

Samuel James Boulter Carter (1858 – 1938)

S J B Carter was an evangelist, author and poet who was called home to be with Christ in November 1938.¹³² It is suggested that through his evangelistic efforts, 800 were saved in one year alone¹³³. He made Ballarat his home: the Sands & MacDougall Directory for 1904 gives his address as 36 Doveton Street, and his occupation as a Printer.

It had been with open meetings that SJBC first commenced his service in Australia, having travelled from Great Britain to Sydney with his father, William. K J Newton¹³⁴ records,

Yet another British evangelist was Samuel Carter who had experience in Bible carriage work in the UK.¹³⁵ He was initially based in Sydney. His ministry in Ballarat, Victoria, during 1881 was reported extensively in the local newspaper. The articles express the radicalness which characterised the early



¹³² William Carter and Anna Hephzabah Boulter married in Dover in June 1846. Samuel James Boulter Carter was born at Pancras in June 1858. The 1871 UK Census shows the family living at 165 Halworth Rd, Parish of St Mary, Newington. William, then 45, listed his occupation as “Minister of Christ”. His wife’s name was spelled by the census taker as “Hannah” (aged 40) born in Brighton. Samuel James Boulter was their eldest, then 13 years old at school. His brothers were David R J (10), Joseph C W (3) and Benjamin T W (2). As was then common, three young women — household servants — were listed: Emma E Fox (21), Lucy Dean (25), and Mary Ann Body (21). SJBC’s death location is currently not known.

¹³³ **Note: Follow this up.** Ballarat Newspaper articles for 1880-1882.

¹³⁴ Kenneth John Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia, with particular reference to the Open Brethren*. ISBN 0 9596526 6 3.

¹³⁵ The Missionary Echo (1888), 249.

Brethren evangelists and the dilemma felt by other Christians in assessing such ministry. After all, not too many ministers of the day could boast a growth in active church members from 0 to 800 in a single year.

How are we to understand and explain the fact of the spiritual success which has attended the twelve months' campaign, just closed, of Mr Samuel Carter – the Plymouth Brother and evangelist – in Ballarat! Clearly, by acknowledging, with gratitude, that his labours have been in the Lord, and that the Master has given the blessing, although irrespectively of the foibles and faults of His servant. Mr Carter's *sibboleth* has been unorthodox in the estimation of many, and, in an ecclesiastical sense, he has had to stand alone; but for all this his case is so singular and striking as to command observation and comment. A year ago Mr Carter came to Ballarat unknown and without influence, except such as attaches to a reprobated sect in Christendom. At first only just the merest handful of congenial spirits associated themselves and met in the lower room of the Mechanics' Institute; their increasing numbers, however, were compelled to find more ample accommodation in the upper hall, and what was at first only a group of individuals has swelled into a large, orderly, and attentive congregation of not less than eight or nine hundred souls. During Mr Carter's ministry some sixty or more persons have been baptised by him, and many intelligent Christian people have become regular worshippers at the Mechanics'.¹³⁶

In July 1888 he withdrew from the troubled fellowship of independent meetings, and published a retraction of two pamphlets written in 1885 in which he had then denied that the one body was the only true ground of gathering in a day of ruin¹³⁷. In his own words, "The chaotic scene of religious desolation which the 'Open Meetings' in Melbourne present, is the *legitimate* outcome of that spirit of independency which in common with others I have so long defended. As some of us have looked about we have been impelled sorrowfully to ask, 'Where are we?' 'Is God the Author of confusion?' Can a principle which necessarily brings in all this sad disorder emanate from the God of love and peace?" On account of his stand, the 'Open' brothers refused his request to even speak with them, treating him as one who *caused* division.

In the 1890's SJBC continued with the Raven-Taylor fellowship, although it is difficult to understand how he was able to swallow his convictions in doing so. In about 1895 the truth of that the One Body is the ground of gathering came under attack, and SJBC was personally pinpointed:

A few years ago certain zealots for the New Teaching wished to (what they called) "help" one well known here in Australia¹³⁸, which, being interpreted, meant helping him to *give up* the truth, he was then known firmly to hold fast.

¹³⁶ *Willing Work* (Melbourne, 26.8.1881),195.

¹³⁷ Titles unknown. No copies or references to these have been located.

¹³⁸ SJBC, as the context proves.

These urged him to write to the one, who is now the leading light in the old country¹³⁹, stating his difficulties, in the hope that he might be able to solve them all, and thus a proselyte might be made of him. The one referred to did write and received an answer which anything but satisfied him, yet he let matters alone. But not long after an “Extract” out of the letter from the one at home to the other out here was *printed* in England without the latter’s knowledge or consent. This was sent to Australia and was being circulated here. A copy fell into the hands of the one to whom the letter was originally written, and his feeling on reading it was that it must be replied to. Consequently a printed “Reply” was given, in the front of which a reprint of the English “Extract” appeared.”¹⁴⁰

In this “Reply” SJBC demonstrated clearly the error, but despite this THR’s “admirers never wearied of bringing pressure on the writer of the “Reply” to withdraw it. He was at last induced to do so. Yet it should never have been done. Error was preferred at the expense of truth then. Let any unbiased person read the “Extract” and the “Reply” and say which of the two should have been withdrawn. Is it possible for any man to retain confidence as a reliable teacher if he has not the candour to own where he was wrong, when proved conclusively to be so?”¹⁴¹

