

ARISTOCRATIC WHIG POLITICS IN
EARLY-VICTORIAN YORKSHIRE:
LORD MORPETH AND HIS WORLD

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the provincial life of George W. F. Howard (1802-64), 7th Earl of Carlisle, better known as the early-Victorian Whig aristocrat and politician Lord Morpeth. It challenges accounts which have presented Whiggery as metropolitan in ethos, by demonstrating that Morpeth strongly engaged with the county of Yorkshire as a politician, philanthropist and landlord. It provides the first dedicated account of how Whiggery operated, and was perceived, in a provincial setting.

An introduction summarises the current historiography on the Whigs, and establishes the rationale behind the study. Chapter One details the pivotal influence of Morpeth's Christian faith on his thought. It suggests that his religious values shaped both his non-political and political actions, ensuring a correlation between them.

Chapters Two and Four are concerned with Morpeth's career as M.P. for Yorkshire (1830-32) and the West Riding (1832-41, 1846-48). They suggest that Morpeth played a key role in building an alliance between the region's liberals and Whiggery, based around the idea that the Whigs would offer political, economic and ecclesiastical reforms. However, they show how this alliance gradually splintered, partly owing to differences between the Whigs and some of the region's nonconformist liberals over issues of Church and State and the Whigs' social reform policies.

Chapter Three details Morpeth's activities as a philanthropist in the county. It suggests that this maintained his links to his supporters, shaped his views on social questions, and enhanced his political reputation. Chapter Five explores his relationship with Castle Howard, his Yorkshire estate. It demonstrates his attachment to the house and integration into local society, his involvement in promoting agricultural and infrastructural improvement in the district, and his concern to improve the moral, physical and spiritual welfare of his tenants. Both chapters show the links between Morpeth's provincial life and his career as a statesman.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

Parts of this thesis have been presented before. Some aspects of Chapter One were presented in a different and much earlier form to the 'Victorian Ethics' conference at Leeds Trinity and All Saints College in March 2008. This working paper was subsequently published as David Gent, "Scruples in my Mind: Ethics, Conscience and Duty in the Life of Lord Morpeth" in Nathan Uglow (ed.), *Victorian Ethics: Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies*, 10 (2008), 38-49. Chapters Two and Four were delivered in condensed and draft form to the 'British History, 1815-1945' seminar at the Institute of Historical Research in March 2009. An argument about the importance of the idea of 'character' to contemporary perceptions of Morpeth, which runs through the whole thesis, was trialled at the 'Languages of Politics' conference at Durham in April 2009. Chapter Five is based on an article submitted in 2009 to the *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, and presented in oral form at a special seminar on Lord Morpeth at Castle Howard in October 2009. This was itself a reworking of a paper presented at the Modern British History conference in Glasgow in June 2008.

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INTRODUCTION

October 21st 1861 was a festive day in Leeds, as over five thousand people gathered in the town centre. They were there to greet George William Frederick Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle (1802-1864), the Whig aristocrat and politician better known as Lord Morpeth.¹ Morpeth, the subject of this thesis, was in the middle of a busy day. At one o'clock he had arrived at Leeds train station, where he was welcomed by the Mayor. He proceeded to oversee the opening of the new Leeds Hospital for Women and Children, wearing - as the *Leeds Mercury* gushingly reported - 'the blue riband of a Knight of the Order of the Garter'. He was then whisked off to outside the Town Hall, where he distributed prizes and inspected the town's Volunteer Corps.

Having been cheered by the assembled multitude, he moved inside the Hall. The Town Council presented him with an address recognising his 'public services... as a statesman and philanthropist'. To mark the occasion they had laid on all the trappings of civic pomp, including an orchestra which duly struck up the national anthem. Admission was by ticket only and the 'body of the hall' reserved for ladies. The aldermen were arrayed in their official robes, and were accompanied by the town insignia. If that were not enough, the councillors then hosted a substantial repast in Morpeth's honour at the Music Hall, where covers were laid for one hundred and fifty guests. Present were the cream of Leeds' middle-class elite, whose confidence and civic pride was exuded in the grand municipal buildings of the town.²

That such men should wish to celebrate the visit of this aristocratic dignitary might at first seem unusual. He was, after all, a member of a landed order which they were

¹ Lord Morpeth is the courtesy title given to the heir to the Carlisle dynasty; it was G. W. F. Howard's name between his grandfather's death in September 1825 and his succession to the Earldom of Carlisle following his father's death in October 1848. Previous to this he was known simply as George Howard. To avoid confusion, he is referred to throughout the main body of this dissertation as Morpeth regardless of chronology. References provide correct titles for that particular date.

² *Leeds Mercury*, October 22nd 1861, p. 3.

rapidly replacing in social, cultural and political importance.³ In many respects, they came from very different worlds. Whereas Leeds' councillors were all self-made men, Morpeth had been born into a life of ease and luxury. The eldest son of George Howard, 6th Earl of Carlisle (1773-1848) and his wife Georgiana, he inherited a huge amount of material wealth, including Castle Howard, a veritable jewel of art and architecture which sat at the heart of one of the most important estates in the North Riding. An intimate of the Royal family (Queen Victoria described him as 'much beloved'), he moved in the highest circles.⁴ He acted as the Queen's deputy in Ireland as Lord Lieutenant from 1855 until 1858 and from 1859 until shortly before his death.

This appointment capped a successful career as a statesman. Morpeth was an exemplary member of that interrelated group of grand Whig families – Russells, Spencers, Hollands, Gowers, Greys, Howards, Cavendishes – who bestrode the early-Victorian political scene. Previously, he had played an important role in the Whig Governments of the 1830s and 40s, serving as Chief Secretary for Ireland (1835-41, in the Cabinet from 1839) and as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests (1846-50). In the process he made important contributions to Irish policy, passed the pioneering and contentious Public Health Act of 1848, and exemplified the Whigs' interest in social questions such as education. He was, in short, a man who moved in a world above that of the majority of his countrymen, and who had shaped their lives in sometimes controversial ways. In one sense, the festivities in Leeds might be read as a reflection of this social difference; the excited crowds, military parade and civic regalia all indicated that Morpeth belonged to a class apart.

In fact, the decision of Leeds Town Council to present an address to Morpeth was a mark of his close and lifelong relationship with the Yorkshire region. The *Leeds Mercury* reminded its readers of the immense popularity he had accrued as Whig M.P. for Yorkshire from 1830 to 1832, and then the West Riding from 1832 to 1841 and again from 1846 to 1848, declaring that all Yorkshire-men regarded him 'almost

³ For a magisterial account of the gradual and complicated decline of aristocratic importance *vis-à-vis* that of the middle-class, see David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, 1990).

⁴ Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians, August 26th 1861, in A. C. Benson & R. B. Brett, 2nd Viscount Esher (eds.), *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection from Her Majesty's Correspondence between the years 1837 and 1861* (3 vols, London, 1907), vol. 3, p. 578.

in the light of a personal friend'.⁵ The councillors present dwelt on the many philanthropic duties he had undertaken in Yorkshire both during and after his political service, reflecting a benevolence he also displayed on his Castle Howard estate. As the alderman John Hope Shaw put it, 'the name of Morpeth... was associated in the most intimate connection with the prosperity and well-being of Yorkshire'.⁶

As this episode suggests, Morpeth provided a bridge between provincial England and the world of Whig aristocracy and government. This study investigates his activities in Yorkshire, focusing on his actions as a landlord, philanthropist and regional politician. In doing so, it provides a case-study of how Whiggery operated in a provincial setting in the period 1820-1860.⁷ Such a study is badly needed. Our understanding of how the Whigs functioned outside the world of Westminster is arguably seriously deficient, a reflection of the paucity of studies on the topic.⁸ This raises several questions. How far did the Whigs' experience of provincial society influence their actions in government? Did they help mediate their policies in the regions? Were they involved in establishing networks of political support?

By examining the life of one prominent Whig politician, this thesis explores these issues. It demonstrates that Morpeth's engagement with Yorkshire's society, politics and culture was an important aspect of his life. Beyond this, the study does not contain a central organising narrative as such. Rather, it ranges over a number of topics and makes a series of inter-related points. These can be grouped into two broad areas. Firstly, the study examines the ways in which Morpeth's provincial actions were related to his wider life as a statesman. It argues that there were significant links between his provincial career and his actions in government. It also suggests that there were important connections between his political actions and his activities as a

⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, October 18th 1861, p. 2.

⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, October 22nd 1861, p. 3.

⁷ This thesis uses the term 'Whig' in the standard sense, to apply to that group of aristocratic families who were on the reforming side of politics. 'Whiggery' describes the political creed of the Whigs. Note, however, that there were considerable generational differences within the Whig Party. Where 'Whiggery' is used in an unqualified sense, it refers to Morpeth's early-Victorian generation. Applied to Yorkshire, 'Whig' refers to members of landed families from both the aristocracy and gentry who supported the Whig Party. Beyond this, some members of the political public who supported the Whigs saw themselves as 'Whig' by affiliation; nevertheless, I have followed the convention of describing such people as 'liberals' or 'reformers'. As I believe the Whigs to have had much in common with these groups, I have sometimes grouped them under these terms.

⁸ One exception is provided by D. J. Gratton, 'Paternalism, Patronage and Estate Management: The Fifth Earl Fitzwilliam, 1786-1857' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Sheffield University, 1999).

Yorkshire landlord and philanthropist, and explores the ways in which the latter spheres of Morpeth's life shaped perceptions of him as a politician.

Secondly, this thesis includes an in-depth account of Morpeth's career as the representative of Yorkshire and the West Riding. To my knowledge, this is the first full-length study of provincial Whiggery to cover the 1830s and 40s, the heyday of Whig government. It aims to yield insight into the Whigs' relationship with their provincial supporters and how this changed over time. In particular, it suggests that whilst the Whigs were successful in appealing to Yorkshire's liberals, the resulting political coalition in the county gradually fractured, as the Whigs' actions in government revealed damaging political and theological differences within it. Whilst this narrative is a fairly familiar one, this study moves beyond current accounts in emphasising Morpeth's own pivotal role in helping to construct, and indeed break, the affiliation between Yorkshire's reformers and the Whig Government.

In investigating these areas, this thesis has the wider goal of furthering our understanding of early-Victorian Whiggery, and uncovering some of the reasons behind its successes and failures. The next section offers a broad summary of the current historiography on the Whigs. It critiques the idea, prevalent in some of this scholarship, that they were metropolitan in ethos. It also outlines some historical and historiographical reasons for studying Whiggery in the provinces. In doing so, it details the main contributions this dissertation makes to the literature. Another section summarises the sources and methods employed in this study, whilst a final section gives a breakdown of the remaining chapters in the thesis.

The Historiographical Context

This thesis has emerged from an explosion of scholarly interest in the Whigs. It complements a now burgeoning number of works on nineteenth-century Whiggery which have appeared in the last twenty-five years. These works bear witness to a startling historiographical rehabilitation. Previously, the early-Victorian Whig Party was largely viewed as a hangover from the eighteenth-century, an 'archaic connection' in Donald Southgate's phrase. Apparently in thrall to the legacy of Charles James Fox, the Whigs had little to offer the Victorian era, and were by turns

vacillating and unprincipled in office. In this light, the legislative achievements of the Grey, Melbourne and Russell administrations were viewed largely as concessions designed to stave off social revolution or to maintain the Whigs' place in government, and hence as more properly the responsibility of other groups in the Victorian polity.⁹

This analysis has now been discredited. It is now recognised that the Whigs played a vital role in both early-Victorian government and in the development of Victorian liberalism. Work in intellectual history has demonstrated the links between late eighteenth-century Whiggism and Victorian liberal thought.¹⁰ There are now detailed studies of the Whigs' contributions to parliamentary reform, foreign policy, and the government of Ireland.¹¹ Three innovative books on early-Victorian Whig government by Richard Brent, Peter Mandler and Jonathan Parry were particularly vital in restoring the Whigs to their proper place in political history. Whilst they posit different interpretations, all three historians agreed that Whiggery was revived and updated in the 1820s and 30s by the generation of Whigs led by Lord John Russell (and including Morpeth). This generation drove the Whig Party to significant achievements in parliamentary and local government reform, the abolition of colonial slavery, church reform, poor-law reform, educational policy in England and Ireland, public health, factory reform, prison reform and much more besides.¹²

Despite this, however, the current literature is predominantly focused on London and Westminster. The relative neglect of the Whigs' activities outside the capital may partly be attributed to an influential historiographical current which presents

⁹ Norman Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction in English Politics, 1832-52* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 157-200; Donald Southgate, *The Passing of the Whigs, 1832-86* (London, 1962), *passim* (for the Whigs as an 'archaic connection', p. 66).

¹⁰ John Burrow, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought* (Oxford, 1988 for 1985), pp. 1-20.

¹¹ Leslie Mitchell, 'Foxite politics and the Great Reform bill', *English Historical Review*, 108 (1993), 338-64; Robert Saunders, 'Lord John Russell and Parliamentary Reform, 1848-67', *English Historical Review*, 120:489 (2005), 1289-1315; Peter Burroughs, 'Liberal, Paternalist or Cassandra? Earl Grey as a Critic of Colonial Self-Government', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 18:1 (1990), 33-60; Jonathan Parry, *The Politics of Patriotism: English Liberalism, National Identity and Europe, 1830-1886* (Cambridge, 2006); Allen Warren, 'Palmerston, the Whigs and the Government of Ireland, 1855-1866' in David Brown and Miles Taylor (eds.), *Palmerston Studies I* (Southampton, 2007), 95-126; Peter Gray, *The Making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815-1843* (Manchester, 2009).

