

The First Leeds Baptist Church.

THE story of the first Baptist meeting house erected in Leeds, familiarly known as the Old Stone Chapel, extends from 1779 to 1826, a period which coincides with the life work of one man, Thomas Langdon; before 1779 there were Baptists in Leeds, of course, that date merely representing the significant determination to have a permanent meeting-place; and after 1826 the new chapel called South Parade became the mother of the large family we know to-day in Leeds.

I.

The movement to form organised Baptist churches in Yorkshire dates only from the eighteenth century, and although there is no need to retrace here the story so well told in the centenary volume of the Yorkshire Association (*The Baptists of Yorkshire*, 1912), one or two points would seem to have a bearing on Leeds and the West Riding. It was a village movement, and the churches were poor in the double sense that they possessed not much wealth and (with a few brilliant exceptions) few learned men;¹ nonconformist disabilities were felt more in towns; and the Leeds church was not too rich in material things until the nineteenth century began, as its minister's vicissitudes will show. Archbishop Herring's visitation returns of 1743² show that there were Baptist circles in Bradford, Gildersome, Guiseley, Huddersfield, and especially Rawdon, all not too distant from Leeds; by the middle of the century there were nearly a dozen chapels in the West Riding; and when the economic position of Leeds is borne in mind, an early influence by these neighbouring communities seems almost obvious. Yet there is little evidence of it, until 1760.

In 1672, the Presbyterians raised a meeting house in Leeds called the "New Chapel" at Mill Hill, and the Rev. Richard Stretton became its minister. Oliver Heywood,³ on one of his

¹ Whitley, *History of British Baptists*, 198; *Memoir of Dr. Steadman*, p. 234 (letter of December 28, 1805); for some of the exceptions, Rev. D. Glass, *Trans. Bapt. Hist. Soc., N.S.*, III, 178.

² Yorkshire Archæological Society, record series, 4 vols. At IV, 241 are collected the reference to Baptists. Is it without significance that nearly all the influential members of the Old Chapel were engaged in the wool trade, which required visits to and from nearby villages?

³ *The Rev. O. Heywood, B.A., 1630-1702: his autobiography* [&c.], ed. Horsfall Turner, 4 vols., 1881-5. I, 341. On Stretton see *Thoresby Society*, vol. xi., D. H. Atkinson, *R. Thoresby*, 1885, etc. Elkanah Hickson (d. Nov. 1694) was the son of Robert Hickson (d. 1681) both friends of Thoresby and Heywood; see Atkinson, op. cit., I, 51, etc.

numerous visits to Leeds, came there in August, 1677: "on Lord's day, August 5, 1677, I was to preach at Leeds for Mr. Streaton and preaching in the forenoon at Mr. Elk. Hicksons there was a great number . . . [&c.] Then upon the wednesday at lecture there was a great assembly of all sorts, presbyterian, independant, prelatial, Anabaptist of all sorts, strange faces that never were there before, W H being an Anab: being askt how he likt me ans: who can chuse but like him well, he is a wel accomplisht man, these things coming to my eye and ear did too much tickle me with vain-glorious conceits of myself . . ."

There is no further trace of W. H. and the others at Leeds; but in the last decade of the century the labours of William Mitchel,⁴ of Rossendale, at Hunslet as early as 1694 are known, that, however, being before he had definitely adopted the Baptist position. The next Baptist name to be met is that of Thomas Hardcastle, the son of Thomas Hardcastle ejected from Shadwell and a friend of Heywood's; Thomas Hardcastle the second gave land for the erection of a meeting house at Gildersome in 1707, signed the first Confession of faith of Rawdon church in 1715, was an elder in 1714 of that church, but resigned the office in October, 1744, because of his distant residence. He lived at Woodhouse in the parish of Leeds.⁵ "It is rather strange that after all the work of Mitchel and Moore, no permanent cause had arisen in Leeds."

