

South Parade, Leeds, 1836—45 (3)

(Concluded)

ANOTHER inroad upon the exclusive privileges of the Established Church had been made in 1836, when dissenters were allowed to perform marriage ceremonies in their own chapels. South Parade obtained a licence on June 26, 1837. In June of the next year a long squabble broke out between the rival Tory *Intelligencer* and Whig *Mercury* in that connection, with Giles playing the part of chopping-block. Two Baptists, Joseph Leese of Manchester, a near relation of Giles, and Mrs. Bracewell of Leeds married. The story put out by the *Mercury* on June 9 was that they had intended to be married at South Parade but found too late that they were unable to comply with the legal requirement of seven days' residence in the parish for marriage by licence; preparations had been made which it would have been inconvenient to postpone, so they went privately to the parish church with their licence; they sent an announcement to both Leeds papers saying that a religious ceremony had been performed at South Parade by Giles, but the *Intelligencer*, adding that they only went there to please him and could not be induced to forego marriage at Leeds Parish Church, argued that the *Mercury* and Giles had deceived the public. Attacked, the *Intelligencer* defended itself and went on defending itself when subsequently re-attacked. The *Mercury* took its stand on a principle and argued the whole question, showing by figures that the majority of marriages were still being celebrated in churches of the establishment; this ought to have satisfied churchmen, it added, but some of them mingled exultation with insolence, and the *Intelligencer* had called Giles "the reverend-by-courtesy minister of one of our sectarian meeting-houses" who pronounced some unauthorised concoction of his own. This went farther than one Baptist minister, argued the *Mercury*, for logically all dissenting ministers were impostors on this showing. "This is the true spirit of High Church Protestant Popery", which must have all the honour, all the power, and all the pay to itself. The effect would be contrary to what the *Intelligencer* intended, it would open the eyes of dissenters to the intolerance of the Church of England and cause them to prize still more the principles of religious liberty. Giles himself sent a letter, dated June 28, to the *Mercury*, claiming that the *Intelligencer's* abuse of him was mere revenge for a party defeat and public exposure on the rates question, "abuse reserved for the scurrilous columns of a paper and the papistical pulpit of a parish church" and not the open field of a public meeting. The affair

dragged on through July and beyond. The *Intelligencer* continued to formulate its announcements of marriages thus — that, for example, J. B. Bilbrough and Sarah Radford (incidentally two of the most honoured names in the annals of South Parade) had been married “before a marriage registrar and in the presence of Rev. J. E. Giles”, a subtle piece of insult. By that time there were other things to think about. The whole affair might seem to illustrate the making of a mountain out of a molehill;⁵² the *Intelligencer* had not been very mannerly about it, and the *Mercury* would no doubt have answered its rival as a matter of custom; it happened, however, that Baines had played a prominent part in the Commons’ debates on the Act which gave dissenters this freedom and had clashed with Peel and others on the point of inserting a “test” clause.

Allied to the Church rates question was that of other ecclesiastical exactions. There was one which concerned Baptists more than the rest, the burial fee. In any event, if a clergyman chose to be awkward he could cite Canon Law to prove that he must not inter unbaptised persons. Even when a remedy was adopted by the provision of public cemeteries, irritation did not cease. A long resolution by Brother Town at South Parade on October 31, 1844, will perhaps fitly summarise the situation :

That while the members of this Christian Church and Congregation look upon ecclesiastical appointments of every kind, by a political body, as a dangerous inroad upon the rights of conscience and the interests of religion, and confidently believe that, without the slightest inconvenience, persons interring in the New Parochial Cemetery might have been left to make their own arrangements with their respective ministers — they would respectfully direct the attention of the Leeds City Council to the proportion which, according to the recent appointment, the burial fees of the consecrated and unconsecrated portions of the ground are made to bear to each other, as peculiarly unreasonable and unjust. That, by a *nominal* equalization, the Dissenter, after paying for consecrated ceremonies which he believes to be sinful and absurd, and contributing towards the salary of an Episcopal Chaplain, over whom he has no control, should be compelled to pay one half of the sinecure fees, which an unrighteous Act of Parliament allows the Vicar and his subordinates to demand for services which others perform — is, in the judgment of this Christian Church, to be reconcilable to no law either of justice or religion. While they call to mind the pleasing fact that, in one of the largest meetings ever convened in the parish, a church rate for burial purposes was all but unanimously condemned, they cannot but

deeply regret that by the above-mentioned arrangement of the Town Council, the condemned measure should have been virtually though indirectly revived. Most earnestly, therefore, would they urge upon the Council the importance of placing on Churchmen alone the burden of feeing their sinecure officials, by the charge of an additional shilling each on interment, in the consecrated part of the ground, as the only means of saving the Borough from inconsistency, the Dissenter from aggression, and the Church of England from disgrace.

