

A Priestley Portrait.

IN a most interesting article on "A Portrait of Joseph Priestley and some of its associations" in the *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, Scientific Section*, II, xii., 549-59, Mr. W. C. Walker, M.Sc., of University College, London, tells the story of how he traced an unpublished portrait of Dr. J. Priestley, painted about 1763,^o to its present whereabouts and then back through the nineteenth century to its eighteenth century origin. The story forms an interesting by-path in Baptist history.

Priestley himself, most probably, gave the picture to his sister Martha (Mrs. Crouch), for it was taken by this lady to Park House, Gildersome, in 1787 when she went as housekeeper to William Hudson, one of the illustrious family of Gildersome Baptists. She stayed there till her death in 1812. A little earlier in the same year 1812, however, Ellen Priestley of Liverpool married James Bilbrough of Gildersome, and it was at the invitation of William Hudson (third of that name), a bachelor, that the couple settled down at Park House. Mrs. Bilbrough who survived till 1865 lived at Park House all her life, and the portrait hung in the dining-room all the while. It remained in the Bilbrough family after the connection with Park House had been severed. In 1860 it was lent to the Royal Society for exhibition, but by this time the name of the artist had been lost. Mr. Walker provides a long discussion on the identity of the artist. It is surely a source of satisfaction to admirers of Priestley that the portrait was for so long kept in the family and is still in their hands.

The Hudson family is described and its connection with the Baptist Church explained in some detail in the course of the article and an elaborate (but designedly incomplete) genealogical tree is provided. Priestley's interest in Tommas, minister at Gildersome, is described and the marriage of Ashworth, the successor of Tommas, to a Priestley is mentioned. Photographs of Park House are provided and an "eye-view" of Gildersome made in 1739 is reproduced.

After consulting certain family documents of the Bilbroughs (kindly loaned to me for the purpose), I am able to confirm Mr. Walker's facts; though according to this source Brooks Priestley's dates are properly 1756-1816.

F.B.