The Leeds Baptist church took its origin in a newly-formed congregational church in Leeds with John Edwards⁶ as its

⁴ Overend, *History of the Ebenezer Baptist church, Bacup*, 1912; p. 57 (letter of 1691), 73 (letter of 1694), David Crosley's visit to Leeds in June 1691 is also referred to, p. 55 (cf. p. 35), Burley is mentioned, and it is also stated (p. 92) that the meeting-house of Josiah Westerman at Hunslet Hall was a regular station for Crosley and Mitchel, but no evidence is quoted as regards Crosley. The episode is interesting for Crosley was Baptist by 1691, and Mitchel at any rate by about 1695; it is unlikely that the connection dropped there and then, but nothing permanently Baptist seems to have followed their labours here. J. Moore is also mentioned, p. 31, 34, 58, &c.

⁵ Information kindly supplied by Rev. D. Glass from the Rawdon church book. *History of the Baptist church at Gildersome*, 1888, p. 19, 22. From an indenture concerning Gildersome church of 1726 it is gathered that T. Hardcastle was at "Great Woodhouse in the parish of Leeds," but a memo of 1751 speaks of Thomas Hardcastle of Gildersome; a further memo of 1774 refers to Thomas Hardcastle as "grandson and heir-at-law of Thomas Hardcastle of Great Woodhouse," (MS. notes of W. R. Bilbrough). There is a notice to the creditors and debtors of the late Thos. Hardcastle of Woodhouse, wool stapler, in *Leeds Mercury*, 17 Dec., 1796.

⁶ Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire*, 1868; p. 305; based on notes by Rev. T. Scales, the successor of Edwards (d. 1785) in 1819. It is unlikely, we may note in passing, that the great awakening of conscience made by Wesley in Leeds was altogether without its effect on Baptists (e.g., Aug., 1778).

minister, formerly a preacher in Wesley's connexion, "but converted under the preaching of the Rev. George Whitefield"; this church worshipped at the White Chapel, built for them in 1754. Edwards was "located for a time at Leeds, where the Society was much divided. . . . As Edwards' views more resembled those of Whitefield than Wesley, he and many others withdrew themselves and formed a separate congregation, much increased by defections from Call Lane [Independent] . . . Some persons came even from Bradford to profit by Mr. Edwards' ministry."

Now it is known that Dr. Fawcett in his youth united with a number of people who had left the Wesleyan connexion at Bradford and who came to hear Edwards; there was immediately an endeavour to begin a Bradford cause, and in this partly is the origin of the Westgate Baptist church; W. Crabtree was its first minister and it was his services that Fawcett often attended, and by whom Fawcett was baptised in 1758.⁷ Then, certainly by 1760,⁸ "several members of the Independent church under the care of the Rev. J. Edwards at the White Chapel in Leeds, were, by reading the New Testament, led to call in question the validity of Infant sprinkling. The church of Christ at Bradford, and their esteemed pastor, Mr. C[rabtree] were by these petitioned to come over and help them in their enquiries into the divine will. A letter to this effect, dated April 23rd, 1760, was sent to Mr. Crabtree signed by four persons. Five persons were soon after baptised and received into full communion with the church at Bradford; these were followed by six more . . ." Fawcett's diary⁹ gives the exact date of the baptism of these five first members: under May 25th, 1760, he records, "This day six persons were added to our number, five of whom came from Leeds." It is also known from his diary that James Hartley, of Haworth, visited Leeds about this time. And Leeds was something of a publishing centre for Baptist opinion in the sixties and seventies; Griffith Wright issued from his press here the numerous pamphlets of men like Fawcett, Dan Taylor, or W. Crabtree.

The Baptist interest in Leeds grew and there was a determination to secure some permanency in the seventies. About 1775, a soldier in a regiment stationed at Leeds, and recently moved from St. Albans, used to preach acceptably, we may infer, to the people at Leeds.¹⁰ His name was Luke Haywood; and becoming friendly with the minister of the Gildersome

⁷ *An account of the life, ministry and writings of the late John Fawcett, D.D.* [by J. Fawcett, junior], 1818, p. 36, p. 40.

