

Belief and Disbelief in Victorian Leicester

by *Malcolm Elliott*

The 19th Century saw veritable tidal waves crossing the sea of faith. The established church, shaken out of its comfortable complacency by the enthusiasm of the Methodist revival in the previous century, was affected on the one hand by evangelistic fervour and on the other by the appeal to its medieval past in the Oxford movement. Established church and non-conformist alike were threatened by the revival of Roman Catholicism; while the Christian Church of all denominations was attacked and eroded by the growing confidence of scientific rationalism.

The direct appeal of the Wesleys, calling men to individual salvation, had its counterpart in the evangelical revival within the Church of England.

Evangelism — the ardent concern to save souls — sometimes went together with a belief in the second coming. Indeed it was a desire to anticipate the second coming by putting the affairs of this world in order that seems to have motivated some of the most prominent figures in the established church. Shaftesbury, for example, “made the Second Coming and Christ’s subsequent earthly reign the point on which all his hopes centred. Then, and only then, did he believe that earth’s wrongs could be righted and sorrow turned to joy — except, of course, for the wicked”.¹

The Millennialists as they were called, believing that Christ would reign for 1000 years before the final Day of Judgement, frequently appear in a rather ridiculous light. “It is impossible,” writes Shaftesbury’s biographer, “to treat with becoming seriousness divines who calculated that the Second Advent must occur on some date between 1790 and 1914, or who preached sermons with such titles as ‘Every eye shall see him’, or Prince Albert’s visit to Liverpool used as an illustration of the Second Coming of Christ”.²

The revival of English Catholicism is reflected in Leicestershire by the conversion of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle to the Roman Church. It was he who provided much of the financial backing for the foundation of Mount St. Bernard’s Abbey in 1835 — giving 227 acres of land in Charnwood Forest to the Cistercian, Trappist monks. Mount St. Bernard was the first Roman Catholic Monastery to be built in England since the Reformation.

Until 1791 it was a criminal offence to celebrate the Mass in England but already in 1777 a Dominican mission was established in Causeway Lane, Leicester and in 1817 the chapel on Wellington Street was built — most probably in the building now known as Blackfriars Hall. The establishment of Holy Cross Priory in 1817 undoubtedly encouraged the growth of Catholicism in Leicester, but perhaps of even more importance to the growth of the Roman Church was the steady stream of Irish immigration especially after the Great Famine of 1845/6.

Yet by 1851, the Religious Census of that year showed Roman Catholics in Leicester as less than 4% of the total attending religious worship — almost the same as the overall national average. Liverpool, at the point of entry for Irish immigrants, recorded nearly 40% in attendance at Roman Catholic worship.³

The Religious Census of 1851 was the only one of its kind ever to be taken in England and despite the many objections which have been raised concerning its accuracy, it remains our

main source of information on the church-going habits of the mass of the population in nineteenth century Britain. It was undertaken largely on account of the fears of the Anglican Church over its failure to attract the new urban masses. The diminishing hold of the church over the town dweller was a matter of grave concern to the clergy and religious laity of all denominations. But it was the peculiar fear of Anglicans that their flock had been lured from traditional allegiance by the Non-conformists.

In fact, the result of the Census was very largely reassuring on that point. Horace Mann, the compiler of the Census report, found about 41% of the total population, or 58% of those eligible to attend at religious worship, did so at one or other of the services held on the Census Sunday. Of these, 47% attended the Church of England and 47% non-conformist services — the remaining 6% being Roman Catholics or 'sectarians'.

If we look at the national results of this survey more closely we find that about half the non-conformist attendants were Methodists of various kinds and a little under one-fifth were Baptists of one kind or another. The worst attendances recorded were for large towns such as Sheffield 32%, Manchester 34%, Birmingham 36% and London and its boroughs 37%. In the rural districts, by contrast, religious adherence remained strong. In Bedfordshire 57% attended, in Huntingdon 55%, South Wales 54%, North Wales 53% and Wiltshire 51%.