¹² Richard Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics: Whiggery, Religion and Reform, 1830-1841* (Oxford, 1987); Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform: Whigs and Liberals, 1830-1852* (Oxford, 1990); Jonathan Parry, *The Rise and Fall of Liberal Government in Victorian Britain* (London, 1993). One other important contribution to the Whigs' rehabilitation was made by Ian Newbould, *Whiggery and Reform, 1830-1841: The Politics of Government* (Basingstoke, 1990).

Whiggery as a fundamentally metropolitan creed. This view has been most forcefully articulated by Leslie Mitchell, who firmly associates late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Whiggery with the capital's fashionable world. Mitchell argues that London salons like Holland House helped to sustain the Whig Party during its long period out of office. For Mitchell, Whiggery thrived in an exclusive culture which revelled in a heady mixture of cosmopolitan ideas, intellectual conversation, fashionable society and political gossip. The Whigs, he contends, disdained the provinces as boring and backward, the natural home of their Tory opponents.¹³

This contention arguably relies overly on the 3rd Lord and Lady Holland, who were notoriously metropolitan. The Whig wit Sydney Smith could joke as to whether Lady Holland had 'ever seen a real country squire, or whether they grow at all within that distance of London'.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Mitchell's work has been highly influential on some analyses of Whiggery in the early-Victorian period. Peter Mandler, for instance, has suggested that the Whigs' 'relative detachment from local concerns' underpinned a centralising, interventionist mode of government, pursued most vigorously by a group of 'Foxite Whigs' (including Russell and Morpeth) in schemes of social reform. Benjamin Weinstein has also drawn attention to the Whigs' metropolitanism in his recent study of London's politics in the 1830s and 40s. Morpeth, a frequent attendee at Holland House and member of Brooks', London's leading Whig club, has been seen to exemplify this allegedly continuing metropolitan tradition.¹⁵

This study challenges this interpretation. It demonstrates that Morpeth was just as likely to be found in Yorkshire as in London, at Castle Howard as Holland House. Recently, Joe Bord has also criticised the 'metropolitan' interpretation of Whiggery. He rightly argues that the cultivation of land remained important to the Whigs' identity, and that a culture which praised science and progress could easily accommodate the agricultural interests of Whigs like Coke of Norfolk and the 5th and

¹³ Leslie Mitchell, *Holland House* (London, 1980), pp. 35-38, 172-95; Leslie Mitchell, *The Whig World: 1760-1837* (London, 2005), pp. 39-76.

¹⁴ Sydney Smith to John Allen, September 15th 1818, in Nowell C. Smith (ed.), *The Letters of Sydney Smith* (2 vols, Oxford, 1953), vol. 1, p. 300.

¹⁵ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 6 (for 'relative detachment from local concerns'), 14-17, 55-84; Benjamin Weinstein, 'Shopkeepers and Gentlemen: The Liberal Politics of Early-Victorian London' (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005), pp. 30-39, and also Benjamin Weinstein, 'Metropolitan Whiggery, 1832-55', in Matthew Cragoe & Anthony Taylor (eds.), *London Politics, 1760-1914* (Basingstoke, 2005), 57-74.

6th Dukes of Bedford.¹⁶ Older accounts, most notably by E. A. Wasson on Lord Althorp, have also revealed the Whigs' interest in scientific agriculture. Wasson presents Althorp's political career as an extension of his wider leadership of rural society.¹⁷ The Whigs' engagement with provincial life was also illustrated by scholars who explored the role played by families like the Fitzwilliams, Sutherlands and Devonshires in promoting urban and industrial development.¹⁸

This thesis adds to these works. It shows that Morpeth was highly engaged with Yorkshire's society. An active poor law guardian and magistrate, improving landlord and benevolent philanthropist, he does not sit easily with the view that the Whigs were a metropolitan breed. However, this study does not merely aim to produce an impressionistic account of his life in Yorkshire, which might be divorced from his wider career. It seeks to demonstrate not just the *existence* of his provincial life, but also its *importance*. In doing so, it builds on existing scholarship in three areas: Whiggery and liberalism, the structure of early-Victorian politics more generally, and the role of ideas of character and manliness in nineteenth-century politics and culture. These will now be explored in turn in order to detail the main points of the thesis.

Whiggery and Liberalism

The importance one places on examining the Whigs' provincial activities partly turns on how one conceptualises their principles. This question has been the subject of a good deal of historiographical debate. As noted above, Peter Mandler has suggested that early-Victorian Whiggery is best categorised by its centralising, interventionist ethos. Mandler suggests that this style emerged because figures such as Morpeth and Russell inherited a creed, developed by the eighteenth-century Whig leader Charles

¹⁶ Joe Bord, *Science and Whig Manners: Science and Political Style in Britain, c. 1790-1850* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 102-33.

¹⁷ E. A. Wasson, *Whig Renaissance: Lord Althorp and the Whig Party, 1782-1845* (London, 1987), *passim*; E. A. Wasson, 'The Third Earl Spencer and Agriculture, 1818-1845', *Agricultural History Review*, 26 (1978), 89-99.

¹⁸ For the Fitzwilliams, see Graham Mee, *Aristocratic Enterprise: The Fitzwilliam Industrial Undertakings, 1795-1857* (Glasgow, 1975); For the Sutherlands, Eric Richards, *The Leviathan of Wealth: The Sutherland Fortune in the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1973). For the Devonshires, David Cannadine, 'The landowner as millionaire: the finances of the dukes of Devonshire, c.1800-c.1926', *Agricultural History Review*, 25 (1977), 77-97; David Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774-1967* (Leicester, 1980), part three. These works largely predate the 'metropolitan' interpretation of the Whigs established by Mandler and Mitchell.

James Fox, that the Whigs were the champions of the people. He argues that this led these 'Foxites' to seek to demonstrate the relevance and responsiveness of aristocratic government, by responding to popular calls for a more activist state. This caused them to attempt to increase the welfare of the people through (centralising) social reforms such as Morpeth's 1848 Public Health Act. Mandler argues that in doing so they were at variance with the mainstream liberal tradition, held by some other Whigs, which favoured a more private, localised and non-interventionist approach to economic and social questions.¹⁹

For Mandler then, Whiggery revolved around Westminster; those Whigs who did participate in provincial activity tend to be presented in his account as having departed from its fundamental spirit.²⁰ There is much of value in this analysis, which has been pivotal in recovering the Whigs' driving role behind early-Victorian social reforms. Nevertheless, its governing assumption – that Whiggery and liberalism can be interpreted by their opposing stances towards *laissez faire* ideals – now appears problematic. The liberal approach to economic policy is now generally seen to have been motivated by a set of moral and political values, especially a determination to ensure that government was not selfish, corrupt or sectionalist.²¹ As will be seen, Morpeth shared these ideals; indeed, they were the foundation of his political popularity in Yorkshire. This thesis also offers a different interpretation of Morpeth's stance on social reform, to which I will turn imminently.

Richard Brent and Jonathan Parry offer a rather different analysis of Whiggery, presenting it as part of a wider liberal ethos. Unlike Mandler, both authors also rightly emphasise the vital importance of religion to the Whigs' ideals and practice. Brent has shown how the early-Victorian generation of Whigs (unlike their more secular fathers) were deeply influenced by faith. He suggests that Morpeth and other senior Whigs such as Russell and Howick were part of a 'Liberal Anglican' group in the Party. Whilst attached to the Established Church, this group nevertheless believed

¹⁹ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 1-120.

²⁰ See, for instance, the account of the 'Young Whigs' like Althorp in Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 87-96.

²¹ Eugenio Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform: Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-1880* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 84-103; Michael Winstanley, 'Oldham radicalism and the origins of popular Liberalism, 1830-1852', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 619-43.

that the differences between Christian denominations were minimal, and that all might come together through essential Christian truths.

These beliefs allowed them to forge alliances with other liberals, particularly dissenters, over issues such as church reform, the government of Ireland and anti-slavery.²² Furthermore, they were convinced that Christian values were vital to a healthy society. Brent thus suggests that they accordingly moved Whiggery away from its late eighteenth-century preoccupation with the workings of the constitution, towards a concern with improving the moral foundations of the national polity.²³

Parry's work largely supports this analysis. He suggests that the Whigs aimed to encourage individual virtue and religion, whilst also wishing to increase social harmony. It was partly these principles which led the Whigs to engage in social reform in areas such as education and prison reform.²⁴ Importantly, Parry has shown how these values were shared by many liberals. It is now appreciated that Victorian liberalism might be defined as a movement which aimed to bring out mankind's potential for self-control, knowledge, morality and communal responsibility, and discourage its tendency to materialism, bigotry and selfishness.²⁵ It was thus centred on what Patrick Joyce has called the 'drama of moral struggle'.²⁶ Whilst, as will be seen, Whigs and other liberals differed over the role which state and Church might play in this process, they nevertheless shared an intellectual tradition.

This dissertation is sympathetic to these latter interpretations. It presents Morpeth as a Christian statesman, someone whose faith impacted on every area of his life. Indeed, it is difficult to overstate the degree of Morpeth's piety. One is, after all, dealing here with a man whose favourite hobby was to listen to sermons, and who could regard

²² Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, *passim*.

²³ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 19-64.

²⁴ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 113-41; Jonathan Parry, 'Past and Future in the Later Career of Lord John Russell' in Timothy Blanning & David Cannadine (eds.), *History & Biography: Essays in Honour of Derek Beales* (Cambridge, 1996), 142-72.

²⁵ Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*, pp. 86-126; Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991); Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects: The Self and the Social in Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), esp. pp. 41-72, 124-35, 161-92.

²⁶ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003), p. 121.

hearing two eminent clerics in the same day as a 'great treat in preaching'.²⁷ My thoughts on Morpeth's belief occupy another chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note that, in tracing the influence of his Christianity, this thesis argues that he endeavoured to improve the moral character of his countrymen, to foster social harmony (especially though religious tolerance), and to demonstrate and increase the dutifulness and disinterestedness of the ruling class. These three aspects of his thought were highly prevalent in his politics.

Once Whiggery is defined in this way - as being concerned with a set of rather abstract moral values - then it becomes possible to shift our interpretation of it away from Westminster. This is not, of course, to say that Parliament and government were unimportant to the Whigs; they were confident that the state could play a role in reforming character and reducing tensions. Nevertheless, they also appreciated that the state could not *impose* moral behaviour; that this would depend ultimately on the efforts of individuals.²⁸ They were accordingly adamant that they did not aspire to bring about the growth of the central state. Instead, they aimed to work alongside existing local structures. It could hardly be otherwise, in an age where welfare provision was left largely to charities and local authorities.²⁹

It therefore becomes essential to contextualise the Whigs' activities by examining their interaction with - and knowledge of - provincial affairs. Nancy LoPatin-Lummis has recently made an interesting contribution in this area, suggesting that the views of the Whig election agent Joseph Parkes on municipal reform were shaped by his own experience of local government in Warwickshire.³⁰ Whig reforms such as the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act, the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act and Morpeth's own 1848 Public Health Act were all concerned to improve structures of local

²⁷ Carlisle MSS (Castle Howard), J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, May 8th 1847. All subsequent references to manuscript sources are to the Castle Howard collection unless otherwise stated.

²⁸ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p. 114.

²⁹ Geoffrey B. A. M. Finlayson, *The Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 1-14, 87-94; Alan Kidd, 'The "liberal state": civil society and social welfare in nineteenth-century England', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 15:1 (2002), 114-19.

³⁰ Nancy LoPatin-Lummis, "'With All My Oldest and Native Friends": Joseph Parkes: Warwickshire Solicitor and Electoral Agent in the Age of Reform', *Parliamentary History*, 27:1 (2008), 96-108. On the Conservative side of politics, Ruscombe Foster has written an excellent study of the interaction between the Duke of Wellington and local government in Hampshire; Ruscombe Foster, *The Politics of County Power: Wellington and the Hampshire Gentlemen, 1820-1852* (Hemel Hempstead, 1989).

government.³¹ This area is not the focus of this study, but it will be suggested that Morpeth's knowledge of Yorkshire, and own practice as a local governor in the county, influenced his thought on topics such as public health and poor-law reform.

However, the Whigs' concern with improving national morality requires us to look beyond formal political structures. The idea of moral reform in early-Victorian England was largely focused on voluntary philanthropic societies which attempted to 'improve' the population.³² To state the obvious, this was a provincial as well as a metropolitan phenomenon; educational societies, temperance groups and religious missions which sought to assist moral reform were an ubiquitous feature of the civic life of provincial towns.³³ This philanthropic culture was seen as vital by liberals, who believed that by bringing people together in morally-improving activity, it offered a way of reducing materialism and social tensions.³⁴

This link between liberalism and moral improvement has recently been highlighted by a number of historians who have been inspired by Foucault's work on governmentality. They have suggested that attempts within civil society to order the behaviour of the population represented a significant form of authority, upon which the 'weak' nature of nineteenth-century liberal government was predicated.³⁵ I would not necessarily agree with the theory underpinning these works, which seem to me to have an arguably functionalist tendency to ignore the myriad reasons for contemporaries to involve themselves in moral reform besides its beneficial effects on

³¹ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 116-27; Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003), pp. 106-09; William Lubenow, *The Politics of Government Growth: Early Victorian Attitudes towards State Intervention, 1833-4* (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp. 33-105.

³² M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge, 2004).

³³ Robert John Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites, 1780-1850: an analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26:1 (1983), 95-118; Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The 'Heathen' at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke, 2009), *passim*. Whilst these works are primarily concerned with men, see also the recent work of Simon Morgan, which suggests that philanthropic activity in the urban arena provided a space for middle-class women to form their own civic identity; Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2007), esp. chapter five. All these works are partly based on Yorkshire evidence.

³⁴ Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*, pp. 87-89.

³⁵ Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003); Lauren Goodlad, *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State: Character and Governance in a Liberal Society* (Baltimore, 2003); Tom Crook, "'Schools for the moral training of the people': public baths, Liberalism and the promotion of cleanliness in Victorian Britain", *European Review of History*, 13:1 (2006), 21-47. Note however that these scholars do not argue that behaviour was 'controlled' from above; the idea of a willing 'liberal' subject is intrinsic to their analysis.

the subject.³⁶ Nevertheless, this line of scholarship has indicated the need to more deeply plumb the connections between state and civil society.