⁸ *Memoirs of the late Rev. Wm. Crabtree*, by I. Mann, 1815, p. 36.

⁹ Fawcett, *op. cit.*, 57. On Hartley, *ibid.*, 67.

¹⁰ J. Stuart, *Beechen Grove Baptist church*, Watford, 1907, p. 34.

church, Rev. James Ashworth, he was baptised by him on August 1st, 1776.¹¹ His regiment was drafted soon afterwards to Fort George, and while there his discharge was procured, and by the middle of 1777 he had settled at Watford; he was given a formal call there on September 17th, 1777, supported by a recommendation of Mr. Ashworth's of July 3rd of that year. But the Leeds church had also desired him to settle among them and had offered a credit of £20 or £30 for his discharge, a large sum for so poor a church.

Undismayed the people at Leeds struggled on—there must have been a mere handful of them—and in January, 1779, they hired rooms in the Old Assembly rooms, Kirkgate, and fitted them up as a preaching station; Dr. J. Fawcett and Mr. J. Parker preached at the opening services, the former delivering “a very ingenious sermon from Nehemiah iv. 2, ‘What do these feeble Jews?’” In May, 1779, about sixteen persons were immersed at the Nether Mills, and formed into a church, being supplied by ministers in the district.¹² The congregation increasing, application was made to the academy at Bristol for a supply, and on June 3rd,¹³ a student not yet twenty-four years old, Thomas Langdon, came to Leeds for the first time and instantly pleased. His visit proved to be so important that the month of June, 1779, is the end of the preliminaries of Leeds Baptist history; henceforward the record is unflinching. The building of the stone chapel was begun early in 1780, and was completed in July, 1781; at the opening services, Dr. Fawcett was again one of the preachers, with Rev. J. Ashworth: Fawcett's text was Gen. xxviii. 17.

II.

Thomas Langdon was born on September 15th, 1755, at Uffculm in Devonshire.¹⁴ His father was a deacon at the Independent church there. As a youth Langdon experienced conversion and was baptised when eighteen by Rev. H. Simonds, Baptist minister of Prescott. Another minister of Prescott, Rev. Joseph Alsop, whose friendship was long retained by Langdon, encouraged him to study; he entered Bristol College in 1777 or 1778,¹⁵ and it was during his student days there that he began a lifelong friendship with Robert Hall, a fellow student. His relations with his tutors were then and always remained

¹¹ *History of the Baptist church at Gildersome*, 1888, p. 24.

¹² *Circular Letter of the Yorks, Assoc.*, 1842, p. 21.

¹³ T. Langdon, letter to B. Goodman, 28 March, 1820. MS.

¹⁴ *Memoir*, p. 9, &c.

¹⁵ Rev. Professor F. E. Robinson informs me there is no record of his entry at Bristol.

cordial; it is pleasant to read the banter, for instance, of Dr. Caleb Evans¹⁶ (after whom he named one of his sons long afterwards) about a university of Leeds—"You speak to me, my good friend, about *Doctor* Evans, but really I know no such person. The only Dr. Evans I ever heard of, was the author of "Christian temper," and he has long since exchanged this world for a better. Though now I think of it—perhaps you have a university at Leeds, and are yourself chancellor, and have granted me a Diploma, for which honour I desire to make all due acknowledgements, if it be so . . ."

He stayed in Leeds until the September¹⁷ of that year, when he returned to Bristol. The impression he made must have been remarkable, for the church at Leeds was anxious that he should settle among them without completing his studies, and a letter was addressed, with the concurrence of local ministers, to Hugh Evans, while Langdon was still at Leeds. His son, Caleb Evans, replied in a first letter giving his personal opinion, "I am sorry to differ in opinion with my honoured brethren, but I think it will be an irreparable injury to you to break off studies in the infancy of them and no lasting benefit to the people"; and in another letter he reported the decision of the annual meeting of Bristol College, "Yesterday we held our annual meeting, at which I read Mr. Fawcett's letter, and the concurrent suffrage of the ministers; but it was the unanimous opinion of the society, that unless *you* had personally desired a discharge, as well as the people, it would be an act of cruelty to give you one, and no real kindness to the people. If their affection for you depend upon the gratification of their present humour, it can be of little value. If it be genuine, and as it ought to be, they will rejoice in your having an opportunity for improvement. . . . Remember me affectionately to Mr. Ross and the whole church at Leeds; . . ." ¹⁸ The college sent another "supply," and about him something will be said later.