Leicester revealed a marked contrast to these national tendencies. In the first place its recorded attendance at all services was 62%, well above the average. If we take the percentage of attendants at different denominations for the best attended service we find that 40.6% attended the Church of England, over 38% were Baptists and only 17.3% were Methodists. In other words Baptists were easily the biggest of the non-conformist churches in Leicester while Methodists who could claim half of the non-conformist adherents nationally, attracted only one-fifth of the total in Leicester.

Clearly the Baptists in Leicester were unusually strong and this may well have been due to the influence of a number of particularly powerful preachers like John Deacon of Barton-in-the-Beans, who was appointed to Friar Lane Chapel in 1783 and preached there for nearly forty years.⁴

Harvey Lane Chapel, belonging to the Particular Baptists was associated with William Carey, founder of the Baptist Missionary Society, and with Robert Hall. Hall was no ordinary man. He seems to have been a preacher of great power and intellect, a rather solitary figure but able to inspire others with his passionate oratory. Thomas Wheeler who later headed a firm of wholesale grocers in Leicester was moved to leave his employment in Dunstable simply in order to sit at Hall's feet. He left his master the day after hearing Hall preach at the local chapel saying: "he must go to Leicester, nothing should stand in his way of living in a town where he could sit under such a ministry".⁵ Thomas Wheeler remained a Deacon of Harvey Lane, long after the death of Robert Hall, when another preacher of unusual talent, J.P. Mursell, was resident there.⁶

Divisions among the Baptists of Friar Lane had led to the establishment of chapels at Archdeacon Lane (1794) and Dover Street (1823); while Charles Street was built in 1830 and the Pork Pie chapel in Belvoir Street in 1845. Later in the century the Baptists built Victoria Road church — a church for the middle-class congregation around the London Road — and half a dozen other places of worship in various parts of the town. By the mid-century the Baptists could also count upon the considerable skill and resources of the travel agent, Thomas Cook.

Much of the missionary zeal of the established church in Victorian Leicester can be attributed to the work of Canon Vaughan of St. Martin's whose practical work for the education of working men and altruistic service gained him the respect of all but the most bigotted non-conformists. The Rev. John Fry was equally zealous in promoting the Anglican cause and it is to him we owe the foundation of several churches in the poorer districts of the town, for

example, St. John the Divine in Albion Street, St. Matthew's and St. Andrew's churches with their attendant schools.

All this ecclesiastical activity took place at the same time as scientific and literary criticism weakened the theological foundations of Christianity. "The basic problem for religion," writes Horton Davies, "was how the blind Life and Force revealed in organic Nature and assuming consciousness in man could be equated with the Divine Fatherhood and the assurance of eternal life in the Gospel. Not only was God's face clouded by the assumptions of the new science, but man himself was forced to bite the dust, as he, who, according to the Psalmist, was created 'a little lower than the angels' was now seen to be a little higher than the apes".⁷

How did the ordinary thinking citizen react to the straining of his religious faith? Alas we do not often glimpse behind the veil of openly avowed creeds. The proponent of religious faith are invariably anxious to reassure themselves as well as others, at least in public. In private correspondence and diaries, however, we see no such constraints.

The letters and memorials of Eliza Ellis show a Leicester woman of some education and intellect wrestling with the new literary and scientific criticism but struggling to retain a simple fairly orthodox Christian faith.