In government, the Whigs attempted to (directly or indirectly) foster civil society's interest in moral reform. In education, for instance, they offered controversial grants to philanthropic educational societies. This thesis deepens our understanding of this aspect of Whiggery by revealing Morpeth's own engagement with non-political projects of moral reform in Yorkshire. It shows how he attempted to fulfil his goals of improving the population's character and increasing social harmony through a number of philanthropic ventures, and through his management of the Castle Howard estate, where he instigated a variety of schemes to raise the virtue of his tenants. These actions were directly linked to his political interests, being grounded in the same intellectual and religious motivations. Morpeth's non-political and political actions therefore influenced each other in various ways.

National and Local Factors in Early-Victorian Politics

The above argument provided one reason for studying Morpeth's Yorkshire life holistically. Nevertheless, whilst this dissertation includes an account of his actions as a philanthropist and landlord, it predominantly focuses on his career as a Yorkshire M.P. It uses this to investigate how the Whiggery functioned politically in a provincial setting. There are a number of reasons to conduct such a study. Any successful political party must reach out beyond itself to attract support. In the nineteenth century, that process was mediated through a localised political and social framework. As Philip Harling has pointed out, even for late-Victorians daily life was an 'intensely local' affair.³⁷ Politics started at local level, in institutions such as the

³⁶ For some indications of the ways in which the Foucauldian analysis might be accommodated into mainstream histories of Victorian liberalism, see the excellent historiographical introduction to Peter Mandler (ed.), *Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2006).

³⁷ Philip Harling, 'The Centrality of Locality: The Local State, Local Democracy, and Local Consciousness in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 9:2 (2004), 216-34.

vestry and town council.³⁸ M.P.'s were expected to represent the interests of their town or county, and hence were often local men.³⁹

Indeed, it was once asserted that county politics in the 1830s remained largely deferential, in the grip of local landlords.⁴⁰ If that were true, then it could not offer a true test of public opinion. However, there is now a good deal of evidence to suggest that deference, where it existed, was a highly qualified concept, and that electors (especially in counties and populous boroughs) were largely independent. As a corollary to this, historians have revealed that voters were increasingly interested in national Parliamentary affairs from at least the mid-1820s.⁴¹ As the excellent work of Derek Fraser has made clear, even local politics was related to 'national' factors.⁴² The nineteenth century was perhaps the golden age of provincial involvement with, and influence on, national affairs. From Christopher Wyvill's Yorkshire Association onwards, great political movements tended to start in larger towns and the northern counties, which were where politicians located 'public opinion'.⁴³

Perhaps because of their view of themselves as the champions of the people, the Whigs proved highly responsive to provincial movements. In the late Georgian period, for instance, the Yorkshire Whig the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam (then Lord Milton) joined with campaigns on slavery, parliamentary reform and free trade when he was the county's M.P.⁴⁴ William Hay has shown how Henry Brougham similarly engaged with reform movements in the provinces, suggesting that it was precisely these links

³⁸ Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England: The Structure of Politics in Victorian Cities* (Leicester, 1976); David Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700-1870* (London, 1997), pp. 26-47.

³⁹ Miles Taylor, 'Interests, parties and the state: the urban electorate in England, c. 1820-72' in Jon Lawrence & Miles Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society: Electoral Behaviour in Britain since 1820* (Aldershot, 1997), 50-78.

⁴⁰ D. C. Moore, *The Politics of Deference: A study of the mid-nineteenth century English political system* (Hassocks, 1976). Moore's view that county elections were dominated by landlord influence is echoed to a large extent by T. J. Nossiter, *Influence, Opinion and Political Idioms in Reformed England: Case Studies from the North-East, 1832-74* (Hassocks, 1975).

⁴¹ R. W. Davis, *Political Change and Continuity, 1760-1885: A Buckinghamshire Study* (Newton Abbot, 1972); Edwin Jaggard, *Cornwall Politics in the Age of Reform, 1790-1885* (Woodbridge, 1999); David Eastwood, 'Contesting the politics of deference: the rural electorate, 1820-60' in Lawrence & Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society* (Aldershot, 1997), 27-49.

⁴² Fraser, *Urban Politics*, pp. 9-12.

⁴³ Donald Read, *The English Provinces, c. 1790-1960: A Study in Influence* (London, 1964).

⁴⁴ Gratton, 'Fifth Earl Fitzwilliam', pp. 13-31, 60-67. On Fitzwilliam's connections to anti-slavery sentiment when he contested the 1807 Yorkshire election (as Lord Milton), see Kirsten McKenzie, "'My Voice is sold, & I must be a Slave": Abolition Rhetoric, British Liberty and the Yorkshire Elections of 1806 and 1807', *History Workshop Journal*, 64:1 (2007), 48-73.

with provincial opinion which made the Whigs a credible party of government by 1830.⁴⁵ The connection between Whiggery and the provinces arguably became even more pronounced in the 1830s. The Whigs' 1832 Reform Act was based around the idea that Parliament would become more responsive to provincial opinion. The Act gave seats to previously unrepresented towns such as Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield. It also aimed to increase the influence of independent, respectable and propertied voters in both towns and counties.⁴⁶

In turn, the Reform Act increased the importance of national factors in provincial politics. It introduced a system of voter registration which encouraged the rise of local political organisations affiliated to Westminster, raised expectations of the political system, and led to pressure on the government to introduce further reforms. A number of historians have suggested that the Act thereby ushered in the 'political modernisation' of England - the process whereby voters came to judge between parties who were seen to offer competing policies and values.⁴⁷ The *Leeds Mercury* could thus declare that the 1835 West Riding election was 'NATIONAL... a great pitched battle between the Reformers and the Tories, [which] will decide whether one party or the other is to have the government of this kingdom'.⁴⁸

There are therefore good reasons for suggesting that the Whigs' relative ability to attract provincial opinion was a vital determinant of their political success. Nevertheless, our understanding of how they interacted with, and were perceived by, their grassroots supporters in the 1830s and 40s is relatively limited. Benjamin Weinstein has produced an informative thesis on Whig politics in the metropolis in this period, but this naturally does not advance our understanding of the provinces.⁴⁹ Our knowledge in this area relies mainly on local histories, on studies of popular

⁴⁵ William Anthony Hay, *The Whig Revival, 1808-1830* (New York, 2004), *passim*.

⁴⁶ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 78-87. Of course, many of the voters in these new boroughs had previously come within the county vote.

⁴⁷ J. A. Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs: English Electoral Behaviour, 1818-1841* (Oxford, 1992); Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties, 1832-1841* (Woodbridge, 2002); Matthew Cragoe, 'The Great Reform Act and the Modernization of British Politics: The Impact of Conservative Associations, 1835-41', *Journal of British Studies*, 47: 3 (2008), 581-603; Richard D. Floyd, *Church, Chapel and Party: Religious Dissent and Political Modernization in Nineteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 2008).

⁴⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Benjamin Weinstein, 'Shopkeepers and Gentlemen: The Liberal Politics of Early-Victorian London' (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2005).

liberalism which tend not to be concerned with Whiggery as such, or on general works on the Whig Party whose focus is on Westminster.⁵⁰ Even within the latter, there is (as noted above) debate as to whether Whig government appealed to other liberals or drew its popularity from outside the liberal mainstream.

Studying Morpeth's career in Yorkshire offers a chance to assess the Whigs' relationship with the political public. Indeed, whilst specific local factors played a part in its politics, the West Riding is perhaps the ideal basis through which to conduct a case-study of political opinion. It contained more voters than any other constituency, and encompassed a huge range of interests, from productive farmland to the desolate moors immortalised by the Brontë sisters, from large commercial and manufacturing towns like Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield to old market towns like Knaresborough and Ripon. Writing in 1846, *The Times* declared that the 'West Riding, with its 30,000 voting men, and unparalleled concentration of interests, is beyond the reaches of all influences but those which appeal to the conscience and mind of man'.⁵¹ The sheer size and diversity of the West Riding electorate meant that it was widely seen by contemporaries to offer a true test of public opinion; indeed, some went as far as to say that 'Yorkshire governs England'.⁵²

The Riding's usefulness to the historian in this regard has not gone unnoticed. There are a number of existing accounts of its politics. Sarah Richardson has produced a heroic psephological study of the West Riding electorate in the 1830s, focusing mainly on the boroughs.⁵³ There are also two older articles on the Riding's politics by F. M. L. Thompson and Derek Fraser which focus on free trade and educational

⁵⁰ Among the former two fields, see Davis, *Political Change and Continuity*; Jaggard, *Cornwall Politics*; Winstanley, 'Oldham Radicalism' and Peter Taylor, *Popular Politics in Early Industrial Britain: Bolton, 1825-1850* (Keele, 1995). Studies of local politics in Yorkshire boroughs include Derek Fraser, 'The Fruits of Reform: Leeds Politics in the Eighteen-Thirties', *Northern History*, 7 (1972), 89-111; J. A. Jowitt, 'From Whiggery to Liberalism: Sir Charles Wood and Halifax, 1832-1865', *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, ns, 2 (1994), 43-54; D. G. Wright, 'A Radical Borough: Parliamentary Politics in Bradford, 1832-1841', *Northern History*, 4 (1969), 132-66; Michael Markus, 'A Pocket Borough? Reformed Politics in Ripon, 1832-67', *Parliamentary History*, 27:3 (2008), 330-60.

⁵¹ *The Times*, February 6th 1846, p. 4.

⁵² *The League*, January 3rd 1846, in *The League* (London, 1846), p. 206.

⁵³ Sarah Richardson, 'Independence and Deference: A Study of the West Riding Electorate, 1832-1841' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 1995).

policy respectively.⁵⁴ However, what follows is the only dedicated study of West Riding politics to concentrate on Morpeth. Indeed, the degree to which previous studies have managed to downplay his role in Yorkshire politics is bewildering. Thompson, for instance, writes that the story of West Riding politics might be told through the ‘survival, modification, crisis and restoration’ of the influence of the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam of Wentworth Woodhouse, the region’s largest Whig landowner.⁵⁵

In fact, after 1830 Fitzwilliam was of nowhere near as great an importance in Yorkshire Whiggery as Morpeth, who as a leading member of the Whig Party both locally and nationally naturally had a significant influence on events. This study restores him to the heart of the story of West Riding politics. It shows that he played a vital role in promulgating the Whigs’ policies in Yorkshire; indeed, after his appointment as Irish Secretary in 1835, he was widely seen as the embodiment of the Whig Government in the county. After his election as M.P for Yorkshire in 1830, he was a key player in the creation of what proved to be an unstable alliance between the Whig Government and the West Riding’s reformers. These included some members of the landed gentry, but increasingly came to be dominated by (largely dissenting and middle-class) liberals from the West Riding towns.

It will be argued that this alliance was built around opposition to the idea of ‘Old Corruption’; the idea that the political system gave an unfair monopoly of economic, political and ecclesiastical power to the aristocracy, a critique developed by radicals in the late-Georgian era. Opposition to such monopolies was to be a motive force in Yorkshire liberalism across the 1830s and 40s. In suggesting this, this thesis complements a number of works which have shown that the legacy of ‘Old Corruption’ dominated popular liberalism in this period and even beyond.⁵⁶

Morpeth was able to harness the force of these ideas by participating in the campaign for parliamentary reform, seen by liberals to be a necessary stepping stone to end other monopolies. He promised that, through the Reform Bill, the Whigs would usher

⁵⁴ F. M. L. Thompson, ‘Whigs and Liberals in the West Riding, 1830-60’, *English Historical Review*, 74 (1959), 214-39; Derek Fraser, ‘Voluntaryism and West Riding Politics in the Mid-Nineteenth Century’, *Northern History*, 13 (1977), 199-231.

⁵⁵ Thompson, ‘Whigs and Liberals’, 218.

⁵⁶ Biagini, *Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform*, pp. 50-60; Winstanley, ‘Oldham radicalism’; Taylor, *Popular Politics*, pp. 43-46, 105.

in a new era of disinterested and fair government, something which liberals believed the Tories could not provide.⁵⁷ Morpeth also suggested that the Whigs would reduce social tensions by adopting a conciliatory attitude towards Irish Catholicism, and by addressing the grievances of English dissenters.

Over the course of the 1830s, the Whig-liberal alliance worked best when the Whigs' actions in government accorded most with these goals. Yet over time cracks began to appear in the liberal coalition. As will be seen, the Government failed to go as far in economic and religious reforms as many of its supporters wanted. In particular, Whigs disagreed with their dissenting allies, who wanted to dismantle some of the structures of the Established Church. By 1840, the Whigs' relationship with their supporters was waning, and extra-parliamentary groups such as the Anti-Corn Law League began to pick up the baton of 'no monopoly'. At the same time, this study details how the Conservative Party rallied in Yorkshire, exploiting concerns among the electorate about the Whigs' views on church-reform and free trade, and benefiting from a tactical alliance with movements for factory reform and against the Whigs' New Poor Law of 1834. Whilst Morpeth himself remained popular, these developments led to his defeat at the 1841 election.

Morpeth's career revived in 1845, as his conversion to the Anti-Corn Law League allowed the liberal forces in Yorkshire to reunite around the idea of free trade. In 1846, he was reinstated as representative of the West Riding, whilst the Whigs returned to office under Russell following the collapse of Peel's Ministry. Yet this thesis suggests that this popularity was short-lived, as the Russell administration responded to widespread concerns about the social and moral condition of the people (the 'Condition of England' question) with controversial legislation in education and public health. Morpeth played a central role in both areas at both local and national levels. It will be argued that the divisions between Whigs and liberals over social reform traced in Mandler's account now began to appear. The Whigs' policies appealed to certain groups concerned with the moral condition of the people, even attracting support from some of Morpeth's historic opponents. However, other liberals (particularly dissenters) were theologically and politically hostile to the

⁵⁷ On the liberals' belief that they provided disinterested government where the Tories could not, Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 4-5.