But in November the Leeds congregation was still insistent: Joseph Ross, a deacon, wrote¹⁹ on their behalf requesting Langdon to leave Bristol in the following Spring, for "to tell you the truth, Mr. Langdon, I believe no person but yourself will please the people here. You have got so much hold of their affections, that I think you are seldom out of their thoughts." He spent the next vacation of 1780, however, at Abingdon,²⁰ assisting the Rev. Daniel Turner, unable through age and

¹⁶ *Memoir*, p. 125.

¹⁷ T. Langdon, letter to B. Goodman, 28 March, 1820. MS.

¹⁸ *Memoir*, p. 13. He accurately reports the Bristol College minute of Aug. 11, 1779.

¹⁹ *Memoir*, p. 15.

²⁰ *Memoir*, p. 15, and Bristol College minute of Aug. 28, 1780.

infirmity to work unassisted, and at the close of this visit a unanimous invitation was given to Langdon to become co-pastor. The salary offered was £70 a year, increased to £100 when he should become sole minister, and a house rent-free was added as part of the bargain; yet Langdon, "sensible of his slender knowledge of the languages and other branches of useful literature . . . was desirous of continuing longer under the patronage of the Society."

It was Leeds that attracted him, in spite of its offer of a mere £30 and its debt of £600 incurred at this time by the building of the Stone Chapel. There is all the fervour of Wales in the letter of Caleb Evans²¹ to Langdon on this matter: "I am out of all patience to hear that the people at Leeds, now they are so numerous, talk of giving you but thirty pounds per annum, nor will I ever consent to your settling there upon such terms. Were you a man of fortune, or the people so few or so poor that thirty pounds was the most they could do, I would not object; but I should reproach myself, and I insist upon it you let the people know it, if, after having taken you from Abingdon, where you would have been handsomely provided for, I should now permit you (I mean with my consent) to settle with a people you have sacrificed so much to serve, and who, though so numerous, only offer you so small a salary."

This is to hasten. According to his own statement,²² Langdon "settled" at Leeds on May 31st, 1781, but there was still some hesitation about a final acceptance of the call. Caleb Evans²³ wrote on August 7th, "It has been a great relief to me to find things go on so comfortably with you in Leeds . . ." and a College minute at Bristol of August 28th, 1781, records that "Mr. Langdon was settled at Leeds. . . . Approved of his continuance at Leeds and voted him five guineas for the purchase of books." Even in February, 1782, Mr. Turner²⁴ could write from Abingdon: "I am sorry the means of your support are so low. . . . As to your acceptance of the people's call, what shall I say? If, after well and seriously weighing the matter, and seeking the divine direction, you still felt your mind disposed to accept it, you would certainly, in my opinion, be in the path of duty in doing so." Or in March, Caleb Evans again: "I know not how to advise you to leave Leeds, the people appear to be so much set upon having you; and yet I hardly know how to advise you to settle there, as I am sure you might settle more advantageously elsewhere . . . I can only say, seek direction from above. . . . Should you settle at Leeds, I feel myself very

²¹ *Memoir*, p. 16. Bristol, Jan. 31, 1782.

²² T. Langdon, letter to B. Goodman, 28 March, 1820. MS.

²³ *Memoir*, p. 141.