Eliza Ellis was one of the daughters of John Ellis of Beaumont Leys who subsequently lived at Belgrave Hall and built 'The Brand' near Woodhouse Eaves. It was from the Brand that she wrote to a friend in June 1863. She refers to some fossils sent by another friend to add to her collection of natural history and then turns to her reading of Lyell:

"I have reached that part of the volume in which he passes in review the Transmutationist and Progressive theories of past times, and then examines that of Darwin. I think Lyell's exposition of these different theories is very masterly, and I have enjoyed reading it as much as any other part of the work. One point upon which he dwells in the review of Darwin's new system [if one may call it so] strikes me forcibly. He says that the theory of Natural Selection and the Origin of Species does not at all compel our belief in a regular progression from lower to higher forms of animal life; though it is generally found that animals which succeed in the struggle for existence are the progenitors of species possessing a more complex organism than those which they have displaced. I have only read a small part of the chapters devoted to Darwin, but so far as I have gone, I am struck with Lyell's wise manner of suspending a final judgement upon this theory, which, as he says, must be greatly modified, as time throws more light upon the class of facts to which it owes its birth. I think it is tolerably clear, however, that Lyell believes this theory of the origin of species to be the only one that furnishes the key to a subject so enveloped in mystery hitherto. Lyell persuades me into liking it better, but I feel sure no one can ever persuade me to reconcile myself to the admission that the human race is closely allied to the Ape species, and that the genealogical table traced back to the very source of things would give us of necessity a derivation from the lowest germs of life, animal and vegetable."⁸

She maintained her interest in theological problems, reading Mathew Arnold, F.D. Maurice and Cardinal Newman as well as dabbling in Huxley and Darwin — not surprisingly her Quaker persuasion found more to her liking in Newman's reverent humility than in the rationalism of Huxley. In November 1870 she wrote:

"...Beside me on the one hand lies 'The Grammar of Assent', and on the other Professor Huxley's 'Lay Sermons and Addresses'. What different books! how utterly unlike in their argument, in their spirit, yet with what profound sincerity and earnestness does the author of each contend for the truth which he believes! I finished 'The Grammar of Assent' to-night; the later chapters, those that are devoted to an examination of the nature and claims of natural, and then of revealed religion, are very interesting; the concluding

chapters in which Newman sums up the evidences for the truth of the Christian religion, and shows with what power, with what silent yet irresistible power it gained converts in the Gentile world, are most eloquent. Referring to the cold sneers of Gibbon, to his attempt to account for the spread of Christianity — on rational grounds, Newman asks [just after he has described with awful vividness a variety of martyrdoms amongst the converts to the new religion, in which mere children suffered the most torturing deaths with heroic fortitude and Christian resignation] ‘Does Gibbon think to sound the depths of the eternal ocean with the tape and measuring rod of his merely literary philosophy?’ Is not this finely said? ...I am glad the ‘Grammar’ came before the ‘Lay Sermons’ — glad, I mean, to have come as it were within the glow of Newman’s warm faith, before I turn to Huxley’s defence of scientific doubt, as the necessary precursor to the acquisition of certain knowledge.”⁹

But she nevertheless found much to excite her in Huxley’s volume. A week later she writes to the same Quaker friend:

“...Did thou read the Lay Sermon on ‘The Physical Basis of Life’? This is the most remarkable and the most startling of the addresses. The idea, as thou will remember, formed the substance of the inaugural address at Liverpool — the idea of the uniformity of the physical basis of life in various aspects. I do not think that the views which Huxley defends, necessarily land us in materialism; certainly this is not his aim in propounding them. Materialistic opinions or beliefs are, he clearly states, ‘unphilosophic’. The paper on ‘A Liberal Education’ is admirable; full of wise and fruitful thought.”¹⁰

Belief in the power of education as a force for good was, of course, not limited to the non-conformists. Popular education was still seen by some as a means of bringing men to God and keeping them in their earthly station. “Be assured” wrote the Vicar of Belgrave in appealing for funds to repair his schoolroom in 1859; “Education is the handmaid to religion.”¹¹

Lord Abinger told the Jury at Leicester Spring Sessions in 1836 if “education was not founded on a moral and religious principle, instead of becoming a blessing, it would in the end turn out to be a curse.”¹² The assize Judge in 1838 was no less dogmatic: “Education without religion was a gross absurdity.”¹³

When the reform of parliament was under discussion in 1832, *The Leicester Journal* solemnly warned the Bishops of their duty to defend the truth:

