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THE WORK AND IDEAS OF  
JOHN WEST, 1778-1845

IAN HERBERT SHEARING STRATTON

submitted for the degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

in the  
UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM, DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY

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1977

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THE WORK AND IDEAS OF JOHN WEST, 1778-1845

I.H.S. STRATTON

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

John West, born in 1778, came under the influence of the Evangelical movement when a student at Oxford. After ordination he worked for more than fifteen years in England, during which time he was associated with several Evangelical societies. Then, in 1820, he was appointed by the Hudson's Bay Company as the first chaplain to the Red River Settlement, British North America. He pioneered educational work at the colony, the school for Indians and half-breeds being adopted by the Church Missionary Society. Boys trained at the school later took an active part in the Christian mission. After returning to England in 1823, West paid two further visits to North America. His survey of the work of the New England Company undertaken in 1825-6 resulted in a reorganization of the Company's establishments. His visit to Bible Society Auxiliaries in 1828 had as its object the revitalising of local societies and the correcting of misapprehensions arising from the Apocrypha controversy.

On his return, West settled in his Dorset parish of Chettle, and took charge also of neighbouring Farnham. Here he engaged in a number of projects, including a village school, and the building of a residential school for gipsy children which was the outcome of his co-operation with the Southampton Committee for the Reformation of the Gypsies. This school had some features in common with the one at Red River.

West worked with a strong view of the close relation between the Christian gospel and the spread of civilisation, and saw himself as the agent of both. His schools were the spearhead of the movement. In them the children were taught the Christian faith, introduced to agriculture, and encouraged to maintain their native skills. West's distinctive view of 'subordination' as a social cement enabled him to work fruitfully with members of all classes.

## 1 THE FIRST FORTY YEARS

George West, carrier and hop planter, of Farnham, Surrey, was married for the second time in 1776. A new house, 70 Castle Street, was built to receive the bride, Ann Knowles; and here, in the house which still stands, their elder son John was born in November 1778. He was baptized in the parish church on 18 December.<sup>1</sup>

John followed his half-brother George as a student to St Edmund Hall, Oxford, and graduated B.A. in 1804, M.A. in 1809. It was here that the foundations of his life's work were laid. Isaac Crouch had become vice-principal of the Hall in 1783,<sup>2</sup> and was to hold the post for twenty-four years. During that time he became 'the real nursing-father of evangelicalism in Oxford', and the Hall a centre for the work of training those who were hoping to take Orders.<sup>3</sup> Some two hundred candidates for ordination passed through Crouch's hands, receiving during their time of residence a thorough grounding in the Greek New Testament by the means of his twice-weekly lectures. On Sunday evenings the students were invited to small reading-parties in church history at the vice-principal's house, where they had the advantage of seeing evangelical religion in a domestic setting, for Crouch, unlike Simeon at Cambridge, was married, and not a fellow of his college. Crouch's obituary notice in the Christian Observer of 1837, written by his successor, Daniel Wilson, noted:

'his pupils left the lecture room animated to run the race to heaven, emboldened to struggle against the world, quickened to confess a crucified Saviour, abased under the perception of their small attainments, and aroused to more fervent prayer for the grace of the great Sanctifier and Comforter .... There are few parts of the kingdom where one or more of his pupils did not carry the impression of his kindness, piety, truly evangelical doctrines, ecclesiastical knowledge, and attachment to the Church of England.' (4)

John West was made deacon at Fulham by Bishop Beilby Porteus on 20 December 1804,<sup>5</sup> and began his ministry as curate of Wethersfield, Essex, the non-resident vicar being Joseph Jowett, professor of Civil Law at Cambridge. After eighteen months in Essex, West migrated to Surrey to become curate to his half-brother George at Stoke-next-Guildford and Aldershot. He was priested in Winchester Cathedral on 21 September 1806. The following year he returned to Essex as curate of Stebbing with Saling, where he was to remain for eight years.

It was also in 1807 that West was married to Harriett, the daughter of Christopher and Catharine Atkinson,<sup>6</sup> by whom he was to have twelve children. Christopher Atkinson, a fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, had preceded Jowett as vicar of Wethersfield, and had died there at the age of forty in 1795.<sup>7</sup> In his Cambridge days he had been 'the means of fostering the early religious sentiments of Mr Simeon, then an undergraduate of King's College, who was seen standing in the aisle (of St Edward's, Cambridge) on each returning Sabbath, as his devout and attentive hearer; and this faithful servant of God began his faithful preaching of the gospel of Christ, under which so many have risen up and called him blessed, as Mr. Atkinson's assistant in good old Latimer's pulpit.'<sup>8</sup> Catharine was the only daughter of Sir Peter Leicester, Bart., of Tabley. In order to make a settlement on Harriett, George West sen. had to mortgage the family property at Farnham for £900.<sup>9</sup>

In 1815, John West moved to White Roothing (or Roding) where he became curate to Henry Budd (1774-1853), the famous chaplain of the Bridewell. The two men became close friends, Budd acting as West's mentor and guide in much of the work that was to follow. F.G. West, the author of the brief memoir of John which is prefixed to the sixth edition of the Memoir of Mrs John West, stated of Budd that it was through his advice that West 'undertook the chief work of his life, as the first Missionary to the Indians of North America.'

There is no record of West's parochial activity during these years of his Essex curacies during the Napoleonic War. It was a period when landlords, well set up by the Enclosure Acts, reaped the financial benefits of the high price of corn, and were 'engrossed in the life of their pleasant country houses.' The poor suffered.<sup>10</sup> Life could not have been easy for the young curate and his wife, who had had five children by 1815, four of whom were living by that date.<sup>11</sup> It is known that the chancel of the church at Wethersfield was in use as a school in the middle years of the nineteenth century, but there is no account of its origin, or evidence that it may have been West's first venture into the field of education.

The one feature of West's work which can still be traced is his active support of the Evangelical religious societies. He



was already a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society; and he was active locally on behalf of the Church Missionary Society, which had been founded in 1799. In April 1814, West, the secretary, and P.H. Douglas, the president, of the Stebbing and Bardfield Village Association, sent a complete list of subscribers to the Society's headquarters, and offered to extend their efforts so as to form an Essex Auxiliary.<sup>12</sup> Five months later West wrote again to say that he saw no advantage in delaying forming the Auxiliary, though now he considered it best to form two, the one in the Dunmow area being for West Essex. The local clergy committee intended to ask Sir Brydges Henniker, already president of the Dunmow Bible Society, and the 'only person of rank likely to co-operate', to be president. In December, West remitted £10 from the Stebbing and Bardfield branch, and explained that the proposed November meeting to launch the Auxiliary could not take place as planned, but that he hoped something would be done in the spring. He himself was shortly leaving for White Roothing, 'but should ever rejoice to co-operate in any way to promote such a cause as that in which you are engaged.'<sup>13</sup>

In 1817 John West returned to help his half-brother at Stoke-next-Guildford and Aldershot; and the following year was nominated to be perpetual curate of Aldershot in succession to his brother, who had resigned the chaplaincy in his favour. Although the church was an ancient foundation, it had never been a rectory because the income was so small, and until 1818 had been a chaplaincy. A document held in the Hampshire County Record Office at Winchester<sup>14</sup> shows the income to have been a fixed stipend of £15 per annum paid from tithes, and the Easter Offerings and Surplice Fees to have averaged £1. West continued to support the work of the C.M.S. from his new base. In 1817 he sent £6. 1. 3., the proceeds of a collection, and two years later £7. 13. 0.<sup>15</sup> A Sunday School had already been opened by his half-brother in a little thatched building in the village.<sup>16</sup>

The difficulties curates had in securing a living, unless they had social or political strings to pull, were considerable.<sup>17</sup> In the early part of the nineteenth century, as in previous times, many curates continued in that station for the whole of their ministry, migrating from one ill-paid post to another.<sup>18</sup> Evangelicals like West faced added difficulties. It was in 1820

that Bishop Marsh of Peterborough devised his 'Trap', eighty-seven questions to be answered by all clergy seeking a living in his diocese, the answers to which would reveal Evangelical sympathies and so lead to their exclusion.<sup>19</sup> Feeling elsewhere was similar, if less precise. However, it was in this year that West was collated to the living of Chettle, Dorset, being instituted by commission from the Bishop of Bristol on 10 February, and subsequently inducted by the Archdeacon of Dorset. The advowson was held at the time by a London moneylender, Abraham Henry Chambers, who had acquired it when the Chafin estates, of which he was the mortgagee, became his property on the death of William Chafin in 1818. Interestingly, the estates included property at Farnham, Surrey, as well as at Chettle.

The value of the living was then £100 per annum, but this was not all at West's disposal. His predecessor, J.T. Napier, had mortgaged the income of the Rectory for the sum of £360 in July 1812 in order to effect some improvements to the parsonage, under the terms of Acts of the 17th and 21st years of George III, and had died, still a young man, in 1819, with most of the debt outstanding. A note on the outside of the indenture for the mortgage<sup>20</sup> reads: 'Mem. Apl. 1825. The greater part of the within named sum, borrowed by the late Rector, was paid by myself - John West Rector.'

But West was beneficed at last; and with some security for his wife and family he could launch out on an ambitious project.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

- 1 For these details I am indebted to the Revd J.W. Branson of Aldershot.
- 2 Reynolds, J.S., The Evangelicals at Oxford 1735-1871, p 57.
- 3 *ibid*, pp 58f.
- 4 *ibid*, p 60.
- 5 West, J., Memoir of Mrs John West<sup>4</sup>, p vi.
- 6 Hutchins, J., The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset, vol III, p 572.
- 7 West, J., *op cit*, p vi.
- 8 West, J., *op cit*<sup>2</sup>, p 2.
- 9 Boon, T.C.B., These Men Went Out, p 2.
- 10 Trevelyan, G.M., English Social History, pp 465-7.
- 11 Unfortunately, the records of the Bishop Porteus Charity for Poorer Clergy (Hodgson, R., The Life of the Rt Revd Beilby Porteus, D.D., pp 293f), which would have provided some evidence of West's position, are not extant for this period.
- 12 Hole, C., The Early History of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, p 447.
- 13 *ibid*, pp 560, 619.
- 14 ref 83M70/1.
- 15 The Missionary Register, 1817, p 488; *ibid*, 1819, p 412.
- 16 Branson, J.W., The Old Parish Church of St Michael the Archangel Aldershot, pp 3, 26f.
- 17 Tindal Hart, A., The Curate's Lot, p 109.
- 18 *ibid*, pp 131, 134f.
- 19 Carpenter, S.C., Church and People 1789-1889, pp 28f.
- 20 Now lodged with the Dorset County Record Office, Dorchester.

## 2 RED RIVER

For a man of forty-one the prospect could have been daunting. West was to go to British North America as chaplain to the Red River Settlement, under the auspices of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The first steps had been taken a few months earlier. At a meeting of the Governor and Committee of the Company in London on 13 October 1819, a decision was taken to send a clergyman of the Church of England to the Red River Settlement

'for the purpose of affording religious instruction and consolation to the Company's retired Servants & other Inhabitants of the Settlement, and also of affording religious instruction & consolation to the Servants in the active employment of the Company upon such occasions as the nature of the Country and other circumstances will permit.' (1)

A salary of £100 per annum was decided upon, and the 'Revd. John West, Master of Arts' was appointed chaplain. Who or what recommended West to the Committee is not clear. There were two Evangelical laymen on the Committee, Benjamin Harrison and Nicholas Garry.<sup>2</sup> Harrison was involved with the work of the C.M.S., and may well have known West in that connection.<sup>3</sup>

Certainly West was in close touch with the C.M.S. committee about the project, writing in December to announce his appointment, and offering to carry out the objects of the Society by establishing schools among the natives at the Settlement. The committee voted him £100 towards carrying out his plans, although doubts were expressed about the suitability of the location at Red River.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the H.B.C. Committee were also aware of West's educational plans points to some common counsel. Also involved was the New England Company. A report made by West to the Company on his return, dated 6 January 1824, refers to a remittance which had helped support the school and its master in the first year.<sup>5</sup>

The history of the Red River Settlement began some ten years before this. The depopulation of the Scottish highlands in favour of flocks of sheep at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, led to considerable distress among the dispossessed crofters and their families. Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk, took up their cause. Having failed to enlist the support of the British government, he bought land in Prince Edward Island to settle a number of crofters, and

also established a colony in what is now Ontario in 1805. The stock of the Hudson's Bay Company had fallen in value as a result of the French war, and this gave Selkirk the further chance that he was seeking. He purchased several thousand pounds worth of stock, and then in 1810 made a formal proposal to the Company for a settlement to be made in its territory. In spite of opposition, the proposal was accepted, and in 1811 Selkirk was granted 116,000 square miles of territory for the nominal price of ten shillings, on condition that he should establish a colony and comply with certain terms. The Committee of the Company hoped that the settlement would provide a home for some of its retired servants. Later, soldiers discharged after the war with the U.S.A. were also to join the settlers.

The first group of colonists reached Red River in 1812, and were joined by other arrivals from Britain, Scots, Irish and Orcadians, in subsequent years. The early years were a history of disappointment and failure. The colonists were harried by a number of half-breed Métis who were in the service of the rival North-West Company, and paid by it to carry on the private war with the H.B.C. for a monopoly of the fur trade, the Nor'-Westers believing that colonisation would be disastrous to the trade.<sup>6</sup> Agriculture proved difficult, first for lack of tools and seed, later because of the harsh climatic conditions in the winter, and plagues of devouring grasshoppers in the summer.<sup>7</sup> In 1817 the Earl of Selkirk visited his settlers and promised them a Presbyterian minister and land for a church, a manse and a school. The site had been the scene of the massacre by Métis of the newly-arrived H.B.C. Governor of Rupert's Land, Robert Semple, and twenty-one colonists, the previous year.<sup>8</sup> The promise was nearing fulfilment when Selkirk died in April 1820, but not in the expected form.

West set about his task with vigour. He stayed in Chettle for only two months, and then returned to Aldershot, leaving a curate, William Merry, in charge of his parish. From the Clock House, Aldershot, where his wife and family were to remain during his time at Red River, he entered into correspondence about arrangements for school equipment and Bibles.<sup>9</sup> His letter to the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, given as Appendix 'A',

illustrates both the cosmopolitan character of the community to which he was to minister, and also the breadth of his mission as he saw it.

John West embarked on the H.B.C. vessel Eddystone at Gravesend on 27 May 1820, the date of embarkation being the date of the commencement of his appointment as chaplain. A few days later the committee of the Honourable Company sent a letter to William Williams, Governor of York Factory on the Bay, notifying him of West's appointment, asking him to 'make proper arrangements for his performing divine service during the short time he may be at York Factory,' to make the arrangements necessary for conveying him to Red River, and to ensure that West was treated with respect by Servants of the Company.<sup>10</sup> 1820 was also the year in which the Scotsman George Simpson (1792-1860) emigrated to North America. Soon afterwards he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and became a key figure in its nineteenth-century progress. The paths of Simpson and West were to cross a number of times in the next three years.

The Atlantic crossing passed without incident. In approaching Hudson's straits, West was impressed by the sight of an iceberg, and his missionary concern aroused by a brief encounter with some Eskimos. In the trading bustle that ensued, he forgot his intention of reading to them from one of the 'Esquimaux Testaments', and of trying to find out if they knew of the Moravian missionary establishment on the Labrador coast.<sup>11</sup>

The Eddystone anchored at York Factory on 15 August; and on the following Sunday the worship of the Church of England was conducted by a clergyman of the Church of England on the shores of the Bay for the first time since Frobisher's chaplain officiated there in 1578.

West's keen perception and quick resolve become apparent from what he did in his short stay at the Factory.

'Observing a number of half-breed children running about, growing up in ignorance and idleness; and being informed that they were a numerous offspring of Europeans by Indian women, and found at all the Company's posts; I drew up a plan, which I submitted to the Governor, for collecting a certain number of them, to be maintained, clothed, and educated upon a regularly organized system. It was transmitted by him to the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, whose benevolent feelings towards

this neglected race, had induced them to send several school-masters to the country, fifteen or sixteen years ago; but who were unhappily diverted from their original purpose, and became engaged as fur traders.

'During my stay at this post, I visited several Indian families, and no sooner saw them crowded together in their miserable-looking tents, than I felt a lively interest (as I anticipated) in their behalf . . . . With the aid of an interpreter, I spoke to an Indian, called Withawecapo, about taking two of his boys to the Red River Colony with me to educate and maintain. He yielded to my request; and I shall never forget the affectionate manner in which he brought the eldest boy in his arms, and placed him in the canoe on the morning of my departure from York Factory.

. . . .  
'I had to establish the principle, that the North-American Indian of these regions would part with his children, to be educated in white man's knowledge and religion. The above circumstance therefore afforded us no small encouragement, in embarking for the colony.' (12)

The canoe journey up the Nelson River to Lake Winnipeg afforded West evidence of the barbarizing effects of life in the wilderness: the language of the Scotsmen when they encountered obstacles, and their total disregard of the Sabbath, brought home to him the difficulty of his task. However, he obtained another boy, an orphan, at Norway House as a pupil for his school, and felt encouraged. He taught the boys a prayer to use morning and evening, 'Great Father, bless me, through Jesus Christ.'

The party entered the mouth of the Red River on the morning of 13 October, and proceeded to Netley Creek to breakfast. Here West had his first meeting with Pigewis or Peguis, the chief of a tribe of Saulteaux Indians, who had been a good friend to the Earl of Selkirk and his colonists. Pigewis expressed the courteous wish that 'more of the stumps and brushwood were cleared away for my feet, in coming to see his country,'<sup>13</sup> and was grieved to hear the news that West brought of Selkirk's death.

The Settlement itself presented further evidence of degeneracy.

'On the 14th of October we reached the settlement, consisting of a number of huts widely scattered along the margin of the river; in vain did I look for a cluster of cottages, where the hum of a small population at least might be heard as in a village. I saw but few marks of human industry in the cultivation of the soil. Almost every inhabitant we passed bore a gun upon his shoulder and all appeared in a wild and hunter-like state.' (14)

The chaplain moved into action without delay. Divine service

was held on the first Sunday; and the school was opened in a log-house about three miles below the Fort on 1 November, where the schoolmaster who had sailed with West, George Harbidge, took up his residence among the Scottish settlers. This date is acknowledged as the beginning of public education in the Hudson's Bay Company's territory of Rupert's Land.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of December West moved his quarters to the farm that had belonged to the Earl of Selkirk. This meant that he was three miles from the Fort, where divine service was still held, and six from the school, and so was put to some inconvenience in his ministrations. This, coupled with the difficulty he experienced in explaining Christian belief and morality to the parents whose children he baptized, and for whom he conducted a marriage ceremony,<sup>16</sup> led West to a determination to erect a 'substantial building' at the Settlement to act both as a day-school and an adult Sunday-school, a residence for the master and the Indian boys, and a temporary church. He believed that such a building would not only be a Christian witness but would also act as a civilising agency 'in a vast field of heathenism.'

On his appointment, West had received instructions to minister to the active servants of the Company as well as to the Red River settlers. So, on 15 January 1821, he set out westwards for his first journey across the wind-swept, snow-covered prairie in a carriage drawn by three dogs, the baggage and food supplies being carried on a separate sledge, with two men as drivers. During the four-day journey in harsh conditions to Brandon House, West, reputedly a good shot, bagged some ptarmigans to eke out the failing provisions. At evening service at the post on the Sunday he married the chief officer, J.R. McKay, to the mother of his two children, and also baptized the children.<sup>17</sup> These dual occasions were a prominent feature of West's visits to H.B.C. posts, and an important part of the policy of his mission.

The strenuous and monotonous existence led by a fur trader led him to seek relaxation in drinking-bouts, about which more later, and sexual license. The European men at the posts kept Indian or half-breed women, sometimes in a permanent alliance, more often on a temporary basis. Before the arrival of missionaries, these liaisons were always made du pays or en facon du nord. West, who saw himself as an agent of Christian civilis-



ation, was as emphatic as the Roman-Catholic priests on the necessity of marriage.