²⁴ *Memoir*, p. 134.

strongly disposed to comply with your request of being present at your ordination.”²⁵

Langdon must have made his decision about the pastorate soon after this; and he was ordained on June 27th, 1782. His own recollection was that the ordination services were “peculiarly solemn and impressive”; Rev. S. Medley, of Liverpool, offered the ordination prayer, Rev. Caleb Evans gave the charge, and Rev. W. Crabtree, of Bradford, preached.

On the 7th November, 1781, a Church Covenant had been signed by nineteen members; the original has been lost, but a copy made about 1800 has been preserved at South Parade, and added to the names of the original nineteen is a list of members received into the church during the next few years. This “Covenant of church communion” closely resembles that of the church at Gildersome, already in print,²⁶ with one important difference; there is no “Confession of faith,” but in the middle of the covenant a short statement of faith is inserted after the words “we take the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament as the only ground and rule of our faith and practice.” It reads, “in which we believe are explicitly contained the important doctrines of the three equal persons in Godhead, Eternal and Personal Election, the Original Sin and Depravity of mankind, particular redemption, efficacious grace in conversion, and justification by the righteousness of Christ imputed, the final perseverance of the saints with all other precious truths connected therewith. Nor will we knowingly receive any into fellowship with us who do not accept and freely embrace these sentiments. Now according to these divine oracles and depending for perseverance only upon the divine help and assistance therein promised, as deeply sensible that we are not sufficient of ourselves but that all of our sufficiency both to will and to do that which is good is of God, we now covenant with God . . .” Of those who signed it, not many may now be identified. The two most important members were Joseph Ross, the deacon who invited Langdon, whose signature comes first, and Joseph Sharp, who figures second on the list; the latter is known through Langdon’s funeral sermon,²⁷ and he held some such office as treasurer, for in 1797 a special church collection was made to pay him accumulated interest and other expenses.

Langdon had no easy task before him; his church membership was small, his chapel burdened with a debt of £600, his salary inadequate, but in his favour he had his youth (he was not yet married), and his sense of divine call. The story for the

²⁵ *Memoir*, p. 17.

²⁶ *Hist. of the Bapt. ch. at Gildersome*, 1888, pp. 55-9, dated 1749.

²⁷ See bibliography of Langdon’s publications.

next few years is fragmentary, and mere glimpses are allowed us from scraps of correspondence with Rev. D. Turner. "I rejoice to hear your congregation increases. . . . But you must have patience," he writes in January,²⁸ 1783, and in November,²⁹ replying to a letter of August, "I am sorry to find that you meet with difficulties and afflicting trials; . . . It is among the lower sort of people, after all, that we must look for lively religion," adding advice how to preach the Gospel. In 1784³⁰ the death of one of his prominent members must have caused Langdon much pain, if we may judge by the feeling of another of Turner's letters; the name of the member is not known. The record is then meagre for five years, but it is noted³¹ that he visited, "shortly after his ordination," various towns in an attempt to wipe out the church's debt.

In 1789 he was dangerously ill with fever. In March of the next year he became an agent of the Dublin General Evangelical Society on the invitation of Rev. James Biggs, minister of Swift's Alley, Dublin; he visited that city and enjoyed the visit, and in November 1790 he received a unanimous call to become pastor at the Baptist church, Swift's Alley, at a salary of £120. He sent a lengthy reply³² to say that he could not leave Leeds: "I feel a most affectionate attachment to my people," he says, and then goes on to allow us a charming glimpse of the little church—"The interest is only in its infancy, and as there are several respectable families which attend from a partiality to my ministry, I have reason to fear it would be injured by my removal. And indeed, I am afraid it would not be so easy for the people here to get a suitable minister as you seem to imagine. They are, it is true, principally a plain people, and their sentiments are in general Calvinistic; but they have a great deal of good sense, and I believe there are few congregations more liberal and candid, or that would more dislike either a ranting enthusiast or a flaming bigoted Calvinist. They are not able, indeed, to raise a salary equal to what you propose, but I believe they do what they can. They raise what is sufficient to support me in my present situation, and should I marry (and as I have made no vows of celibacy, it is not impossible but I may), I am confident they would exert themselves to the very utmost." That confidence was soon to be tested.

