

Giles, Father and Sons.

WHEN the old Lancashire and Yorkshire Association, founded in 1695, met for the last time before dividing in 1837 at Hebden Bridge, three ministers were members, a father and two sons. William Giles, the father, was pastor at Preston, William Giles, the son, was at Eccles, John Eustace Giles was at Leeds. One had been trained by experience only, one was essentially a schoolmaster, one was a Bristol man. To sketch their careers may illustrate the diversity of ministerial life a century ago, and it may dispel a confusion between father and son, into which nearly every writer has been betrayed, so that *Baptists of North-west England* and a portrait in Preston vestry need correction. A careful monograph by Mr. Arthur Humphreys in 1926 has done much to elucidate matters from the domestic side.

The family hailed from Devon. George of Totnes had a son, John, who settled at Tavistock. There our William senior was born in 1771. Twenty years later, Zachary Macaulay was appointed Governor of Freetown, for the Sierra Leone company. The strongest element here was a body of 1,100 negroes, who in the war of American Independence had sided with the British, and had since been domiciled in Nova Scotia; among them was a Baptist church, whose pastor was David George. Great interest was felt in England, and the infant B.M.S. sent out two white missionaries, whose work, however, soon ended. Coke, the great Methodist pioneer, organised another party, and in this William Giles enlisted, to help on the medical side. This party also met with severe disappointment and broke up; but Giles had come into contact with Baptists, both black and white, and he adopted their principles. When he returned, he was baptized at Plymouth Dock by Isaiah Birt. At the other church, Winterbotham had been imprisoned for political preaching, and work was under the care of Philip Gibbs; he obtained the help of Giles.

In naval circles there was a Eustace Pike, whose daughter Elizabeth married Giles. He was ordained at Portsea, and settled as pastor at Dartmouth, the small church where Newcomen (of the steam-engine) had been pastor half a century earlier. Here were born three sons, William in 1798, John Eustace in 1805, and Samuel about 1809. In this year he moved to Lymington, where he exercised his ministry for eight years. His boys were sent to school with James Hinton at Oxford.

In 1817 he undertook a third pastorate, moving to Chatham, and the Kent period offers plenty of opportunity for confusion. For in the first place there was at Eythorne a pastor, John Giles, from 1792 to 1827, so that within the same Association there were two pastors of the same surname, apparently unrelated. Then William Giles went to the Particular Baptist church which had existed in Chatham since 1741, which in 1776 had called John Knott, a baker from Eythorne, who had resigned in 1816—into the confusion between the Knotts we need not enter. This church had a building on Clover Lane, for which appeal was made to London for aid in 1774; while Knott had enlarged the chapel in 1793 and 1815. Even so, it was not large enough, and a building committee was soon formed for a completely new chapel; and to this committee William Giles junior was secretary. Zion was opened in 1821, on the old site.

It may be added that the oldest cause was General Baptist, known from 1660 when it owned a house, and that in 1823 it was worshipping on Heavyside lane in premises leased till 1899, with Edwin Chapman as its Elder; it had a burial-ground on Hammond Hill. From it an Evangelical church had separated in 1800 rather than move, and had joined the New Connexion, but was just fading away in 1821. These two are mentioned lest they should be confounded with the Giles churches. And to avoid confusion in another way, it may be noted that the Great Meeting founded about 1662 by Thomas Carter, was also housed on Clover Lane, at Ebenezer.

The Particular Baptist church was troubled with Antinomians, as were many others about that time, and Giles opposed them. One result was that a second Particular Baptist church was founded, at the Brook, and this joined the Kent and Sussex Association. The original church settled down under W. G. Lewis, while Giles took charge of this new church, on strict communion lines, but not hyper-Calvinist. He was a good evangelist, and preached for the Irish Society. This took him once to Preston in Lancashire, which had had no pastor for three years and was tempted to close its doors. He was invited, and reopened Leeming Street on 17 February, 1833, being followed at Chatham Brook by Reuben May. In nine years he left a deep mark on Lancashire, prominent among those Strict and Particular Baptists who held by the Association and supported missions. Then there was a split in the Home Mission church at Ashton-under-Lyne, so Giles resigned Preston and went there in 1843, having the joy of re-uniting the church, being aided by the Preston church. He resigned in December 1845, and died next month.