'Marriage, I would enforce upon all, who are living with, and have children by half-caste, or Indian women. The apostolic injunction is clear and decisive against the too common practice of the country, in putting them away, after enjoying the morning of their days; or deserting them to be taken by the Indians with their children, when the parties, who have cohabited with them, leave the Hudson's Bay Company's territories. And if a colony is to be organized, and established in the wilderness, the moral obligation of marriage must be felt. It is "the parent," said Sir William Scott, "not the child of civil society." '(18)

Many, especially retired officers of the Company, followed West's advice in the matter. One who did not was George Simpson, soon to become Governor; and this issue was one of the causes of the strained relations between the two men.<sup>19</sup>

It was at Brandon House that West first saw the Indian custom of staging a corpse, and he noted the details of the custom carefully, as was his habit. He concluded,

'I could not but reflect that theirs is a sorrow without hope: all is gross darkness with them as to futurity; and they wander through life without the consolatory and cheering influence of that gospel which has brought life and immortality to light.' (20)

The furthest point reached by West on this journey was Qu'Appelle, a few miles below the junction of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine Rivers, a little south of where Fort Ellice was later established. A large band of Indians arrived at the fort with provisions at the same time as West's party, and their behaviour raised in acute form another question on which he took a firm stand, that of spirit-drinking.

'When they had delivered their loads, they paraded the fort with an air of independence. It was not long however before they became clamorous for spirituous liquors; and the evening presented such a bacchanalia, including the women and the children, as I never before witnessed. Drinking made them quarrelsome, and one of the men became so infuriated, that he would have killed another with his bow, had not the master of the post immediately rushed in and taken it from him.' (21)

Heavy drinking at the Company's posts during the long northern nights or as an aid to relaxation during brief intervals snatched during the concentrated work of the summer season was one thing; plying the Indians with spirits was another. West believed that it was a cause of their degradation.<sup>22</sup> In the manuscript

17

copy of the Journal in the C.M.S. archives, the passage about the obligation of marriage quoted above contains an allusion, suppressed in the published version, to the fact that native women were obtained 'by Europeans through that irresistible bribe to Indians, the Rum Keg.'<sup>23</sup> West later told Simpson, after the latter had become Governor, that he intended to lay before 'some of the pious societies with whom he corresponds an expose of the baneful consequences of the use of Spirituous Liquors among the Indians', in the hope that through their influence and that of some of the members of the Committee, spirits would be prohibited in the Company's territories.<sup>24</sup> In this matter West was at one with Roman-Catholic and Wesleyan missionaries. The trouble was partly due to the high wages paid during the struggle between the two rival fur-trading Companies. With the end of this conflict, money became less plentiful, and the amount of liquor available consequently diminished. At the very end of his stay in North America, just before he embarked in July 1823, West rejoiced that the council meeting at York Factory resolved to begin to implement the wishes of the London Committee that the quantities of spirits given should be reduced to one-third.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to note that West took a similar view of the effects of drinking spirits mixed with water on the lower classes of American citizens and British immigrants in the United States during his visit of 1826. In this case, he recommended brewing as a remedy, and added wistfully, 'I seldom met with beer in North America.' (26)

The end of the private war between the two Companies engaged in the fur trade, referred to above, was brought about by their amalgamation in this year, 1821,<sup>27</sup> on the initiative of some of the wintering partners of the North-West Company. The union brought stability to the territory, and was one of the factors leading to the viability of the Red River Settlement in subsequent years. Supreme control remained with the Governor and Committee in London, but considerable authority was in the hands of the North American departments. George Simpson was appointed governor of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land on its creation, taking over the Southern Department as well five years later. The implementation of the terms of the union was largely in his hands. West commented on the event in a letter

to the committee of the Bible Society, written on 17 February:

'The coalition of the two rival Companies, which have long vigorously contended with each other in prosecuting trade, I conceived to be highly favourable towards any attempt that may be made in benefitting the Indians in a religious or moral point of view.'<sup>(28)</sup>

West made two further journeys to the Company's posts during 1821, the first being a short one to Pembina (Fort Daer) in March, again by carriole, where he joined in a meeting to discuss 'the best means of protection, and of resisting any attack that might be made by the Sioux Indians, who were reported to have hostile intentions against this part of the colony, in the Spring.' One of the features of West's Journal which must have been valuable publisher's bait is apparent here. He notes the expertise of the Canadians (ie, half-breeds with French fathers) as dog-drivers and voyageurs in a canoe, as well as their vivacity and tendency to blasphemy, and the propensity of English half-breeds for marathon dancing sessions.<sup>29</sup>

The late Earl of Selkirk had suggested that a summer visit to York Factory would provide the chaplain with an opportunity to minister to a large number of the Company's servants, so West set off for this destination on 1 August.<sup>30</sup> Governor Simpson was not entirely happy about this interruption of the short working season,<sup>31</sup> but West, mild-featured<sup>32</sup> as apparently also was Simpson, possessed a determination of character which drove him to exploit every possibility of exercising a Christian and civilising ministry. At Norway House, en route, he officiated at the now customary Baptism and Marriage services, and met up with Nicholas Garry, the Evangelical Deputy Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Simon McGillivray, one of the North-West Company's signatories to the Deed of Co-Partnership, who were on their way to the gathering at York Factory to work out details of the agreement in the field.<sup>33</sup>

The formation of a Bible Society Auxiliary in the area had been in West's mind when he began his mission.<sup>34</sup> In a letter he wrote to the Governor in February 1821, he saw the summer visit to York as the chance he had been looking for, especially in view of Garry's promised presence. West invited William Williams to be president of the proposed Auxiliary. The meeting was held on 2 September, with Nicholas Garry in the chair. It was agreed

unanimously that 'the Auxiliary Bible Society for Prince Rupert's Land, & the Red River Settlement' should be formed. Williams accepted the post of president, and George Simpson that of treasurer. West himself was secretary, and George Harbidge one of the seven departmental assistant secretaries. More than £120 was subscribed on the spot, £50 being from the Company, and the remainder from donations and annual subscriptions.<sup>35</sup> Garry was duly impressed by the character of the man who could bring about such a result. He wrote in his diary:

'The readiness which was shown by every Gentleman to subscribe proves how erroneous the Opinions of People have been that there was no Religion in the Country. It proves how easily the Minds of People may be led to do what is good and Mr West certainly had much merit and has made great Advances in producing so desirable a result.' (36)

A total of £200. 0. 6. was subscribed during the first year's working; and although the Auxiliary did not survive West's departure by more than a year, during its short life it contributed just over £300 to the parent Society in London. There was, however, one longer-lasting result. Two traders, James Leith of Fort Chipewyan, and Robert McVicar, in charge of the post at Slave Lake, were absent from the meeting. Leith, who had been appointed one of the assistant secretaries in his absence, wrote to McVicar urging him to show that their generosity was equal to that of their friends, 'in support of an institution that embraces such universal sentiments of benevolence to the human species.' Leith's concern for the spiritual and moral welfare of natives and settlers grew over the years, and it was money derived from his estate that later made possible the foundation of the bishopric of Rupert's Land in 1849.<sup>37</sup>

Garry was not as impressed by another feature of West's ministry during his stay at York Factory. On the Sunday after the Chaplain's arrival, he made this note in his diary:

'Divine service at 11 by the Rev Mr West. All the Swiss Settlers, who are (with the Exception of seven) Calvinists, attended, and all the Officers and Servants of the Company, nearly 200 People. Mr West is not a good Preacher; he unfortunately attempts to preach Extempore from Notes, for which he has not the Capacity, his Discourses being unconnected and ill-delivered. He likewise mistakes his Point, fancying that by touching severely and pointedly on the Weaknesses of People he will produce Repentance.' (38)

As soon as West had helped cheer Garry on board the supply ship Prince of Wales for the return journey to England, he set off to return to Red River, and soon came up with the party of Swiss emigrants who had been recruited for the Settlement. The arrival of these settlers, who included a number of women, led some German bachelor colonists to present themselves 'in search of a wife.' The Roman-Catholic priests refused to solemnise the ensuing marriages, and attempted to discourage Catholics from being present at the ceremonies conducted by West. As well as seeing his duty in this matter to be that of a bringer of civilisation, West was in the habit of using the opportunity provided to give copies of the Bible in their native tongue to the parties. This again was not to the liking of the Roman-Catholic priests.<sup>39</sup> West's attitude was uncompromising:

'We derive all true sentiments in religious subjects from the Bible, and the Bible alone . . . Therein is contained the great charter of salvation, and the awful code of divine communication to the human race. "A Bible then to every man in the world," is the sentiment we would encourage, in opposition to such a priestly objection, that is contrary to the liberal conduct of more enlightened Catholics.'

The opening of a school, taking the settlers' children daily, and the Indians and half-breeds as boarders, had been a priority on John West's arrival at Red River. One of his primary objects became the construction of a proper school building. Things moved very slowly. The largely Scots settlers had expected, as they put it, a 'Gaelic minister'.<sup>40</sup> Finding West, unlike his successors, inflexible in his adherence to the Book of Common Prayer, and with little spare time on their hands, they were reluctant to give the chaplain the six days' annual labour they were expected to provide for him. Moreover, alarms caused by rumours of impending attacks on the settlement by Indians also had a delaying effect.<sup>41</sup> Work had not progressed far enough by West's return from York Factory for the building and the schoolmaster's residence to be brought into use; and Harbidge had removed the school to the former North-West Company's post at Fort Garry, with the result that the number of scholars had diminished, as had the number of Sunday worshippers, because of the school's distance from the Settlement. West was disappointed; but the participation of the Indian boys in the worship at Christmas, when they sang 'Hallelujah! to the Emmanuel', increased his

determination. He reflected:

'I meet with many discouraging circumstances in my ministerial labours; but my path is sometimes cheered with the pleasing hope, that they are not altogether in vain; and that the light of Christianity will break in upon the heathen darkness that surrounds me. The promises of God are sure; and when cast down, I am not disheartened.' (42)

In the Spring of 1822, Governor Simpson forced the settlers to render three days' labour due to West so as to bring the building to a state in which it could be used, though uncompleted.<sup>43</sup> At the same time it was hinted to the chaplain that the interest he was taking in the education of the native children had excited the fears of some of the chief factors and traders. They saw West as the forerunner of an army of missionaries and teachers who by exercising a civilising ministry and encouraging the Indians to settle to agricultural pursuits would ultimately destroy the fur trade. West's own vision of a system of schools stretching across the continent was not calculated to allay their fears. Governor Simpson was not as sympathetic to education as he was to become ten years later, but West had allies in the Evangelical members of the London Committee of the Company.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, things were moving in London, on the initiative of the Committee. They sought the help of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 'furnishing them with a Missionary or in a donation for the erection of a Church at the settlement on the Red River', but 'no help could be spared' at this time (1822).<sup>45</sup> C.M.S. was also approached. Benhamin Harrison and Nicholas Garry attended a meeting of the committee of the Society on 28 January, and pointed out the advantages of Red River as a base from which a more general mission might be conducted. It was unanimously agreed to constitute Red River as the Society's ninth mission: John West was to be 'Superintendent' (sic); another missionary was to be sent out as soon as practicable; George Harbidge was to be engaged by the Society; and the Indian children were to be maintained and educated. £800 per annum was allocated for the work.<sup>46</sup> This information reached West in the mail on 20 June, together with good news of his family's health; 'and no one ever received news from a far country, which gladdened the heart more than these letters did mine.'

A few days later, a brother-in-law of the late Earl of Selkirk,

James Halkett, arrived at the Settlement. Halkett, Selkirk's executor and a director of the H.B.C., was active to improve the colony's conditions during his stay. West spent a good deal of time with him during the summer, going first to Pembina and later to York Factory. After the Pembina visit, West took the opportunity of Halkett's presence to conduct divine service in the unfinished schoolhouse for the first time. On 21 July 1822, the seventh Sunday after Trinity, two of the boys in the school, 'being able to read the New Testament, repeat the Church Catechism, and to understand the chief truths of the Christian Religion', were baptized. The nine-year old son of Withewacapo, who had been given to West in the early days of his mission, took the name James Hope. There is evidence to suggest that James, with his brother John who was baptized at Red River with two other boys shortly before West's departure a year later, carried the gospel into the Mackenzie River basin in the far North-West of the territory before official Anglican mission work began there in 1859.<sup>47</sup> The other boy, the orphan son of an Indian and a half-caste woman, whom West had obtained at Norway House on the way to the settlement, was given the name Henry Budd, in honour of West's friend and former Rector. West had prayed that his boys might be raised up 'as heralds of salvation in this truly benighted and barbarous part of the world'; and in Budd his prayer was to be fully answered. Henry became the first native catechist and teacher at The Pas eighteen years later, and ten years after that the first native deacon to be ordained by the first Bishop of Rupert's Land.<sup>48</sup> The relationship between West and Henry Budd was like that of a father to a son. When the young Budd heard that West was not returning to Red River two years later, he is reported to have wept.<sup>49</sup> Contact was maintained over the years, as is witnessed by the copy of a deferential yet affectionate letter written by Budd from The Pas on 13 August 1843 preserved in the Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land.<sup>50</sup> It must have rejoiced West's heart to read 'There are about sixty persons more, between young and old, who were all wishing to have been baptised to the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ this year, and add to the few sheep that the Great Shepherd has in this place.'

West's visit to York Factory with Halkett in the summer of 1822 saw two interesting developments. Captain John Franklin, with Dr Richardson and other members of the Northern Lands expedition to

the Coppermine River, were waiting there for a ship to take them back to England. Franklin not only attended the first anniversary meeting of the Bible Society Auxiliary, but also spoke to West about the possibility of educational work among Eskimos, so that the chaplain now began to think in terms of establishing a school in the area of Fort Churchill on the North-West coast of the Bay.<sup>51</sup> Franklin's vision was given substance in the person of one of his Eskimo guides, Augustus, who often came to West's room, and conversed with him tolerably well in English. Augustus also spoke for such a school. West sent his wife a little note written on paper he had lined for the Eskimo to write in a large hand

M e v e r y g l a d .  
y o u r w i f e m e s e e .

o r  
T a t a n e u c k <sub>A</sub> A u g u s t u s

And in the accompanying letter to his unmarried sister-in-law staying with his wife, West added a postscript which contains the one shaft of humour in the whole story:

'Tataneuck or Augustus - has written you.

I tell him, he must kill you plenty Deer, if you, -- his wife - he says, - "me, plenty kill, properly" -<sup>52</sup> This letter also contains news of the other development, the arrival of George Harbidge's intended wife: 'Eliz. Moden who is come out as wife to my School-master is in good Spirits, ... - she will I trust greatly assist the Mission in teaching the female Indian children.' West's hope of increasing the scale of his Indian school, expressed in this letter, was not fulfilled.

The bride's name was actually Elizabeth Bowden. She was coming out with the consent of both the Company and the C.M.S. not only to marry George Harbidge, but also to assist him in his work. Having been trained at the National Society's Central School at Baldwin's Gardens in London's East End, she was the first qualified schoolmistress to enter western Canada.<sup>53</sup>

West's educational techniques will be discussed in a later chapter. Here it is sufficient to note that Bell's Madras system was used, as at the Central School where teachers received their two months' training, but without the pressure of numbers which often rendered the system ineffective, coupled with gardening to encourage the Indian boys to engage in agriculture in



adult life, and with training in hunting and fishing to keep them in their own native esteem.<sup>54</sup> Although religious education was primary, it was well set in a cultural context.

On the return journey to Red River, West stopped to smoke the calumet with Peguis. The chief put the shrewd question as to what West would do with the children after they had been educated at the school. He was told that they could return to their parents if they wished it, but that West's hope was that the boys might settle to agriculture. The girls were being taught to knit and make garments. All 'would be led to read the Book that the Great Spirit had given to them, which the Indians had not yet known, and which would teach them how to live well and to die happy.' As an example of living well, West alluded to monogamy, to be somewhat nonplussed when Peguis smiled, and said that "he thought that there was no more harm in Indians having two wives than one of the settlers," whom he named.<sup>55</sup>

This year there was a plentiful harvest at the settlement. West returned to find the colonists threshing their crop, and he noted the yields with interest, mentioning his own abortive experiment in attempting to grow winter-sown wheat.<sup>56</sup> His mission was as wide as human life itself.

1823 was a year of consolidation, disturbed only by an upset caused by West's refusing to baptize the illegitimate child of the daughter of a Swiss emigrant. The man took offence, even though he had himself cast his daughter away for her sins. West believed that he was digging foundations for the future of the colony:

'Unless chastity be considered as a virtue, what hope can be entertained of forming any organized society? and if the Colonists fearlessly commit crimes, because they have stepped over a certain line of latitude; and live in a wild profligacy, without the curb of civil restraint, the Settlement can hold out but faint hopes of answering in any way the expectations of its patrons.' (57)

On 10 March, West noted that 'the ringing of the Sabbath bell now collects an encouraging congregation'; three months later he writes of the addition of two small houses to the Mission School as separate sleeping apartments for the Indian children.<sup>58</sup> At the same time he speaks of digging and hoeing himself with 'our little charge' 'as an example and encouragement for them to labour.' It was perhaps this involvement and close concern with

the children that gave them an influence out of proportion to their numbers. There were by now a mere eight boys and two girls with a half-breed woman to look after them.<sup>59</sup> West continued to try and extend his educational system. There is an interesting letter, printed by H.G.G. Herklots,<sup>60</sup> from a canny Scots settler, William Garrioch, whom West approached in April to set up a school in return for a payment of £150 a year. Garrioch worked out that the proposed establishment for Indian children would cost at least £158 a year to run, and so declined the undertaking.

As his stay at Red River drew to a close, John West considered the erection of the little wooden school-church as an achievement:

'I considered it as a small point gained, to have a public building dedicated to religious purposes, whose spire should catch the eye, both of the wandering natives, and the stationary Colonists. It would have its effect on the population generally.'

On his last Sunday, 8 June, he baptized three more of the boys in the school: John Hope, the second son of Withewacapo; James Harbidge, named after the schoolmaster; and Charles Pratt. Hope and Pratt were later to become native catechists.<sup>61</sup> On the following Tuesday, West addressed a crowded congregation in a farewell discourse, encouraging them to pray for the incoming missionary. Then he set off once again for York Factory, with his mind set on the claims of the Eskimos.

The manuscript of a sermon he preached at York and at Fort Churchill, on the text, 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath' (Mark 2.27) has been accidentally preserved among the records of the parish of Chettle now held in the Dorset County Record Office. Its heavy style gives colour to Garry's criticism of West as a preacher. The only hint of illustration in the concentrated attack on Sabbath-breaking occurs in the application, where the words "Judge Hales &c" have been inserted between the lines; and even this appears to have been done at a later date.<sup>62</sup> Significant to indicate West's motivation is his stress on the civilising effect of the Sabbath rest.

'It must be admitted that the regular observance of the Sabbath has a powerful influence in restraining the immorality and wickedness of men. Where the Sabbath is neglected there vice follows and iniquity will prevail . . . and he

will generally be found the best Man of God who observes the Law of his Lord in observing the Sabbath.' (63)

It was rather a fierce farewell for his fellow-countrymen.

Gentler words were, however, the portion of the Eskimos. Following Captain Franklin's advice, West set off on foot from York Factory for Fort Churchill, a distance of over one hundred and eighty miles. It was a hard journey, the travellers suffering alternately from the attacks of mosquitos and the intense cold of winds blowing off the Bay. At this point in his Journal, West, always a shrewd observer of what was going on around him, goes into great detail about natural phenomena.<sup>64</sup> The journey took nine days. Augustus, one of the Eskimos of Franklin's expedition, who had still not met up with his kin, came out to meet the party, and again the two men spent a good deal of time together. West, viewing the Eskimos as an Indian tribe, regarded their spiritual welfare as coming within the terms of his mission.