“With all due deference to the learned body we are addressing, we would beg to call their attention to one point. If the measure of Reform now before their House be carried by their aid, let them not ‘lay the flattering unction to their souls; that they have by their favouring votes saved the Establishment from the ruthless grasp of the *Reformers*’. ...Why should the unholy and unnatural coalition of Infidels, Papists and Dissenters frighten the Bench from its propriety? ... Papists and Dissenters unfortunately rank amongst our Legislators — they are both the bitter and inveterate foes of the Church. The first thinks he cannot do God a greater service than to persecute if he cannot convert; and the other joins the first with all the deadly animosity of a family feud.”¹⁴

This sort of bombast is fairly typical of the *Journal* — no hint of questioning or the search for reconciliation of science and religion ever blurs the solid naïveté of its adherence to orthodoxy.

When Municipal Reform was imminent the *Journal* urged its readers “to devote their whole energies of mind and body to the cause of the Constitution” and it warned that the “immediate and ultimate results of Socinian ascendancy” would be “the speedy destruction of the Church and the eventual despotism of the Sword.”¹⁵

Chief perpetrators of this so-called Socinian attack were the Unitarians who became the most influential body in the Reformed Corporation, providing as is well-known, the first seven mayors of the new Council from 1836.

Unitarianism emerged out of the rationalistic free thought of the eighteenth century and was perhaps the most fertile ground for the acceptance of scientific revelations into the corpus of Christian thought. The Unitarians of Leicester not only comprised some of the wealthiest, public-spirited, talented and cultivated citizens of the nineteenth century town but they also did much to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of their less comfortable townsmen. In 1846 they appointed Joseph Dare as the Town Missionary whose job it was to visit the homes of the poor with practical as well as spiritual advice and assistance.

Dare's thirty-six Annual Reports are a unique quarry of information on the people of Leicester in the middle years of the nineteenth century. He was not out to convert others to Unitarianism: "Our great object is not to increase the numbers of our particular flock" he wrote in 1855, "but to promote the virtue and happiness of all — to diffuse a spirit of industry and order, of contentment and religion, throughout the community."¹⁶ He was incensed at the hell-fire homilies preached by some ministers of other denominations and at the bigotry and arrogance of those such as the scripture reader who "on having some of his opinions controverted, denounced the objector, and told him at once he would go to hell!"¹⁷ or the "clergyman of Puseyite tendency" who "had burnt a Sunday magazine, issued by one of the Dissenting bodies. The reverend gentleman discovered the little book in the hands of a child at his Sunday school. He gave the child a penny for it, and then threw it into the fire, observing that it was fortunate he had been able to destroy it before it had been seen by any more of the children. He would buy and burn all of the kind they could bring him".¹⁸

Admirable and charitable as they were the Unitarians were almost inevitably the harbingers of yet more radical doubts about Christianity and religion in general. Leicester had always had its outright atheists and agnostics like the aged radical George Bown and Jacob Holyoake who was one of Robert Owen's social missionaries and a leading force in rationalist thought in Leicester for over half a century.

The Social Institution opened by Robert Owen in 1839 moved to the premises of Dare's Domestic Mission in 1850 and later had its meetings in the Russell Tavern in Rutland Street. On one occasion Holyoake was denied the use of a room at the Three Crowns for a lecture and it was this sort of prejudice against free thought that led Josiah Gimson to advocate "a place of our own".

Gimson was brought up a member of the Unitarian Great Meeting but his mind sought freedom even from the constraints of that tolerant society and it was he who led the movement to establish the Secular Hall. In his memoirs, his son Sidney, mentions some of the visitors to his father's house, among them "Mrs. Besant — a charming brilliant, very good looking young woman, whose conversation was a delight", and Charles Bradlaugh whose "courtesy and dignity much impressed me and I got an abiding impression of bigness, both physical and intellectual. One felt that one was in the company of a great man".¹⁹

Bradlaugh, Annie Besant and Holyoake all spoke at the opening of the Secular Hall in March 1881. Most of the local papers reported the event, including the speeches by Josiah Gimson, Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, and described the hall in detail but carefully avoiding any editorial judgement on its significance. Only the *Leicester Daily Post* seems to have ventured to speculate on the phenomenon of this physical monument to unbelief.