In 1838 Giles spoke at the first anniversary meeting of the ostensibly undenominational Leeds Town Mission and once again did not mince matters. After telling of fearful degradation he had seen all around, he referred to some objections to the preachers that, not being in the apostolic succession, they were therefore "unauthorised" ambassadors and an innovation on the authority of the established Church. If they were irregular, said Giles, let them be more irregular still (applause and some disapprobation).⁵³

The greatest of Giles's controversial battles was waged against one whose name is known to every schoolboy. Having alluded in a sermon to some errors of Socialism, he was invited by the Socialists of Leeds to attend a course of lectures given by the great Robert Owen in the Music Hall, Albion Street, and Owen himself reinforced the invitation by a personal note. Giles declined to take part in a public discussion but offered to examine Socialist "sentiments" and refute them in print if necessary. He was given some of Owen's writings and soon found that far from being the productions of a mind not inimical to religion and morals, if somewhat visionary and sceptical — as he had imagined — they were licentious, hypocritical and altogether wicked. He felt bound to caution the public against the whole system of Owenite Socialism⁵⁴ which he did in three lectures; these he was urged to print, but between delivery and printing, the skeins of controversy became further entangled.

The lectures were given at South Parade in September and October 1838 and were so popular that many were unable to gain admission and he repeated them. They were announced as preparing for publication on October 20, but when on October 27 they were re-announced, it was with an additional note by J. Heaton, the printer, authorising him to state that the "Abstract" of the first lecture which had been published without sanction, was exceedingly defective. On December 22 the first lecture was advertised as published at the price of sixpence. It was a year almost before the second lecture appeared in print; and the third never did appear so far as is known. What had happened?

South Parade's minute book tells part of the story. At a special church meeting held on November 8 it was resolved that "Bro.

Templeton having published a paragraph in the papers injurious to the character of Mr. Giles . . . be waited upon" and if he refused "as publicly" to acknowledge his sorrow and retract, the church would further consider what to do. It did, and withdrew from communion with him on November 26. It was P. B. Templeton, one of the flock, who had put forth the "Abstract" and he claimed that it was not done for profit, his intention was only to be helpful, and he was no Socialist. But when he sent a disclaimer of Heaton's "bill" to *The Leeds Intelligencer*, where it was printed on November 3, it appeared from the address given that the paper he served as reporter was none other than the notorious *Northern Star*, whence he dated his letter on October 24. That newspaper had begun its meteoric career in Leeds only a year before⁵⁵ and it was the mouthpiece of Feargus O'Connor and the organ of Chartism. Evidently such company was not suitable for Baptists and Liberals to keep.

In the next place, even before the first of Giles's lectures had got into print, the leading Socialist in Leeds had made haste to give a series of counter-lectures which he proceeded to publish himself without delay under the title *Socialism As It Is*. This was Joshua Hobson, publisher of *The Northern Star*. He can have had little love for South Parade, for he had just served a term of six months' imprisonment for publishing an unstamped journal, and among the magistrates who had passed sentence had been Alderman George Goodman, mayor, a pillar of the chapel and friend of Giles. Giles claimed that he was much misrepresented in them; Hobson counter-claimed that he had made use of notes⁵⁶ taken at the lectures. When Giles eventually did publish his first lecture Hobson claimed that what he printed was not what he had said. Whether Giles had been dilatory, or astute, or simply wished to take unhurried thought before committing himself to print, is not clear; but he ultimately claimed the right to revise his matter for publication. Hobson would have been less disconcerted if he had not been in such a hurry; but it is difficult not to concede his claim that he did not know where he stood; his answer was to provide an addendum to his lectures to strengthen his case.

Giles's first lecture set out to prove "Socialism as a religious theory, irrational and absurd". Of Owen's private character he would say nothing, but the tendency of his public efforts was quite another thing, about which there could be no two opinions. His artful, evasive and negative mode of writing, and his cool assurance of infallibility, aimed at exposing ministers of religion and legislators to public contempt. The Socialist was a self-convicted infidel; not only an infidel but a libertine; and not only a libertine but a scoffer and one of the worst description. Giles leads his readers round a wonderful maze of theological disputation as he examines *The New*

Moral World and other works of Owen and considers the "five fundamental facts" and "twenty facts and laws of human nature" on which the Rational System was founded.

The second lecture dealt with the "moral" tendencies of Socialist theories. We are back to the familiar Owenite doctrine that men being moulded by circumstances, you alter the men if you alter the circumstances. Giles claims that Socialists deny the authority of conscience: piety is despised by them as representing superstition and thralldom, but piety is enjoined upon us by our religion, and in a form suited to our degenerate condition. They go farther than mere atheism, they betray malignant activity against Christianity. Their reliance on *nature*, which they prefer to what they call priestcraft, leads direct to immorality. Self-indulgence is encouraged. Undoubted but lamentable aberrations of some so-called Christians are regarded by them as the normal products of Christianity, whose great law, on the contrary, is love. There will always be great inequalities among men, argues Giles, and the task of Christianity is to lay stress on the duties of the various classes: but Socialism is a system of anarchy and insubordination. It feels that all human laws are unnecessary or opposed to the laws of Nature; society is to be dissolved into its original elements; religion, marriage, rights of property are all to be swept away and replaced by a new heaven upon earth. A ruler is a tyrant, a master an oppressor, a rich man a criminal, and an employer an extortioner: these divisions will be abolished as causing ignorance, poverty and disunion. But would the equality that followed be other than irresponsible? What is the authority of the Socialist creed? Opinion and conjecture. The Christian gospel is different: it is based on divine authority and a perfect example. Socialism is material, Christianity spiritual. The second lecture was printed a year after delivery, and it is clear that by then Giles was tired of the controversy. His final arguments, in the third lecture, are not known.