'The next day, they gathered round me, and with Augustus and an interpreter, I was enabled to make the object of my visit to them well understood. I told them that I came very far across the great lake, because I loved the Esquimaux; that there were very many in my country who loved them also, and would be pleased to hear that I had seen them. I spoke true. I did not come to their country, thinking it was better than mine, nor to make house and trade with them, but to enquire, and they must speak true, if they would like white man to make house and live amongst them, to teach their children white man's knowledge, and of the Great and Good Spirit who made the world. The sun was then shining in his glory, and the scenery in the full tide of the water before us was striking and beautiful; when I asked them, if they knew who made the heavens, the waters, and the earth, and all things that surrounded us, so pleasing to our sight? their reply was, "We do not know whether the Person who made these things is dead or alive." On my assuring them that I knew, and that it was my real wish that they and their children should know also the Divine Being, who was the Creator of all things; and on repeating the question, whether they wished that white man should come and give them this knowledge, they all simultaneously expressed a great desire that he should, laughing and shouting, "heigh! heigh! augh! augh!"' (65)

West envisaged that the proposed school should be built at Knapp's Bay, about two hundred miles North of Churchill, so that building materials and later provisions could be supplied from the Fort. He relished his role as a pioneer; and

'thought it a high privilege to visit even the wild inhabitants of the rocks with the simple design of extending the

Redeemer's kingdom among them; and that in a remote quarter of the globe, where probably no Protestant Minister had ever placed his foot before.' (66)

Nor did another such place his foot there for a good many more years. Consistent Anglican work among the Eskimos had to wait until the late 1850s; and it was not until 1876 that the first missionary to devote his whole time to them began work at Little Whale River.<sup>67</sup> In this, as in his vision of a chain of schools across the North American continent, West saw far ahead of the actual possibilities of his day, and his vision proved the spur to others.

Having treated the staff at Churchill to his disquisition on Sabbath observance, West returned to York Factory, making another foot journey of seven days. There he met his intended assistant, the Rev. David T. Jones, who had come from England in the Prince of Wales, the ship which was to take West back to his family.<sup>68</sup>

In the Calendar of the 1959 Canadian Prayer Book there are nine entries connected with the history of the church in the dominion. 'John West, Missionary, Red River' is one of them, on 31 December; and 'Henry Budd, first North American Indian to be ordained to the ministry, 1850', is another, on 2 April.<sup>69</sup> This is sufficient indication of the significance attached to West's work in Canada. As far as West himself is concerned, it is not so much his vision of the evangelization of the whole continent brought about by a planned system of school-churches that has brought recognition, but his total dedication to the difficult task assigned him, and his attention to the smallest details. Unlike his two successors, David T. Jones and William Cockran, he undertook to learn an Indian language, and observed and recorded Indian customs.<sup>70</sup> This interest in things Indian put him alongside the boys of his school, and in time helped them to exercise an influence in the life of the church which no one but himself could have foreseen. Besides those already mentioned, some who came under his eye as he was about to sail also undertook Christian work.<sup>71</sup> West, a true pioneer, was able to inspire the same outlook in his pupils.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

- 1 H.B.C. archives A.1/52, fo. 39-39d; quoted Reverend John West, p 1.
- 2 Thompson, A.N., John West: A Study of the Conflict between Civilization and the Fur Trade in J.C.C.H., vol XII no 3, p 44.
- 3 Letter from T.C.B. Boon to Mrs E.M. Bourke of Chettle House, 4 February 1964.
- 4 Boon, T.C.B., The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies, p xvi (referred to hereafter as From the Bay); Stock, E., History of the Church Missionary Society, vol I, p 246.
- 5 Minute Book of the New England Company 1816-30, p 164 (Guildhall Library MS 7920/2).
- 6 Schooling, W., The Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1920, pp 78f; Boon, From the Bay, p xiv; West, J., The Substance of a Journal during a Residence at the Red River Colony, pp 21f (referred to hereafter as Journal).
- 7 Schooling, op cit, pp 86-92; West, Journal, pp 23, 62f, 70. For a vivid description of the terror and destruction caused by grasshopper invasions in North America, see Rølvaag, O.E., Giants in the Earth, pp 331-9. A tract, 'drawn up with the view of inducing Settlers to establish themselves on the Red River', and reprinted as Appendix XII to the Proceedings of the C.M.S., 1819-20 (pp 367f), paints a picture far removed from reality: 'Crops of every kind have been abundant. The spontaneous produce of the country, in fish and buffaloe-meat, is very great.' The first good harvest at the settlement was not gathered until 1822.
- 8 Herklots, H.G.G., Frontiers of the Church, p 181.
- 9 Rupert's Land archives M.S. 1008D; B.F.B.S. archives HC/1.
- 10 Rupert's Land archives M.S. 1008D.
- 11 Journal, p 9.
- 12 Journal, pp 12-15. The Plan is printed in the Proceedings of the C.M.S., 1819-20, pp 368-72. It will be discussed in chapter 8.
- 13 Journal, p 20; Thompson, Chief A.E., Chief Peguis and his Descendants, pp 9-19. Peguis became a close friend of the Revd W. Cockran, the third clergyman to minister at Red River, and was baptized by him in the name William King (after the late sovereign) in 1838. His wife was baptized two years later, as Victoria. It was the reproachful letter sent by Peguis to the C.M.S. by the hand of the returning missionary, David T. Jones, that secured the arrival in 1839 of the Revd J. Smithurst, the first of the Anglican missionaries to devote his entire attention to work among the Indians. Peguis lived to a great age, dying in 1864. See Boon, These Men Went Out, pp 4-6.
- 14 Journal, p 21.
- 15 Journal, pp 22, 26ff. Boon, From the Bay, p 7; These Men Went Out, p 75.

- 16 These services, which West recorded in a register preserved in the H.B.C. archives (E.4/1b, fo 197-197d), constitute the first civil marriage ceremonies conducted in the territory. See Appendix 'B'.
- 17 Journal, pp 32f; Boon, From the Bay, p 9.
- 18 Journal, pp 51f; cf pp 26, 34, 37, 75f, 104, 121. The emphasis was one common to Evangelicals: see Carpenter, Church and People, p 28.
- 19 Thompson, A.N., op cit, pp 49f.
- 20 Journal, p 33.
- 21 *ibid*, pp 36f; cf also p 56 and Journal<sup>2</sup> p 242.
- 22 Albert Schweitzer came to a similar view in regard to Africans at Lambarene: see My Life and Thought (London, Allen & Unwin, 1956), p 226.
- 23 ref C.C. 1/0 73.
- 24 A letter from Simpson to Andrew Colvile, 20 May 1822, Selkirk Papers, xxiv, 7587, quoted in A.N.Thompson, op cit, pp 48f.
- 25 Journal, p 193.
- 26 Journal<sup>2</sup>, p 316.
- 27 Schooling, op cit, p 31; A Brief History of the Hudson's Bay Company, p 21f.
- 28 B.F.B.S. archives F.C.1 (1821), p 47A; cf Journal, p 65.
- 29 Journal, pp 44, 50f, 137.
- 30 *ibid*, p 64.
- 31 Thompson, A.N., op cit, p 48.
- 32 The portrait now hanging in the Synod Office of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, Winnipeg, was described by Canon W.B. Heeney, a former Archivist of the Province, as expressing 'feminine tenderness'; *ibid*, p 57.
- 33 Boon, From the Bay, p 12.
- 34 See Appendix 'A'.
- 35 B.F.B.S. archives F.C.1 (1821), p 47A.
- 36 The Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Second Series, 1900-1901, vol VI, section II, pp 157-8, quoted in Reverend John West, p 3.
- 37 Boon, From the Bay, pp 13, 58-61; Carrington, P, The Anglican Church in Canada, p 99.
- 38 see note 36.
- 39 Journal, pp 66-9, 73-5.
- 40 Reverend John West, p 3.
- 41 Journal, pp 26f, 58.
- 42 *ibid*, pp 72, 77.
- 43 Thompson, A.N., op cit, p 45.
- 44 *ibid*, pp 47f; cf Journal, pp 92f, 144-8.
- 45 Classified Digest of the Records of the S.P.G., p 177.

- 46 The Missionary Register for 1822, p 124; Stock, E., History of the C.M.S., vol I, p 246; Journal, p 94.
- 47 Journal, p 96; Boon, From the Bay, pp 5, 15, 204.
- 48 Journal, p 17; Boon, From the Bay, pp 6, 49f, 66, 83; These Men Went Out, pp 57f; Carrington, P., op cit, p 97.
- 49 T.C.B. Boon in the Winnipeg Free Press, 28 December 1963.
- 50 ref 1002.
- 51 Journal, pp 98f; Boon, From the Bay, p 16; Missionary Register for 1822, p 447.
- 52 Letter of 20 August 1822, Rupert's Land archives 1002.
- 53 Boon, From the Bay, p 16; Burgess, H.J., Enterprise in Education, pp 44-54.
- 54 Journal, pp 102f; The First Ten Years Quarterly Papers of C.M.S., no XXX, Midsummer 1823.
- 55 Journal, pp 102-4.
- 56 *ibid*, p 108.
- 57 *ibid*, p 121.
- 58 *ibid*, p 130. This bell, cast in 1821, has been in St Clement's Church, Mapleton, near Selkirk, Manitoba, since 1862: Shave, H., Our Heritage, p 6. West's wooden church, although it stood high enough to survive the flood of 1826, was considered too small and had become rather decayed by 1831. The foundation-stone of its replacement, the first Protestant church built of stone in Western Canada, was laid in May 1833. See Appendix 'C'.
- 59 N.E.C. Minutes, pp 163f (Guildhall Library MS 7920/2).
- 60 Frontiers of the Church, pp 183-5. It is interesting to note that when Mr and Mrs Harbidge left the Settlement in August 1825, Garrioch took over the running of the school (Missionary Register for 1826, p 156).
- 61 Boon, From the Bay, p 18; Journal, p 156.
- 62 Bishop Reginald Heber, quoted Sir Matthew Hale's testimony to the value of 'careful observation of the Lord's day' in his last sermon (Sermons Preached in India, London, Murray, 1829, pp 305f). I am inclined to think that West, who was a keen book owner, inserted the reference from Heber when he preached the sermon on a later occasion.
- 63 A number of words are abbreviated in the ms.
- 64 Journal, pp 159-68.
- 65 *ibid*, pp 176f, 179.
- 66 *ibid*, p 169.
- 67 Boon, These Men Went Out, pp 43f; Stock, E., History of the C.M.S., vol II, pp 321-5.
- 68 Journal, pp 191-3.
- 69 Carrington, P., op cit, pp 305f; The Commemoration of Saints and Heroes of the Faith in the Anglican Communion, pp 46-9.

- 70 so Thompson, A.N., op cit, p 55.
- 71 *ibid*, p 54; Boon, These Men Went Out, pp 59-61. James Settee, who is said to have entered the school in 1823 but was not baptized until four years later, became a catechist and later a clergyman. Two other boys who came under West's eye became ministers in other churches. The half-breed son of Chief Factor John Dugald Cameron worked at Sault St Marie as a Baptist; and Thomas Hassall, an Indian boy whom West delivered to David T. Jones as he was about to leave the country, became the assistant of the Wesleyan Mission superintendent at Norway House, James Evans.



## 3 THE NEW ENGLAND COMPANY

When John West left York Factory in 1823, he evidently intended to return. He did not take over the care of his parish of Chettle, where the curate continued to officiate. He did, however, forward the proceeds of a collection taken there to C.M.S. in February 1824, the amount of £5. 6. 0. being further evidence of his powers of advocacy. He joined his family at the Clock House, Aldershot; and it was from there that he sent another parochial contribution to the Society of £8. 12. 6. in April.<sup>1</sup> But he was not to go back.

Some time before 13 January 1824 he was granted an interview with the Board of the Hudson's Bay Company, and on that day he wrote a letter in which he referred to what had passed. He had stated the difficulties of the post, and had in turn been asked what his intentions were. His reply was, 'I have never given up my original intention of going back to the Bay with Mrs West and part of my family.' No record is given of the discussion which followed the reading of this letter at the Board; and the next entry on 28 January merely records that as a result of the letter, West's report, 'and other communications' having been considered, 'it is not expedient that Mr West should resume his situation as Chaplain, and that he be credited his salary to June next and Gratuity to June last.'<sup>2</sup> The 'other communications' may well have been letters from Governor George Simpson who had found West a man with strong ideas of his own who could prove intractable. Certainly he was writing later in the year, in a letter to the Governor and Committee, 'Mr West was never popular, and will be less so hereafter than formerly if he comes out, indeed I do not suppose he would have a hearer.'<sup>3</sup> West himself made no written comment about Simpson, nor does he ever criticize the policy of the H.B.C. The only published statement of his view is found in one of the reviews of his Journal printed on the end paper of the second edition. Speaking of him and his work, and of his intention of returning, it concludes, '. . . but who, from some cause, not here assigned, has been induced or compelled to relinquish his important services.'

In the meanwhile, West had been compiling and despatching his reports, to the H.B.C., and to the New England Company, sending a copy of the former also to the Church Missionary Society. He

had also prepared his Substance of a Journal &c for publication, dedicating it to Henry Budd, Rector of White Roothing, with whom he continued to be on intimate terms.<sup>4</sup> The quality of his report to the New England Company appears to have been the direct cause of his next appointment.

This Company, originally founded by the Long Parliament in 1649,<sup>5</sup> and sometimes known as 'The Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England', had transferred the main part of its work to New Brunswick after the American War of Independence. There, at an establishment in Sussex Vale, a system of Indian apprenticeships was now being operated, which appears to have been open to considerable abuse.<sup>6</sup> The Company's Special Committee decided that an on-the-spot investigation was necessary, and that John West was 'a proper Person to be employed' to carry it out. The General Court, meeting on 20 January 1825, ratified the temporary appointment, fixing a salary of £200 per annum with expenses of £50. On 31 May, West attended a Committee meeting, and was given his instructions.<sup>7</sup>

He sailed for New York in the Packet on 2 June. On his arrival six weeks later, he was soon made aware of the slavery issue. He was introduced to a Slave Hollander from South Carolina, who 'literally expressed his surprise that I should think Negroes "had souls like white men."' <sup>8</sup> West had expressed his thoughts on this subject briefly in the entry in his Journal during the return journey from Hudson's Bay, when he had been reading Wilberforce's An Appeal to the Religion, Justice, and Humanity of the Inhabitants of the British Empire in behalf of the Negro Slaves of the West Indies. He then exclaimed, 'When will men regard each other as brethren, connected by common ties of humanity, and as generally responsible to God, the Judge of all.'<sup>9</sup> Now, when he met another 'intelligent gentleman from one of the slave-holding States' at his boarding-house, he expressed his surprise that slavery should exist at all in America, in view of the constitution, and his opinion that 'its existence is grossly inconsistent with the great charter of the nation . . . . Difficulties may exist, and emancipation may be gradual, but let it be pursued both by England and America, as absolutely necessary.' Here West takes his stand with the Evangelical party campaigning for the freeing of slaves, basing it firmly on the

equality of all men in the sight of God, and their absolute worth as those for whom Christ died. Later in this tour, when he preached to a large number of Negroes in Nova Scotia, he noted that they were not good settlers, and should be offered every inducement to return to Africa. Some of them were doing this; and West, his eye ever open to possibilities of spreading the gospel, saw them as potential missionaries.<sup>10</sup>

West made his way North, and crossed from Eastport to St John, New Brunswick by steam-boat on 8 August. He went straight to the Sussex Vale establishment to undertake the chief object of his mission. 'The Academy for instructing and civilizing the Indians' founded by the Company had failed. Settlers who had been loyal to the crown during the American war of independence had moved into the area after the war, largely displacing Indians, and a system of apprenticing the Indian children to these settlers at a young age had supervened. This did not meet with the approval of the Indians, evidently because it meant that the children, bred to servitude, were regarded as cheap labour. West noted that any attempt to educate Indians 'as hewers of wood and drawers of water' was bound to fail because it was a fundamental mistake, and that 'their naturally high and independent spirit must be consulted in the attempt to do them good.'<sup>11</sup> The Indians should be allocated land of which they were the proprietors. Again, his strong emphasis on the value of every human being comes out.

'There is nothing in their nature, nor is there any deficiency in their intellect, that should consign them to perpetual degradation, and to that cold-blooded philosophy, and infidel sentiment, of "Let them alone; - to take measures to preserve the Indians, is to take measures to preserve so much barbarity, helplessness, and want; and therefore do not resist the order of Providence which is carrying them away!"' (12)

West's analysis was quick and decisive. He wrote a letter to the Special Committee of the Company 'expressing a decided opinion against the continuance of the Sussex Vale establishment.' Meeting on 3 November, the Committee resolved that 'Mr West should be directed to take the necessary measures for breaking up the Company's Establishment at Sussex Vale on 25 March next', provided that educational engagements already entered into were not compromised.<sup>13</sup>

West then moved to the coast of New Brunswick and afterwards of Nova Scotia to survey the small, dispirited groups of Indians

wandering in that area, who were Roman Catholics because of the long history of French occupation. He recognized the difficulty this presented to educating them in English and in Protestant principles. He recommended the allocation of land to them to induce them to settle, and the appointment of teachers,

'who would need a religious motive to cause them to persevere in their truly arduous task, whilst acting towards them as their protectors, advisers, friends, and assistants in agricultural pursuits . . . Education, as it advanced, in conveying the elements of real knowledge, would effectually destroy, through the divine blessing, the elements of superstition, and change that turn of mind on which superstition is founded.' (14)

In October, West just missed witnessing the vast fire which destroyed Miramichi and a large part of the provincial capital Fredericton. In this catastrophe, caused by a hurricane, nearly two hundred people were killed by fire or water. The experience was such that it led West to express apocalyptic ideas for the only time in his writing.

'It resembled more the immediate interposition of the hand of the Almighty, than the rage of the elements, in an ordinary state of convulsion. The flames were of such magnitude, and withal so furious, that they seemed unlike the fires of this world; when ever they grasped a building, instantaneous destruction was the consequence; men were seen trembling with fear, and women shrieking, ran with their children to the shore, in the hope of escaping the destroying element on rafts, logs, or any buoyant article that might float them. At the same time was heard the bellowing of the terrified cattle, and the roaring of the flames . . . . The awful catastrophe speaks volumes, and is well calculated to excite enquiries for our salvation, at the final audit which will suddenly take place, with "the crush of matter and the wreck of worlds." . . . How strongly is the contemplative mind which dwells on the distressing tale carried forward to a more tremendous event, to a more enduring storm of which all shall be eye-witnesses, and in which all shall be personally concerned.' (15)

In Nova Scotia he came into contact with the Micmacs, a tribe which was also Roman-Catholic. The custom found among them of stoning an adultress caused West to speculate about the reason for this parallel to the provision of the Mosaic law. He concludes, by quoting from another writer, that the solution which poses least difficulty is that the Indians are the descendants of ancient Israel, and migrated to North America via Bering Strait.<sup>16</sup> He had hinted in his Red River Journal that he inclined to this view; but he never bases his call to missions among Indians on the supposed affinity. That call is always sounded on the basis of a common humanity.

For four months from February 1826, West was making the arrangements for closing the Sussex Vale establishment. During this period he reflected on the strategy of mission which should be followed in North America. He saw that government grants for schools were not enough.

'A mighty mass of intellect is thus called into action, and as ever stirring and awake, it requires some better guide in matters of religion, than the commonplace precepts, which may be taught by the schoolmaster. - The rising youth call loudly for increased ministerial watchful care, while the destitute state of numerous settlements, formed far back in the interior, present to the active devoted Missionaries of the Gospel, vast fields of usefulness, already ripe for harvest.'

He outlined a need not met by the small numbers of S.P.G. and Church of Scotland missionaries. There should be 'a company of preachers', about twenty in number, who would be preceded by 'schoolmasters or exhorters who would prepare the way, and collect a people for their preaching.' The lessons of Methodism had not been lost on West. It was the gospel which should be preached, and not a sacramental church system set up.

'It must be acknowledged that preaching is the most efficient method of spreading the knowledge of Divine Truth; and it is to itinerant preaching, however many may undervalue it, that we owe our freedom from the shackles of popery, in the success of the reformation. Christianity was first promulgated by it, and revivals of religion have taken place at different periods, through its powerful means, as in the days of Whitfield and Wesley, in their travels through England and America.' (17)

In June, West began a westward journey, again passing through the U.S.A., to visit Indians settled along the Grand River in Upper Canada.<sup>18</sup> These were the descendants of the Mohawks who had settled in the area in 1776 during the American war of independence, and under their chief Joseph Brant had built the first Anglican church in what was to be 'Canada', near Brantford. The Indians living in the area in 1826 belonged to several tribes, and were known as the Six Nations, their chief being the son of Joseph Brant. There had been no resident missionary for forty years, and the church and school had fallen into decay. Brant had been in correspondence with the New England Company about local needs, and he now met West and accompanied him on his visits. Brant had also received money from the Company to pay for the erection of a school, which was not yet complete. West's reaction was predictable:

'I urged the immediate completion of it, as the place where the children of this district met for instruction was

attended with much inconvenience.' (19)

He also saw the need of superintendence, which a 'devoted, resident missionary' could provide.