"In most towns Secularism struggles for an existence in some obscure, cheerless, third-rate hall, and the wonder is it can live at all amid the depressing surroundings where it finds a local habitation and a voice. But Secularism in Leicester has so far flourished as to erect a handsome and substantial hall in a conspicuous thoroughfare and to challenge public attention by all the outward signs of prosperity. The members of the Christian churches may well ask, How is this to be accounted for? We believe the answer to be twofold: first that in Leicester Secularism has been wise enough to dwell upon its one

grain of positive truth rather than upon its bushel of negatives; and second that Secularism in Leicester has been very fortunate in the character of some of its representatives. To deal with the last first, character in this world thank God, will always tell and character distinguished for its courage, its simplicity, its kindliness, its uprightness, will get a certain amount of sway for any creed with which it happens to be associated, be it true or false."²⁰

The 'one grain of positive truth' referred to was the social gospel of secularism in Leicester: improving the lot of the poor, in housing, education and welfare.

The main thrust of the editorial, however, was to condemn Secularism in the belief that good works were grounded in religion and ultimately impossible without it.

The *Leicester Daily Mercury* gives us a fuller impression of the social gospel of secularism in its report of the speech by Mrs Besant. She spoke of the need for 'political truth' as well as scientific truth.

"If it be wrong to speak a falsehood, to rob, and to murder when they were dealing with their own fellow citizens, so also was it wrong when they were dealing with another nation. Falsehood did not cease to be falsehood because they called it diplomacy; robbery did not cease to be robbery because they called it annexation; and murder did not cease to be murder because they dressed it up in a red coat and called it war. The churches had failed to bring those truths home to men and it was their duty to teach what the churches had failed to teach. That hall would also be for the investigation of social truth. It was not a natural state of things that one set of men in a country should have more money than they knew what to do with, while others equally honest and hard-working should be pining for bread."²¹

The reaction of the clergy was predictably one of outrage and moral indignation. Canon Vaughan delivered an address on Secularism to the working classes referring in particular to the five busts which adorn the front of the hall, including that of Jesus.

"Those who have been responsible for the erection of the building can hardly be supposed to be ignorant of the deep and intense disgust which the association of the second of these five names with the rest would produce in the minds of those amongst us, whether Churchpeople or Non-conformists, who deliberately profess and call themselves Christians. If the thing has been done ignorantly and without any intention of insulting and outraging the feeling of [to say the least] a very large section of their fellow townspeople — they can easily set themselves right with us by removing the bust and erasing the name."²²

The sermon drew a most thoughtful and interesting reply from an anonymous writer who signed himself 'One who heard the Canon's respected father's last sermon'. "Sir," he wrote "Canon Vaughan says there are persons, when they are talking about Christianity, who seem not to know what they are talking about, and to have taken no pains or trouble to know. I think the Canon has fallen into the same error in regard to Secularism," and he went on to defend free thinkers, declaring that:

"Their aim is that man and woman shall be able to see the grand world they live in, and the good use it can be put to, and to lessen the need for convict prisons and Charity Organisations, and each may be able to think for himself or herself, and try to do that which is right and fair between them, and not to have their conscience made for them. I am sorry to think such a lovely building should cause anyone painful feeling. We cannot help it. As to the busts that cause such disgust, it is not the first time that the company Jesus was found in displeased some of the Pharisees. Then the Canon talks of blasphemy. It reads ugly; but what is there in it? They called Jesus a blasphemer, but it did not make him so. What would the Churchman or Non-conformist think if the Secularist was to