In June, 1839, there appeared on various walls in Leeds placards bearing a challenge from Lloyd Jones, from Manchester, to Giles and others, to discuss the evidences of Christianity. A meeting was held in the Music Saloon, South Parade, with a crowded audience, and Joshua Hobson was in the chair. But it was not those who had been challenged who opposed Lloyd Jones, it was the notorious Richard Carlile; Giles and his fellows did not attend, though for Giles at least the location of the debate must have been of the handiest. Reporting the meeting, *The Leeds Times*⁵⁷ headed its paragraph "Socialism Unveiled", otherwise an Owenite disavowal of belief in the Bible. Another meeting was held early in July⁵⁸ when there was a public discussion between Jones and Carlile at the "Socialist Hall", in nearby East Parade, on the circumstances that influenced the formation of human character. Jones revealed that

he had discovered who had opposed him at Manchester; it was Giles, and he was determined he should not escape him now.

The deacons were concerned for civil and religious liberty everywhere, as was the West Riding Baptist Association. In a letter to that body in June, 1840, they drew attention to "the imprisonment of the excellent Mr. Onken at Hamburgh for preaching the gospel and administering the ordinance of Believers' Baptism". The episode assumed a more than local or denominational aspect and Giles was sent with Dowson of Bradford to present a memorial to the King of Denmark on the persecution of Baptists in Copenhagen, Launzeland and Aalburgh. The whole story is fully documented in the *Baptist Magazine* for 1841: the incident led directly to the formation of The Baptist Continental Aid Society by West Riding Baptists, with two South Parade men as chief officers.

In July, 1844 two more instances of oppression were considered by the church. A letter was read from Brother Rycroft of Nassau which told of persecution against Baptists in Exhuma, Bahama Islands, under the immediate influence of the colonial clergy: it was resolved that a petition to Parliament be sent. At the same time, a letter of support was despatched to brethren in Turkey, who had shown great steadfastness when tempted to violate the sanctity of the Lord's Day. Interest in Turkey is partially explained by a domestic event in 1846. In October of that year, a Tea Meeting was held at South Parade to welcome home Brother and Sister William Binns, Brother and Sister James Binns and their families, Brother Campbell and Sister Charlotte Ellis, after three years' stay in Turkey, when there was much to tell about its moral and spiritual degradation. In December of 1846, the church considered the plight of their Irish brethren, passed a resolution of sympathy, and backed it up by subscriptions and a collection "to relieve their crying necessities".

Giles might be counted upon to enliven the proceedings of any meeting he attended. Monster demonstrations were held in Leeds to demand the abolition of Negro Apprenticeships in 1837 and 1838.⁵⁹ In November, 1837, Giles moved one of the resolutions in a long speech, fully reported in *The Leeds Mercury*.⁶⁰ He had, he said, long ago denounced a system which he described as the "clumsy juggle of a very raw conjurer". The compensation money of £20 million should have gone to the slaves and not their oppressors. There was no half way between right and wrong. He had never seen the expediency of the system, for its "mysterious" aim was to make the negro free! He defended Sturge, amid applause, from the attacks of the pamphleteer.⁶¹ During the meeting the testimony of Baptist missionaries in Jamaica was quoted by another speaker. In April, 1838, both Giles and Goodman each moved a resolution on the same theme.⁶² In censuring the government and calling for

a full and unconditional emancipation, Giles likened Lord John Russell and Sir Robert Peel to Pontius Pilate, for having shaken hands across the table of the House after being engaged in "a bad business". At a meeting on "Idolatry in India" to protest at government interference, held at Leeds in June, 1838, Giles seconded a motion for sending a petition to Parliament. Even here he was involved in a minor controversy, but got the better of two Anglian clergy wanting to put an amendment by showing with great good humour, to the amusement of the meeting, that such an amendment was unnecessary.

There were other issues on which members of South Parade felt constrained to speak their minds. Individuals might comment on the Peace movement and emigration, but it was the church itself that passed the following resolution in January, 1843 :

That our beloved pastor be requested to consider himself to be the Representative of this Church at the approaching Meeting of the Anti-Corn-Law League at Manchester.

In March, 1843, the *Leeds Mercury*⁶³ reported that an attempt was being made to establish a Complete Suffrage Association in the town. A small room had just been opened, and it was Giles who delivered a lecture on the principles and objects of the Association. In December, 1839⁶⁴ a public meeting had been held to provide relief for the unemployed : Giles was put on the Committee of the working party and was the mover of a resolution that provided no man of violence should find a place on that Committee. The movement for factory reform was not one that dissenters on the whole supported with warmth or alacrity, it appears, if they supported it at all.⁶⁵

THE LAYMEN

South Parade was making progress : its members were active in the church and out of it. Was it adapting itself fully to new conditions in Leeds, however, meeting the challenge of a changed political, social and religious scene? For the Leeds of 1836-45 was not the Leeds of 1826 and certainly not that of 1779. Langdon's ministry had coincided with momentous changes in industry, population and political feeling; that of Acworth had seen the quickening of these changes⁶⁶ and a partial fruition of the reform movement. By the time Giles arrived, religious tests for political office had been removed, an outdated system of Parliamentary representation had been reformed, and in 1835, on the eve of his coming, a revolution in local government had been effected in Leeds, consequent upon the passing of the Municipal Corporations Bill. All these changes were to make themselves felt at South Parade, more especially the last. A great expansion of freedom had been

achieved, but much remained still to be done before dissenters could rest content with full and perfect liberty.