A little further West, 'on some fertile flats by the River Credit', were the Mississauga Indians, whom West also visited in company with Brant. They were living in bark huts and tents awaiting the construction of log huts, 'which were then building by contract of the Provincial government, and nearly finished.' The agriculturist in him was pleased to see that they had planted some Indian corn. Here a half-breed Wesleyan teacher was instructing about thirty children with considerable devotion to his task. West spoke to the children, and listened to them sing. He was not so happy about the extempore prayer, the groans, and claps of joy, and 'could not but regret that they were at all influenced to conduct themselves in this manner'; and he found it impossible to consider this behaviour and the camp meetings at which it was encouraged 'otherwise than with decided disapprobation.' However, he was pleased to note that the converts had given up 'ardent spirits', and recognized the pioneering spirit of the Wesleyan missionaries who 'are often known to advance as light troops, or pioneers, penetrating into the very heart of the wilderness, before the slow movements of heavy corporate bodies, in the army of Christian missionaries.'<sup>20</sup> As he left these Indians, West also parted with Brant, who, in a letter, asked for help in rebuilding the Mohawk church, and promised land and money towards the maintenance of a clergyman and a school.<sup>21</sup>

Two visits to Niagara, and a tour of the model prison at Auburn in Maine, which appeared to West 'to approach a system of perfection in the management of criminals', rounded off the second North American mission; and in August West embarked at New York.

In November we find him attending the New England Company sub-committee dealing with the report he had made. This was 'very fully discussed', and he answered questions. He added more. He suggested that the Company should build ten, if not twenty-five, huts on the River Credit site, in addition to those being built for the government, with a church or chapel which would also serve as a school costing about £200. There should

also be a small outlay on agriculture 'to secure all the benefits of Location.' He recommended that a Church of England missionary should be sent to the Mohawks, and that help should be given to build a house for him as well as to repair the church. Two schools should be built and staffed with masters for the Senecas, also of the Six Nations, the schools doubling as churches. Members of other tribes would come to these centres. As a second stage, West recommended 'Schools of Industry and the use of Turning Laths.'<sup>22</sup>

The December sub-committee accepted all the recommendations, and allocated an expenditure of £1050 for buildings. A suggestion that there might be a new establishment in New Brunswick was dropped in favour of West's scheme. The missionary from Sussex Vale was to be invited to settle amongst the Mississauga Indians on the River Credit.<sup>23</sup>

Thus the re-organization and extension of the work of the New England Company which took place in 1826 was almost completely the result of John West's investigation and recommendations. He was to maintain contact with the Company's committee, as we shall see; but his chief work for it had now been completed.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

- 1 The Missionary Register for 1824, pp 120, 200.
- 2 H.B.C. archives A.10/2 fos 398-9 and 404-5, and A.1/54, p 30; quoted Reverend John West, pp 4f.
- 3 5 June 1824; H.B.C. archives D.4/8 fo 15d, quoted Thompson, A.N., John West: A Study of the Conflict between Civilization and the Fur Trade, p 52.
- 4 West's daughter Caroline Jane was born at White Roothing in January 1825.
- 5 Brief accounts of the origin of the Company are given in C.H. Robinson, History of Christian Missions, pp 56f; Latourette, K.S., A History of the Expansion of Christianity, vol III, pp 44f.
- 6 The details given in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, are taken from the History of the New England Company, from its Incorporation in the Seventeenth Century, to the Present Time (London, Taylor & Co., 1871), pp 75-7. The account there given contains the erroneous date of 1823, instead of 1826; and the copying of this date has made Latourette and Robinson miss West's key role in the re-organization of the Company's work. The Minute Book of the Company is clear.
- 7 Minute Book of the New England Company 1816-30, pp 198, 203, 209 (Guildhall Library MS 7920/2).
- 8 Journal<sup>2</sup>, pp 212f.
- 9 Journal, p 194; see Coupland, R, Wilberforce, pp 393-6.
- 10 Journal<sup>2</sup>, pp 249f.
- 11 *ibid*, pp 227-31; cf also pp 244, 248.
- 12 *ibid*, p 234.
- 13 Minute Book, p 215.
- 14 Journal<sup>2</sup>, p 248.
- 15 *ibid*, pp 237-41.
- 16 *ibid*, pp 253-5; cf Journal, pp 54f, 87f.
- 17 *ibid*, pp 258-62.
- 18 Upper Canada was the area to the immediate North of the Great Lakes, West of the Ottawa River, the present-day province of Ontario. Its white population was largely British. There was a strong Methodist element. Lower Canada was the area East of the Ottawa River, containing the cities of Montreal and Quebec, which was French-speaking and Catholic.
- 19 Carrington, P., The Anglican Church in Canada, pp 41f; West, Journal<sup>2</sup>, pp 275-8, 287f.
- 20 Journal<sup>2</sup>, pp 291-7.
- 21 *ibid*, p 303.
- 22 Minute Book, pp 242f.
- 23 *ibid*, pp 244f.



#### 4 TO NORTH AMERICA FOR THE THIRD TIME

When John West had completed his mission for the New England Company, he returned to Dorset and took charge of his parish of Chettle. But he had now acquired a reputation as a trouble-shooter, and this was soon to lead to a call from another quarter.

The British and Foreign Bible Society had suffered from internal controversy in 1825 and 1826 about the inclusion of the Apocrypha in Bibles for distribution in countries where this was customary. In some cases, as for example among the French-speaking Roman-Catholic areas of Canada, the parent Society had allowed this, and had thus invited protests from some of its constituents, particularly in Scotland. The Society gave up the practice; but the links between the Scottish settlers in North America and their homeland meant that adverse propaganda reached them which distance rendered it difficult to counter. Local Associations suffered division, and some lapsed. The London committee decided that the best way of dealing with the situation was to send a travelling representative who could not only deal with the controversy, but also breathe new life into the Associations. Early in 1828 they were in correspondence with John West about the possibility of his undertaking this mission. His knowledge of the country, and his acquaintance with a number of leading people in it, made him the obvious choice. His reply to the committee's request, given as Appendix 'D', refers to some of the details given in the draft of his instructions preserved in the archives of the Bible Society.<sup>1</sup>

The committee decided on the ensuing summer as the best time for the visit, but left the itinerary in West's hands. They reminded him of 'the simplicity of the Object' of the Society, and stressed that its agents 'cannot too frequently call to remembrance that it is entirely Foreign to the object of the Society to interfere as one of its agents in any Matters Political or Ecclesiastical.' They mentioned that Auxiliaries needed to be reminded that new settlements in the continent call for an extension of the Society's work, and specified that West should 'have friendly conferences' with local committees to this end.

The second object specified is the obtaining of information about aboriginal languages spoken in the area, 'and whether it is necessary & practicable to do anything further on this head.' The third is the clearing up of misapprehensions current as a result of the recent controversy, in the hope that the hearts of the Society's North American friends may be united 'in closer bonds.'

West also took the opportunity of contacting the New England Company, and offered to re-visit some of the places to which he had gone for them on the previous occasion. The committee accepted his offer, which meant his going this time 'not in any official character but as a Gentleman well informed and much interested in the objects of the Company.'<sup>2</sup>

Sailing from Liverpool in an American Packet ship on 25 April, West reached New York a month later, a little too late to attend the anniversary meeting of the Society there; but he called on Dr Milnor, 'the zealous friend of the American Bible Society', before setting off for New Brunswick. His first engagement in the province was with the Deerand Indian Island Branch Bible Society, and his report of what happened is characteristic of the mission generally.

'The population of these islands is but small, and my inquiries led me to hope that every family was in possession of the Bible. The Society, however, was nearly become extinct, and, in the hope of its reanimation, I mentioned the necessity there was of looking beyond their own immediate narrow horizon, and of never forgetting the great object of the British and Foreign Bible Society, - the supply of the Sacred Scriptures to every family of every island and continent of the world.' (3)

West visited seven Societies or Auxiliaries in the south-eastern lowland area of the province, and was foiled from making a personal visit to another, oddly enough at Miramichi again, by another natural disaster, this time heavy flooding. His account of this episode, not given in the published version of his Report, indicates how he embodied his continual motto of 'Perseverance.'

'On my arrival here (Richibuctoo) . . . early on Wednesday Morning it blew so hard as to prevent the Ferryman from answering the signal to cross the Richibuctoo River. At length I succeeded in getting the Master of a ship that was lying at anchor in the channel to put me across in a large sailing boat, but not without being nearly swamped from the strength of the current, and violence of the wind driving us foul of another Vessel. Preserved by a kind Providence, I had yet further difficulties in my way, for on landing on this side

of the River, every one pronounced the road to Miramichi to be impassable on Horseback, & no individual would let me a Horse for the Journey - neither was it to be perform'd on foot, which was my next enquiry, in consequence of the deluge of rain which had recently fallen, unless I could wade knee-deep or more through mud and water for nearly a distance of Ten Miles!, nor was there any prospect of traversing the 100 miles distant by water in an Indian Canoe, from the strong head wind that prevailed - I sat down to write, therefore . . .' (4)

Doubts raised by the Apocrypha controversy were allayed; depositories were restocked with Bibles; and personal animosities were calmed. West also visited the scene of his earlier labours, this time with the interests of a different group in his mind.

'About three years ago I was engaged on a mission to the Indians of Sussex Vale, and from having visited the surrounding emigrant settlers, I was very desirous of forming a Bible Association for their benefit; it afforded me, therefore, much pleasure to succeed in this measure, which excited considerable interest, and was liberally supported in the neighbourhood. I sent 100 copies of the Sacred Scriptures to the depository, with the request that they might be circulated at reduced prices, to aid the supply of the wants of the Bible throughout the surrounding district.'

In early July, West crossed the Bay of Fundy to Nova Scotia, and, after stimulating the lapsed Annapolis Branch Society to renewed activity, had one of his rare happy ecumenical encounters.

'From this point I proceeded to Yarmouth, and, passing the residence of the Roman Catholic priest at Sissaboo, I conversed with him on the subject of circulating the Scriptures among a numerous French population in his neighbourhood. He expressed no objection to De Sacy's version; and, by an arrangement which I afterwards made, I hope that the Sacred Scriptures will have free course among them.

'Meeting with an intelligent Irish schoolmaster, who was teaching several Roman Catholic families at Sissaboo, I supplied him, at his request, though a Catholic, with several copies of the French Bible, which he assured me would be thankfully purchased at reduced prices. He was greatly delighted on receiving a Bible in the Irish language and character, which he promised to read on the Sabbath to some Irish Roman Catholics in a neighbouring settlement that he frequently visited.'

The Auxiliary Society at Yarmouth had held no anniversary meeting for two years. 'A few friends' were galvanized into activity by the visit, and a public meeting was called to re-animate and re-organize the institution. The annual subscription list was filled immediately, and the next day a Ladies' Association was formed 'under the zealous patronage of a Mrs Fletcher.' This lady, aware of the financial hardship experienced by some settlers' families, organized a system of articles of barter (butter, poultry and stockings!) to encourage support. This

experience at Yarmouth led West to a conclusion about local support which he later expressed in a report from Halifax.

'In the discharge of my Mission hitherto, I have invariably found, that wherever the Anniversary Meeting has been dropped there, the Society has soon gone to decay. And this I apprehend will generally be found to be the case; which matter of fact, should lead the Friends in general of the British & Foreign Bible Society, steadily to persevere, in holding their Annual Meetings - under the full persuasion, that, this an active, watchful agency, the Society will never lose its Interest, or want Patronage, from the Public.' (5)

At a Committee meeting at Halifax to fix an anniversary meeting, West was told about a shipwreck that had taken place off Cape Race, Newfoundland, in which fifty or sixty people had perished. The survivors had arrived at Halifax; and West visited them immediately in the Poor House in their distress. He gave pocket Bibles to the emigrants, most of whom were Presbyterians from Northern Ireland on the way to Quebec, in the name of the Society.

At Pictou, a mainly Scots settlement, West found that a pamphlet campaign had been waged in connection with the Apocrypha controversy, with such vigour that it had led to an attempt to dissolve the Society. He unearthed some copies of the Bible containing the Apocrypha in the depository, and ordered them not to be circulated in that form. There was a rival Edinburgh Bible Society depository in the same town, but West was pleased to find good relations between the two establishments. He attended nine meetings in Nova Scotia, and wrote to those groups he was unable to meet personally. He then set off for Lower Canada by the 350-mile land route via Boston to avoid the delays which coastal fogs would have caused during a journey by sea.

The largely Roman-Catholic character of Quebec and Montreal created problems in the distribution of the Scriptures; but opposition at the meeting in Montreal came from another quarter. A Scots clergyman, 'in a rather captious manner', asked what guarantee he and his friends had that the Society would not circulate the Apocrypha. West, himself a strong advocate of the primacy of the canonical Scriptures, replied that the integrity of the committee and the public conduct of the Society's affairs should be security enough.

It was here and in Upper Canada, where Anglican influence was strong, and where some years before 'the Society had been represented in the press as a usurper of the functions of the Society

for Promoting Christian Knowledge and a malignant, though insignificant, enemy to Church and State',<sup>6</sup> that West found the going hard and lonely.

'It is painful to remark that no Missionary from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel stood with me on the platform at any public meeting, to advocate the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society in either of the British provinces, or gave his testimony publicly in favour of the Institution; nor does the Bishop of Nova Scotia, or the Bishop of Quebec, patronise or encourage the formation of Bible Societies or Associations in their respective dioceses.'

At York in Upper Canada West met a 'spirit of apathy and indifference', and the people to whom he had written about holding a meeting had done nothing about it. He met a few supporters in private in the hope of stirring them to activity, and parted from them in hope, which later events proved to have been justified. At Brantford there was a public meeting to establish a new Auxiliary, at which West again met Brant, and heard an address from the missionary, the Revd Robert Lugg, whose presence there was the direct result of West's recommendation to the New England Company two years before. While in Upper Canada, he discussed with some Wesleyan missionaries the subject of a Chippeway version of the Bible. The outcome was that Peter and John Jones, brothers who were chiefs of the River Credit Indians and in the employ of the American Methodist Missionary Society, started to translate the gospels of Matthew and John. The York Bible Society, which took on new life in 1828 after West's visit, recognized the need at about the same time, and underwrote the project financially.<sup>7</sup>

West attended a council of Seneca chiefs in a Forest during his stay in Upper Canada, and read to them a rather fulsome address which a Mr. John Davidson Smith, who had introduced himself to West at a missionary meeting held near London on the latter's return from Red River, had sent out by him together with some presents.<sup>8</sup>

For the final month of the mission, West's seventeen-year old son, John Rowland, a student at Clare Hall, Cambridge, had sailed out to join his father.<sup>9</sup> Father and son disembarked together at Portsmouth on 25 October.

The official historian of the Bible Society summed up the results of the mission as follows:

'As the result of Mr West's visit the stalwarts were encouraged

and confirmed; groundless charges and wild rumours were refuted; the faltering and the dead Auxiliaries were revived or replaced; depositories were replenished from his stock; a new institution was founded for the Indians and settlers in Sussex Vale; one still more important, as opening a more extensive distribution in the rising settlements towards Lake Michigan and the West, was established at Brantford on the Grand River, among the tribes of the Six Nations.'<sup>(10)</sup>

The visits to the New England Company's establishments did not lead to such spectacular results. All that is recorded in the Minutes after West had attended a committee meeting on 27 November is that an increase previously voted in the salary of the schoolmaster at the Bay of Quinté should be suspended on his advice.<sup>11</sup> The following April, West again wrote to the Company offering his services as 'corresponding foreign secretary and visiting missionary'; but the plans of the Company did not require such a person. In notifying West of this decision, the committee recorded that if there was need of such a temporary mission in the future, 'there is no one to whom they would so readily entrust such Mission as himself.'<sup>12</sup>

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

- 1 B.F.B.S. archives, F.C. in, 1828, pp 106ff.
- 2 Minute Book of the New England Company 1816-30, pp 277, 279, special committee meetings of 3 and 10 April 1828 (Guildhall Library MS 7920/2).
- 3 Annual Report of B. & F.B.S., 1829, p 95. Details given in this chapter are taken from West's Journal of a Mission from the British and Foreign Bible Society to the Provinces of British North America, by the Rev. John West, printed as pp 95-101 of this Report. A few further details, mainly in the matter of personal names, are found in the interim reports which West sent to the Society during his mission.
- 4 From a letter sent to Mrs McDonald of Miramichi, which goes on to give the message that West had hoped to deliver viva voce at a meeting. West included a copy of the letter in his second report to London, dated 5 July 1828.
- 5 To the Revd Andrew Brandram, B.F.B.S. House, 16 August 1828. A sympathetic picture of Brandram is given by George Borrow in chapter XLV of Lavengro: 'bulky, his features were noble, but they were those of a lion.' However, the scene as a whole is not very accurate.
- 6 Canton, W., A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, vol II, p 62.
- 7 Canton, op cit, p 64. Peter Jones brought their translation of John to England in 1831, when it was printed. When it was later discovered that an American army chaplain had translated the whole N.T. into Chippeway, the two brothers turned their attention to Genesis and Exodus.
- 8 B.F.B.S. archives, F.C. in, 1828.
- 9 Memoir of Mrs John West,<sup>2</sup> pp 52f. Mrs. West wrote to a friend that she had decided in favour of her son's going after consulting Henry Budd of White Roothing; and she added, 'We think it will be of great service to the character of dear John, and make him altogether more likely to be a useful man.'
- 10 Canton, op cit, p 63. West's report limits the Sussex Vale work to settlers. The fact that the local scattered Indians were Roman Catholics and had no written language led him to regard Bible work among them as 'not practicable at present.' A later letter from West to the Bible Society, dated 12 May 1830 (F.C. in, p 131), shows that he followed up both the Chippeway translation project and the progress of the rejuvenated Associations.
- 11 N.E.C. Minutes, p 302.
- 12 *ibid*, pp 320f.

## 5 CONTINUING CONCERN

When John West was at York Factory in 1823, preparing for his journey to Fort Churchill, a 'Society for the Education and Improvement of the Poor in the Island of Newfoundland' was founded at a meeting held in the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill, on the initiative of the Teignmouth businessman, Samuel Codner.

West and his mentor Henry Budd were present at the first anniversary meeting held in July 1824, and are listed among the movers and seconders of resolutions. The resolutions themselves are not linked with the names of their proposers, but one mentioning the benefit to be conferred on the colony 'by the establishment of schools' bears the impress of West's outlook upon it.<sup>1</sup> By the time of the second anniversary, when Henry Budd preached the sermon, the name had become the 'Newfoundland School Society.'<sup>2</sup>

At the 1829 anniversary meeting, held in May, West's name is linked with that of his successor at Red River, David T. Jones, in the list of movers and seconders. The two men suggested that the Society should extend its operations to the whole of North America.<sup>3</sup> At this meeting it was announced that West had accepted the offer of the new post of 'a travelling or Clerical Secretary' with the Society, based on Salisbury Square, with a view to 'make its success and needs known' in the country.<sup>4</sup>

With this appointment in view, West immediately began to implement his suggestion. As a first step he wrote to the provincial government of Lower Canada suggesting that small boarding establishments for Indian children should be attached to existing schools for the children of settlers, and also that a separate institution for Indian education should be set up. He was also in correspondence with Archdeacon G.J. Mountain, later Bishop of Montreal, on the same subject.<sup>5</sup> For unexplained reasons, over which neither West nor the Newfoundland School Society are said to have had control, the appointment was not made.<sup>6</sup> The work went forward, and the S.P.G. also increased its personnel in the area and established a Sunday School Society, but West appears not to have been further involved.<sup>7</sup>

However, he followed up his idea by submitting a Plan 'For promoting civilization and Improvement of the North American



Indians Within the British Territory' to Sir George Murray, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in November.<sup>8</sup> This was a shrewd move, as Murray had earlier been Governor of the two Canadas. The Plan suggested the setting up of a seminary or school 'for the maintenance, and instruction, of Indian children of both sexes' in Upper and Lower Canada. The children should be taught English, while still retaining their own language, arithmetic and Scriptural knowledge. The boys should be instructed in agriculture 'and the useful arts of civilized life', while the girls should 'learn Needle-work, Knitting and Household work in general.' If these schools were conducted by well-qualified teachers, it would be reasonable to suppose that 'well principled youths of both sexes' trained in them could be then 'sent out as Teachers to the Tribes in the Interior.' Wherever there were competent agents in other parts of the British provinces, 'Schools of Industry' for the Indians could also be established. West suggested that the project could be financed by the money which was being disbursed fruitlessly in 'Presents' by the government to the Indians, and that the gradual change of these Presents to gifts of implements and seed-corn, to encourage settlement by the young men who had been through the schools, would not only reduce expenditure, but also increase the influence of the government. The Plan was acknowledged from Downing Street on 8 April 1830, and West was corresponding with M.P.s about it a month later.<sup>9</sup> Then it disappears from view.