Whigs' proposals, a hostility which completely fractured their relationship with Morpeth. In charting this story of union, discord and transformation, this thesis reveals some reasons behind Whiggery's successes and failures as a political force.

The analysis of West Riding politics presented in this thesis is indebted to insights derived from the 'linguistic turn' pioneered by Gareth Stedman Jones.⁵⁸ It is surely impossible to understand the highly moralised nature of early-Victorian politics without examining the way in which political languages shaped political actions. As will be seen, ideals of 'corruption', 'disinterestedness', 'monopoly', 'tyranny', 'tolerance' and 'liberty' were all vital to West Riding politics in the 1830s and 40s. Different views about what these ideas meant created profound divisions between Morpeth and some of his allies.

Nevertheless, this study recognises that political languages are effective only to the extent that they resonate with economic, social, religious and political experiences. The analysis of political languages can only take us so far. Politics, surely, is about more than just the institutionalised expression of ideas. It also revolves around interactions between rulers and ruled. This dissertation therefore pays attention to the ways in which Morpeth helped to construct the Whig-liberal coalition in Yorkshire by developing social and political networks. West Riding liberalism revolved to a great degree around a relatively small number of influential activists, primarily composed of landowners, members of the urban middle-class elite and dissenting ministers.

Morpeth knew these men personally. He served alongside them at philanthropic gatherings, socialised with them at balls and soirees and slept at their homes. He developed relationships with them both inside the political arena (at elections and political dinners), and outside formal political arrangements. One suspects that few politicians would deny the importance of this sort of networking. Nevertheless, this is not the usual stuff of political history, possibly because any account of its influence must necessarily be impressionistic. Political networks have been most extensively

⁵⁸ 'Rethinking Chartism' in Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 90-178.

explored by historians of aristocratic women, who have seen social gatherings as one way in which such ladies participated in an otherwise exclusive political process.⁵⁹

Arguably, however, such relationships were even more important in the masculine sphere. Meetings between politicians and their supporters provided one way in which the latter might make their opinions known. By interacting with his most influential constituents, Morpeth could hear their concerns, whilst reassuring them that he took their views seriously. In turn, it will be argued that his practice as a statesman was influenced by these networks. He drew upon the knowledge of his supporters, and the experience he gained of Yorkshire life through meeting them, when forming his views on issues such as parliamentary reform, health, education and factory reform.

Character and Manliness

One final reason to examine Morpeth's provincial life, especially in its wider non-political aspects, is that the personal lives of politicians were often crucial to the public's perception of them. The non-political actions of nineteenth-century public figures were far from private. Morpeth's social life, his philanthropy, and (to a lesser but still significant degree) his actions as a landowner were often reported on in the press. From the late eighteenth century onwards, politicians were increasingly expected to demonstrate moral probity in their non-political actions, as their personal virtues were seen to be inseparable from their political conduct.⁶⁰ Indeed, political scientists have suggested that belief in the integrity, honesty and morality of politicians is a vital element in building up political confidence and trust.⁶¹

Anna Clark has demonstrated that scandals might easily erupt if a public figure was seen to deviate from accepted moral boundaries, for this could draw suspicion on their public motives.⁶² Charles James Fox, for instance, was heavily criticised for his

⁵⁹ Elaine Chalus, 'Elite women, social politics, and the political world of late eighteenth-century England', *Historical Journal*, 43:3 (2000), 669-98; Sarah Richardson, "'Well-neighboured houses': The political networks of elite women, 1780-1860' in Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (eds.), *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke, 2000), 56-73.

⁶⁰ Matthew McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 2-5; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (2nd revised edn., New Haven, 2005), pp. 188-90.

⁶¹ John Kane, *The Politics of Moral Capital* (Cambridge, 2001).

⁶² Anna Clark, *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution* (Princeton, 2004).

seemingly immoral fondness for gaming, which his Pittite opponents used to suggest that he would mismanage state finances.⁶³ The Baptist essayist John Foster drew the lesson that, for all his talents, Fox failed as a statesman because ‘the people placed no confidence in his virtue’. Like many of his contemporaries, Foster felt the people were duty bound to examine the moral qualities of public figures.⁶⁴

It will be argued that, unlike Fox, Morpeth was seen by many of his Yorkshire supporters to be a man of unblemished personal morality. As he lived and moved in Yorkshire, voters were able to form an estimate of his personality. He particularly benefited from the idea that he was perceived to be a man of good character. Largely thanks to the pioneering work of Stefan Collini, the idea of character is now seen to be a central element of Victorian thought. Confusingly, the word character has both a descriptive sense and a qualitative sense, and Victorians used both.⁶⁵ It was thought that everyone had a certain character which shaped their moral actions, and this might be improved. Liberals in particular agreed that this was an important goal.⁶⁶ As will be seen in the next chapter, Morpeth himself helped to encourage this process. ‘Character’, however, might also denote a set of ideal qualities to aim for.⁶⁷

As a concept, ‘character’ was very closely related to a prevailing idea of manliness.⁶⁸ Although there was no agreement among early-Victorians on what constituted manly behaviour, this was defined by a significant section of the population as a set of moral attributes.⁶⁹ ‘Character’ and ‘manliness’ had several interrelated elements, all of which were important in Morpeth’s life and career. As such, they are worth detailing in depth here.

⁶³ Phyllis Deutsch, ‘Moral Trespass in Georgian London: Gaming, Gender and Electoral Politics in the Age of George III’, *Historical Journal*, 39:3 (1996), 637-56.

⁶⁴ John Foster, *Biographical, Literary and Philosophical Essays, Contributed to the Eclectic Review* (New York, 1844), pp. 115-22 (on Fox), 173-98 (on statesmen).

⁶⁵ Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain, 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991), esp. pp. 91-118

⁶⁶ Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*, p. 86.

⁶⁷ In what follows, I shall use ‘character’, in abbreviations, to indicate when I am speaking about it in this sense.

⁶⁸ The gradual shading of older ideas of manliness into the early-Victorian idea of character is traced in Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005).

⁶⁹ There is now a vast literature on this topic, some of which is cited below. Important contributions were made by Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987) and John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity in the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, 1999).

Firstly, the man of ‘character’ was defined by his hatred of display and artificiality. He acted at all times out of conscience rather than a concern for what other people thought of him. As with other elements of the ideal, this aspect evolved through the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century religious revival, in particular the evangelical critique of worldliness. For evangelicals, what truly mattered was not one’s reputation with one’s peers, as might be defined through wealth and display, but rather one’s relationship with God.⁷⁰ To act in defiance of godly principles in order to gratify one’s pride and vanity was not manly; hence aristocrats and dandies who seemed to revel in worldly luxury and display were deemed effeminate.⁷¹

It followed that ‘character’ was associated with sincerity, simplicity and earnestness.⁷² The Congregationalist minister Thomas Binney declared that the ideal man was ‘simple, straightforward’, distinguished by his ‘utmost transparency of meaning and purpose’.⁷³ Secondly, and accordingly, manly character entailed independence, as only the independent man could act sincerely from his own beliefs. Independence denoted freedom from outside control, which had been a key element of manhood in the Georgian period.⁷⁴ As will be seen, Morpeth’s critics were able to make much capital from the idea that he had an unmanly political dependence on the Whigs’ Irish allies. Indeed, its association with independence meant that manliness was seen by some to be a peculiarly Protestant (and English) concept, not available to Catholic or European populations who were under the control of priests and tyrants.⁷⁵

Critically, however, the man of good character also had to become independent of his own passions. Only by struggling against his own innate tendency for selfishness and worldliness could man act for the common good; something required of all public figures. Collini has shown that for Victorians, ‘character’ and manliness were

⁷⁰ Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957), pp. 218-29.

⁷¹ James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood* (Ithaca, 1995), pp. 21-24.

⁷² John Tosh, ‘Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), 455-72. On ‘earnestness’, see also Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, pp. 218-44.

⁷³ Thomas Binney. *The Royal Exchange and the Palace of Industry, or the Possible Future of Europe and the World* (London, 1851), p. 53.

⁷⁴ McCormack, *Independent Man*, *passim*.

⁷⁵ David Alderson, *Mansex Fine: Religion, Manliness and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century British Culture* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 3-15.

constructed against selfish habits.⁷⁶ The contrast here, though, was not so much with effeminacy as with beastliness. Religious writers saw man's capacity to act for others as his most distinctly human (manly) attribute, that which separated him from the 'brute creation'.⁷⁷ They evolved this idea of manhood by campaigning against an older style of masculinity based around physicality, sexuality and sensual pleasure. The London nonconformist Robert Philip argued that, by involving sin and ignoring man's God-given capacity for devotion to others, this was beastly rather than manly; 'no man', he argued 'does so *unman* himself as to identify his lot with the Devil'.⁷⁸

The manly man, then, acted dutifully and unselfishly in opposition to his baser instincts. Yet he was also, ideally, more than this; he was someone whose very *will* was to be kind to others. He was tender, benevolent, empathic, full of compassion for the weak and the suffering.⁷⁹ The model here was, of course, Christ himself. Partly owing to its emphasis in the work of writers such as Thomas Hughes, historians have tended to equate the idea of Christian manliness with mid-Victorian Anglicanism.⁸⁰ However (importantly given their role in West Riding politics) it is clear that Christ was seen as a manly (yet tender) exemplar by early-Victorian nonconformists as well; he is presented in this light in works by influential preachers such as the Baptist Robert Hall and the Congregationalists James Parsons and John Angell James.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Collini, *Public Moralists*, pp. 60-90, 97-100.

⁷⁷ John Angell James, *The Young Man's Friend and Guide Through Life to Immortality* (9th edn., London, 1863), pp. 13-14. For similar sentiments from other influential theologians, see James Parsons, *Sermons* (London, 1830), pp. 105-06; Robert Hall, *The Works of Robert Hall* (4th edn., London, 1834), vol. 1 of 6, p. 43; William Leask, *True Manhood: A Lecture* (London, 1848), p. 6. On the contrast of manliness with beastliness, see Boyd Hilton, 'Manliness, Masculinity and the mid-Victorian temperament' in Lawrence Goldman (ed.), *The Blind Victorian: Henry Fawcett and British Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1989), 60-70.

⁷⁸ Robert Philip, *The Young Man's Closet Library* (New York, 1836), p. 16, 125.

⁷⁹ Jeremy Gregory, 'Homo religiosus: masculinity and religion in the long eighteenth century' in Tim Hitchcock & Michele Cohen (eds.), *English Masculinities, 1660-1800* (London, 1999), 85-110, esp. 99-102; Hilton, 'Manliness', pp. 65-68. This more 'empathic' side to early-Victorian ideas of character and manliness clearly owed much to eighteenth-century ideas of sensibility, which redefined (albeit in contested ways) accepted manly behaviour. On this, see the superb analysis in G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 37-77, 247-79.

⁸⁰ Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge, 1985); Peter Gay, 'The Manliness of Christ', in Richard Davis & Richard Helmstadter (eds.), *Religion and Irreligion in Victorian Society: Essays in Honour of R.K. Webb* (London, 1992), 102-16. One useful attempt to extend this literature beyond Anglicanism is provided by S. J. D. Green, 'Christian Manliness and the Nonconformist Tradition in West Yorkshire, c. 1880-1920', *Northern History*, 31 (1995), 267-280.

⁸¹ Olinthus Gregory (ed.), *Memoir of Robert Hall, A.M., by Dr Gregory, Together with Observations on his Character as a Preacher by John Foster, Together with Twenty-One Sermons Preached by Mr. Hall on Various Occasions* (London, 1833), pp. 282-85; Hall, *Works of Robert Hall*, p. 53, 173;

Dutiful, selfless, earnest, sincere, conscientious, benevolent, philanthropic, Christian in thought and deed; Morpeth was all these things to his supporters. As will be seen, their perception of him as a man of excellent character was actively publicised by them both orally and in print, and was constructed around both his political and non-political actions. Most of all, however, Morpeth benefited from the fact that his political and non-political actions were seen as consistent with each other.

Consistency was the defining hallmark of the early-Victorian idea of ‘character’. This arose from the need to distinguish sincerity from theatricality; by defining ‘character’ through inner moral values, contemporaries made it difficult to distinguish the truly moral man from the skilled but deceitful actor.⁸² A focus on consistency helped to overcome this by revealing whether a man was earnest in his ideals or changed his views depending on his situation. The contemporary writer William Roberts thus defined the ‘great mark’ of ‘character’ as being whether a man exhibited ‘a certain harmony of deportment’, a ‘parallelism’ which was ‘independent of place and time’.⁸³

For this reason, contemporaries had a great degree of interest in the personal and non-political lives of public figures. Historians have grown increasingly aware that nineteenth-century popular politics was highly concerned with the morality of (aristocratic) rulers. Inflamed by ideas of ‘Old Corruption’, reformers were determined to replace what they saw as a selfish and corrupt governing elite with a selfless, dutiful and moral one.⁸⁴ As West Riding politics turned on issues such as tolerance, disinterestedness and selflessness, it was vital for Morpeth to appear to embody such values. It will be argued that the values he displayed in the non-political sphere, such as his benevolence, were seen to give credibility to his rhetoric.

Parsons, *Sermons*, p. 74; John Angell James, *Christian Fellowship, or the Church Member’s Guide* (Boston, 1829), pp. 47-49.

⁸² Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, pp. 53-54.

⁸³ William Roberts, *The Portraiture of a Christian Gentleman* (New York, 1831), pp. 65-68. This work was published in Britain in 1829. A similar argument can be found in the section on ‘character’ in Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help, with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance* (London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1997 [1st published 1859]), pp. 237-40.