All through the preceding half-century a ferment of political, social, intellectual and religious ideas had been at work, and Leeds had been a manufactory of ideas as well as of woollens. It was now a hotbed of dissent and left-wing politics of all descriptions; it was also a furnace of vice, ignorance and disease. The dirt and smoke that amazed Acworth on his arrival was nothing new then and did not get any better; unhampered industrial progress brought with it also grave problems of a moral and social kind. If not much is heard from South Parade about specific industrial problems, a great deal was said about political and moral issues.

In the way in which South Parade reacted to the changed conditions—and South Parade and the Baptists were not alone in the campaign—much was due to Giles in the decade 1836-45. He was much in demand both as a preacher of Baptist and an advocate of Christian principles, and as a public speaker and delegate on civic questions. He attacked irreligion, ignorance and Socialism, and with his ministerial colleagues and friendly laymen represented that dissidence of dissent which Dr. Hook found so well established in Leeds and so stubborn. Giles left enduring memories of his powers on platform and in pulpit; more than that he deeply influenced many young men, some of them laymen, others who entered the ministry. But no man is an island. Impersonal forces were at work which would have made their pressure felt without Giles or any other minister. Laymen had a part to play in the struggle for freedom, and opportunities now opened out to them that had been denied to their forefathers and were beyond the reach of ministers. South Parade's laymen took full advantage of these opportunities and supported, and were supported by, their fellow nonconformists. South Parade, in a word, became a great Liberal camp. Dissenters had not been denied freedom of expression on the issues of the day, but few of them could consistently hold office in local or national government before 1828. When the Test Act was at long last repealed in that year, to be followed by the Reform Act of 1832 and the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, a fair field of power opened before them.

In the struggle for equality of citizenship, as on other broad issues, Leeds dissenters had been greatly assisted by Edward Baines the elder, who was not only a Congregationalist and a Liberal, and at this very epoch Liberal M.P. for Leeds, but the proprietor of one of the most powerful newspapers of the day, *The Leeds Mercury*, organ of Liberalism and dissent. Baines's policy in his paper, on the platform, and in the House, was one of thoroughgoing Liberalism, with Reform everywhere (or nearly everywhere), especially in church affairs, as his watchword.⁶⁷

On the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act, the old close corporation of Leeds, so long dominated by Tories and Churchmen, came to a swift end, and local government service opened a little wider to more democratic competition free from sectarian prejudice. The Liberals came into their own and dissenters sprung to action. One Baptist played a dominant part, George Goodman. The Goodman family and South Parade were almost synonymous. Old Ben Goodman⁶⁸ had long been a leader in the counsels of the church and he and his sons had given liberally both to the church itself and many good causes such as the Lancasterian School. Although he was himself a deacon for many years, his sons put off a decision to be baptized and were not strictly "members" of the church, but all that concerned South Parade concerned them and they were able to become public figures in a way that had not been possible for their father. Popularly they were known as "Smiling George" and "Surly John". John must be dealt with in summary fashion. He had had a finished education in France, making of him a "gentleman" but, as one who had known him recorded, no "gentle-man"; he was off-handed in manner and rather masterful, and died, after failing in business, without a friend.⁶⁹ He was elected alderman for the borough of Leeds in 1838, and was a member of a local delegation to an Anti-Corn-Law meeting in London in March, 1839.

George (1792-1859) was a model of geniality and public success. He was the very first mayor to be elected in Leeds under the new regime after 1835 and was re-elected in the same year (1836) but preferred to pay the statutory fine of £50 to forego the honour; subsequently he was mayor in 1847, 1851 and 1852. The gold chain which was presented to him on April 30th, 1836, by the burgesses and inhabitants :

as the official insignia of the Mayor, in token of their approbation of representative municipal government, and to remind the chief magistrates that their powers and honours, conferred by the people, are to be held for the public welfare

is still in use by the Lord Mayors of Leeds.⁷⁰ He was alderman for many years and one of the corporation's representatives on the board of the Waterworks Company, then a joint enterprise. Ultimately he represented Leeds in Parliament as Liberal member from 1852 to 1857 and received a knighthood in 1852. These are honours that would have been inconceivable for a Baptist in his father's prime.

He was also a magistrate both for the borough and the West Riding and acted on the Leeds licensing bench, saying his say about the drink problem. The new magistracy was yet another "Reform"

innovation which displeased the local Tories, and here again dissenters entered preserves hitherto carefully guarded. It was as chief magistrate that he received unwelcome attention from the "Factory King", Richard Oastler,⁷¹ who addressed to him two of his fiery pamphlets at a time when he was campaigning for the amelioration of factory conditions. These were *The Unjust Judge* and *More Work for the Leeds New Thief Catchers*, both published in 1836. The burden of Oastler's complaint was that whereas Goodman and his colleagues on the bench had sent Joshua Hobson (the same who opposed Giles two years on) to prison for six months for publishing an unstamped newspaper, they had let off with a mere caution a mill-owner who had violated the factory laws.