The church at Red River continued to interest its founder. Reference has already been made to his continuing correspondence with the Indian boy whom he had baptized in the name of Henry Budd. We get one other glimpse of West's fatherly concern for the boys of his school. In the Missionary Register for 1842,<sup>10</sup> in excerpts from the Journal of John Smithurst, then a C.M.S. missionary at the colony, there occurs an account of a wedding at which John Hope, another of Withewecapo's sons, gave away the bride. Then is printed a letter to the secretaries of C.M.S. from West, recalling the handing over of the boy by his father, and the promise made to visit him, which was not fulfilled for many years. West concluded:

'How cheering is Mr. Smithurst's statement . . . What encouragement is there, amidst all discouragements, to pro-

secute Christian missions! Let us therefore persevere, and faint not; for in due season a rich harvest shall be reaped, to the great glory of the Lord.'

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

- 1 The Missionary Register for 1823, pp 295f; Carrington, P., The Anglican Church in Canada, p 73.
- 2 The Missionary Register for 1824, pp 387f; for 1825, pp 215f.
- 3 *ibid* for 1829, p 215; Carrington, *op cit*, p 74. Interesting details of how this was later done are to be found in Kingsmill, J., Missions and Missionaries, pp 268-72 and Appendix pp 1-12.
- 4 Newfoundland School Society Annual Report for 1829, pp 48f. In the first bound volume of Annual Reports, 1823-33, in which the pages are numbered by hand, the pp are 408f.
- 5 Letters from W. Plenderleath to West, 18 August 1829 and G. Mountain to West, 15 August 1829 (Rupert's Land archives 1002). Mountain became Bishop of Montreal in 1836. He was zealous in promoting National Schools for boys and girls. No mention of the correspondence is made in Armine W. Mountain's biography of his father, A Memoir of George Jehoshaphat Mountain.
- 6 Newfoundland School Society Annual Report for 1829, p 48 note; West to Andrew Brandram, 1 July 1829 (B.F.B.S. archives HCl). Perhaps the circumstance was Mrs West's poor health, which had worried West the year before, when she had gone to stay at Lyme. In this letter he wonders if there is a vacant church in the South of France, which had been recommended for his wife.
- 7 Classified Digest of the Records of the S.P.G., p 157.
- 8 Rupert's Land Provincial archives, 1002.
- 9 Boon, T.C.B., These Men Went Out, p 3; Letter of 17 May 1830 (B.F.B.S. archives HCl).
- 10 pp 116-8.

## 6 COUNTRY PARSON

John and Harriett West were now settled in Chettle Rectory, which was to be their home for the rest of their lives. Chettle was a small, static community, its population in 1833 being 129, one less than it had been fourteen years before.<sup>1</sup> The estate was in the hands of the mortgagee, A.H. Chambers, and the Queen Anne House, designed by Thomas Archer, was unoccupied and used as a farm store, a state of affairs which was to continue throughout West's incumbency. There had been no Enclosure Acts for the parish, although a manorial court in 1812 had ordered the six tenants to rationalise their holdings. The chief change of economic and social structure was the award of disfranchisement of Cranborne Chase in 1829 that freed the area from the rights of chase, and the consequent disposal of some 12-20,000 head of fallow-deer. Apart from the possibility of more land being converted into arable which this opened up, and the reduction of damage to crops inflicted by the deer, there was also a change of living style for the hardier village spirits who had lived by poaching. Hutchins wrote of the villages of which Chettle was one:

'Whole parishes in and adjacent to it (sc Cranborne Chase) being nests of deer-stealers, bred to it by their parents; and initiating their children into it, they naturally contract habits of idleness and become pests of society.'<sup>(2)</sup>

It also meant the end of the battles between keepers and poachers for which the Chase had become notorious, and which had also been linked with smuggling offences. The economic condition of the poor in Dorset was signally bad at this time.<sup>3</sup> There was little industrial growth to provide work for the surplus labourers who were anchored in their parishes by the operation of the settlement laws and their own ignorance.

Ministry could not have been easy in this situation. I have been unable to find any evidence of the violence associated with the 'Swing' riots of 1830 taking place in the village. There is no reference to them in the number of surviving letters written by West during this year. Perhaps the fact that there was no resident landowner to provide a focus for discontent kept the village quiet. Later on West was to become involved in a project which he believed was the solution to the problems created

by overpopulation in agricultural villages and the resulting poverty: in the meanwhile he turned his attention to two other matters.

The first of these was the church building. The thirteenth-century nave and chancel were in a poor state of repair. Entries in the 'Chettle Church Book' which records the financial affairs of the parish from 1768 to 1842<sup>4</sup> show, in the years of West's absences abroad, a Church Rate<sup>5</sup> of £1. 10. 5., levied from two men, the mortgagee providing three-quarters of it. West's return led to an alteration which is as eloquent of his powers of persuasion as was the financial achievement of his Rupert's Land Bible Society Auxiliary. This note is written in his hand:

'At a vestry held this 26th Day of Feby 1828, it is agreed to collect 17 Rates amounting to the sum of £25. 17. 1.'

With this money, work could be taken in hand; and subsequent years saw the purchase of a bench, six mats, 'butts' for pulpit and pew, and a bier, as well as expenditure on building materials and labour. In 1838, money was disbursed for flint-picking, and for two loads of gravel, in connection with the improvement of the churchyard. The flint wall which was built round the raised level of the churchyard still exists. Other entries about expenses involved in 'conveying the young persons to the confirmation', Communion linen, and binding a Prayer Book, speak of a zealous parish ministry on a small scale.

The other enterprise, which was on a somewhat larger scale, was West's scheme to spread Bible Society Associations throughout the villages of the countryside, and to get Bibles into every home. The neighbouring clergy were not all happy about this, and the sixth Earl of Shaftesbury, at nearby Wimborne St Giles, threatened his tenants and all under his influence 'with his full displeasure', if they aided the project in any way.<sup>6</sup> West's fertile, organizing mind went so far as to envisage a village to village canvass to ascertain the needs of the destitute for Bibles, but the scheme did not meet with approval, and appears to have progressed no farther.

Chettle did not present great scope for an educator. There had been a charity school in the village in the late 18th and early 19th centuries on a small scale; but this appears to have

lapsed with the death of William Chafin of Chettle House, who had administered the charity, in 1818. It was re-started by West's curate in 1822 on a larger scale, and supported by Chambers and some voluntary subscribers. A Sunday School was held in the parsonage, and books were circulated among the children by their Rector.<sup>7</sup>

That scope was provided when West was presented to the Crown living of neighbouring Farnham, worth about £140 per annum, apparently to show the appreciation of the administration for his recommendations about education in the colonies. He was instituted on 12 March 1835, a few months after also being appointed as one of his domestic chaplains by John William Ponsonby, brother-in-law of Lord Melbourne, on his being created Baron Duncannon of Bessborough. This appointment also looks like recognition, Ponsonby serving as first commissioner of woods and forests under Melbourne from August to December 1834, and again after April 1835, and retaining the esteem and friendship of the Prime Minister in spite of his sister's indiscretions. Ponsonby was also concerned about the education of the poor.<sup>8</sup>

The new Rector's first concern for his parishioners at Farnham was that they should have a church big enough to worship in, and without payment. He planned an extension to the North side of the nave of the church, big enough to seat 100 people; and since the estimated cost was not high enough to qualify for a Treasury grant, approached a number of his wealthy friends for financial assistance.<sup>9</sup> The extension is a typical example of the architecture of the period, a strongly-built simple North aisle, transitional in style. The following year, two additional galleries (since removed) were added to provide extra sittings.

His second concern was for a village school. In Farnham and the adjoining area of Tollard Farnham,<sup>10</sup> with a total population of 315, there were two small dame-schools, supported financially by the parents of the children attending them, and no Sunday School. West approached the National Society for the Education of the Poor in January 1836 asking for a grant towards the building of a school-room in the village to cater for the education of thirty-five boys and thirty-five girls. The suggested internal size of the building was 30 feet long, 14 feet wide, and 11 feet high, giving a floor area of 420 square feet, six feet

for each child, a somewhat smaller provision than that recommended by the Society.<sup>11</sup> The school was to be built on glebe land, and would cost a total of £132, of which it was hoped to raise £32 by subscription and sermons. Future support was to be provided in a similar way, coupled with payments from the parents of the pupils. The school-room, as the National Society required, was to be used on Sunday as well as on weekdays. A grant of £35 was voted.<sup>12</sup>

In October, West had scruples about accepting a Treasury grant, but he had overcome them by a month later, and reported that he had £75 in hand. In December he started separate Sunday Schools, twenty-five girls being taught in the parsonage, where his curate lived, and the boys in a room in a large cottage; and he was already anticipating the improved accommodation and facilities which the school-room, then under construction, would provide. By midsummer 1837 the building was finished, and a little playground laid out in front of it. Its design and appearance are typical of the schools built in association with the National Society during this age of economic scarcity. The Sunday School moved in shortly after the building's completion, and the day school followed in March 1838. The mistress engaged proved more than satisfactory, and the attendance of children was greater than expected. The resulting overcrowding led to problems of ventilation which were common at the time.<sup>13</sup> A clergyman who inspected the school for the local Union commented on this danger, and advised that more room was necessary. So by March 1839, the building which had only been in use for a year was too small; and the next month West was proposing to add a room 12 feet square at the rear, to accommodate twenty-six children. He sent out an appeal to the landed classes for financial support, and in the course of it stated that 'children of Agricultural Poor paid 1 penny per week each.'

This plan happened to coincide with the controversy between the church and the state over the inspection of church schools which had received government grants towards their construction.<sup>14</sup> This was one of the few issues in the nineteenth century on which churchmen of all parties were united. Evangelicals were as uncompromising in their attitude as the clergy who held much stronger

## FARNHAM, DORSET



The extension to the church of St Laurence, 1835



The village school (now the Post Office), 1837



views about state interference with the church. West took his stand with them. He wrote in December 1839, 'I could not accept the government grant upon their condition of "Inspection" whatever inconvenience it might put me to.' The dispute was finally resolved by an agreement whereby the archbishops had a deciding say in the appointment of inspectors, and grants were thereby rendered acceptable.

At the beginning of 1845 West turned his thoughts towards building a house for the schoolmistress on a small plot of land adjacent to the school, given by Lord Rivers. The estimated cost was £70. The application for a National Society grant shows that there were then sixty-six children on the books of the school, and eighty-eight in the Sunday School. The salary of the mistress was given as £25 per annum. The Society voted £15; and a Parliamentary grant of £20 was promised. Work commenced; and in November West wrote to thank the Society for another grant of £10 towards the cost of fittings. On the last day of the year he died suddenly. His son and executor, John Rowland West, now Rector of Wrawby-cum-Brigg, Lincolnshire, paid the outstanding excess cost out of his father's estate.

A note in the Education Enquiry of 1833 shows that a lending library was also attached to Farnham school. These libraries were a common feature of the ministry of clergy who were devoted to their flocks, particularly those of an Evangelical persuasion.<sup>15</sup> Savings banks were often also organized by zealous incumbents.<sup>16</sup> There is no evidence to show that West organized one; but among the Chettle parish records are two letters written in December 1836: one is addressed to him by Elizabeth Dunford, evidently a widow, about her deposits in the Bristol Savings Bank, and the other is from the Revd W.C. Gore of Barrow, where Elizabeth Dunford had formerly lived, to West, giving him details of her account. This indicates his support of the movement. Gore's letter also gives a hint of West's pastoral concern. It ends, 'I am glad to hear that through your kindness she is likely to be placed in a comfortable situation, and I hope she will do well in it.'

West, as we have seen, was concerned about slavery. In 1830, a postscript to a letter to the Bible Society asks about the advisability of sending petitions to Parliament in support of the

activity which the anti-slavery lobby had begun following Sir George Murray's move to the Colonial Office.<sup>17</sup> Four years later, after emancipation, he sent some money raised at Chettle and in the locality for the 'Negro Fund', the object of which was to provide every freed slave with a Bible.

Like the Evangelicals generally, West did not hold such radical views about the plight of the English village labourers. Baron Duncannon's brother, William Francis Spencer Ponsonby of Canford, had been a member of the grand jury at Dorchester which found that there was a True Bill in the case of the Tolpuddle labourers charged with administering illegal oaths, nine months before the Baron had appointed West as his domestic chaplain.<sup>18</sup> It does not appear that Duncannon shared the repressive views of his brother and Lord Melbourne; and West's appointment ought not therefore to be seen as taking sides in the issue. Indeed the only reference in his correspondence is neutral. It occurs in a letter to the Bible Society, and is a reference to the meeting which was held on Charlton Down, near Blandford,<sup>19</sup> in November 1838. The meeting, which was attended by one of the Tolpuddle men now returned from Australia, John Standfield, was called to demand the implementation of the Six Points of the People's Charter. Inevitably, the question of low wages came up. Radicals maintained that there had been intimidation by landlords and farmers before the meeting, and that this had meant that there was no Blandford man willing to take the chair. The moderate, factual statement of West's letter is in marked contrast to the hysterical account which appeared in the Dorset County Chronicle. West wrote to Andrew Brandram:

'There is a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed among the Labourers, at the low rate of wages they receive, and to day, it is expected 100s. of them will attend a meeting on the Downs on the Dorchester road, at 4 or 5 miles below Blandford, where they are to be addressed by a Delegate from London.' (20)

The Dorset County Chronicle began its account:

'The political incendiaries who are going through the country exciting strife between the labourers and their masters, have endeavoured to get up a demonstration in this county.' (21)

As well as his consistent view of the eternal significance of every human being in the sight of God, West's sympathy with the demand for better education being made by the labourers would have meant that he could not join in the outcry against them raised by a number of clergy.<sup>22</sup> Instead of taking sides, he did what he

believed was the best practical thing in the circumstances by encouraging the labourers to emigrate. The letter which refers to the Charlton Down meeting has as its main subject emigration. West had been assisting a certain Major Macarthur in getting families to emigrate to New South Wales. He had gone to Spithead to see the families off, and to give them Bibles and Testaments before they sailed. He had taken a service for them, the day of his visit being a Sunday, and in the sermon reminded them of the value of the Scriptures 'in the wilderness part of the world, when deprived of Public ordinances', - what he meant when he once wrote of the Bible's being 'a Perpetual Pastor.' His account continues:

'I have assisted Major Macarthur in his obtaining from Dorsetshire many families of agricultural Labourers - and am satisfied with the kind care, and anxious feeling he has for their moral and religious instruction, - while they write (the former parties) that they are thankful for their improved conditions in life - at the same time, I think Emigration, where their spiritual interests are attended to, is of Local advantage from a superabundant Population in our villages.'(23)

The documentary evidence for organized emigration from Dorset is slight: there is but one letter in the County Record Office, to a parish officer of Buckland Newton; but that letter is stamped, 'Dorset Colonization Society Blandford Branch.' Since Chettle is only a few miles from Blandford, one wonders whether these two letters indicate another sphere of activity in which West was prominent.

Here again, he was influencing the future. G.M. Trevelyan explains:

'The English village during the first half of the Nineteenth Century was still able to provide an excellent type of colonist to new lands beyond the ocean. The men were accustomed to privation and to long hours of out-of-door work, and were ready to turn their hands to tree-felling, agriculture and rough handicraft. The women were ready to bear and rear large families.'(24)

West and the many other clergy who were involved in organizing emigration,<sup>25</sup> did so out of Christian concern for the wellbeing of their people. If others were doing so in the heartless way criticized by William Cobbett,<sup>26</sup> that was not their fault. They were encouraging the more spirited of their parishioners who were not prepared to remain locked in a system of poverty to change their lot; and if their vision was not broad enough to conceive

what social changes could bring about, at least they did not preach the duty of being contented with degrading poverty.

Another piece of West's work linked with this concern for his villagers was his encouraging and training a young parishioner to assist him in the work of Christian ministry. In a letter which I am now unable to trace, West wrote of his hope that this man could be ordained as his helper. The countryman would be able to live and preach the Christian faith in a more practical way than he himself could. The lesson of the Methodist preachers was not lost on West.

He himself kept in touch with the land by farming his glebe. After his death in 1845, the notice of the sale of his effects in the Dorset County Chronicle<sup>27</sup> listed three cart-horses, two Alderney cows in calf, a two-yearling heifer, a sow in farrow, one elt and two store pigs, two Dorset ewes, and a useful pony. There were two 10 feet square two-floor granaries on caps and stones, one wheat-rick, one hay-rick and part of another, a two-horse wagon, an iron-armed dung-put, and a number of implements. There was also a hogshead brewing-furnace with utensils and casks, indicating that West followed the practice of benevolent farmers in providing beer for their workers.<sup>28</sup> The man who advocated agricultural training for his schoolboys practised what he preached, and remained an active farmer until his death.

John West retained his wider interests, and continued to be concerned for the progress of the Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society in the home base, chairing and speaking at meetings of both organizations from time to time. He also engaged in literary activity in a small way.<sup>29</sup> He published two books in 1839. The small 43-page Brief Memoir of William B----- is an account of the illness and death of a twelve-year old boy, with morals drawn from the tale. West's careful ministry in lending the boy improving books and monthlies is apparent; so is his Evangelical emphasis in some words spoken in the sick-room:

'O think much of the Saviour. Let us talk of him at mount Calvary, there we get the best and deepest conviction of the awful nature of sin, and there we most powerfully feel the obligation to forsake it; while we have peace with God through his cricifixion.' (30)

The moral breathes the same spirit.

'There is a vital living principle of godliness, which is not

opposed to forms, but which no mere rite, form, or nominal christianity can bestow.'

'The religion which he embraces from an experimental conviction of its truth, does not consist in a mere change of opinion, or empty notion floating in the brain, but is felt as a divine principle seated in the heart.' (31)

The book echoed the spirit of the age, and so commended itself 'for distribution in the Schools of a British Colony.'

His other publication which first appeared in the same year showed the same sentiment. It was the Memoir of Mrs John West, who had died in March. Mrs West's letters have been shorn of much of the biographical detail which would have been of interest to us now, while the pious effusions have been allowed to remain. Few facts come through. One which does is that she took an active part in her husband's ministry, in Sunday School and in cottage Bible meetings,<sup>32</sup> and shared his interest in education. She had also grasped his understanding of the nature of the Christian life. Writing to her son John Rowland West not long after he had become incumbent of Wrawby, she gave him this advice:

'and ever remember, my dear son, as a minister of the gospel of Christ, that true religion consists of doctrine, experience, and practice. These are ever united in the mystery of our redemption; and those are the best sermons that combine the three.' (33)

But his wider concern had already led John West to practical activity in another field, and it is to this that we now turn.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

- 1 A Digest of Parochial Returns, Select Committee to Inquire into the Education of the Poor, 1819, p 207; Education Enquiry, 1833, p 220.
- 2 Hutchins, J., The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset, vol III, p 412; Gray, H. St G., A Memoir of Lieut.-General Pitt-Rivers, p 25.
- 3 Mingay, G.E., Rural Life in Victorian England, p 14; Hammonds, The Village Labourer 1760-1832, p 183. Some married men were receiving as little as 4/6 a week. Trevelyan (English Social History, p 478) notes that in the South of England railway navvy gangs did absorb some surplus labourers.
- 4 Now lodged with the Dorset County Record Office, Dorchester.
- 5 For details of this levy for keeping churches in repair, and dissenting objections to it, see Elliott-Binns, L.E., Religion in the Victorian Era, pp 71-3.
- 6 Letters to the Revd A. Brandram, 30 March and 6 November 1830, B.F.B.S. archives HCl.
- 7 Education Enquiry, 1833, pp 92,220.
- 8 Baron Duncannon (afterwards the 4th Earl of Bessborough) and his family were also strong supporters of popular education, his wife and sisters taking an active part in the work of schools on the family estates in Kilkenny (Boon, These Men Went Out, p 3).
- 9 These and following details about the construction of the village school have been taken from letters written by West to the National Society between January 1836 and October 1845, contained in the Society's file on Farnham School.
- 10 Tollard Farnham, although actually a part of the parish of Tollard Royal, made up more than half of the village of Farnham, and needed to be included in the educational scheme. The application for a grant was signed by Charles Austin, Rector of Tollard Royal, as well as by West.
- 11 Burgess, H.J., Enterprise in Education, p 39. The National Society recommended 7 sq ft per pupil.
- 12 National Society grants were given towards the building of schools on a once-only basis, and not for subsequent maintenance or the payment of teachers (Burgess, op cit, pp 27-9).
- 13 Hammonds, The Bleak Age, p 161. Edward Feild's Report on Schools in the Diocese of Salisbury in 1840 (Appendix IV to the National Society's Annual Report of 1840) quotes the number of pupils in the school as 80, the largest number in the group of mixed schools he visited.
- 14 The controversy is described in Burgess, op cit, pp 76-94; Curtis, S.J. and Boulwood, M.E.A., An Introductory History of English Education Since 1800, pp 60f.