suggest the dismantling of their buildings? There's one thing about Secularism; it teaches that all men are equal, and if we do right we are as good as our neighbour, though he have the Church at his back. It's 'Divine Equality' we glory in; the priest's denunciation we fear not. It seems such a mistake to talk to young people about the profanity of Voltaire. If they are of inquiring turn, they will read and know for themselves, and then what do they find? The minister misled them. When I was young I used to hear the great Tom Paine's name shouted out in execration Sunday after Sunday from the very pulpit the Canon now occupies. What was the consequence? I read for myself and the glorious freedom I would not exchange for all that what orthodoxy promises — and that is more than 40 years ago. I have nothing to say about what he tells his fellow Christians. I know they call themselves 'miserable sinners'. I am not going to gainsay it if they are such; but I often think they are not altogether telling the truth — that is their affair. I care not for their pity, but I wish not to be the subject of their slander. There is much that we Leicester Secularists admire in Canon Vaughan — his science classes and his adult classes. We hear of their success with pleasure; but if his sermons show the bigot we will stand up in self defence."²³

There, apparently, the matter rested, for the Canon would not have wished to give greater prominence to such an articulate defence of secularism.

There was much in the conduct of affairs at the Secular Hall that followed the pattern of non-conformist worship. Secular hymns were sung and Sunday schools held for children and the sermon was replaced by a series of public addresses often by eminent visiting speakers such as G.B. Shaw, Eleanor Marx, William Morris, Graham Wallas, and Prince Kropotkin — 'a real prince and not one of the kind that are two a penny on the continent'.²⁴

Sidney Gimson recalls, too, the visit of Rosamund Dale Owen, grand-daughter of the great philanthropist.

"She was a spiritualist as was her father, Robert Dale Owen and she had a curiously simple and practical belief. She even told us, when chatting at home, of the spirit of an old servant [a darkie, for Miss Owen came from America] who still did jobs about the house for her and tidied up the drawers in her bedroom! — Not long after she married Laurence Oliphant the writer and traveller."²⁵

Another great woman who lectured in 1898 was Mary Kingsley, niece of the writer.

"She showed slides of her visits to West Africa with deliciously humorous asides e.g. 'Some people tell me that in this photograph the people have not got enough clothes on, but it's really all right, I happened to reach that village on washing day and you can see the clothes hung out to dry on bushes at the back!'"²⁶

Among the most passionate visitors to the Secular Hall was William Morris, the artist, who was instrumental in furthering the development of Ernest Gimson the architect and furniture designer. Morris was vehement in his detestation of 'restorations' e.g. of St. Albans. Edith Gittins 'who almost worshipped Morris' quietly interjected. "Well, Mr. Morris, I have been into the only chapel in that cathedral which has not been touched and I think it badly needs restoring". The effect was electrical. Morris jumped out of his chair, rushed across to her, gesticulated with his fist near her face, and called out "Tommy rot, madam, tommy rot, tommy rot!" Miss Gittins gazed at him, quite at a loss and a bit alarmed. There was a moment's awkward pause then unrestrained laughter in which Morris and Miss Gittins joined. He stayed and talked a bit about the particular chapel to Miss Gittins and then returned to his chair.²⁷

Edith Gittins was not the only visitor to the Secular Hall to be accosted by the fiery William Morris. Sidney Gimson retained a strong affection and friendship for the Rev. Page Hopps of the Great Meeting and after a lecture by Morris on one occasion he had supper with them.

"After supper we were talking about the lecture, Page Hopps sitting in an easy chair, Morris on a dinner table chair. Page Hopps said, 'You know, Mr. Morris, that would be a

very charming Society that you have been describing, but it's quite impossible, it would need God Almighty himself to manage it!' Immediately Morris jumped up, ran his fingers through his hair and ruffled it, walked once or twice round his chair, then, shaking his fist close to Page Hopps face, exclaimed 'All right, man, you catch your God Almighty, we'll have him!' There was a burst of delighted laughter, in which Page Hopps heartily joined, and there was no response."²⁸

Between the Secularists and the true believers there was of course no such converse. They were like the Edinburgh fishwives cat-calling across the street who, as Sidney Smith observed, must necessarily disagree since they argued from different premises. Tom Barclay the veteran socialist of Leicester, who has given us such a delightful account of his own spiritual journey in 'The autobiography of a bottlewasher', tells how he once inveigled his old Catholic mother into the library of the Secular Hall after taking her to a performance of 'The Mikado' at the Opera House. She admired the grand place with its books and pictures and spacious tables never dreaming till well away from it that it was the very same citadel of paganism that had lured her beloved son from the true faith; for she had vowed never to die until not one stone of it remained upon another.