⁸⁴ Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (London, 1995), pp. 142-56, 166-70; Louise Carter, ‘British Masculinities on Trial in the Queen Caroline Affair of 1820’, *Gender & History*, 20:2 (2008), 248-69; Jennifer Hall-Witt, ‘Reforming the aristocracy’: opera and elite culture, 1780-1860’ in Arthur Burns & Joanna Innes (eds), *Rethinking the Age of Reform, 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 220-37.

A similar thing has been noted in the careers of contemporaneous politicians such as Ernest Jones and Sir Robert Peel, whose popularity rested partly on the fact that their wider lives seemed to chime with their politics.⁸⁵ Morpeth would not have been able to achieve this had he been divorced from his constituency. It will thus be argued that his success as a Whig politician was built around his engagement with provincial life, and hence partly rested on the fact that he was not the exclusive, metropolitan aristocrat presented by some historians as typical of Whiggery.

Of Sources and Methods

The above section summarised the main arguments of the thesis, in the process demonstrating some reasons for studying Whiggery in the provinces. This section briefly details some of the sources and methods employed in the course of my research. This thesis has naturally been modelled on certain types of historical study. As an examination of a defined region, it builds on works which have demonstrated that investigating politics at local level can yield more general insights.⁸⁶ In conducting a study of one man, I have also unsurprisingly adopted aspects of the biographical method. Biography offers a superb way of getting into the mind of one's subject; in this respect this thesis has been particularly influenced by David Bebbington's excellent intellectual biography of Gladstone.⁸⁷

Nevertheless, my aim was decidedly not to produce a conventional biography of a Victorian politician, charting a chronological journey from childhood to legislative achievement. A valuable if now dated biography of Morpeth in this mode has already been published by Diana Davids Olien.⁸⁸ His legislative activities are further charted in the general works on Whiggery referred to above, and in two specific articles about

⁸⁵ Donald Read, *Peel and the Victorians* (Oxford, 1987); Miles Taylor, *Ernest Jones, Chartism and the Romance of Politics, 1819-1869* (Oxford, 2003). On a related note, see Joseph Valente, 'The Manliness of Parnell', *Éire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies*, 41 (2006), 64-121, which makes a similar argument for a later period.

⁸⁶ See the references in footnote 50 above.

⁸⁷ David Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone: Religion, Homer, Politics* (Oxford, 2004).

⁸⁸ Diana Davids Olien, *Morpeth: A Victorian Public Career* (Washington, 1983). This work predates the revival of scholarly interest in the Whigs which occurred in the late 1980s, and so now seems somewhat old-fashioned in its views of Whiggery. Whilst informative and generally sound, it is inaccurate in several trivial details.

aspects of his politics by Boyd Hilton and Peter Mandler.⁸⁹ In what follows, Morpeth's actions as a statesman are referred to only in so far as they are relevant to his life in Yorkshire. The reader will thus find little, for instance, about his time as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Most aspects of his Yorkshire life are covered, although a planned chapter on his activities in local government was abandoned due to a lack of relevant source material.

This thesis employs the case-study method. Case-studies offer an in-depth investigation of a subject or small sample of subjects. They can be contrasted with cross-case studies, which cover a broader population but which must necessarily give less information about individual cases. In general, and I hope in this instance, the case-study approach offers a richer insight into its given subject, enabling the researcher to better understand the causes behind certain events. Although in-depth, they are also typically wide-ranging, and are accordingly able to uncover connections between what might have appeared to be distinct phenomena.⁹⁰

Case-studies can also provide a critical test for existing arguments. This study, for instance, uses Morpeth's life to critique the argument that the Whigs were metropolitan. Case-studies are thus the stuff on which broader studies are built. Nevertheless, like any research strategy, this approach has limitations. In particular, it inevitably raises the problem of typicality; is case X representative of the broader sample Y? When presenting my research on Morpeth's provincial life, I have often been questioned by (I hope interested rather than sceptical) scholars as to how typical this was for Whiggery as a whole. That question falls outside the scope of this study. By its very nature, case-study research does not seek to analyse more broadly.

One might, for instance, perform a study of the eating habits of Britons by investigating a sample of the population in York. This might tell us much about the topic under investigation, but one would not expect the researcher to then be able to answer a question about the inhabitants of Newcastle. It follows that case-study

⁸⁹ Peter Mandler, 'Cain and Abel: Two Aristocrats and the Early Victorian Factory Acts', *Historical Journal* 27:1 (1984), 83-109; Boyd Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform: the case of Lord Morpeth', *Historical Journal*, 37 (1994), 829-59.

⁹⁰ A useful overview of the case-study method is provided in John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge, 2007).

researchers must inevitably be cautious about generalising from the particular to the universal. In what follows, by way of comparison I do sometimes detail instances where Morpeth's actions seem similar to that of other Whigs. I also attempt to draw some conclusions about what his life might tell us about Whiggery in general. The reader should treat these statements as provisional, calls for further research rather than attempts to have the definitive word on the subject.

However, of course all case-study research starts from the proposition that, from what is previously known, its chosen subject(s) might be considered representative of a larger population. I have already noted above why I consider Yorkshire to be a representative constituency in this wider sense. There are similarly good reasons for seeing Morpeth as a sound basis for a study of Whiggery. He was seen by contemporaries as a Whig, and viewed himself as a 'pure old Whig'.⁹¹ Nevertheless, some qualification is necessary here. There were some profound generational differences within the early-Victorian Whig Party. Morpeth had far more in common with members of his (more religious) generational cohort of Whigs such as Russell, and with pious older Whigs like Althorp, than he did with the largely secular generation of Grey and Holland.⁹²

Beyond this, historians such as Mandler, Brent and Boyd Hilton have suggested that there were divisions even within this early-Victorian generation on economic, social and religious policy, based around different styles or religious beliefs.⁹³ It is not the place of this study to examine policy, but I would suggest that, from a broader perspective, these differences may not have mattered to the degree to which they did in high politics. Even successful governments can harbour internal dissension. All Whigs could arguably agree on certain key values, such as a commitment to disinterested government, and the need to display tolerance towards nonconformists in both England and Ireland.⁹⁴ Viewed from a regional standpoint, Whigs who at times disagreed with Morpeth on policy (such as Sir Charles Wood) could

⁹¹ J19/8/30, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, February 26th 1853.

⁹² On these generational differences in religion, see Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 104-143.

⁹³ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*; Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*; Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? : England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 517-24.

⁹⁴ Joe Bord has recently tackled this issue from a different perspective, suggesting that the Whigs were united by a certain manner, especially a liberality of style and a commitment to science; see Bord, *Science and Whig Manners*, esp. pp. 1-9.

nevertheless work with him in Yorkshire. It is also worth pointing out that to the average voter, distinctions within the Party do not seem to have greatly mattered.⁹⁵

In terms of sources, whilst this study draws on a wide range of documents in numerous collections, it naturally relies heavily on Morpeth's own papers. In this respect, I have been fortunate to have enjoyed extensive access to the voluminous archive at Castle Howard, where the Howard family and estate papers are still housed. The archive includes a full and informative run of estate accounts and correspondence, and tens of thousands of letters. These have almost certainly been pruned and edited by successive generations; Morpeth himself somewhat horrifyingly noted that 'it is a satisfying occupation to destroy and part with old papers'.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the collection remains extremely rich. Letters to Morpeth from his political supporters and opponents in the West Riding were particularly useful. With the exception of the rather superficial account of Morpeth's Yorkshire career given in Olien's biography, this is the first study of West Riding politics to use these papers.

Dealing with correspondence was an important aspect of Morpeth's role as an M.P. On returning as representative for the region in 1846, he noted that he had received an 'unexampled' taste of a 'West Riding M.P.'s post', comprising 64 letters, 'chiefly about petitions', of which he answered above 50.⁹⁷ Morpeth was seen as a conduit between the West Riding and Westminster, a role which was undoubtedly heightened by his position in the Whig Party leadership. Letters were one way in which his constituents could make their opinions known and grievances heard. They also offered a forum in which to share their knowledge of issues relevant to the Whigs' policy. Morpeth certainly did listen to these views, on at least one occasion directly quoting from a letter from an influential constituent in the Commons.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, the correspondence in the Castle Howard archive tends to be either from his keenest allies or, more unusually, his most zealous opponents. It does not necessarily provide a guide to the opinions of ordinary electors or those who did not have the vote.

⁹⁵ This point is made in Phillips, *Great Reform Bill*, p. 45.

⁹⁶ J19/8/23, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, April 8th 1850. Morpeth was extensively involved with arranging his father's papers after the latter's death in 1848. Later annotations suggest that he also arranged, and hence also probably edited, his own correspondence.

⁹⁷ J19/8/10, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 9th 1846.

⁹⁸ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third series, XC, March 3rd 1847, cols 785-86.

The other major source in the Castle Howard archive used extensively in this dissertation is Morpeth's diary, which he kept on a daily basis from October 1843 almost until his death. Covering over forty volumes, it is surely one of the great unpublished political diaries of the nineteenth century.⁹⁹ The diary was directly inspired by a record Morpeth kept of his year-long tour of America in 1841-42. This was later emulated in a diary he maintained whilst voyaging around the Eastern Mediterranean between 1853 and 1854. Both these travel journals were written with an eye to an audience, and were later disseminated to the public in various forms.¹⁰⁰

The main diary was more private, but only partly so; Morpeth refers to a future 'reader' at one point in the text.¹⁰¹ The diary was thus probably self-edited. The interested scholar will find little on taboo subjects such as his attitude towards sexuality, which as he was a lifelong bachelor remains the subject of speculation.¹⁰² Nevertheless, it is an invaluable source, recording what Morpeth did on a day-to-day basis. Given its usefulness, it is necessary to ask (as no previous writer on Morpeth has done) why he kept a diary at all. It was explicitly designed to contain 'memorandums, indicating movements, whom I meet, what I read, great events, anything I might especially wish to mark and remember'.¹⁰³ However, it is also a highly discursive piece, recording his reactions to people, events and literature. At times, it becomes a confessional document, through which Morpeth chastises himself for unchristian thoughts and indicates his determination to better his conduct.

⁹⁹ Scholars have been able to use a one-volume selection of the diaries edited after Morpeth's death by his sister, but this represents only a fraction of the available material and omits many of the most useful and revealing passages; Lady Caroline Lascelles (ed.), *Extracts from Journals kept by George Howard, Earl of Carlisle* (Printed for private circulation, 1870).

¹⁰⁰ The Mediterranean journal was published shortly after the end of Morpeth's trip; George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters* (London, 1854). The American diary formed the basis for a public lecture he gave on his trip around the Americas, later published in George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle. *Two Lectures on the Poetry of Pope, and on his own Travels in America* (Leeds, 1851).

¹⁰¹ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 27th 1847.

¹⁰² Allen Warren has detected a mysterious Gladstone-like code of self-chastisement which appears in Morpeth's diaries from his period as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and seems to be related to entries concerning one of his young ADC's, with whom he clearly enjoyed a close friendship. This might indicate that Morpeth felt his feelings towards the man were somehow inappropriate, although not necessarily in a sexual sense (private communication from Dr Warren). Morpeth did appreciate beauty in women, maintained lengthy friendships with a number of ladies, and was at one point thought to be on the verge of proposing to Anne De Grey, the daughter of a fellow Yorkshire-aristocrat (J19/1/6/89, Lady de Grey to Lord Morpeth, September 10th 1833). All of this, however, is speculation.

¹⁰³ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 2nd 1843.

What particularly seems to pervade the diary's daily entries is a need to record how the day had been used. As will be seen, Morpeth had a strong spiritual conviction that he ought to use his God-given energies usefully and beneficially. It is probably no coincidence that he started the diary during a period when he was out of Parliament, a 'time of repose' in which he felt he lacked direction. Not long after the first entry, he records his belief that he ought no longer to 'keep longer aloof from a more decided sphere of action'.¹⁰⁴ The diary's record of people met, deeds done and meetings attended arguably cannot therefore be seen as a simple account of his life. Rather, it helped Morpeth fashion his own identity as an active, benevolent and Christian man.

In addition to standard archival documents, this study also draws upon a number of material sources at Castle Howard, such as buildings, monuments, photographs, mementoes, objects and books. The collaboration with Castle Howard which has underpinned this project has been especially fruitful in this respect. In particular, I have benefited from studying Morpeth's library, which includes an impressive array of theological texts, a few of which contain brief but revealing annotations. This dissertation also makes extensive use of two handwritten commonplace books which Morpeth kept of his favourite sermons. It is the first study to use this evidence.

Outside of the archives, the main type of source used is the newspaper, vital to any political historian. I have consulted a number of Yorkshire newspapers such as the *Leeds Mercury*, *Leeds Intelligencer*, *Sheffield Iris*, *Sheffield Independent* and *Bradford Observer*. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed an expansion in the quantity and significance of the provincial press (all the papers above were either founded or revitalised in this period). The *Leeds Mercury*, by the mid-1830s the largest paper outside London, claimed a circulation of nearly ten-thousand by the 1840s, and was read by at least ten and possibly twenty times that number.¹⁰⁵ These papers were the chief source of political information for most people. By reporting and commenting on events at Westminster, the provincial press maintained the population's interest in politics and helped voters connect to national affairs.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 31st 1843.

¹⁰⁵ Donald Read, *Press and People, 1790-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities* (London, 1961), pp. 78, 201-02. This is the weekly circulation of the *Leeds Mercury*; it went tri-weekly in 1855 and daily from 1861.

¹⁰⁶ Phillips, *Great Reform Bill*, p. 48.