- 15 Tindal Hart, A., The Country Priest in English History, p 20; Addison, W., The English Country Parson, p 145. One of the things Mr Tryan's critics held against him in George Eliot's 'Janet's Repentance' (in Scenes of Clerical Life) was that he had founded 'a religious lending library in his remote corner of the parish,' as well as preaching extempore, like West, and filling the aisles of his church.
- 16 Tindal Hart, id. Carpenter, S.C., Church and People 1789-1889, pp 47f; cf Williams, R., Culture and Society 1780-1950, p 43.
- 17 Letter of 6 November 1830, B.F.B.S. archives HCl; cf Coupland, R., Wilberforce, pp 418f.
- 18 Marlow, J., The Tolpuddle Martyrs, pp 74, 172.
- 19 *ibid*, pp 224-6.
- 20 14 November 1838, B.F.B.S. archives HCl.
- 21 Dorset County Chronicle, 15 November 1838.
- 22 cf Marlow, *op cit*, p 228.
- 23 William Cobbett, born, like West, at Farnham, Surrey, c 1763, held and expressed strong views about human equality during the second half of his life. Equally concerned about low agricultural wages, he poured scorn on those who advocated emigration because he saw in their schemes the influence of the hated ideas of Malthus (Rural Rides, vol II, p 57).
- 24 English Social History, p 474.
- 25 Mingay, *op cit*, pp 98, 102, 112, 156; Tindal Hart, *op cit*, pp 20, 60, 65.
- 26 Rural Rides, vol II, pp 57, 70.
- 27 29 January 1846.
- 28 Mingay, *op cit*, pp 172f. In Dorset, the men were allowed a gallon of beer a day in some cases, to be drunk at the meal intervals during their long working hours.
- 29 West was a reader as well as a writer, leaving a library of 700 volumes.
- 30 p 12.
- 31 pp 36, 41. Perhaps it should be noted that on p 27 we are told that William thought it wrong to go to fairs. This is the only hint West gives that he shared Evangelical opposition to popular amusements; cf Hammonds, The Village Labourer, pp 222-4; Trevelyan, *op cit*, pp 503f. The younger contemporary antiquary and collector of Christmas carols, William Sandys (1792-1874), felt little sympathy with the enthusiasts for popular education because of their cold attitude towards traditional pleasures; Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern; p 1.
- 32 Memoir of Mrs John West<sup>2</sup>, pp 234f.
- 33 *ibid*, p 209.

## FARNHAM, DORSET



The Gipsy School, started in 1845  
(until recently the Pitt-Rivers Museum)



The village  
schoolmistress's  
house, 1845



## 7 THE GIPSY SCHOOL

One aspect of the English Romantic Movement in the first half of the nineteenth century was an interest in the ways of the gypsies. At the beginning of the period it is signalled by the episode of Harriet Smith and the 'trampers' in Jane Austen's novel Emma (1816)<sup>1</sup>, the only scene approaching violence in her work; it is drawing to a close when Matthew Arnold's The Scholar Gipsy appeared in 1853. The wandering tinker's life led by George Borrow in the mid-1820s, and his acceptance by the Romany fraternity as one of themselves, later described in his semi-autobiographical books, Lavengro (1851) and The Romany Rye (1857), captured the imagination of many for whom such a life would have been unthinkable.

John West would have been familiar with the gipsy element among the seasonal hoppers who worked for his father in Surrey when he was a boy, although he never refers to this experience. There is one brief hint of his later interest in his Red River Journal. In a description of Indians on the move, he mentions the wife carrying a tent, a dog the kettle, and continues,

'The little ones were also severally laden with a knapsack, and the whole had the appearance of a camp of gypsies moving through the country.'(2).

But the full implications of the parallel, and the possibilities it opened up, do not seem to have struck him until he became acquainted with the work being done in Southampton some years later by a man of considerable initiative.

James Crabb had begun his ministry as a Wesleyan preacher.<sup>3</sup> His health failed as a result of overstrain, and so after his marriage he entered his father's broadcloth business at Wilton, and then later opened a school in Romsey. On his return to health he again offered his services to the Methodist Conference, but was turned down. So in 1822 he hired the old assembly rooms in Southampton for two services a Sunday. The following year the foundation-stone of a large Zion Chapel was laid. Here Crabb exercised an independent ministry, using the Prayer Book of the Church of England, and providing services for the poor who could not obtain sittings in their parish church. He also engaged in an active ministry among seamen, prostitutes and prisoners.

It was while attending the Winchester assizes in 1827 that he was first made aware of the needs of gipsies, when he tried to comfort the wife and family of a young man sentenced to death for horse-stealing.<sup>4</sup> Starting to read on the subject, he began to wonder how he could engage in a ministry to the wanderers. An opportunity soon presented itself when the mother-in-law of the man condemned at Winchester visited him in Southampton and consented to place in his care the eldest child of the family and the daughter of another son-in-law who had been transported. He kept the children at home for a few days, and then started to send them to his infant school. Other children came, and Crabb realised that permanent and effective work for them needed proper organization. Some local men, including one clergyman, the Evangelical Dr Wilson of Holy Rood, formed a committee 'for taking into consideration the condition of the Gipsy race, and devising some means for their moral and spiritual improvement.'<sup>5</sup> This soon became known as the Southampton Society for the Reformation of the Gypsies, 'Reformation' in this case including the giving up of their wandering habits, as it was generally thought that nothing permanent could be done for them while they moved from place to place. The Society drew up a paper which it circulated to a number of noted clergymen with little result. Charles Simeon could give no encouragement:<sup>6</sup> unless the government could 'first fix them', nothing could be done but circulating tracts. Nothing discouraged, the committee began to settle women and boys in trades in the town. After five years, they had been so successful that they engaged in publicity to suggest similar activity in other parts of the country. Crabb's book, The Gipsies' Advocate, which to observations on the character and habits of the gipsies added 'Many Interesting Anecdotes on the Success that has Attended the Plans of Several Benevolent Individuals who Anxiously Desire their Conversion to God', was the means chosen. In 1829, Crabb held the first of his annual gatherings at Christmastide at Spring Hill, Southampton, when he entertained about 150 gipsies to a dinner, and then distributed warm clothing and Bibles.<sup>7</sup> John West attended the first anniversary, and was much impressed by what he saw.<sup>8</sup> He also became a friend and fellow-worker of Crabb.

West's first project in 1842 was on similar lines to Crabb's. 'In order to test the practicability of carrying out the plans

of the Southampton Committee in his own parish, he erected two cottages, in each of which he placed a gipsy family; and that they might be kept from idle habits, and help to maintain their children, whom he placed under instruction in his parochial school, he allotted to each family an acre of ground for cultivation.'(9)

Similar efforts were made elsewhere, and those involved in the schemes kept in touch with each other. It was as a result of the hostility shown by local parents to their children's associating with gipsy children that West first made the suggestion that there should be 'a school for gipsy children exclusively.' Crabb immediately accepted it. The last years of West's life were then largely occupied with making the idea a reality. He began by issuing a small publication entitled A Plea for Educating the Children of the Gypsies, dedicated to Lord Ashley, then the member of Parliament for the county, and addressed to the local 'Nobility, gentry, and magistrates.' It outlined the following plan:

'We would provide, at the commencement of the institution, for the maintenance and education of, at least, twenty-four orphan Gypsy children, under six years of age; or boys and girls, not older, from the largest and most destitute Gypsy families; and we would wish that the establishment would afford, at the same time, an asylum for the orphan, or destitute Gypsy child, whom any kind and benevolent person might be pleased to adopt, on the payment of a moderate annual sum of at least five pounds, towards its education and support.

'We know of no remedy, or plan, that can be adopted, in the hope of substantially improving the character of the Gypsies like the one proposed; and we would cherish the belief that whatever aid is afforded towards the building fund, or given by donations or annual subscriptions for the maintenance and education of the children of the Gypsies, will carry with it the full approbation of the judgment and conscience.' (10)

Lord Ashley consented to be patron; Crabb joined West and his curate at Farnham, Charles Baring Coney (who was soon to move to Kimmeridge), as secretaries; and the treasurer was George Carr Glyn of Lombard Street. That this was a far-ranging project is shown by the fact that a Revd Dr Marsh of Leamington was also prepared to accept subscriptions. Plans were submitted to the government with an application for a grant; and these, together with a description of the building, are given in Appendix 'E'. The government grant of £100 heads the interesting list of subscribers which is printed on the front page of the Dorset

County Chronicle for 18 December 1845. The list includes three M.P.s in addition to Lord Ashley, the Bishop of Salisbury, a number of members of the Nobility, 'A Man's Servant', amounts raised by holders of collecting cards, and two names from West's earlier ventures: Henry Budd, and Captain Sir J. Franklin and his wife. The editor of the paper was now sufficiently interested to accept subscriptions at his office.

A sum of some £1,200 was raised fairly quickly, so that it was possible to arrange for the laying of the foundation-stone on a site, taken from the glebe, near the boundary between West's two parishes on 24 July 1845.

In the presence of the members of the committee, the architect, Louis Butcher of Barnstaple, and ladies seated on a temporary platform, West began the proceedings:

'Ladies and Gentlemen: The dedication of a building simply undertaken with a view to the praise and glory of the Redeemer, is an event that must gladden the heart of every true Christian. It is, then, in his Divine name, that the first stone of such a building is about to be laid - - a building to be erected for the one sole, simple object, of gathering in the too long neglected outcast gipsy children from the highways, and hedges, to be clothed, maintained, and "brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Hear, hear.)' (10)

After West had offered an extempore prayer, the Old Hundredth psalm was sung,<sup>11</sup> and an aged gipsy, Charles Stanley, wearing a 'blue ribbon, as a mark of distinction', was introduced.<sup>12</sup>

The architect handed Stanley a trowel, and the old gipsy proceeded to lay the stone and strike it vigorously three times with a mallet. After James Crabb and Francis Archibald Stuart of Blandford (who had paid for the site) had spoken, 'old Mary Carter, a venerable dame, and a real gipsy, originally a Stanley', asked to say a few words, in which she commended the work of Crabb and West. Mr Samuel Carey Richards then dilated upon the significance of the first government grant being given for gipsy welfare, and the wisdom of the committee in gaining the patronage of the large-hearted Lord Ashley.<sup>13</sup> 'With such patronage, . . . it was hardly possible that they could fail of success.'

Fittingly, on a site with the Royal Standard of England waving on each side, John West terminated the proceedings with a call for three cheers for the Queen.<sup>10</sup>

It was to be his swan-song. On 31 December he died suddenly

of a ruptured main artery. Work on the school lost momentum; for West was not only the man on the spot, but also the prime mover. The following August a public meeting was called at Weymouth to hasten the completion of the building, and to bring it into use.<sup>14</sup> The school was the only one of its type in England when it was opened on 5 October 1847 for six gipsy children to begin their education.

The school never really flourished. It managed to arouse the suspicion of local farmers and residents while never gaining the confidence of the gipsies. The proposed staff of a master and mistress was never achieved; and the single schoolmistress was unable to control the children and handle the parents who called to toll them away, in spite of weekly supportive visits by members of the committee.<sup>15</sup> In the eight years of the school's life, there were at least three schoolmistresses, the Misses Lenox, Dove and Wear. When James Crabb's biographer was writing in 1854, only forty-six children had been admitted as pupils, and of them only five remained in the school. Closure came in 1855.<sup>16</sup> The committee had meanwhile found new responsibility by taking over the work of the Southampton Committee from an ageing James Crabb in 1847, and supervising a travelling gipsy evangelist.<sup>17</sup> But pioneering work of this sort demands men of an independent and enterprising character. James Crabb and John West were two such, and the mission to the gipsies was largely the outcome of their co-partnership. Without them it petered out.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

- 1 vol III, ch 3 in the original edition.
- 2 West, J., Journal, p 165.
- 3 These details are given in Rudall, J., A Memoir of the Rev. James Crabb, Late of Southampton.
- 4 Rudall, op cit, pp 132-4.
- 5 ibid, p 135.
- 6 ibid, pp 139f.
- 7 ibid, pp 143-5; letter of Crabb to B.F.B.S., 28 December 1836 (B.F.B.S. archives HC1).
- 8 Rudall, op cit, p 147.
- 9 id; also Dorset County Chronicle, 31 July 1845.
- 10 quoted in Dorset County Chronicle, 31 July 1845.
- 11 J.A. La Trobe (quoted by E. Routley, The Musical Wesleys, pp 113ff) witnesses to the popularity of the Old Hundredth in the 1830s. West regarded its opening line as an incentive to missionary work, and so was much attached to it. It was sung on the quarter-deck of the Eddystone in Stromness harbour on West's first Sunday at sea in 1820 (Journal, p 4). In spite of his strong views about adherence to the Prayer Book, he also encouraged the use of hymns in devotion. He quotes Reginald Heber's 'From Greenland's icy mountains', which had first appeared in a national publication early in 1823, on p 206 of his Journal which came out the next year. He noted that little William B----- often repeated John Newton's 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds' (Brief Memoir of William B-----, p 16); and in the Memoir of Mrs John West includes verses from the lesser-known 'O thou God who hearest prayer' by J. Conder, and 'O how the thought that we shall know' by E. Swaine (pp 218f, 257f in ed<sup>3</sup>).
- 12 Stanley, who was a Scripture reader employed by Crabb's Southampton Committee, was the son of the repentant gipsy whose story was told in the Religious Tract Society's popular 'The Dying Gipsy' (Narrative series no 803). Being a Romany himself, he was able to introduce Crabb to the gipsies when the latter visited race-meetings at Epsom in order to contact them (Rudall, op cit, p 142). The names Stanley and Cooper indicate the true Romany character of the gipsies taking part; see Borrow, G., Romano Lavo-Lil, pp 185-92. They were not plucked from the numerous drop-outs from society who had taken to the wandering life during this period.
- 13 The 7th Earl of Shaftesbury thought highly of West. When he heard of West's death he noted in his diary: 'Another good man gathered to his fathers - it seems as tho' God were fulfilling the prayer "shortly accomplishing the number of His elect." But I may be permitted to grieve as a man . . . He is one of those for whom I can entertain no fear, he has entered, I doubt not, into his rest, the rest of his Lord and Saviour.' (Broadlands Papers, ms diary of Lord Ashley, communicated by Canon M.M. Hennell).

- 14 Dorset County Chronicle, 20 August 1846.
- 15 Dudley Buxton, L.H. (ed), The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham, p 24.
- 16 Rudall, op cit, p 157; Dudley Buxton, op cit, p 24.
- 17 Rudall, op cit, p 158.

## 8 EDUCATION FOR LIFE IN SOCIETY

John West was involved with the building and organization of three schools. Of these, the village school at Farnham need not much concern us, as it was in union with the National Society, and therefore conducted on the Madras system devised by Dr Andrew Bell, and outlined by him in A Sketch of a National Institution for training up the children of the Poor in 1808, after several years' experiments in introducing the system in England. On its foundation in October 1811, the National Society linked Bell's system with an Anglican dogmatic and disciplinary religious education.<sup>1</sup>

It is easy now to criticize and even caricature the rival systems of Bell and Joseph Lancaster, and the way in which their advocates egged each other on to claim ever larger numbers of pupils which could be taught by one teacher through the use of child monitors, and to ridicule the parrot-like learning which resulted, as was done by the Hammonds in The Bleak Age.<sup>2</sup> And one is inclined to smile at the confident way in which the systems were praised by their sponsors for using mechanical methods in an age of machinery; yet it is difficult to see how any other method could have provided some basic education on the scale that the time required, when the need for schools was clearly seen by many, and there was little money to pay for them.<sup>3</sup>

As far as classroom work went, John West advocated Bell's methods in his school at Red River, and it is probable that they were also used in the Gipsy School at Farnham, although the numbers of children taught were never large enough to give the system its true character. As in the National schools, religious instruction retained its primary place. But the interest of these schools for us today lies in the way in which West viewed them in relation to the society in which their pupils would have to live. He developed his ideas on this subject in the plan which he drew up on his arrival at York Factory in 1820 (see page 13 above), and which appeared as Appendix XII to the Proceedings of the C.M.S., 1819-1820.<sup>4</sup> The plan is a 'Proposal for an Establishment', and is in fact a blueprint for the school which was opened at the Red River Settlement shortly afterwards. It shows that West had thought deeply on the subject of education.

He begins by noting that the cause of failure in a number of



missionary educational projects had been 'the attempt to inculcate religious and moral instruction, without a sufficient basis of the habits of civilization.' Where due attention had been paid to this aspect, but where there had been an attempt to do too much at once, 'to convert a set of complete savages immediately into a civilized society', as with some North American Indians, failure had also followed. The result had either been that the lads, on returning to their tribes, had lapsed into all their former habits of savage life, or else that they had 'remained among the European Settlers, associating with them only, and in no degree contributing to the progress of improvement among the Natives in general.' He concludes that no progress can be expected in the civilization of Indians, unless a whole tribe together, 'or at least ... such a number as may form a society among themselves' may preserve 'the improvements which they have acquired.' One Indian who became 'a complete farmer', while the rest remained hunters only, would serve little purpose. West notes that civilisation has always advanced by slow degrees, and deduces that what is needed is a slow and gradual change in the habits of the tribe; and concludes that 'a very small improvement, generally diffused among a whole Tribe of Indians, and firmly established by custom, will facilitate the introduction of farther improvements.' He adduces as good examples the work of Moravian missions, and a particular piece of work conducted by the Quakers among the Indians of the Ohio, although he recognizes that these had already some acquaintance with agriculture, which most of those within the Hudson's Bay Company's territories had not. These, subsisting mainly by hunting and fishing, needed to be persuaded to settle.

West suggests that two possible methods of work present themselves: the employment of missionaries to live with the wandering Indians, or the establishment of a school in which the young could be instructed before being sent back to their people. A combination of the two he thinks would be even more effective, with the school in a strategic situation. Since the numbers in the school would necessarily be small, 'a judicious selection' of the pupils would be essential, because they would 'probably become leading men in their respective tribes; and their example may, therefore, have a very extensive effect.' He goes on:

'In the education of these Indians, the course of instruction

must be very different from that of an Ordinary School: and should approach more to the system of a School of Industry, in which agriculture and the mechanic arts must be among the principal objects.'

So as to arouse a desire for improvement in others, the boys should be trained in such a way that the rudest savage would be able to see the benefits.

'The Young Men, who are educated at the proposed Establishment, should be conspicuously superior to those who have not had the benefit of instruction. They must not, therefore, be allowed to forget those accomplishments of savage life, without which they would be despised: they must be sent back, possessed of as much dexterity in hunting and fishing, as their companions; and their additional acquirements should be such as are most likely to be valued. Reading or writing will gain but little credit to one of these Young Men: but if he has learned to mend a gun, he will be highly respected in his tribe; and others will become ambitious of obtaining the same opportunities of improvement. The point of most essential importance is, to inure them, as far as possible, to habits of foresight and persevering industry; and to let them know, from experience, the facility of cultivating the ground, as well as the great advantages of the practice.'