Alas Tom Barclay and his mother are long since gone and the Secular Hall remains as the only secularist institution outside London. It still has its adherents and its weekly meetings, though no longer its Sunday schools and secularist hymn singing.

Indeed one is bound to reflect sadly that the passion of protagonists in the battle for the Victorian mind has long since faded. "Positive infidelity," says Brian Inglis, "like Primitive Methodism, failed to attract a large proportion of the working classes". There is wide agreement with the report of 1851 that the masses were 'unconscious secularists' but,

"Half a century later, despite the efforts of Bradlaugh, Holyoake and other evangelists of unbelief, it was still thought to be uncommon; in 1900, people friendly and unfriendly to religion agreed that among the working classes indifference to the churches was normal, moral and political hostility to them was common, and cosmological objections to their message were rare — rarer, as many observers noted, in England than on the continent of Europe."²⁹

We no longer care about such things. Is it materialism or an ingrained agnosticism in modern man that makes us turn aside from such arguments about the truth or falsehood of Christianity? Certainly we are more tolerant, but then, where truth is at stake, tolerance is the virtue of the uncaring. Some Victorians did care and the building of the Secular Hall in Humberstone Gate in 1881 is a visible reminder of the passionate caring for truth which was the mainspring of Leicester Secular Society.

Notes

- 1 Georgina Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury — A biography of the Seventh Earl 1801-1885*, (Constable, 1974), p.101
- 2 *Ibid.*, p.103
- 3 Parliamentary Papers (House of Commons) 1852-53. LXXXIX — Report on Religious Worship (England and Wales) p.cclxi and article by W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 religious census — a useless experiment?' *British Journal of Sociology*, XVIII (1967), 382-407
- 4 Douglas Ashby, *Friar Lane The Story of Three Hundred Years*, (The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1951), p.49
- 5 *A Memoir of Thomas Wheeler*, copy in the possession of the author
- 6 A. Temple-Patterson, *Radical Leicester*, (Leicester University Press, 1954), p.231
- 7 Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Newman to Martineau, 1850-1900*, (Princeton University Press, 1962), p.175

- 8 *Letters and Memorials of Eliza Ellis*, printed privately after her death in 1879, p.252
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.352
- 10 *Ibid.*, p.353
- 11 Parochial letter of the Rev. Richard Stephens of Belgrave, 1/9/1859, *Leicestershire Record Office*
- 12 *Leicester Journal* 25/3/1836
- 13 *Leicester Chronicle* 24/3/1836
- 14 *Leicester Journal* 27/4/1832
- 15 *Ibid.*, 25/12/1835
- 16 Joseph Dare, Annual Report to the Domestic Mission, 1855, p.9
- 17 *Ibid.*, 1858, p.17
- 18 *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.*
- 19 Sidney Gimson, '*Random Recollections*', *Leicestershire Record Office*, 10D 68/18 p.22
- 20 *Leicester Daily Post* 7/3/1881
- 21 *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 7/3/1881
- 22 *Leicester Journal*, 18/3/1881
- 23 *Leicester Daily Mercury*, 16/3/1881
- 24 S. Gimson *op. cit.*, p.43
- 25 *Ibid.*, p.45
- 26 *Ibid.*, p.47
- 27 *Ibid.*, p.48
- 28 S. Gimson, '*Further Recollections*', 1935, p.23
- 29 Brian Inglis, *Churches in Victorian England*, p.329