These papers played a vital role in Yorkshire politics, particularly by encouraging and organising political pressure.¹⁰⁷ Many of the editors of these journals were highly engaged in political life on a personal level. The Edward Baines' (father and son) of the *Leeds Mercury* both became M.Ps, and were sufficiently influential that they became hated figures for their opponents.¹⁰⁸ Organs like the *Mercury*, the *Bradford Observer* and the *Sheffield Independent* represented the broadly middle-class, commercial, nonconformist opinion which formed the backbone of liberalism in Yorkshire.¹⁰⁹

This dissertation also deploys other printed sources such as broadsides, squibs, posters and election songs. As James Vernon has suggested, this sort of 'street literature' was vital to nineteenth-century popular politics.¹¹⁰ It has been especially useful in exploring the attitudes of those engaged in popular causes such as the factory reform movement and anti-poor law campaign. This literature often contains bitter personal attacks on political rivals, and is hence also an excellent source for critical perceptions of Morpeth's character.

Chapter Breakdown

The arguments in this thesis are spread over five chapters. As one of the themes I wish to emphasise is the links between various aspects of Morpeth's life, the chapters support one another, and should be read together rather than in isolation. The thesis adopts a partly thematic, partly chronological structure. Chapter One provides more background on Morpeth, and examines his principles, ideals and attitudes. It particularly details his religious beliefs, making the argument that these are essential to understanding his actions in all other areas. Morpeth's Christianity, it will be

¹⁰⁷ Read, *Press and People*, pp. 206-08.

¹⁰⁸ David Thornton, 'Edward Baines, Editor: Great Man, Great Liar? The Press Assessment', *Thoresby Miscellany*, 14 (2004), 37-66.

¹⁰⁹ David Thornton, 'Edward Baines, senior (1774-1848), provincial journalism and political philosophy in early-nineteenth-century England', *Northern History*, 40:2 (2003), 277-97; Derek Fraser, 'Edward Baines' in Patricia Hollis (ed.), *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* (London, 1974), 183-209; Read, *Press and People*, pp. 108-36; David James, 'William Byles and the Bradford Observer' in D. G. Wright & J. A. Jowitt (eds.), *Victorian Bradford* (Bradford, 1982), 115-36.

¹¹⁰ James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c. 1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 131-41.

suggested, provided a unifying theme in his life which conceptually underpins the interconnectedness explored by the rest of the thesis. This chapter also suggests that Morpeth's religious beliefs led him into provincial life by making him spiritually uncomfortable with a purely metropolitan existence.

Chapter Two, the longest in the thesis, details his career as Whig M.P. for Yorkshire and then the West Riding from its inception in 1830 until his defeat at the general election of 1841. It charts how Morpeth played a central role in building an alliance between Whiggery and reform-minded opinion in the county, and how this began to splinter over time. In the process, it examines how Morpeth and the Whigs were viewed by their Conservative and radical opponents. Furthermore, the chapter details an ongoing and at times humorous debate between liberals and their opponents over Morpeth's personal character and manliness, showing how these helped shape political differences. The chapter thus offers some indication as to why Morpeth was defeated in 1841, and explores some of the developing tensions in the Whig-liberal coalition which were to bedevil Morpeth when he returned to West Riding politics in 1846.

In the meantime, however, Morpeth's engagement with the West Riding was continued through philanthropy. Chapter Three looks at his religiously-motivated engagement with a number of philanthropic associations within the Yorkshire region. It suggests that philanthropy was of significant importance in his life, and was connected in various ways to his politics. For instance, it shows that he saw philanthropy as a way of building the values he also wished to foster as a statesman. The chapter outlines the ways in which Morpeth's altruistic activities shaped his views on the social questions which the Whigs were to tackle in the Russell administration. Moreover, it suggests that his philanthropy helped to maintain his links to his political supporters, and increased even further their estimation of his character.

Chapter Four investigates Morpeth's political career in Yorkshire in the 1840s, concentrating on the period between his resumption of the representation of the West Riding in early 1846 and his succession to the peerage in October 1848. Although short, this was the most turbulent period of Morpeth's political career. The chapter

begins by exploring his relationship to the question of free trade and the Anti-Corn Law League, showing how this temporarily allowed a resumption of the Whig-liberal alliance. However, the chapter details how this coalition collapsed due to dissenting liberal opposition to the Whigs' legislation on education and health. At the same time, however, it is also suggested that the basis of support for Whiggery was transformed, as the Whigs' proposals appealed to some of their historic opponents. The chapter shows how Morpeth was centrally involved in these events.

Chapter Five details his close relationship with his Yorkshire home of Castle Howard, offering a direct critique of the view that the Whigs were metropolitan in ethos. It explores his interaction with his tenants and his role in the management of the estate. It looks at his involvement in schemes of improvement in the district, such as the promotion of new agricultural techniques and the creation of new railways. It also examines the way he started projects designed to raise the education, social condition and morality of his tenants – projects directly linked to his wider interests as a philanthropist and statesman. A short epilogue and conclusion summarises the arguments of the thesis, and suggests some lines of further research.

ILLUSTRATION ONE: Portrait of Lord Morpeth (1854)



Portrait of Lord Morpeth (then 7th Earl of Carlisle) painted in Athens in 1854. The painting is on display in the Castle Howard Collection.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Mind of Morpeth: Whiggery and Belief

It may not be true, as G. W. E. Russell once asserted, that Whigs were ‘born, not made’, but Lord Morpeth certainly seems to provide evidence for the contention.¹ In retrospect, he could have been nothing but a Whig. He was a scion of two of the nation’s greatest Whig families. His mother, Georgiana Carlisle (nee Cavendish) was the daughter of the great Whig hostess Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, and shared all of her partisanship for the Whig Party.² In the paternal line, his ancestor Charles Howard (1669-1738), 3rd Earl of Carlisle, was a staunch Whig who fully supported the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (an essential element in any Whig dynasty’s history). He built Castle Howard in an attempt to increase his standing with William III.³ Morpeth’s grandfather Frederick Howard (1748-1825), 5th Earl of Carlisle, caroused his way around Europe with the eighteenth-century Whig leader Charles James Fox and crippled his estate by guaranteeing Fox’s gambling debts.⁴

Whilst Frederick later turned independent, Morpeth’s father George Howard (1773-1848), 6th Earl of Carlisle, helped return the family to Whiggery through his marriage to Georgiana and his close friendship with Fox’s nephew the 3rd Lord Holland.⁵ He had a minor diplomatic role with the Whigs in the ‘Talents’ Ministry of 1806-7, damaging his reputation by participating in a disastrous failed mission to seek an alliance with Prussia. Carlisle is perhaps best described as a political moderate. A fervent admirer of George Canning, he helped arrange the Whig-Canningite coalition of 1827, acting as Commissioner of Woods and Forests in the administration with a

¹ G. W. E. Russell, *Collections and Recollection* (London, 1898), p. 195.

² Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, p. 49. Georgiana Devonshire’s contribution to Whig politics is evocatively detailed in Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (London, 1998).

³ Charles Saumarez Smith, *The Building of Castle Howard* (London, 1990), pp. 22-23; Philip Carter, ‘Howard, Charles, third earl of Carlisle (1669-1738)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), online edn. May 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13887>, accessed 24 Dec 2009].

⁴ Andrew Duncan, ‘A Study of the Life and Public Career of Frederick Howard, Fifth Earl of Carlisle 1748-1825’ (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1981).

⁵ Lady Holland recorded that the 6th Earl was ‘very much attached to Lord. H’; Journal of Lady Holland, April 16th 1799, in G. S. H. Fox-Strangways, 6th Earl of Ilchester (ed.), *The Journal of Elizabeth Lady Holland (1791-1811)* (2 vols, London, 1908), Vol. 1, p. 239.

seat in the Cabinet. He was subsequently an inactive Cabinet member in Earl Grey's reforming Government of 1830-34 before retiring through ill-health.⁶

Like all of the 6th Earl's children, Morpeth shared his father's love of Canning, and was greatly upset by the statesman's death.⁷ However, from an early age he was firmly on the Whig side in politics. Assured of a political career, he began to attend the Whig salon at Holland House in the company of his parents and Lord Holland's son Henry Fox, who was his closest friend at Eton.⁸ He was an early convert to parliamentary reform, thoughtfully warning his mother to suppress the news from his father lest it 'bring on another attack of his gout'.⁹ With youthful arrogance, he had decided on a topic for his maiden speech (the great Whig principle of religious tolerance) before his nineteenth birthday.¹⁰ Having waltzed into Parliament as representative for the Howards' pocket borough of Morpeth in 1826, he achieved his wish by triumphantly seconding Sir Francis Burdett's motion for Catholic Emancipation the following year.

Morpeth soon established himself as a rising star in the Whig Party, and at one stage was even touted as a future Whig Prime Minister.¹¹ His siblings increased the family connection to Whiggery still further. Three of his five brothers followed him into the Commons in the Party's interest.¹² His eldest sister Caroline let the side down somewhat by marrying into the Lascelles family of Harewood House, Yorkshire's

⁶ Ian Machin, 'Howard, George, sixth earl of Carlisle (1773–1848)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn. January 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13901>, accessed 1 Nov 2009].

⁷ 1st Earl Granville Papers (The National Archives), PRO/30/29/17/8/1, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, August 10th 1827. The gloom which came over the Howard family upon Canning's death is also recorded in Georgiana Agar Ellis to Caroline Lascelles, August 16th 1827, in Maud Mary Wyndham, Baroness Leconfield (ed.), *Three Howard Sisters: Selections from the Writings of Lady Caroline Lascelles, Lady Dover and Countess Gower, 1825-33* (London, 1955), p. 85.

⁸ Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 19-25.

⁹ J18/3/58/98, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth (marked 1821).

¹⁰ J18/3/57/26, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, Monday March 26th [1821].

¹¹ Mary Hardcastle (ed.), *Life of John, Lord Campbell* (2 vols, 2nd edition, London: John Murray & Co., 1881), Vol. II, p. 210. Charles Greville wrote in the late 1830s of an expectation that Morpeth would one day lead the Whigs in the Commons; Lytton Strachey & Roger Fulford (eds.), *The Greville Memoirs, 1814-1860* (8 vols, London, 1938), Vol. 4, p. 25.

¹² Of Morpeth's five brothers, Frederick Howard served as M.P. for Morpeth from 1832 until his untimely death in a carriage accident in 1833. He was replaced by his brother Edward Howard, later Lord Lanerton, who served as Whig M.P. for Morpeth from 1833 to 1837 and 1840 to 1852. The youngest brother, Charles Howard, father of George, 9th Earl of Carlisle, was Whig M.P. for Cumberland East from 1840 until his death in 1879. Henry Howard had an unsuccessful career as a diplomat. William, the future 8th Earl of Carlisle, was mentally ill and was eventually placed in an asylum.

most important Tory dynasty. However, his other five sisters all made sound Whig matches. Harriet married the immensely wealthy 2nd Duke of Sutherland and established an important Whig salon at Stafford House.¹³ Blanche married Lord Burlington, cousin and heir to her equally rich and impeccably Whig uncle the 6th Duke of Devonshire. Elizabeth wedded a son of Earl Grey, Georgiana married the Whig politician Lord Dover, and Mary, the youngest of the Howard brood, eventually married Morpeth's Cabinet colleague Henry Labouchere.

With a family history like this, it would be tempting to assume that Morpeth's politics was merely a dynastic matter, a torch passed on from generation to generation. This would be partly true, but would not take us very far. Upon reading Lord Holland's *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, perhaps the best contemporary account of early-nineteenth-century Whiggery, Morpeth bemoaned that it contained 'no principle more lofty than Whiggism, no virtue more perfect than Charles Fox's'. Indeed, where the Whigs of that period had made something of a cult of their great historic leader, Morpeth dismissed him as having 'too little morality'.¹⁴ These comments point to a discontinuity between his Whiggery and that of the previous generation. The difference lay in religion, which must lie at the heart of any study of him.

Upon Morpeth's death in 1864, the Revd. Daniel Bagot, Dean of Dromore, was moved to preach a sermon commending his 'abiding feeling of personal piety'.¹⁵ It was a fitting memorial, for by any standards he was an incredibly devout man. He prayed regularly and read innumerable sermons and theological works. This contrasted to the scepticism of the Hollands and the indifference of his own father, a lifelong source of regret.¹⁶ Where for the older generation of Whigs piety did not enter into politics, Morpeth could declare to the Commons that religion ought to

¹³ Harriet Sutherland's political interests are detailed in K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 122-27, 154-66.

¹⁴ J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 13th, October 20th 1854. On the influence of Fox on the earlier generation, see N. B. Penny, 'The Whig cult of Fox in early nineteenth-century sculpture', *Past & Present*, 70 (1976), 94-105; Leslie Mitchell, 'Foxite politics and the Great Reform bill', *English Historical Review*, 108 (1993), 338-64; Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 14-22.

¹⁵ J. J. Gaskin (ed.), *The Vice-Regal Speeches and Addresses, Lectures and Poems of the Late Earl of Carlisle* (Dublin, 1865), p. lxxii.

¹⁶ The indifference to personal religion displayed by the Whigs of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century is discussed in Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 110-22; G. F. A. Best, 'The Whigs and the Church Establishment in the age of Grey and Holland', *History*, 45 (1960), 103-18; Mitchell, *The Whig World*, pp. 117-34.

‘pervade all that we are about’.¹⁷ Commenting on this religiosity, Lord Holland felt Morpeth to be ‘very serious’, and professed to be afraid to talk before him.¹⁸

As Richard Brent has brilliantly shown, Morpeth’s contemporaries in the Party were equally religious, leading them to take Whiggery in new directions.¹⁹ Brent’s study is among many to have demonstrated the importance of religion to nineteenth-century politics.²⁰ This chapter adds to this scholarship. It explores Morpeth’s faith and shows how this was entwined with his political values. Nevertheless, his faith influenced all his spheres of activity. The same spiritual values which shaped his actions as a statesman also inspired his activities as a Yorkshire landlord and philanthropist. Morpeth’s faith acted as a unifying force, creating connections between the various areas of his life.