“Are these not the very things that have caused all the trouble here for the last ten years on account of their persistent explaining away and rejection of them? Is it not for the holding fast of these, that those who have done so, were subjected to so much ill-will and persecution? What led to the Reply of SJBC of Ballarat? Just the denial of these truths. There would have been no need for it otherwise. Think what those have suffered at the hands of the supporters of the late FER, whose right-hand man THR has been, *because* they sought to *preserve* these things when they were being set aside, and could not give up what they had learned from God!”¹⁴²

SJBC again took a stand against falsehood in 1909. He was amongst the opposers of Charles Webb’s false doctrine in 1909, and wrote a tract opposing it.¹⁴³ But when a more formidable opponent, the dominant leader James Taylor, pressed Webb’s doctrine 20 years later, SJBC yielded to the pressure and once again chose to remain in fellowship with those who denied truths he had formerly defended.

His Legacy:

In 1897 he commenced a gospel magazine, *The Message*, which continued until at least 1914. Volumes of this little periodical are very hard to come by, but contain many excellent articles – with a particularly Australian flavour.

¹³⁹ THR, also from the context.

¹⁴⁰ W S Flett, “Demonstration of Errors in the New Teaching...” Chapter 11. August 1904.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² W S Flett, “Demonstration of Errors in the New Teaching...” Chapter 17. May 1905.

¹⁴³ Letters of James Taylor, vol.1 p.263.

Carter's tracts and especially his poems are well worth reading. Here is a sample:

— Under the Juniper Tree —

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die."

(1 Kings 19; 2 Tim.4; Rev.3:2).

Disheartened and weary he lay
Down under the juniper tree:
So faithless was he — not a ray
Of cheer 'mid the gloom could he see.
"Apostasy spreads," hissed the foe,
"Truth fails ... all thine efforts are vain."
A Voice whispered: "Though it be so,
Still 'Strengthen the things which remain.' "

"The things which remain! What are they?"
The man of God asked with a sigh.
The Voice breathed: "Around thee today,
They faint, they sink, 'ready to die.'
Though strife and division abound,
Though evil thou canst not restrain,
Yet still 'mid the ruins be found
To 'Strengthen the things which remain.' "

"On earth still *the Spirit* abides,
The gospel still sounds from above;
Go forth and wherever He guides,
Still tell the glad message of love.
The Supper — the bread and the wine —
Still speaks of the One Who was slain,
Still spreads thee a feast still divine
Then, 'Strengthen the things which remain.' "

"Each week still a few meet for *prayer*,
And graciously thus are they led
To cast upon Him all their care,
Who numbers the hairs of their head ;
And still by His love some are stirred
To gather in faith yet again
To read and to ponder *the Word*,
And 'Strengthen the things which remain.' "

'*The little* ones still seek to save ;
Oh ! care for them ; let them be told —
Of Him Who His life freely gave
To save them as well as the old.
The tempest-tossed and the *bereaved*,
The sick in their weakness and pain,

Still need to be solaced, relieved:
Oh! 'Strengthen the things which remain.' ”

“ ‘Stand fast!’ for *the faith* still contend,
Rise ! Gird thee, ‘Be strong in the Lord,’
‘Hold fast what thou hast to the end,’
And great then shall be thy reward.
‘The Lord is at hand!’ Ne’er forget
The hope of His coming and reign :
Despond not, nor murmur, nor fret,
But, ‘Strengthen the things which remain.’ ”

“The Church as a witness has failed,
Her lamp-stand has gone from its place,
Her light for her Lord has long paled,
Yet still shines the *light of His face*.
Look up — see how brilliant it gleams !
His glory and grace cannot wane;
Go forth then, reflect His bright beams, —
Go, ‘Strengthen the things which remain.’ ”

Then from under the juniper tree,
The servant went forth with this prayer :—
“My Lord, still there’s something for me
To do and to be and to bear;
Though feeble, despised, and obscure,
My soul by Thy love still constrain
For Thee and for Thine to endure,
And ‘Strengthen the things which remain.’ ”

Book List

Other titles by SJBC, mostly published by Morrish, include:

Five Little Pebbles – A Poem

Four Characters of the Church

Grace makes no Conditions

Head Belief and Heart Belief

Helps and Hints for Young Christians

Intimacy with Christ

Is it Well with Thee?

Knowledge is not Power

Philip the Evangelist

Proverbs: The Book of Relationship

Seventh Day Adventism - A Dialogue

Some Men’s Sins

Stumbling Blocks in the Way

The Books were Opened

The Christian Citizen

The Five Great Christian Ministries
The House of God Viewed Locally
The Love that Lasts; The Joy that Lasts; The Beauty that Lasts
The Queen of Sheba
The Tabernacle of Testimony
Unity
Unspoken Prayer
All Your Need (Phil.4:19)
Bible Songs – Notes of an Address
I Love to Point Him Out
The Perfect Man, Psalm 16 – Notes of an Address
A Personal Saviour
Submission, Matthew 26:42; Satisfaction
Baby's song: an incident in the Melbourne-Sydney night mail.
Brotherly forgiveness
Ephesus: Her Start, Zenith, Fall and Rise
Exhortation and Encouragement
Five Suggestive Figures
Hints on the prayer meeting
The Ten Lepers
The Operations of the Spirit of God in the Soul
Wrestling Habakkuk