West also recommended the teaching of English as 'a primary object'; as a vehicle for further instruction, and also as a 'common medium of communication' between tribes of different languages. With his eye ever on the aim of spreading civilization, West saw this as a means of reducing dissension and strife between rival groups. Reading and writing, 'with the first elements of arithmetic', could perhaps be added, but as matters of secondary consideration. The unwillingness of Indian parents to control their sons, which West noted in his Journal,<sup>5</sup> would make it impossible for them to 'submit to that sort of controul, which is exercised over Children in our schools.' There should therefore be variety of occupation, and 'of sedentary study, a very small portion.'

The length of time a boy could spend in the school would have to be limited, perhaps to one or two years. In the light of his experience West raised this to three in his report to the New England Company of 1824;<sup>6</sup> and in practice it turned out to be longer. This indicated that too much should not be attempted at once. The teacher, he noted, would 'require talents of a very different class, from those of an Ordinary Schoolmaster.'

George Harbidge, who accompanied him to Red River, was an old boy

of Christ's Hospital, and was therefore probably of the required calibre.

At the end of his stay at Red River, West noted in his Journal on 2 June 1823, the way in which his plan had worked out in the field.

'I have been adding two small houses to the Church Mission School, as separate sleeping apartments for the Indian children, who have already made most encouraging progress in reading, and a few of them in writing. In forming this Establishment for their religious education, it is of the greatest importance that they should be gradually inured to the cultivation of the soil, and instructed in the knowledge of agriculture. For this purpose I have allotted a small piece of ground for each child, and divided the different compartments with a wicker frame. We often dig and hoe with our little charge in the sweat of our brow as an example and encouragement for them to labour; and promising them the produce of their own industry, we find they take great delight in their gardens. Necessity may compel the adult Indian to take up the spade and submit to manual labour, but a child brought up in the love of cultivating a garden will be naturally led to the culture of the field as a means of subsistence: and educated in the principles of Christianity, he will become stationary to partake of the advantages and privileges of civilization.' (7)

It was education based on clear fundamental principles, one of which was the retention of the bond between the pupil and his social and cultural background as he was encouraged to accept the benefits of civilised life in a gradual way. It is interesting to compare this ideal with the stock picture of unthinking missionary zeal in the following modern parody of Eskimo education in northern Canada.

'Missionaries . . . go to the arctic and suffer like martyrs so that in a year, or a decade, they can make professing Christians out of some heathen tribe. It is too great a leap . . . In most of the church schools the Eskimos are taught the singing of hymns and the saying of prayers, but they learn little else and what they do learn is useless to them for it is not applicable to the physical realities of their present lives. Confused and baffled, they suffer for this attempt to 'educate' them, since on their inevitable return to the ancient way of things, which still prevails in their villages, they know only enough to feel vague dissatisfaction, without understanding how to bring about the changes which they are dimly aware are needed.' (8)

The problem is inherent in all situations of social and cultural change, and there is no easy solution to it. At least it can be said that West was fully aware of the issues, and had thought his way through to a practical programme which he then

tried out. The way in which his boys did return to their people, ministering to them from settled bases and gaining their respect, becoming acknowledged leaders, indicates that he was working along sound lines.

It is not so easy to evaluate the experiment of the Gipsy School. For one thing, West died before it opened its doors; for another, there is no remaining evidence of what happened to the scholars in later life. Moreover, it appears that the idea of the school developed only after the Southampton Committee and West himself found that to settle gipsies and to introduce their children into parochial schools created acute social problems.

When the school was proposed, its curriculum was to be along the same lines as that of the Red River establishment, as the details of the building and its grounds given in Appendix 'E' indicate. Its aim was to settle the children and stop their wandering life. Something of this sort had already been achieved in Southampton, as we have seen, where boys and women had found employment in trades, and West had established two families in his parish. To maintain and educate gipsy orphans was a means of furthering this aim, although it is a little perplexing to see how to cast the children on the world at the age of six would conduce to their retaining the benefits of their education as an example to others.

When he reached Red River, at the age of nearly forty-two, West was at the height of his powers, and was able to formulate a coherent and imaginative plan. He was in his mid-sixties when work began on the Gipsy School, and seems to have turned to his earlier plan. The parallels between the gipsies and the North American Indians impressed him; and he appears to have overlooked the difference in the circumstances. It was not as easy to gain the confidence of gipsy leaders as it was to make a successful appeal to some Indian chiefs. The Indians were awed by European civilisation, and anxious to gain some of its benefits: the gipsies proudly saw their way of life as an independent alternative to that of house-dwellers. It is noteworthy that when the school was eventually opened in October 1847 men were not much in evidence: it was only gipsy women and children who sat down in the festooned school-room to 'tea, bread and cheese and other refreshments.'<sup>9</sup>

Even so, had West lived to supervise and evaluate the work of the school, he might well have seen where modifications were required. With his gift for impressing and influencing men, he could have secured for the school the goodwill which it apparently never enjoyed. And then, as well as 'answering simple questions on the salvation of their souls', and singing in a 'wonderfully improved' way, as the visiting book says they did,<sup>10</sup> the children might well have started to discover a way in which their education could be related to the life and friends they had known. But perhaps that is asking too much. After one hundred and thirty years the problem is not much nearer solution.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

- 1 Burgess, H.J., Enterprise in Education, pp 20, 23f, 44-54; Curtis, S.J. and Boulwood, M.E.A., An Introductory History of English Education Since 1800, pp 9-12; Lawson, J. and Silver, H., A Social History of Education in England, pp 238-46.
- 2 chapter IX, pp 139-53.
- 3 Lawson and Silver, op cit, pp 241, 246.
- 4 pp 368-72.
- 5 p 24. Writing was in any case thought by many to be an unnecessary accomplishment for the English poor: Lawson and Silver, op cit, p 240.
- 6 Minute Book of the New England Company 1816-30, p 165 (Guildhall Library MS 7920/2). See p 32 above.
- 7 pp 150f. The real impetus to agricultural and industrial Indian education at Red River came after the flood of 1826 from the Revd William Cockran: Boon, T.C.B., These Men Went Out, pp 5, 6f; From the Bay, pp 36-8.
- 8 Mowat, F., People of the Deer, pp 266ff.
- 9 Dorset County Chronicle, 7 October 1847.
- 10 Dudley Buxton, L.H., The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham, pp 24f.

## 9 EDUCATION AND CIVILISATION

The picture of John West which has emerged from the foregoing study of his work and of the ideas which he was expressing through it, is of a man in the mainstream of the Evangelical movement in the Church of England. His missionary and educational labours were the practical outworking of the doctrines of the centrality of the Bible, of the need for personal salvation through acceptance of the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and of the Christian's duty to make his faith something of practical relevance in his daily life. The expression of those ideas through missionary activity with an emphasis on education was also an aspect of his Evangelicalism. Since, however, education was the chief field of his activity, it was here that he contributed himself to the thought of the movement, and was prepared to strike out on his own. In the question of the education of gipsies, for example, he was prepared to enter into a venture of a much bolder kind than the very limited approach recommended by Charles Simeon.<sup>1</sup>

The key thought of West's here is his linking of the spread of the gospel with the progressive civilisation of the people evangelized. Schools and their staff were the chief feature in this plan of campaign.

'They (the Indians of British North America) must be educated before they can be led to comprehend the benefits to be received from civilization, or ere a hope can be cherished that their characters will be changed under the mild influence of the Christian religion . . . The training of the child forms the maturity of the man.'<sup>(2)</sup>

And agriculture, the love of which West tried to graft into the minds of his pupils, was important to him because without it civilisation as he understood it was impossible.

'What can calm these ferocious feelings, and curb this savage fury of the passions . . . ? what, but the introduction and influence of Christianity, the best civilizer of the wandering natives of these dreary wilds, and the most probable means of fixing them in the pursuit of agriculture, and of those social advantages and privileges to which they are at present strangers.'<sup>(3)</sup>

At the end of the eighteenth century there had still been opposition to missionary work among the heathen in Evangelical circles where Calvinist emphasis was strong, and this sometimes

took the form of regarding their lack of civilisation not only as an insuperable hindrance to evangelism but also as a sign of divine displeasure.<sup>4</sup> The attitude was never as strong in England as it was in Scotland, and it became the view of an insignificant minority after the founding of the missionary societies. Even so, few of the advocates of mission were as articulate on the subject as West was, and the linking of the blessings of Christianity with those of civilisation appears to be the product of his own mind. There is an interesting echo of the thought in George Borrow's The Romany Rye, in a passage which could well have been applied to West; though, strangely in view of their mutual interest in the gipsies and the Bible Society, Borrow gives no hint that he knew anything of West or his work.

'Oh! what a vast deal may be done with intellect, courage, riches, accompanied by the desire of doing something great and good! Why, a person may carry the blessings of civilisation and religion to barbarous, yet at the same time beautiful and romantic, lands; and what a triumph there is for him who does so! what a crown of glory!' (5)

West saw clearly that there were only two options in North America: either to leave the Indians as degraded peripheral hangers-on to the white society which was developing and would become dominant, and would eventually sweep them away, or else to attempt to evangelize and civilise them through a programme of missionary education and practical training.<sup>6</sup> He realised that civilisation was an ongoing, if slow, process, and felt the duty laid upon him, as a Christian and a cultured gentleman, of taking his part in spreading its benefits. He was as aware of the qualities of the Indian character, as he was of its failings;<sup>7</sup> and he saw what that character could become under the influence of Christian example and teaching. The same could be said about his opinion of gipsies. He approached Borrow's regard for the Romany character,<sup>8</sup> and did not share the almost universal dislike of bringing gipsies into close relations with established local communities. He was able to recognize the social conditioning which led to standards of behaviour different from those accepted by people living on the land or in a town, and to see that the preaching of the gospel, combined with instruction in the techniques of agriculture and industry, could be effective in civilising those whom society regarded as outcasts. It was because he believed that it was more effective to start with the young than



to try and 'reform' adults, that it was to a school that he turned in this case as well.

Thus, although West did not involve himself in the political side of social issues, and seems to have confined his communications with M.P.s to matters concerning colonial education and the slave question, he did see salvation as having a social aspect, and he involved himself to the full in that aspect. He did this on the practical level with his schools, and on the wider stage in the plans he drew up for an extension of the system.

There is no approximation in West's thought to the educational ideas expounded in France by J.-J. Rousseau, and taken up in English middle-class experiments, which focused attention on the development of the individual child.<sup>9</sup> Social and philosophical ideas linked with this view would have rendered it inhospitable to an Evangelical Christian, particularly to one who also saw the value of established religious institutions. Nor on the other hand does West ever stress the mechanical and numerical possibilities of the Madras system. He always worked on a small or moderate scale, and thus was able to think around his work and evaluate it. His concern for excellence in his pupils led him to an approach which in practice meant that development of the inner group was of primary importance because it would lead to the progress of civilisation.

In this connection, it is interesting to look at what West has to say about the eternal value of each human being in the sight of God. The Indian view of the future life struck him as 'gross darkness . . . as to futurity', although he recognized in it a yearning for an informed faith, as he did also in that of the Eskimos.<sup>10</sup> George Borrow's gipsy acquaintances maintained that they believed in no future life.<sup>11</sup> West, while concerned about the eternal welfare of each individual, does not lean to the excessively individualistic way of thinking to which Evangelicals tended. His argument is conducted at a corporate level, highly appropriate to the social consciousness of the groups with which he was working. This is illustrated by the words of his prayer at the laying of the foundation-stone of the Gipsy School in July 1845:

'May they be thy sons and thy daughters, O Lord God Almighty,

adopted through grace into thy family, and made heirs with Christ of thy heavenly kingdom; may they live to thy glory, and inherit thy promises.' (12)

It was the fears aroused by events in France and the revolutionary ideas associated with them which added acrimony to the debate about popular education in the early years of the nineteenth century. The controversy had been going on for some years, with the advocates of education for the poor having to counter the traditional view that learning was for the upper classes, and that knowledge was unnecessary for the lower. The French revolution raised the argument to a higher key: to educate the masses would be to cause them to be dissatisfied with their lot, and to render them open to radical propaganda and worse.

The issues were put clearly in the debate in the House of Commons in July 1807 on Samuel Whitbread's Poor Law Bill, a comprehensive measure including the establishment of a system of free education, which was afterwards extracted as an abortive Parochial Schools Bill. Whitbread, a brewery owner, was in no doubt about the social implications of schools for the poor: 'Sir, in a political point of view, nothing can possibly afford greater stability to a popular government than the education of your people.'<sup>13</sup> One of his supporters, a Mr. Sharpe, had also made a similar point: a little education would form 'many beneficial habits of an indelible nature; habits of submission and respect for their superiors.'<sup>14</sup> The opposing view was now stated with some force, when Whitbread moved the second reading of his bill.

'Mr. Davies Giddy rose and said, that while he was willing to allow the hon. gentleman who brought forward this bill, every degree of credit for the goodness of his intentions, as well as for his ability and assiduity; still, upon the best consideration he was able to give the bill, he must totally object to its principle, as conceiving it to be more pregnant with mischief than advantage to those for whose advantage it was intended, and for the country in general. For, however specious in theory the project might be, of giving education to the labouring classes of the poor, it would, in effect, be found to be prejudicial to their morals and happiness; it would teach them to despise their lot in life, instead of making them good servants in agriculture and other laborious employments which their rank in society had destined them; instead of teaching them subordination, it would render them factious and refractory, as was evident in the manufacturing counties; it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets,

vicious books and publications against Christianity; it would render them insolent to their superiors; and, in a few years the result would be that legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power towards them, and to furnish the executive magistrates with much more vigorous laws than were now in force.'(15)

In a book published two years later, advocating a stretching of the system of endowed schools for the benefit of a greater number of children, Thomas Bernard, with a glance at men like Giddy, wrote of 'pious and conscientious Christians who dread the consequences of a general diffusion even of elementary knowledge among the poor. In order to render others content with Ignorance, the friends of that lady are perpetually showing the danger of Instruction . . . . If Ignorance, say they, is expelled from her seat, the vacancy must be filled by Pride.'<sup>16</sup>

Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, 1787-1808, who actively supported the efforts of Evangelical churchmen although he did not fully subscribe to their theology, had already taken a stand on the question. His biographer, writing of his Visitation Charge of April-May 1802 which laid stress on the importance of clerical residence and pastoral care, goes on:

'In addition to these admirable observations . . . he exhorted his clergy' to encourage amongst their people, peculiarly at such a time, a spirit of loyalty, obedience and subordination; and with that view, recommended to them in the strongest terms the adoption of those excellent institutions, Sunday Schools; or, if these should be disapproved, or thought impracticable, the propriety at least in some way or other of educating the lower classes of the people, and instructing them in the principles of the Christian Faith.'(17)

Porteus recognized that the argument against popular education was maintained by men of considerable ability, on the grounds of public safety. But in his Charge to his clergy the following year, he argued that the contrary was shown to be the case by the contrasting reactions to the French revolution in the British Isles. In Ireland, where 'the ignorance and superstition of the peasants and labourers are scarcely to be equalled in any other civilized country in Europe', there were scenes 'of wanton cruelty and savage ferocity as exceed all power of description'; in 'our own island', where 'the higher orders could write, and the inferior orders could read', there was a rapid return to order and equanimity after a brief period of unsettlement. He continued:

'The great mass of the people form the broad base of the pyramid

of our civil and ecclesiastical constitution, and it is therefore essentially necessary that this foundation should be made firm and secure, and well compacted together by those sound principles of virtue and religion, which are the strongest cement of civil society, and the chief support of national happiness and prosperity.'

Then he concludes with a reference to our Lord's love for children and his concern for the poor: 'this is an argument for our attention to the education of the lower classes, which overbears all reasoning and all objections to the contrary.'<sup>18</sup>

It was Bishop Porteus who ordained West deacon in 1804, when the themes of his Charges were still fresh. It is therefore likely that the bishop's writings and outlook influenced West's thinking. The similarity is clear, although it is true that the outlook was shared by others. The link could well be the idea of 'subordination', which was used on both sides of the argument. Porteus maintained that the education of the poor in Christian principles would ensure a proper subordination in society, and West followed him in this. However, West gives the word a distinct flavour of his own, and so modifies the idea.

'Subordination' as an ideal of social structure had a long history; but it became a catchword at the end of the eighteenth century because of the fears of anarchy aroused by the French revolution. Edmund Burke spoke for the upholders of the social order, and found ready hearers:

'Good order is the foundation of all good things. To be enabled to acquire, the people, without being servile, must be tractable and obedient. The magistrate must have his reverence, the laws their authority. The body of the people must not find the principles of natural subordination by art rooted out of their minds. They must respect the property of which they cannot partake.' (19)

On the whole, Evangelicals who engaged in popular education projects were sympathetic to the Tory point of view, and echoed the argument deployed by Bishop Porteus. West does not use it directly, but he does make interesting references to subordination which throw light on his ideas. In the manuscript of the sermon on Sabbath observance preached at York Factory in 1823, the following appears:

'Were it only a Natural Institution to be observed - the welfare of Society, and the Place of Subordination demand to be attended to. It must be admitted that the regular observance of the Sabbath has a powerful influence in restraining the

immorality and wickedness of man.'(20)

During his second visit to North America, for the New England Company, West was taken on a visit to the State Prison at Auburn in Maine. This was regarded as a model prison in which no healthy prisoner was permitted to be idle. If he knew no trade he was taught one, and then worked with the rest. Silence was so strictly enforced that the prisoners knew each others' names only from hearing the warders speak. A lash of raw hide was the only instrument of punishment. West noted:

I saw no fetter, nor heard the clinking of any chain, nor was any military guard seen, . . . , yet there was perfect order and subordination.'(21)

In his view, Auburn was unequalled 'for unremitted industry, entire subordination, and subdued feelings of the prisoners.'

In the sermon, West is using the idea in a different way from those who spoke of the benefits of a stratified society, in which the lower classes know their place. At first sight, it is difficult to see how he could apply it to Sabbath observance in the wild territories of the Hudson's Bay Company, until we realise that he was anticipating the conclusion of his argument that due observance of the Christian Sunday is one of the best securities for orderly and lawful behaviour in communities, quoted on pp 25f above. The Auburn references can be linked with this. What impressed West was not the subjugation of the prisoners to the will of the governor and the warders, but the fact that criminals were living in a community in a harmonious way because regulations were being observed. The key idea in both cases is the rule of law, and not the superiority of any one class. 'Subordination' for West was a rather more democratic category than for others.

By holding this idea of subordination as the basis of social life, and seeing the Christian faith and its ordinances as supporting it, West was able to exercise a ministry among widely differing social groups, and to do it effectively. The population of Rupert's Land was heterogeneous, yet West obtained results from several sections of it, and had contact with all of them. There were no gentry in his parishes of Chettle and Farnham during his time (Chettle House was empty, and Farnham had no resident squire), but the Rector who was indefatigable on behalf of the tenant farmers and their labourers, as well as of the gipsies whom the others suspected, was also able to minister

to a Whig peer serving in the administration of the day without in any way deserving Adam Smith's strictures on contemporary clergy:

'The clergy naturally endeavour to recommend themselves to the sovereign, to the court, and to the nobility and gentry of the country, by whose influence they chiefly expect to obtain preferment.'(22)

West never dilates on the unity of the human race in Adam or in Christ: his emphasis is rather on the triumph of the Christian mission bringing all men to be saved. It is their future salvation that is the ground of his present concern. This was the motive power of his wide-ranging efforts, which led him to work in apparently unpromising fields. He expressed the conviction in the last words of his Red River Journal:

'I have no higher wish in life, than to spend and be spent in the service of Christ, for the salvation of the North American Indians. Not my will, however, but HIS be done, who alone can direct and control all Missions successfully, to the fulfilment of HIS prophetic word, when "The wilderness shall become a fruitful field," and "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."'(23)

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

- 1 see p 65 above.
- 2 Journal, pp 152, 154.
- 3 ibid, p 90.
- 4 Elliott-Binns, L.E., Religion in the Victorian Era, pp 377f.
- 5 Borrow, G., The Romany Rye, p 162. For another parallel in a North American context after West's time, see Kingsmill, J., Missions and Missionaries, p 266.
- 6 see pp 34f above.
- 7 Journal, pp 39, 49; 53, 88f, 124, 151-4. Washington Irving's contemporary essay, 'Traits of Indian Character', in The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent., makes an interesting comparison. Irving laments the degraded state of Indians, and draws an idealized picture of their past condition, although this must be qualified by their internecine quarrels. But he can only end on a note of nostalgia, without any hope or plan for the future.
- 8 see The Romany Rye, p 359.
- 9 Lawson, J., and Silver, H., A Social History of Education in England, pp 232-4.
- 10 Journal, pp 33, 135f, 185; see p 16 above.
- 11 Borrow, G., Lavengro, p 166; Romano Lavo-Lil, pp 241, 248.
- 12 Dorset County Chronicle, 31 July 1845.
- 13 House of Commons, 19 February 1807, Hansard, vol viii, 877.
- 14 quoted Gregg, P., A Social and Economic History of Britain, 1760-1950, p 246.
- 15 Hansard, 13 July 1807, vol ix, 798-9.
- 16 quoted Burgess, H.J., Enterprise in Education, p 16.
- 17 Hodgson, R., The Life of the Rt Revd Beilby Porteus, D.D., p 177.
- 18 Porteus, B., Works, vol VI, pp 315-22.
- 19 Burke, E., Reflections on the Revolution in France<sup>4</sup>, p 359.
- 20 Some words are abbreviated in the ms. The word rendered 'Place' is difficult to decipher; but the expression is written plainly six lines later.
- 21 Journal<sup>2</sup>, pp 309f.
- 22 The Wealth of Nations, vol iii, p 234, quoted Hammonds, The Village Labourer, 1760-1832, p 217.
- 23 Journal, p 209.