What have other scholars made of Morpeth’s thought? In an early article, Peter Mandler presented him as the opposite of the pious Lord Ashley, seeing him as a member of a cosmopolitan ‘whig *beau monde*’ who, although somewhat more devout than his elders, did not allow ‘religious or even strictly moral motivations’ to enter into his politics.²¹ Mandler is quite right to suggest that Morpeth belonged to a culture which valued art, politics and literature, but the argument that he was not guided by religion can immediately be discounted. There is ample evidence that his Christianity dominated his thought. Indeed, as he told Lady Holland in a fruitless attempt to convert her, it provided a ‘motive and an end in everything’.²² This piety is

¹⁷ Speech of Lord Morpeth on a motion to remove Jewish disabilities, reported in *The Times*, December 18th 1847, p. 3.

¹⁸ John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Broughton, *Recollections of a Long Life, with Additional Extracts from his Private Diaries* (6 vols, London, 1911), vol. 5, p. 180.

¹⁹ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, *passim*. Brent’s argument is reviewed above, pp. 8-9.

²⁰ David Bebbington, *The Nonconformist Conscience: Chapel and Politics, 1870-1914* (London, 1982); Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988); J. P. Ellens, *Religious Routes to Gladstonian Liberalism: The Church-Rate Conflict in England and Wales, 1832-1868* (University Park, PA, 1994); Timothy Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality: Nonconformist Politics in Mid-Victorian England* (Woodbridge, 1999); Richard D. Floyd, *Church, Chapel and Party: Religious Dissent and Political Modernization in Nineteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 2008).

²¹ Peter Mandler, ‘Cain and Abel: Two Aristocrats and the Early Victorian Factory Acts’, *Historical Journal* 27:1 (1984), 83-109, and for quotes 86, 107.

²² Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS 51583, fol. 124, Lord Morpeth to Lady Holland, March 20th 1844.

acknowledged in Olien's biography of Morpeth, but it is largely passed over, and she does not make any serious attempt to analyse his faith.²³

There have, however, been two other revealing interpretations of his religious thought, both of which predominately rely on published sources. As previously noted, Richard Brent has presented him as part of a 'Liberal Anglican' group in the Whig Party. Although supportive of the Church of England, this group believed that the basis of religion lay in essential truths around which all Christians could and should unite.²⁴ Boyd Hilton has offered a contrasting view in an article which aims to use Morpeth as a case-study through which to criticise Brent's interpretation of Whiggery, whilst simultaneously putting some religious flesh onto the bones of Mandler's account of the Whigs' economic interventionism.²⁵ As this is the only dedicated account of his faith by a serious scholar, it is worth summarising in detail.

Hilton particularly highlights Morpeth's optimistic pre-millennialism, his eager anticipation of the imminent end of the world as predicted in biblical prophecy. This belief, almost fantastical to modern eyes, was displayed in his verses on *The Second Vision of Daniel* (1859).²⁶ It is also evident in his published account of his voyage around the Mediterranean of 1853-54, undertaken partly as a result of his conviction that Turkey would be the scene of the coming apocalypse.²⁷ Hilton arguably rather overplays this aspect of Morpeth's faith, which seemingly only became prominent after the European revolutions of 1848. Even then, he felt that prophecy should not 'engross our attention... what most concerns us is the real personal descent of Christ

²³ Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 99-101, 232.

²⁴ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 134-40.

²⁵ Boyd Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform: the case of Lord Morpeth', *Historical Journal*, 37 (1994), 829-59.

²⁶ George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *The Second Vision of Daniel: A Paraphrase in Verse* (London, 1859).

²⁷ George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters* (London, 1854), p. 2. Morpeth's conception that Turkey was to be the site of the Second Coming seems to have led him to adopt an unusual anti-Turkish attitude in the Crimean War. Lord Stanley noted that 'with his particular views of the Prophecies I suppose he must feel uneasy at anything that keeps the doomed Turk in Europe and prevents the fulfilment as he reads it'; Lord Stanley to Lady Stanley, November 13th 1854, in Nancy Mitford (ed.), *The Stanleys of Alderney: The Letters between the Years 1851-1865* (London, 1968), p. 94.

to each'.²⁸ However, Hilton rightly makes the more telling point that Morpeth's pre-millennialism was based on the idea that God continually intervened in the world.²⁹

Morpeth believed in 'the immediate superintendence of Divine Providence in the order of events'.³⁰ This separated him from those who thought that Providence operated mechanistically through natural laws. In earlier work, Hilton had evocatively detailed how this belief underpinned ideas of economic non-interference; God had ordained a system which naturally rewarded virtue and punished vice, and this needed no interference from meddling politicians.³¹ Reversing this argument, he accordingly suggests that it was Morpeth's pre-millennialism which led him to develop the inclination 'to intervene paternally in social problems' which Mandler charts.³² Nevertheless, Hilton perceptively (if rather elusively) suggests that this was tempered by a commitment to individual effort, relating this to his incarnationalism (an aspect of his faith discussed below). He thus tends to present Morpeth as a man of two conflicting impulses, and suggests that these were reconciled through social reforms, such as education, which did not fundamentally interfere in the market.³³

There is much of value in the analyses provided by both Hilton and Brent, which both receive some endorsement below. Nevertheless, the presence of two such apparently conflicting interpretations suggests that neither has quite got to the bottom of Morpeth's thought. There is thus ample scope for a re-assessment based on more detailed research.

Fortunately, it is possible to reconstruct Morpeth's beliefs in detail. His journal often contains religious passages, and also provides some useful pithy commentary on his religious reading. Although the bulk of what must have once been a substantial religious library seems to have subsequently been dispersed, some of the books which

²⁸ J19/8/17, Diary of Lord Morpeth, May 7th 1848.

²⁹ Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', 849-50.

³⁰ Carlisle, *Second Vision of Daniel*, p. 6.

³¹ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988), *passim*.

³² Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', 850.

³³ Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', 842.

remain in the library at Castle Howard contain helpful if very brief annotations.³⁴ An insight into his mind can also be gained through his public speeches, which often possessed a religious tenor. The main source for this chapter, however, is a collection of sermons - unused by previous scholars - which he transcribed into two commonplace books. He used these both for personal devotion and to read aloud to his household and guests on Sunday evenings, a habit he began not long after he inherited the Howard estates.³⁵ Given that he was unlikely to preach from a text he disagreed with, these provide an excellent guide to his belief. Moreover, many of these sermons are ones he had previously read and enjoyed; the books can therefore be seen as compilations of his favourite religious texts.

The richest documentary evidence for Morpeth's faith therefore comes from the 1840s and 50s. This presents a slight methodological problem for analysing his thought in earlier periods. Indeed Hilton, apparently led by the bias in the sources, suggests that whilst pious earlier he only became 'gripped' by religion in the 1840s.³⁶ This was not the case. Although his father was apathetic about religion, his mother Georgiana was a thoroughgoing evangelical who subjected her children to a highly religious education.³⁷ Morpeth aped her piety as a boy, confessing his sins to her whilst at preparatory school (wonderfully, these included thinking 'a most shocking word').³⁸ There is less evidence for his thought during his adolescent years at Eton, although he did write to his mother to assure her that 'God chastiseth those he loveth'. Chastisement seems to have been his lot in this period; he disapproved of the other boys' misbehaviour, and was bullied and badly beaten on at least one occasion.³⁹ It is not hard to imagine him as Arthur in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

³⁴ Should any future scholars wish to follow up on these, Morpeth's annotation code is explained in his copy of H. E. Manning, *Sermons* (London, 1842). A '+' indicates his agreement with a passage, a '?' indicates doubt, and an 'x' indicates disapprobation.

³⁵ J19/9/15-16, Commonplace book of sermons written and annotated by Morpeth. These Sunday prayer meetings are first recorded in J19/8/20, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, February 11th 1849.

³⁶ Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', 856.

³⁷ Ruth Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 2003), pp. 101-03.

³⁸ J18/3/53/72, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, July 2nd 1812.

³⁹ J18/3/55/94, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, April 30th 1815; J18/3/55/28, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, November 5th 1815; J18/3/56/11 George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, undated.

We also regrettably have only snippets of evidence revealing the time he spent at Oxford University from 1819 to 1823. His college, Christ Church, was synonymous with a classical education, but nevertheless an element of religious study was essential for all Oxford degrees. Christ Church was the favoured choice for the sons of peers. Its student body encompassed both the scholarly and the frivolous, but the college as a whole had a growing reputation for academic rigour.⁴⁰ Morpeth's native intelligence allowed him to thrive, and he achieved a first in classics and gained the University's prizes for both English and Latin verse, considered by one friend to be a 'brilliant performance'.⁴¹

There are indications that he maintained his boyhood piety during this period. One contemporary recalled that he 'bore an irreproachable character as an undergraduate'.⁴² Apart from his old school chum Henry Fox, who he seems to have criticised for his lack of faith, his closest friends at Christ Church were all religiously earnest. They included the evangelicals John Stuart Wortley (son of a Yorkshire landowner and a future political opponent) and Lord Ashley, the future 7th Earl of Shaftesbury.⁴³ Whilst his friends bemoaned some 'idle habits' – particularly a short-lived fondness for whist – there is little to indicate that he did not share their devotion, if not perhaps their evangelical dogma.⁴⁴ After leaving Oxford he bonded with another evangelical, Henry Pelham, 3rd Earl of Chichester, a friendship based

⁴⁰ M. G. Brock, 'The Oxford of Peel and Gladstone, 1800-1833' in M. G. Brock & M. C. Curthoys (eds.), *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume VI, Nineteenth Century Oxford, Part I* (Oxford, 1997), 10-14, 41-42.

⁴¹ Wharnccliffe Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WHM/561, John Stuart Wortley to Lady Caroline Stuart Wortley, May 29th 1821.

⁴² 'Personal Recollections of an Old Oxonian' from *The Month* (November 1865), reproduced in Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-regal Speeches*, p. 456.

⁴³ Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS, 52010, f. 139, George Howard to Henry Fox, July 22nd 1822 (this letter seems to chastise Fox on his lack of faith, replying to a complaint about his own faults by stating that it pains him to think of Fox's 'much more important one, where the subject is infinitely higher'). See also Holland House MSS (British Library), Add. MSS 52010, f. 117, George Howard to Henry Fox, July 7th 1821, for his close friendship with Wortley. His friendship with Ashley, with whom he took a tour of Scotland in 1820, is detailed in Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 18-19.

⁴⁴ For 'idle habits', see Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS 52011, f. 25, John Stuart Wortley to Henry Fox, February 22nd 1822. Peter Mandler has implied that Morpeth was frivolous and worldly at Oxford, quoting one incident where Ashley had apparently dragged him away from a bout of drunken 'window smashing' (Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, p. 52, citing Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS 52010, f. 112, George Howard to Henry Fox, May 19th 1821). This would certainly have told against his religiosity, but in fact this letter suggests that Morpeth played no part in these excesses, and was disgruntled to find himself punished by the Proctor for the actions of others.

around their shared piety.⁴⁵ In the early 1830s, Morpeth's faith was sufficiently strong for him to copy out lengthy extracts from the Bible, a labour of over two years.⁴⁶

It seems, then, that his intense religiosity was a lifelong phenomenon. Moreover, he does not seem to have changed his opinions in the fundamental way that, for instance, Gladstone did. There is a high degree of resonance between the values he possessed in the 1840s, and those indicated by earlier sources. I have thus cautiously used both sets of evidence to indicate his thought throughout his public life. These sources suggest that his beliefs encompassed three interrelated elements. Firstly, he thought that the Christian ought to be unselfish in thought and deed. Secondly, he had a strong faith in mankind's potential for moral progress, related to his incarnationalism. Thirdly, he equated Christianity with a tolerant, harmonious society, a belief influenced by, but not reducible to, Liberal Anglican theology. These values were to deeply influence his non-political and political actions, and it is to them we now turn.

The Importance of Being Earnest: Selflessness and Disinterestedness

Before venturing into the realms of theology, it is essential to recognise that for Morpeth religion was always an essentially practical affair, a matter of doing rather than thinking. Christianity, he preached, was 'intended for our practical benefit', and meant nothing unless accompanied by 'real practice'.⁴⁷ He could bestow no higher praise on a sermon than to call it 'practical' or 'useful'. As these comments suggest, he followed the nineteenth-century drive to make religion 'real' rather than 'nominal'. Faith, in this view, was not merely about attending church; it involved being 'constantly governed by the motives, sustained by the principles, living, breathing, acting in the invisible atmosphere of true religion'.⁴⁸

Walter Houghton has argued that this idea formed the basis of a 'fundamental community of aim' shared across the spectrum of early-Victorian Protestant

⁴⁵ J19/1/4/69, Earl of Chichester to Lord Morpeth, dated 1829; J19/1/5/31, Earl of Chichester to Lord Morpeth, December 4th 1830.

⁴⁶ J19/9/17, Book containing extracts from the Bible, started 1830 and completed September 1832.

⁴⁷ J19/9/5, Commonplace book, 'Great is the Mystery of Godliness' (Thomas Arnold); 'Happy is the man that findeth wisdom' (Dr Barrow).

