the Rev. W. Carrier [Note 6], 'I have been thinking much recently about the kingship of Christ. Tell friend Bellingham [Note 7] I am going to write to him on the subject and want him to let me have his ideas on this subject.' He did not know how soon it would be his privilege to see 'the King in his beauty.' He died on October 29th, in his ninetieth year, and was interred in Cardiff cemetery on November 2nd. A memorial service, largely attended, was held in Mount Tabor Chapel, at which the Rev. J.P. Bellingham gave a full address, testifying to his sterling character and faithful service as a minister of the gospel.

WILLIAM CARRIER

Notes of explanation:

1. In 1823 a Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in Steam Mill Street, Chester. The Primitives later grew to have three circuits based on Chester, compared to one circuit for the Weslyans.
2. In 1851 his son, also named Philip Maddocks was born in St. Heliers, Jersey. The son also became a Primitive Methodist Minister, but in 1901 is recorded as a Clergyman in the Church of England, Wiltshire.
3. In the 1861 census he was living in Wrexham, Denbighshire with his son Philip.
4. In the 1881 census he was superannuated and living at 5 Wordsworth Street, Roath, Glamorgam, with his grandson Philip J. Maddocks aged 5.
5. Cory Brothers were a shipping company who made charitable donations.
6. In 1910 the Rev. William Carrier was superintendent minister of Cardiff No.2 Primitive Methodist Circuit.
7. In 1895 The Rev. John Parry Bellingham was minister of Cardiff No.1 Primitive Methodist Circuit.