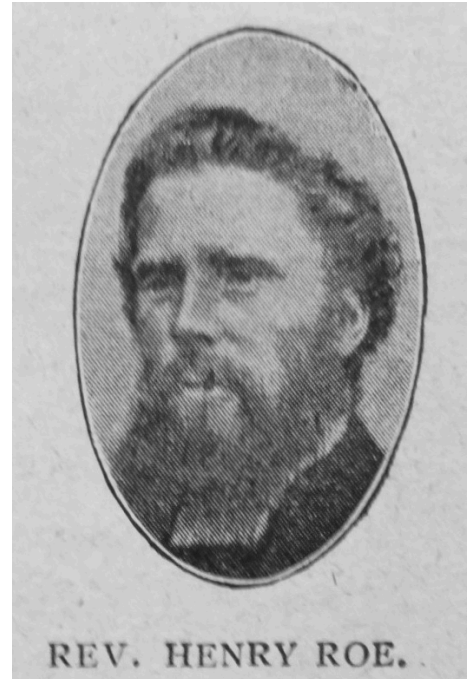


Rev. Henry Roe

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Richard M Rutter

Henry Roe was born at Old Lenton, Nottingham, on April 1st, 1842. His parents were gracious examples of brave discipleship, and of their memory their son was indeed proud. As a child he was adventurous, and he found the rough and even savage discipline of school days to be irksome and ultimately unbearable.

At eight years of age we discover him at work for a farmer receiving a wage of half-a-crown per week. Early, too, did the love of literature manifest itself, and there are records of Saturday evening visits to Nottingham market-place in search of books, among those secured being such classics as "Pilgrim's Progress" and "The Saints' Everlasting Rest." After spending a year in the employ of a farmer, he entered a bleach works, where he laboured for five years. He was then apprenticed to a leather merchant. His occupation demanded twelve hours a day, in spite of which he found time, borrowing it from the night, for a well-planned course of study, which covered a variety of subjects.



In 1857 he experienced the love of God in Christ, and immediately joined the Church, his first class-ticket being given to him by Dr, Samuel Antliff. Two months later he was teaching in the Sunday school, and shortly after was appointed "prayer-leader." In 1858 he preached his first sermon, in the house of Thomas Amram. In order to equip himself for the preacher's task he attended Dr. Antliff's Bible class in Nottingham. There are also records of his visits to a theological class in Wesley Chapel, and Y.M.C.A. Bible class, while he conducted Bible readings for young men at Old Radford. In 1860 he preached his trial sermon at Hockley, and was raised to full plan.

He entered the ministry in 1865 and was stationed at Northampton, his subsequent circuits being Maidenhead, Newport (I.W.), Glasgow, Tottenham, Jersey, Saffron Walden, Woburn Sands, St. Ives (Cornwall), Sawley, Wellingborough, Chinnor, Radstock, Middleham, Swinefleet and Howden.

He will, however, be best remembered as the pioneer missionary of our Church. Happily the story of 1870 is so well known to all Primitive Methodists that there is no need to describe the establishment of the first mission station on the island of Fernando Po. It is pleasant to think of the position assigned Mr. Roe at the great Jubilee Thanksgiving meeting during the Conference in Hull, a position which thrilled him with pride. His last days were brightened by the remembrance of the honour done to him by that grateful assembly. He superannuated in 1899 and came to reside, at St. Ives, Cornwall.

His interest in the world of men and events never flagged, while he displayed an equally keen concern for the welfare of the town in which he lived. His diary discloses that he was the first president of the local Co-operative Society. Travel was his delight, and leisure provided him opportunities of gratifying his taste. Thus we read of tours to France, Germany, the Holy Land and Rome. He was a man of strong convictions, and he possessed the power of forceful expression. His will power, too, was notable, as was his disdain for popularity. He espoused unpopular causes, and was not afraid of criticism, nor did he quail before suffering. Towards the end he grew feeble of gait, but the manner of his passing was quite unexpected. On a lovely

autumn morning he set out from his daughter's home to Penzance, and had just entered the railway carriage when he complained of feeling ill, and expired almost immediately.

His death called forth much sympathy, and many were the tributes paid to his work by the Press. The funeral service was held in our St. Ives Church, conducted by the Revs. R.M. Rutter and A. Colbeck (United Methodist). The Rev. H.M. Hull was appointed to represent the General Committee. He was borne to the cemetery by officials of our Church. The memorial service was attended by a congregation which filled the church. His son and daughter cherish his memory, a cherishing that is shared by many who never knew him in the flesh, for the life of a pioneer missionary is the property of a nation, and as the years pass, and the world that is Africa opens up, such lives as this win greater sway.

References

Primitive Methodist Magazine 1921/801