On the 29th July, 1791, when on a visit to Devonshire, he

²⁸ *Memoir*, p. 146-7.

²⁹ *Memoir*, p. 122.

³⁰ *Memoir*, p. 133.

³¹ *Memoir*, p. 20. See also later for the item from London and other places in 1800 to pay off the debt; here is evidence probably of his influence.

³² *Memoir*, pp. 25-8.

was married to Miss Ann Brown, the daughter of a deacon at Prescott, and sister-in-law of Langdon's old friend, Mr. Alsop. Their first child, a son, was born on the 1st January, 1793, but in the summer of the same year the baby died of smallpox. Langdon poured out his grief, for it was a double blow; the death had occurred in Devonshire, whither Mrs. Langdon had gone in consequence of the death of her father. Those were the days of large families, and it was not long before a second child was born, Mary, about 1794; another came probably in the next year, and thereafter there is a succession of children to the total of at least twelve.³³ Well might Robert Hall³⁴ write to him "the tranquillity of a single life is apt to degenerate into insipidity, and that of married persons to be ruffled with care."

In May, 1794, feeling that his salary was more than ever inadequate to his domestic requirements, he began in business as a bookseller to supplement his income; but after a trial of two years on a small scale, he abandoned this business.³⁵ But he did not abandon the project of supplementing his salary, and "after much consideration and asking the advice of his friends," began a school³⁶ in 1796, which flourished until his death. On the 8th February, 1795, he preached at Hull on the formation of a Baptist church there; the sermon then delivered he was induced to print.³⁷ The year 1799 must have been a proud and a busy time for him, for the Yorkshire and Lancashire Association met at Leeds in that year, and the manuscript letters³⁸ addressed to him are still preserved.

³³ *Memoir*, p. 137. I am assured that there were more, probably sixteen, but have been unable to consult the register of the Old Chapel sent to Somerset House in 1837.

³⁴ *Memoir*, p. 144.

³⁵ *Memoir*, p. 37.

³⁶ Date uncertain. In April and July still "Mr. Langdon, bookseller, Upperhead Row," *Leeds Intelligencer* 21 April, 4 July, 1796; in September, "Mr. Thos. Langdon, stationer," *Leeds Mercury*, 10 Sept., 1796.

School referred to in a letter of R. Hall's of June 26, 1797. *Memoir*, p. 39. Cf. the panegyric of R. W. Hamilton, *ibid*, 94. The Leeds directory for 1817 styles it an academy for young gentlemen, West Street; but Mrs. Langdon helped, and girls were sent there, e.g., Mrs. J. B. Bilbrough, daughter of W. Radford, whose son, W. R. Bilbrough noted down his mother's recollections, which I have used; she went about 1820 when six years old, leaving when nine.

Langdon was probably influenced by Fawcett, to whose academy at Ewood Hall (where he removed in Jan. 1797) many of the local Baptists sent their sons, e.g., J. B. Bilbrough [see bibliography of Langdon, 1817] or J. Town. The school was continued after his death; both Mrs. and Miss Ann Langdon on the one hand, and Caleb Evans Langdon on the other, kept schools. See later.

³⁷ *Memoir*, p. 30; see bibliography.

³⁸ From Bacup, Clitheroe, Cloughfold, Colne, Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Manchester, Rawdon, Rochdale, Salendine Nook, Wainsgate; in the possession of Mr. J. E. Town.