To describe in detail all Goodman's multifarious activities would be to retail much of the social, political and economic history of early Victorian Leeds. He laid the foundation-stone of the Victoria Bridge in Leeds, was a director of the Leeds and Bradford Railway, and represented Leeds at the Great Exhibition. As a good Liberal he lent full support to the Anti-Corn-Law agitation. It was at one protest meeting in Leeds that he was interrupted by the redoubtable Chartist Feargus O'Connor in January, 1839. On the other hand, he was in touch with Cobden, Bright and Lord John Russell and met them when they came to speak in Leeds⁷²; in April, 1849, he presided at a West Riding dinner given in Cobden's honour at Wakefield and took the chair at a Leeds meeting to support Cobden's Peace proposals in June, 1851.

Humanitarian causes were sure of his support. His interest in schemes of emigration may have mingled economic with humanitarian motives but in the "Hungry Forties" emigration was thought to be one remedy for contemporary needs. Goodman took the chair at a meeting of the Leeds and Yorkshire Emigration Society in January, 1849. When he presided at another meeting in May, 1852, it was noted that the Australian gold-rush was drawing labour from the wool-producing industry. But what else than pure philanthropy can have actuated him to lend his aid to the Polish and Hungarian Refugees in May, 1850, or to Negro Emancipation in April, 1838, or to the number of local efforts of this kind he supported, the Leeds Town Mission, the Lancasterian School, the Tradesmen's Benevolent Institution, or the House of Recovery? He was not unknown at the Leeds Literary Institution, and having had his say, as has been noted, in the "voluntary" controversy about education, it is not surprising to find him taking the chair at a meeting to form a branch of the National Public Schools' Association in November, 1850.

It was doubtless because he knew at first hand the facts about Negro Emancipation⁷³ or "Hindoo Idolatry" that he took an interest in these questions; Baptist missionaries kept the Baptist

churches informed. Goodman knew the work of the B.M.S. well, and when in London in May, 1850, presided at its 59th anniversary meeting.

To the Baptists of Leeds he was perhaps the most distinguished private citizen belonging to their faith, and was consequently much in demand at their various celebrations. His family gave generous aid to the infant church at Hunslet, George himself laying the foundation stone in 1835. He was in the chair at the opening of York Road chapel in May, 1847. His closest connexion was with the Great George Street, afterwards Blenheim, church, the foundation stone of which he laid in November, 1848. It was only after the secession had taken place that he was baptized at long last, in his own home, it seems, in November, 1850. From 1850 to 1857 he was treasurer of that church.⁷⁴

His career is a good example of the effective use made by dissenters of their new-found freedom. He was middle-class, and as every text-book writer explains, the first fruits of the Reform movement were disappointingly middle-class. Goodman was not, however, the only member of South Parade who took an active part in political affairs. It was not for everyone to become a Member of Parliament, but some might aspire to the humbler ranks of alderman or councillor, overseer or Poor Law Guardian.

One of these was Hutchinson Gresham, an honoured deacon, who described himself in 1838 as silversmith, pawnbroker and clothes dealer, of Hunslet Lane. At this address the family business, a stone's throw from the Goodman headquarters, was carried on for many years after his death, but he had at one time a branch in North Street, not far from Giles's residence. He died on August 5th, 1861, aged 67. He was town councillor for the South Ward from 1844 to 1853, having already been Ward Assessor there in 1838 and in the years from 1840 to 1842, and was elected alderman in 1853 for a period of six years. For one year he was chairman of the Poor Law Board (Leeds township), in 1853, and he represented the South Ward on that body from 1851 to 1854. In 1841 he was elected one of the Improvement Commissioners.

As a Baptist, Gresham had been received into membership on August 6th, 1837, thus in Giles's time. For some time he was Joint Secretary of the West Riding Baptist Association, but it was as a cheerful deacon that he was longest remembered. His wife Anne, who was received into membership on November 4th, 1838, survived him and died on April 1st, 1875. Is it ironic that Hutchinson Gresham is now remembered not for his own worth so much as because he gave employment to a young man who afterwards greatly exceeded him in industrial and political stature?

Another important deacon was James Richardson, Clerk of the Peace of the Borough of Leeds from 1836 to 1861, and senior

partner in the Leeds firm of solicitors, James and Hamilton Richardson and Turner. Early in life he had conducted opposition to the Orders in Council issued towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars, playing a leading part for the Yorkshire merchants and manufacturers; subsequently he gave great service to the causes of Parliamentary Reform, abolition of colonial slavery and the repeal of the Corn Laws. He was against the government measures for education in 1843 and 1847 and assisted in the national councils of the Baptist Union on the 1843 Bill. He was the chief figure in the Baptist Continental Aid Society already mentioned.⁷⁵

Another deacon of the church who played a minor role in local politics but was equally long remembered as a model member was Joseph Town (1804-60), who belonged to a family with perhaps the longest record of service to South Parade that it has known. He came originally from Keighley, where the Towns had their paper mill, and from the early 'twenties is found in the merchant side of the business at Leeds and active in the Sunday School. The Leeds firm continued under his name for more than a century. He was elected one of the Overseers of the Poor for the North Ward of the borough in April, 1839, and although not successful as a candidate for the Town Council in 1844, did represent the Mill Hill Ward from 1851 to 1853. There is a glowing tribute to his memory in *The Leeds Mercury* for July 31st, 1860.