William Giles junior was sent by his father to school at

Oxford, where James Hinton, the Baptist minister, supported himself by teaching on St. Aldate's. Young Giles rose to be usher there. When his father moved to Chatham in 1817, the son joined him, and opened a school on his own account. One of his earliest pupils was Charles Dickens, 1817-1821. Mr. Humphreys asserts that the son was called to the ministry in 1817, and though he offers no evidence, it is perfectly possible that the church called him to "the ministry," as distinct from the pastorate, that is, that he was formally recognised as a lay-preacher. Yet, as the father was that year admitted to the Bristol Fund, there does seem room to doubt, until the church record confirms the statement. The son was essentially a school-master, and his establishment was advertised as "Classical, Mathematical and Commercial." After twelve years he moved to Lancashire; his biographer does not tell whether this was connected with his marrying Harriet Waring. On 26 January, 1831, he opened a boarding-school at Barton Hall, Patricroft. Next year the Itinerant Society linked with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Association opened work at Barton lane, Eccles, and Giles junior became pastor. This was before his father came to the county. About 1837 or 1838 he moved his school to 38, Ardwick Green, Manchester. But in 1842 there was a thorough change. He moved his school into Cheshire, at Seacombe House, resigned the pastorate of Eccles, and accepted the pastorate of the original Baptist church of Liverpool, then worshipping at Byrom street; from this church C. M. Birrell had in 1838 taken away many members and had built Pembroke; those who remained were Strict and Particular, and had dropped out of the Association in 1841. As for Eccles, it soon quitted the Association, and it is represented to-day by the Strict and Particular church at Byron street, Patricroft. Be it remembered also that Giles, the father, in the same year 1842 left Preston to reside in Manchester, just as his son left that town. In 1843 Dickens had won an international reputation, and Samuel Giles, brother of William junior, entertained the former master and the former pupil at Ardwick; from that time onwards the school advertised the connection and gave Dickens as a referee. As the railway was being tunnelled beneath Byrom street, the premises were sold in 1846, and the Liverpool church was housed next year on Shaw street, where it still worships, having had in 1875 J. K. Popham as its pastor. Giles seems to have ended his connection with it about 1846, for a school advertisement of 1848 refers to him as W. Giles, Esquire, of Seacombe House. And perhaps this maritime residence, coupled with his frequent removals, prompted him; certainly he did become F.R.G.S., a distinction not worn by many Baptist ministers, but with a clear

advertising value for a schoolmaster. At the end of July, 1848, he made his last change, to Netherleigh House, Chester. In this city there was a seventeenth-century Baptist church, worshipping since 1800 on Hamilton Place; of this church he became pastor. But the school was the main thing. His fiftieth year was celebrated by a committee of which Dickens was a member; meetings were held in the Mayor's parlour at Manchester, and a silver tea-and-coffee service was presented on 16 May 1849, with a letter read from the famous novelist. The school passed on the death of William junior in 1856 to his son William Theophilus, M.A., who carried it on till 1882; he became a clergyman, died in 1895, and was buried at Upton. The family is still represented in Chester.

John Eustace Giles, son of William senior, had a rather different career. He was schooled, first by his brother William at Chatham, then by James Hinton at Oxford. His father baptised him at Chatham in 1824, and he went to Bristol College to prepare for the ministry. After supplying at Haverfordwest, he began work in 1830 with a new church up Oxford Court in the city of London, curiously mis-named Salters' Hall. After six years he went to the great church on South Parade in Leeds, succeeding James Acworth, who went to the northern College. The South Parade chapel soon had to be enlarged, and three new chapels or schools were presently opened in other parts of Leeds. In the town he took a most prominent part; ecclesiastically he stood for religious equality and no church rates; religiously he was evangelical and missionary; politically he upheld free trade, and opposed socialism and slavery. Twice he was sent to plead for persecuted Baptists, to Hamburg and to Copenhagen, succeeding on each occasion with the state authorities. His great abilities were recognised by an invitation to become secretary of the B.M.S., which he declined, and by election to be chairman of the Baptist Union in 1846. That year also saw him pastor at Broadmead, whence he promptly returned to Yorkshire, taking charge of the Portmahon church at Sheffield, where he wielded great influence for fourteen years. After a brief experience at Rathmines, he went to London, and at Clapham Common spent his last thirteen years, passing away in 1875.