At the Association meeting held in 1804 at Hebden Bridge a proposal was made to establish an academy for the education of young men for the ministry, a project that seems to have been dear to the heart of Langdon; he, Dr. Fawcett, and Rev. T. Littlewood, of Rochdale, the secretary, were the organisers, and an influential layman, James Bury, the treasurer. A short statement³⁹ on the project was drawn up and circulated, and this concludes: "Before the late Association at Hebden-Bridge, several individuals had thought on the subject, and had communicated their wishes and their hopes concerning it. At that time, a very judicious sermon, on the nature and important ends of a gospel ministry, was delivered by the Rev. Thomas Langdon, in which the preacher recommended the proposed institution with great propriety and effect. The sermon,⁴⁰ it is expected, will shortly appear in print, and be dispersed as widely as possible." Before that Association meeting dispersed, £714 had been subscribed, and the names of many Leeds men appeared in the subscription list printed with the sermon, chiefly William Radford with a contribution of £50 and Michael Thackray with one of £21. There was discussion on the place where the academy should be built, Little Horton near Bradford eventually being decided upon; but much difficulty was found in securing a president; Rev. J. Kinghorn, of Norwich, was approached, but declined, and in the end, Dr. William Steadman accepted the office in May, 1805.⁴¹

This period may with certainty be regarded as the brightest of Langdon's life; from 1805 onwards shadows are cast upon that brightness; there are personal and family troubles. His own health was undermined by asthma from this time until his death; by 1815 his health was permanently broken.⁴² "He was seldom able to remain in bed during the night, but would sit for hours in an easy chair," records his daughter; and on February 6th, 1817⁴³ he could himself write to his wife, "When I parted with you, though I knew of your intention of staying only during

³⁹ Printed in the *Memoir*, pp. 40-42.

⁴⁰ See bibliography.

⁴¹ *Memoir*, pp. 43, 47. Some account of the founding of the academy in Parsons, *History of Leeds*, II. 35-37; and detailed information in *An account of the life, &c., of John Fawcett, D.D.*, 1818, p. 308 &c., and in *The Jubilee memorial of Horton College, Bradford*, 1854. From Steadman's own information (*Memoir*, by T. Steadman, 1838), it is gathered that Langdon was one of those who addressed a pressing letter to him, then at Bristol. Steadman arrived in Leeds on June 13, 1805, and often preached here, e.g. April 6, 1806, when he "did not feel quite at home"; or January 18, 1807, when he preached for Parsons, who was ill. (*ibid.*)

⁴² *Memoir*, pp. 47, 52.

⁴³ *Memoir*, p. 50; ms. notes of W. R. Bilbrough.

the holidays, yet I had not the least expectation of living to see you again. . . . My coughing and breathing are in general very bad; my nights are restless, and in general very painful, so that I feel myself extremely weak." Mrs. J. B. Bilbrough (1814-1892), daughter of William Radford, remembered the old man; "Mr. Langdon was a nice old gentleman . . . and my father had given him a standing invitation to come and dine with him once a week; so on a certain day a knife and fork were laid for him, and he came if convenient to do so. He would walk in and sit down with one leg put back under the chair, and lean upon his knee for a while till he got his breath, for he was asthmatical, and after a few minutes he recovered and would say to me: 'Well, my dear, and how are you to-day?'" Added to this was the sorrow of losing two of his daughters, who died from inflammation of the lungs, one, aged nine, in 1808, the other, aged about fourteen, in August, 1809; his eldest daughter Mary was also severely ill at this time.

Yet he pursued his work actively. In 1808 he was the minister who addressed the church at Gildersome at the ordination of Rev. William Scarlett.⁴⁴ He had the joy of baptising his daughter Mary, now aged twenty, in 1814.⁴⁵ And his friends, especially Robert Hall, were a source of pleasure, either by letter or by visit. In 1817, August 28th, the second annual meeting of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Assistant Baptist Missionary Society was held at Leeds; Benjamin Goodman was in the chair during the proceedings, and Langdon, of course, figures in the printed *Account*⁴⁶ of the meeting; various members of the Goodman family gave donations for the "translations" and the subscriptions for the year include £41, out of £112, "collected at the Leeds annual meeting."

⁴⁴ *History of the Baptist church at Gildersome*, 1888, p. 26.

⁴⁵ *Memoir*, p. 49. For Robert Hall, *ibid*, 51; or Hall's *Works*, 1832, V., 511, 525, 532.

⁴⁶ See bibliography.

(To be continued.)

University Library, Leeds.

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