Thomas Morgan was for more than twenty years the respected "Registration Agent", or paid secretary of the Liberal party in Leeds, and as such a thorn in the flesh of the Tories, who nevertheless did not withhold admiration for his versatility. Although he had not long been a member of the church at the time of his death on December 6th, 1853, at the age of 56, having been admitted on January 20th, 1851,⁷⁶ he had in fact been long connected with the Sunday School. He had been asked, for instance, to address the scholars in 1828, were Acworth unable to do so, and to compose a hymn or two for the scholars to sing at the Whitsuntide festival.⁷⁷ He has already been seen in action.

An indirect link with the church, but a very direct one with the Goodmans and Liberalism, is provided by the Carbutt family of Leeds. Francis Carbutt was a dominant figure in the politics of mid-Victorian Leeds, and with Sir Edward Baines, the object of many an attack from the Tory *Intelligencer*; it was with Mrs. Carbutt that Cobden stayed when he visited Leeds in December, 1849. Carbutt's mother was the sister of Benjamin Goodman.⁷⁸

Of the manifold varieties of Leeds commerce and industry, the church could provide representatives great and small. Not all can be mentioned individually, nor, at this distance of time, can all be readily identified. The Goodmans were traders with wide connections in wool, as was John Wylde,⁷⁹ a deacon for forty years; the

Towns were paper-merchants, long to survive in Leeds⁸⁰; the Holroyds⁸¹ cloth finishers; the Bilbrougths chemists and druggists and afterwards oil merchants and drysalter⁸²; John Heaton, bookseller, printer and publisher, has been a puzzle to historians.⁸³ Besides men in business on their own account, there were naturally large numbers of employees of others. One such was William Adgie, compositor on the staff of *The Leeds Mercury*, who joined the break-away contingent which formed the Blenheim church.⁸⁴ But one who was to become the greatest industrialist of them all was at this time an unknown young man still in his 'twenties who had just set up in business for himself.

He had arrived in Leeds from London, the son of a gunsmith, and joined Hutchinson Gresham.⁸⁵ Why he came to Leeds in particular is a mystery not yet solved, but if, as is said, he came in 1842, he was twenty-one years old, just "out of his time" and not exactly an Ancient of Days. He was a fast worker. He and a young lady called Ann Hirst were among a number who narrated their religious experience orally at a church meeting at South Parade on March 28th of that year; they were added to the church roll on April 3rd; and they were married on December 22nd.

What has been described as the "historical accident" of his settlement in Leeds was to be of immense significance both for the young man himself and for the town he had adopted. John Barran, for that was his name, made unspectacular progress in business for a year or two, then showed rapid expansion after 1853.⁸⁶ He soon acquired one of the best shopping sites in Leeds, the long-celebrated No. 1, Boar Lane,⁸⁷ from which establishment he issued his equally famous poetical advertisements. He dealt in ready-made clothing, especially the boys' suits for which he became so well known.

In 1856, he established in Alfred Street nearby what was probably the first wholesale clothing factory in Leeds. He was an early user of the sewing machine, but the invention which made his fortune and may perhaps be said to have altered the face of Leeds, was discovered by accident. Visiting a furniture exhibition in the town, he observed a bandsaw at work cutting veneer, and immediately conceived its possibilities for his own trade. He drew up a specification for a machine using a knife instead of a saw edge, and it was an immediate success. Together with his adoption of the policy of sub-contracting⁸⁸ it led the way to immense developments in the trade. Machine production and subdivision of labour had entered the industry in all its branches. Barran's may not have been the first example⁸⁹ of the ready-made clothing idea in Leeds, but its significance to the economic historian is the way in which it shows the wholesale industry growing here more rapidly than elsewhere and becoming a staple industry. Partly this was due to economic advantages possessed by the town in the middle of the nineteenth cen-

tury,⁹⁰ but it has been also claimed that it was largely the result of the "historical accident" of Barran's initial settlement in Leeds instead of somewhere else.⁹¹ He was a better employer than most, it is argued.⁹² In August, 1853, for instance, he presided at a meeting of retail tradesmen in Leeds to recommend early closing.⁹³

His public career follows the pattern set by Goodman. He was town councillor for fourteen years from 1864, although he suffered defeat as candidate for the Mill Hill Ward in 1851. He was alderman from 1868 to 1878, mayor in 1870-1-2, and later Liberal M.P. for the borough from 1876 to 1885, and afterwards for Otley from 1886 to 1895. During his mayoralty there occurred one event in which he played a major role, much criticised at the time but subsequently seen to have been abundantly justified, namely, the purchase of the Park at Roundhay, one of the finest open spaces in the land.