## A P P E N D I C E S

- 'A' John West's Order for Scriptures for Distribution at Red River.
- 'B' The Rupert's Land Marriage Register, 1821.
- 'C' John West as Artist at Red River.
- 'D' John West's Letter of Acceptance to the Bible Society, 1828.
- 'E' Description and Plans of the Gipsy School, Farnham, Dorset, 1845.
- 'F' The West Memorials at Chettle and in St John's Cathedral, Winnipeg.



## APPENDIX 'A'

## JOHN WEST'S ORDER FOR SCRIPTURES FOR DISTRIBUTION AT RED RIVER

At the Rev. Mr Budds

Bridewell Hosp<sup>l</sup>:

May the 18th 1820.

Gentlemen,

I have accepted the appointment as Chaplain to the Hudsons Bay Company, and am going out in the company's ship to the Red River Settlement North America in the course of next week, and shall feel obliged as a Member of the British & Foreign Bible Society if the Committee will grant me the following supply of Bibles and Testaments for sale where practicable, or gratuitous distribution on my voyage, or on the Settlement.

12 Danish Bible  
 12 D Testaments  
 12 Dutch Bibles  
 25 Dutch Testaments  
 100 English Bibles  
 300 English Testaments  
 12 Swedish Testaments  
 50 French Testaments  
 3 Portuguese Testaments  
 9 Italian Testaments  
 6 Esquimaux Testaments  
 25 German Bibles  
 50 German Testaments  
 30 Gaelic Bibles  
 6 Irish Testaments  
 6 Welsh Testaments  
 1 Set of Reports  
 Brief Views  
 & tracts --

It will be my endeavour to dispose of as many as I can by Sale, and it will be my zealous endeavour to establish an Auxiliary Bible Society at the Settlement -- and am

Gentlemen

Your Ob Sev<sup>t</sup>

John West.

(The letter is directed in another hand)

To the Committee for Printing &c &c  
 of the British & Foreign  
 Bible Society.

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A Minute of the Printing Sub-Committee of 19 May 1820 records the reading of the letter, and grants the Bibles etc., as per the list.

APPENDIX 'B'  
THE RUPERT'S LAND MARRIAGE REGISTER, 1821

The marriage services which West conducted at the posts he visited, described on pp 15f above, constituted the first such civil ceremonies performed in the territory of the Hudson's Bay Company.

The extract from the Register, in West's hand, given on the following page, is the record of the events described in his Journal, pp 65f.

'The 12th of August, being Sunday, we had divine service; after which I baptized between twenty and thirty children, and married two of the Company's officers. On the 14th, we left this Post, and arrived at York Factory, the 27th, where we found a considerable number of Swiss families, who had left their country, as emigrants to the Red River Colony. .... They appeared to me to be a different description of settlers, from what the colony, in its infancy of improvement, was prepared to receive; as consisting principally of watch-makers and mechanics. The hardy husbandman was the character we wanted; who would work his persevering way through the thickets, clear the surface, and spread cultivation around us; and not easily repine if a storm overtook him in the wilderness.

During my stay at the Factory, several marriages and baptisms took place.'

The second entry shown records a marriage between one of the Company's officers and the Indian woman with whom he was co-habiting, and illustrates West's insistence on this point.

THE RUPERT'S LAND MARRIAGE REGISTER

1821.

Marrriages Solemnized in the Territory of the Hudson's Bay Company in the year 1821 - 197

Mr. Jobsten - Clerk, at Cumberland House, & Mary Kennedy of Norway House, were married at Norway House this twentieth day of August 1821, by Mr. West, Chaplain

In the presence of Nicholas Garry, George Purdyson, signed Mr. Jobsten, Mary Kennedy - No. 25

Peter Fidler, of Granitobah, & Mary, an Indian Woman of the same place, were married at Norway House this twentieth day of August 1821, by Mr. John West, Chaplain.

In the presence of Nicholas Garry, Donald Sutherland, signed Peter Fidler, Mary x her mark - No. 26

Alfred Guinche, (Serp), & Marianne Monnier (Serp), were married at York Factory this 20th day of August 1821 - by Mr. John West, Chaplain - signed Alfred Guinche, Marianne Monnier

In the presence of Walter Hanson, Nicholas Garry No. 27

Julien Junier, (Serp), and Margaret Groom (Serp) were married at York Factory this 20th day of August 1821, by Mr. John West, Chaplain - signed Julien Junier, Margaret Groom x

In the presence of W. Woodman, Alg. Donaldson, Walter Hanson No. 28

John Junier Tiffot, (Serp), & Salome Knechtler, (Serp), were married at York Factory this 20th day of August, 1821, by Mr. John West, Chaplain - signed John Junier Tiffot, Salome Knechtler x

In the presence of Walter Hanson, Simon Mc Gillivray, Wm. Todd No. 29

signed at York Factory August the 21st 1821

APPENDIX 'C'  
JOHN WEST AS ARTIST AT RED RIVER

During his stay at Red River, John West sent home drawings he had done to illustrate his work. These were used to illustrate articles in the Quarterly Papers of the Church Missionary Society, and appeared as plates in West's published Journal. Two appear on the following page.

The upper one illustrates an incident which took place on 31 January 1821, when West was returning from Qu'Appelle. It is described on pp 40f of the Journal. Shortly before setting out for the day's journey, West observed 'a fine looking little boy standing by the side of the cariole, and told his father that if he would send him' to the Settlement, he 'would be as a parent to him.' Four months later the boy arrived at Red River from Hunter's Tents and entered the school. The father of the boy had said after West's departure that 'as I had asked for his son, and stood between the Great Spirit and the Indians, he would send him to me.' (Journal, p 59)

The drawing also illustrates the way in which the single-seat carriole was drawn by three dogs. On deep and soft snow the dogs were preceded by a man wearing snow-shoes who depressed the snow sufficiently for them to run on it.

The lower drawing is an impression of the church and school erected by West.

## PLATES FROM JOHN WEST'S RED RIVER JOURNAL



West with carriole



The mission church and school

APPENDIX 'D'  
JOHN WEST'S LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY, 1828

Rectory - Chettle  
Nr. Sarum -  
Feby: 7th 1828

My dear Sir,

If I have appeared remiss in not answering your ltr sooner, it has arisen from a desire to consider it with deep reflection, & with sincere and earnest prayer to God for direction -

There is no quarter of the world I feel a more lively interest for, in the best sense of the word, than the Colonies of British North America - They have greatly interested me, in my Missionary labours, and if it be considered that I may be instrumental in promoting the objects of the Bible Society in that quarter, I am willing to undertake another Mission, in compliance with the wishes of the Committee - I fear, that much unkindly feeling exists in the Provinces which has no doubt been awakened from the North, from whence a numerous Emigrant Population has proceeded, and whence so much has been said, I think, in an unkindly - uncharitable, and captious manner -----

This being the case, I should consider the Mission, as one of an arduous nature - having for its object, the general promotion of a better feeling among the existing Bible Societies in the Colonies, - as well as to enlarge their sphere of usefulness in the circulation of the S.S. - together with the formation of New Societies where it might be found practicable -

Nor would it be the least interesting part of my labours, to collect if possible, every information "whether any thing more can or ought to be done in regard to translations into any of the Aboriginal languages" - As to the geographical direction in the tour of the Mission, & the season when it should be undertaken, perhaps it may be best considered in a future correspondence, or personal conference -

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Yrs. vy truly

John West.

APPENDIX 'E'  
THE GIPSY SCHOOL, FARNHAM, DORSET

The following description of the school building appeared as a footnote to the obituary notice of John West in The Gentleman's Magazine for February 1846, pp 213f.

'The piece of ground which has been purchased for the site of the new building is a very eligible one, situated nearly mid-way between the parish churches of Chettle and Farnham, which are about a mile distant from each other, and about six miles from Blandford, and sixteen from Salisbury. The ground commands an excellent panoramic view over many miles of finely cultivated and beautifully wooded country. Indeed, a more salubrious spot for bringing up the little wanderers could not have been selected; and from its commanding situation, the building will be a conspicuous object from the surrounding country. The design, by Louis Butcher, esq. is in the Elizabethan style of architecture, and the general arrangement of the plan is as follows: The centre of the principal front is appropriated to the dining hall for the children, having the master and mistress's apartments on either side; the kitchens and offices being in the centre in the rear. The boys and girls' school rooms occupy the wings. The principal elevation facing the west is two stories in height; the gable in the centre being terminated with a bell turret. The long line of roof is broken by gabled dormers, producing a pleasing effect of outline when seen in perspective. The school rooms occupying the wings are only carried up one story in height. The sleeping apartments for the master and mistress are in the centre; the dormitories for the boys and girls being on either side. There will be accommodation for twenty boys and four girls, or more, at first. The building will be constructed of red brick and flints, with stone quoins and dressings to the doors and windows. The estimated cost is £1000. There will also be land enough for the occasional employment of the children, as they grow up, in the occupations of the field garden, until they arrive at an age to leave the establishment.'

This description differs somewhat from the details on the plan submitted with the application for a government grant in 1845, which are incorporated in the ground-floor plan reproduced on page 96. In that plan, the building is shown surrounded by an area of land of roughly rectangular shape, 370 ft on the east boundary, and 190 ft on the south. This is illustrated on page 97. The layout indicates the character of the education which West wished to provide as an encouragement to the gipsies to settle to agriculture.

After the school's closure in 1855, the building was used as a residence. It was later purchased by Lieutenant General A.H. Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers of Rushmore, considerably extended, and con-

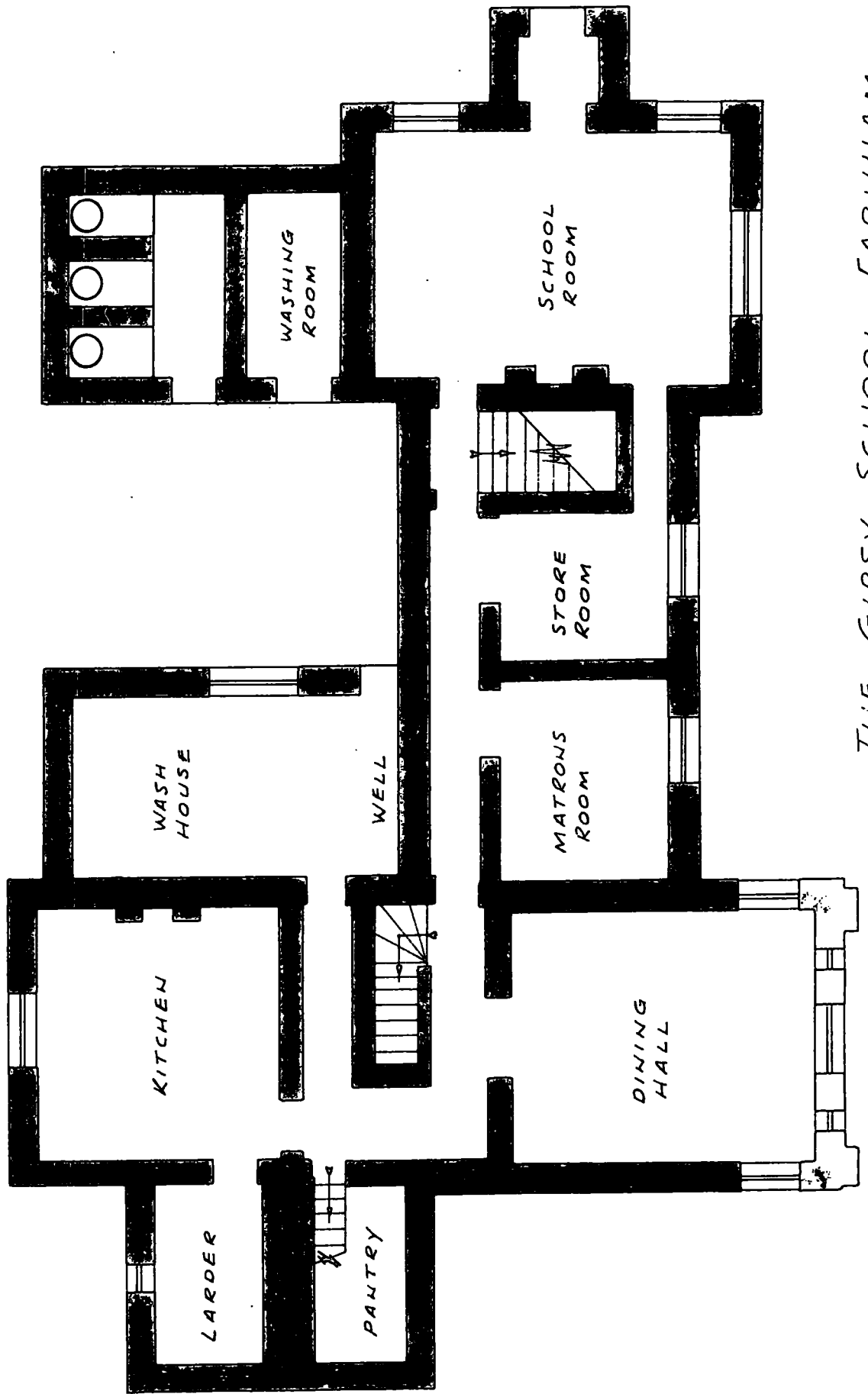
verted into a museum to house his local archaeological collection and further ethnological material. It remained as such until the death of his grandson in 1965, when it was closed.

The Gipsy School visitors' book was kept in the museum, though not as an exhibit. Information from it was incorporated in the script for a scene in an ambitious local pageant in 1961. With the closure of the museum and the dispersal of its contents in the years since 1965, there is little hope that the book will ever be seen again. The only remaining source for any knowledge of what it contained is the brief article in L.H. Dudley Buxton, The Pitt-Rivers Museum, Farnham. General Handbook, published in 1929.

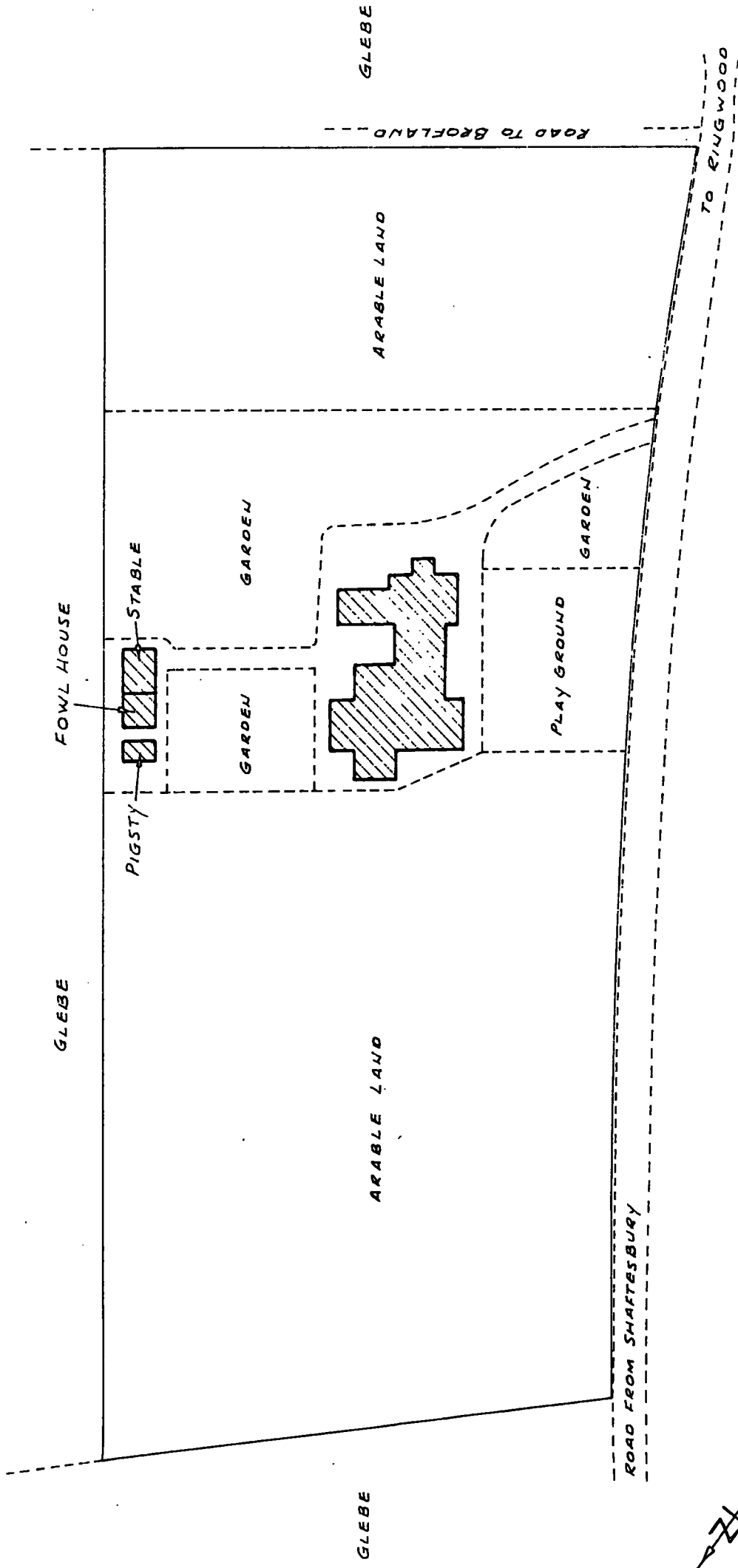
Entries in 1852 and the following year show that the pigsty was then being used for its designed purpose, although one wonders whether its function was less to train the boys as pigmen than to provide a home for a scavenger to eat up scraps from the table and to convert them into bacon.

The plans on pp 96 and 97 have been prepared by Mr Eric A. Burt, of Salisbury.





THE GIPSY SCHOOL, FARNHAM.



THE GIPSY SCHOOL, FARNHAM, DORSET.

SCALE - APPROX 1:500

APPENDIX 'F'  
THE WEST MEMORIALS

The chancel and nave of the church of St Mary, Chettle, were completely rebuilt in 1849 at the expense of the new owner of the Chettle estate, the Wimborne solicitor Edward Castleman. The wall tablet in memory of Harriett and John West and two of their children which had been erected in the former church was placed on the North wall of the new chancel. The East window, portraying the crucifixion, was given by the surviving West children in memory of their parents, as were a pair of iron and brass branched standard candlesticks which are now in Chettle House.

Canadian visitors to Britain from the Winnipeg area often visit the village to see the memorials. Two windows in St John's Cathedral, Winnipeg, built in 1926 near the site of West's original Red River wooden church, keep his work alive in their memory.

The two windows are shown on the following page. The larger one, on the North side of the nave, shows West preaching to Indians and a settler. It was given by the children of Edward Lancaster Drewry in 1946 in memory of their father. The smaller one, which is in the vestry, records the meeting of West and Chief Peguis, or Pigewis, referred to on page 14 above. It was given in memory of Albert and Ellen Le Beau by their son. The depiction of West in both windows is based on the portrait mentioned on page 29.

The windows in  
St John's Cathedral,  
Winnipeg,  
depicting  
John West



In the glory of God and in  
living memory of Albert  
and Luen Le Beau

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