A baronetcy was conferred upon him in February, 1895, and at its inauguration the University of Leeds conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D. in 1904, thereby recognizing his services to its predecessor the Yorkshire College. He died in 1905,⁹⁴ having been a member at South Parade for sixty-three years. In spite of a strenuous public life, and the possession of a London residence, he never lost touch with his church. Even in 1876, nearly thirty years before his death, he had been a chief speaker at the Jubilee meetings, telling of a long connexion and far-off incidents and impressions at South Parade. It was he who foresaw the need to re-deploy the church's forces in the city, twenty years before it actually took place, at Harehills and Headingley.⁹⁵ He was a trustee, both of South Parade and York Road; he was the treasurer of a humble penny-a-week funeral society at the church.

Seventy years after Giles's arrival, the Rev. R. C. Lemin was minister at South Parade. Writing in the church manual for 1906, he told how, on the last walk he had had with Sir John, he had asked him whether he could put in a sentence the principles that had shaped his wonderful life. "With that keen, humorous look which we all knew so well, he stopped and turning said :

' I'll not willingly offend
Nor easily be offended;
What's amiss, I'll strive to mend,
Endure what can't be mended.'

It was a quaint maxim he had heard John Eustace Giles quote; and he had never forgotten it." The wheel had come full circle.

NOTES

⁵² But cf. the fears aroused when the first local marriage between Unitarian dissenters took place in Leeds under the new Act, *Memorials of the Rev. Charles Wicksteed*, ed. by his son Philip Henry (1886), p. 50.

⁵³ *Leeds Mercury*, December 29th, 1838. Cf. *ibid.*, December 23rd, 1837, where a long attack was made on Hook and "Oxford bigotry" because of certain derogatory remarks by the vicar when the Mission was founded.

⁵⁴ For Leeds as a stronghold of Owenism, see J. F. C. Harrison, *Social Reform in Victorian Leeds* (Thoresby Society, 1955) and the same writer's *Living & Learning, 1790-1960* (1961). Giles's attack almost coincided with a similar one from the Baptist minister at "Queenshead", Rev. T. H. Hudson, whose book *Christian Socialism Explained and Enforced* (Halifax, 1839) was based on lectures "to check infidel socialism" (*Leeds Mercury*, June 29th, 1839).

⁵⁵ On its origins, see *History*, N.S., XXXIX (1954), pp. 54-67.

⁵⁶ Had he had assistance from Templeton the reporter? On Hobson, see Harrison, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ June 22nd, 1839.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, July 6th, 1839.

⁵⁹ The subject had a special topical interest for Leeds people, for the Thomas Harvey who had collaborated with Joseph Sturge in visiting the West Indies and reporting their findings in a famous book published in 1837, was "our townsman". The *Mercury* gave much space to the case of James Williamson.

⁶⁰ It gave him double measure, in fact, printing separately the following week a "fable" he had quoted. *Leeds Mercury*, December 16th and 23rd, 1837.

⁶¹ *Mr. Sturge and His Tour in the West Indian Islands*.

⁶² Goodman's part will be mentioned presently.

⁶³ *Leeds Mercury*, March 25th, 1843. Cf. S. Smiles, *Autobiography*, ed. T. Mackay (1905), 90ff.; S. Hobhouse, *Joseph Sturge* (1919), chap. 6; A. Briggs (ed.), *Chartist Studies* (1959), 363ff.

⁶⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, December 26th, 1839.

⁶⁵ See the latest findings in Dr. J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement, 1830-1855* (1962), especially his final chapter.

⁶⁶ The greatest decennial increase in population occurred in Leeds between 1821 and 1831.

⁶⁷ *Life*, by his son, Sir Edward, 2nd ed., 1859. Largely due to his persistence, John Marshall, the Leeds Unitarian manufacturer, had been elected M.P. for Yorkshire in 1826, much to the chagrin not only of Tories but of Whigs, who both regarded the Yorkshire seats as the preserve of the landed aristocracy. In 1834 Baines himself was elected for Leeds, in opposition to the strong Tory candidate, Sir John Beckett, and was re-elected in 1835. It is with the son, however, that we are largely concerned in this period.

⁶⁸ *Baptist Quarterly*, VI, 168. Ben Goodman was still a member of South at this date, though in retirement and not very active. He died in 1848.

⁶⁹ Ms. diary of W. R. Bilbrough. John died on December 13th, 1868. Yet it must be acknowledged that it was he who revised the account of his brother George printed in R. V. Taylor's *Leeds Worthies* (1865), with all its references to his affability, conciliatory spirit and the rest.

⁷⁰ In 1857 he gave the corporation a reduced replica of the chain, which he had worn on unofficial occasions. There is an illustration of it in *Leeds: the industrial capital of the North*, 1954 edition, p. 11, as well as a description of the official one.

⁷¹ The Oastlers were not unknown at the Old Stone Chapel. *Baptist Quarterly*, VI, p. 119. See C. Driver, *Tory Radical, The Life of Richard Oastler* (1946).

⁷² Cobden, Bright and Colonel Perronet Thompson came in December, 1843, Cobden again in December, 1849, and Lord Russell in December, 1852, accompanied by Lord Beaumont, who stayed with Goodman.

⁷³ When Mrs. Beecher Stowe came to lecture in September, 1853, Goodman it was who presented to her a testimonial from the ladies of Leeds.

⁷⁴ A funeral sermon by Dr. Brewer was published under the title *Man At Death*; there is a copy in the Leeds Public Library. His portrait by John Simpson, was presented to Leeds Town Council by the burgesses in 1837 as a testimonial of respect.

⁷⁵ Obituary in *Leeds Mercury*, November 8th, 1861. See also *Baptist Magazine* (1842, p. 139) and Vols. 34 and 35 (1843), pp. 311ff.

⁷⁶ His admission, "cheerfully and unanimously accepted", was followed by that of his son William, in April: William's name was removed in 1859 after his departure for New Zealand.

⁷⁷ *Jubilee*, 63.

⁷⁸ On Francis Carbutt, see J. Mayhall, *Annals of Leeds*, III. Obituary of Mary Carbutt, his mother, *Leeds Mercury*, May 13th, 1837.

⁷⁹ John Wylde, who died March 21st, 1853, aged 78, had been a deacon since 1813.

⁸⁰ On the Towns, see *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. XX, No. 5, January, 1964, p. 206.

⁸¹ The Holroyds came out of South Parade with the break-away group in 1848; they were cloth finishers of some standing in Leeds and the firm still continues.

⁸² J. B. Bilbrough's business was wound up in the middle of the century and his sons retired as "gentlemen" of leisure. They, Alfred and William Radford (the latter name speaks volumes) made a bequest to the Leeds City Art Gallery for the acquisition of watercolour paintings, which enabled Leeds to possess one of the finest collections of the kind. J. B. Bilbrough, deacon and church secretary, married Sarah Radford, of whom something has already been said.

⁸³ The student will find at least nine men of this name in the local directories for the period. Most of these can be eliminated for our purpose. This John was baptized at South Parade on November 2nd, 1837 and died on May 10th, 1862 (South Parade records and *Leeds Mercury*, May 14th, 1862, which identifies him as "late publisher of this town"). He must be carefully distinguished from (1) the locally better-known John Heaton (1769-1852) who founded the business and retired from it in 1827, leaving it to his nephew, our John Heaton (Sir T. Wemyss Reid, *A Memoir of John Deakin Heaton, M.D., of Leeds* (1883), p. 59; this elder John Heaton was a Congregationalist); (2) a John Heaton, Treasurer of the Leeds Town Mission, who was a churchman (*Leeds Mercury*, December 29th, 1838, p. 6); as his address is usually given as "South Parade", i.e. the street so named, he is possibly the same as John Heaton, "stuff merchant" who lived there for a time. I am obliged to the Secretary of South Parade, J. J. Scottorn, Esq., for help in this identification. Cf. *Jubilee*, pp. 38ff., where reminiscences of Rev. W. Heaton, grandson of a deacon John, and son of our John, are given.

⁸⁴ The son and grandson of William Adgie were partners in a prominent Leeds firm of chartered accountants which still administers the funds of the Leeds Tradesmen's Benevolent Institution.

⁸⁵ Gresham had advertised for an apprentice in 1838. *The Leeds Intelligencer*, December 29th, 1838.

⁸⁶ Mrs. Joan Thomas, *A History of the Leeds Clothing Industry* (1955) gives the best available account of John Barran's place in the history of Leeds, with some biographical facts, but his early career is shrouded in obscurity. This book has some errors of fact, e.g. she styles Gresham "Thomas" no doubt by association of ideas.

⁸⁷ Earlier he had been near Leeds Bridge. Cf. Note 91 below.

⁸⁸ A Jewish sub-contractor, Hermann Friend, who was responsible for

increasing the economic advantages of the invention. Thomas, *op. cit.* The powerful effect of Barran's activities on the growth of the Jewish community in Leeds is another aspect of his work worth study. Cf. *Leeds Tercentenary Celebration of the Resettlement of the Jews in the British Isles* (1956), pp. 20ff., for notes on H. Friend.

⁸⁹ Russum & Co., at Leeds Bridge, were already selling "ready-made clothes" in 1838. *Leeds Intelligencer*, June 30th, 1838.

⁹⁰ It would occupy too much space to enter into detail; see Thomas, *op. cit.* Transport facilities; availability of labour, especially female labour, after the decline of the flax trade in Leeds; marketing; and Jewish immigration, are some of these factors.

⁹¹ The subsequent history of the firm may be read in David B. Ryott's *John Barran's of Leeds, 1851-1951* (Leeds, 1951), as well as in Thomas, *op. cit.*

⁹² Thomas, *op. cit.*

⁹³ *Leeds Intelligencer*, August 6th, 1853. By early closing at that date was meant 7 p.m., all the year round, except Saturdays.

⁹⁴ Long obituary notice in *The Yorkshire Post*, May 4th, 1905. The writer failed to see in his career any "romance of industry". The full family genealogy is in Burke's *Peerage* (42).

⁹⁵ Ms. diary of W. R. Bilbrough.

F. BECKWITH

JOHN BUNYAN AND "REPROBATION ASSERTED"—

(Concluded from page 131)

²⁶ Bunyan, *Christ a complete saviour, Works* (1692), p. 370.

²⁷ Cf. Bunyan, *A defence of the doctrine of iustification, by faith in Jesus Christ* (London, 1672), p. 55; and *Light for them that sit in darkness* (London, 1674), p. 15.

²⁸ *R.A.*, p. 17. Cf., e.g., Bunyan, *Genesis, Works* (1692), pp. 13-15.

²⁹ *R.A.*, pp. 20-21.

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