⁴⁸ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'Your Life is Hid with Christ in God' (Caird).

opinion.⁴⁹ This allowed Morpeth's religious practice to be remarkably catholic. Although generally preferring services by broad churchmen, he partook of a range of styles, on one occasion noting that he had been through 'nearly the whole cycle of religious opinion' in a single day.⁵⁰ His preferred divines, too, spanned the theological range, from High Churchmen like Samuel Wilberforce, who he asked to write a sermon especially for his commonplace book, to the popular evangelical preacher Henry Melvill, from 1829 to 1843 incumbent of Camberwell Chapel in London, to whom he sent charitable contributions on at least one occasion.⁵¹

Morpeth's favourite theologian was probably Thomas Arnold, whose sermons he found sure to 'instruct and amend'. Upon reading A. P. Stanley's famed biography of Arnold in 1844, he exclaimed 'O, why was I not brought up under him!'⁵² I have been unable to ascertain whether Morpeth ever met Arnold, but his diary shows that he was immersed in his works in the early to mid-1840s.⁵³ It is probable that he knew his principles before then, for Brent records that he strongly supported Arnold's claim to preferment whilst Irish Secretary.⁵⁴ Morpeth also felt 'veneration' for the American Unitarian William Ellery Channing, whom he met on a year-long tour of America in 1841-42. Overlooking the 'peculiar' Unitarian views, he eagerly devoured Channing's entire published works in 1843.⁵⁵ Numerous sermons from these men went into his commonplace books, where they were joined by texts from preachers such as the evangelical Thomas Chalmers, the Yorkshire Congregationalist James Parsons, and even the seventeenth-century divine Robert Leighton.

What united this diverse group, apart from their ability to turn out a good sermon, was their conviction that the true believer did not merely assent his intellectual

⁴⁹ Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957), p. 228.

⁵⁰ Diary of Lord Morpeth, May 10th 1846, in Lady Caroline Lascelles, (ed.), *Extracts from Journals kept by George Howard, Earl of Carlisle* (Printed for private circulation, 1870), p. 32.

⁵¹ Wilberforce MSS (Bodleian Library, Oxford), 7th Earl of Carlisle to Samuel Wilberforce, c.12, June 29th [1858]; J19/1/17/16, Henry Melvill to Lord Morpeth, February 21st 1838.

⁵² J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 26th 1843, December 24th 1843; J19/8/4 Diary of Lord Morpeth, July 14th 1844.

⁵³ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 2nd 1843 suggests that he had read Arnold's lectures on history and numerous sermons by him during the previous year.

⁵⁴ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 138-39. Specifically, Brent suggests that Morpeth supported the Whigs' offer to Arnold of the wardenship of Manchester, which occurred in 1840 (Arnold declined for financial reasons). Regrettably, Brent does not provide a reference, so I have been unable to follow up on this point.

⁵⁵ J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, December 11th 1841; J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 2nd, November 27th 1843.

agreement with Christian doctrines. Rather, he allowed his faith to fill up his heart and dominate all his actions. Real religion was therefore earnest religion. This was a theme running through Morpeth's faith. Christ, he preached, 'came not into the world to fill our heads with mere speculations... whilst in the meantime our hearts remain all ice within'.⁵⁶ The Christian ought to live and breathe the principles of the Gospel, so that they became a living 'witness for Christ'.⁵⁷ Morpeth's leader Lord John Russell believed something similar, noting that Christ commanded men to love 'God with all thy heart... and thy neighbour as thyself... the whole life of man is required'.⁵⁸

These beliefs meant Morpeth had relatively little time for the sort of religious rationalism exhibited by some older Whigs such as Henry Brougham, who sought to prove the existence of God through natural revelation.⁵⁹ Although not indifferent to such defences – he recommended Paley's apologetics to Lady Holland – he saw them as largely inessential.⁶⁰ The Almighty, he stated, 'had made all to love him, but none to comprehend him'; the 'essence' of man's religion was 'unbounded love to his fellow man'.⁶¹ One came to know God not through the intellect, but through feeling and experience, especially the practical application of scripture. Morpeth's position here and in many other respects was akin to that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, an influence on some of his favourite divines, especially Arnold. Whether he ever read Coleridge is unknown, but the Castle Howard library contained many of his works, and it would have been highly out of character for him not to have examined them.⁶²

⁵⁶ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'And hereby we do know, that we know Him, if we keep His commandments' (Cudworth). For similar themes in this book from texts by the preachers mentioned above, see also 'But I know you, and ye have not the love of God within you' (Thomas Chalmers), 'Thy Kingdom Come' (Thomas Arnold); 'And when he was come into the ship' (Samuel Wilberforce); 'I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart' (Archbishop Leighton).

⁵⁷ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'And when he was come into the ship' (Samuel Wilberforce).

⁵⁸ Lord John Russell Papers (University College London, Special Collections), MS Ogdon 84, undated essay on religion.

⁵⁹ Bord, *Science and Whig Manners*, pp. 95-101.

⁶⁰ Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS 51583, fol. 124, Lord Morpeth to Lady Holland, March 20th 1844.

⁶¹ Speech of Lord Morpeth at Wakefield, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, August 14th 1847, p. 10; J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'Great is the Mystery of Godliness' (Thomas Arnold).

⁶² Coleridge's position and influence is admirably charted in Bernard Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore* (2nd edn., London: Longman, 1995), esp. pp. 47-48 for his critique of eighteenth-century rationalism.

Morpeth's faith can at times appear rather vapid, but this was far from the case. His focus on Christian principles such as love, duty, kindness and charity was so intense because he believed that life was a scene of moral trial, in which all one's actions had spiritual import. God, he felt, had placed man on earth for serious purposes, and expected him to live up to a high moral standard. Mankind was 'constantly proved, and put to the test'.⁶³ It was these very basic elements of the Christian faith which exercised the most influence on Morpeth. When he justified his actions, he almost always did so by simple reference to the Bible, which he believed to be 'the best counsel in every condition and every circumstance of life'.⁶⁴

This is a necessary point, because as the Victorian age was a period of intense religious controversy, we are apt as historians to analyse it through various theological 'isms'. Theological disputes were often vital (their political import will be seen throughout this thesis), yet it is possible to over exaggerate these differences. There was little in the essentials of Morpeth's faith with which the average early-Victorian Protestant would have disagreed; as will be seen, he was able to garner political kudos from his religiosity even among men of different denominations. In turn, he admired pious men and women of all sects and classes. For instance, he maintained a lengthy friendship with the Miss Priestmans, two Quaker spinsters who lived near Castle Howard, feeling their talk always 'to be of use to me'.⁶⁵

The opposite of Morpeth's faith can be found not so much in competing Christian doctrines, but rather in infidelity. Indeed, he felt that the Bible grouped society into 'two general and distinct classes', believers and unbelievers.⁶⁶ Unsurprisingly, he considered it to be his duty to spread the word of God among the latter, teaching that if the Christian failed in this respect, he was no Christian at all.⁶⁷ As will be seen

⁶³ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'What is man that thou shouldst magnify him' (Dewey).

⁶⁴ Speech of the 7th Earl of Carlisle at the British and Foreign Bible Society, Selby, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, November 27th 1858, p. 5.

⁶⁵ J19/8/15, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 21st 1847.

⁶⁶ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you' (Thomas Chalmers).

⁶⁷ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'In as much as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me' (Archbishop Sumner). Note however that Morpeth, unlike some of his fellow enthusiasts, did not support missionary activity out of a conviction that non-believers would be damned in the hereafter. Morpeth believed in a benevolent God, and hence struggled with the idea of eternal punishment; he noted that the contradiction between these ideas was the source of his only major intellectual difficulty in religion (J19/8/30, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 4th 1853).

later in the thesis, he was a keen patron of religious missions. Nevertheless, he believed that knowledge of scripture on its own was insufficient to reform the soul. Like many early-Victorians, he felt that mankind had an innate tendency towards ungodly, sensual and selfish behaviour, which even believers had to constantly struggle against. These baser tendencies could be overcome, but this required considerable self-denial, the 'subjection of our wills... to the will of God'. He therefore agreed with Henry Manning that 'the power of self-determination' was vital in deciding the condition of the soul.⁶⁸

This aspect of Morpeth's faith – unexplored by either Hilton or Brent – was of immense significance in his life. Its wider implications are better appreciated if it is seen as involving a conflict between worldly materialism and godly morality. Morpeth equated mankind's selfishness with worldliness; men, he taught, were too apt to display 'affection to the world and worldly things'. This was a problem not just because it resulted in sin, but also because worldly people could not fulfil the Christian charge of love and charity to others.⁶⁹ However, he did not believe it necessary for the faithful to seal themselves off from the world. His favourite sermons often insist that Christian principles should be brought to bear in labour, business and social interaction. A religious life could be an enjoyable and active life.⁷⁰

He was clear, though, that man should not act out of selfish desires. The pursuit of pleasure, he stated to one audience, 'cannot be considered the real aim or business of life', which should instead revolve around a 'virtuous self-denial'.⁷¹ Indeed, he felt that worldliness was counterproductive, for there could be no higher happiness than that which came from working for others and doing God's will. As he told a gloomy

⁶⁸ Castle Howard Library, Annotations in Morpeth's hand in H. E. Manning, *Sermons* (London, 1842), p. 59 (he read these in the course of 1842-43); J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (William Ellery Channing).

⁶⁹ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'It is good for a man that he bear his yoke in his youth' (Scougal). For this theme, see also 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world' (Thomas Chalmers); 'Thy Kingdom Come' (Thomas Arnold); 'Unto the pure all things are pure' (Dewey); 'In as much as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto Me' (Archbishop Sumner).

⁷⁰ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, & wrought, for by their occupation they were tentmakers' (Henry Melvill); 'What is man that thou shouldst magnify him' (Dewey); 'Likeness to God' (William Ellery Channing).

⁷¹ Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-Regal Speeches*, p. 5.

Lady Holland in what was quite probably a counterproductive effort to cheer her up, irreligious people were therefore ultimately bound to be miserable.⁷²

Crucially, he applied these views to himself as well as to others. He was convinced that his ‘whole nature’ had a ‘perversity’, a ‘thick brood of corruptions’ requiring God’s aid.⁷³ This was a pressing concern for him, because as a wealthy aristocrat he had every opportunity of living a life of selfish repose; precisely the sort of existence which contemporary moralists condemned.⁷⁴ Whilst he enjoyed sociable diversions, he was thus apt to experience a degree of guilt when these took up too much of his attention. After indulging in some New Year amateur theatricals, he could chastise himself for his ‘dissipated and engrossed manner’.⁷⁵ At times, he took this anxiety to almost ludicrous levels. After spending one Sunday sorting out his papers, he reassured himself that this was ‘more right than reading sermons would have been... there is more self-denial in it’.⁷⁶ When a man regards even reading sermons as a little too self-indulgent, there can be little doubt that he is seriously in earnest.

His deepest anxieties about his own selfishness, however, came as a result of his political ambition, whose vanity he felt inconsistent with the ‘spirit of perfect and consistent faith’. When troubled by the frustration of his ambitions as his political importance declined late in his career, he turned to prayer and the sacrament to help him overcome his ‘too worldly heart’.⁷⁷ It is doubtless significant in this respect that Morpeth’s youthful religious education had come from an evangelical mother, for the critique of worldliness was especially marked in the writings of late-eighteenth century evangelicals such as Hannah More, whose works are in the Castle Howard

⁷² J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘And when he was come into the ship’ (Samuel Wilberforce); Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS 51583, fol. 124, Lord Morpeth to Lady Holland, March 20th 1844.

⁷³ J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 23rd 1844.

⁷⁴ Marjorie Morgan, *Manners, Morals and Class in England, 1774-1858* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 51-58.

⁷⁵ J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 1st 1845.

⁷⁶ J19/8/16, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 21st 1847.

⁷⁷ J19/8/32, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, February 12th 1855. See also J19/8/19, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 8th 1849; J19/8/30, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, December 26th 1852, January 1st 1853. I have discussed this topic at greater length in David Gent, ‘Scruples in my Mind’: Ethics, Conscience and Duty in the Life of Lord Morpeth’ in Nathan Uglow (ed.), *Victorian Ethics: Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies*, 10 (2008), 38-49, presented at the ‘Victorian Ethics’ conference at Leeds Trinity & All Saints College in March 2008. This early working paper lacks much of the theological background provided here.

library.⁷⁸ Georgiana felt that the ‘one thing that signifies’ in education was to inculcate the wish to ‘sacrifice selfish or personal gratification’.⁷⁹

A sense of the sort of teaching Morpeth would have been exposed to as a boy can be gleaned from a family prayer in Georgiana’s papers, possibly of her own composition.

‘Let us not be quietly gliding down the stream of time, until at length we find ourselves, unprepared, in the gulf of eternity... [Let us] be enabled to be a blessing for others, and to be useful in our day & generation. May we be less selfish, more kind, more bountiful, that we may imitate the example of our blessed Saviour’.⁸⁰

Morpeth was to cast off many of the tenets of his mother’s faith in adulthood, telling her that evangelicalism had a tendency to produce ‘mistakes and mischief’.⁸¹ As Hilton has observed, he did not believe, as evangelicals did, in mankind’s alienation from God through sin.⁸² Evangelicals saw the atonement, which reconciled man with God, as the bedrock of Christianity. Salvation was available only to those who repented of their sin and, as Georgiana put it in her prayer, trusted ‘entirely in the merits of Christ’s atoning blood’.⁸³ Morpeth’s faith, however, revolved far more around sanctification than justification. Indeed, he felt that excessive dwelling on the atonement might produce spiritual complacency. ‘The end of the Gospel’, he emphasised, ‘is not to cover sin, by spreading the purple robe of Christ’s death and sufferings over it, while it still remains with us with all its filth un-removed’.⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the emphasis on selflessness evident in his mother’s teaching was one which Morpeth clearly carried with him. In later life, he was to draw much of his

⁷⁸ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, pp. 176-82. Interestingly, Hilton notes that the High Church equivalent of Hannah More was Sarah Trimmer, who was the sister of Georgiana Carlisle’s childhood governess.

⁷⁹ J20/1, Georgiana Carlisle to Charles Howard, July 10th 1858.

⁸⁰ J18/74, Religious Writings by Georgiana Carlisle, Paper marked ‘Sunday Evening Prayer’, not dated.

⁸¹ J18/3/61/6, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, post-marked October 22nd 1831.

⁸² Hilton, ‘Whiggery, religion and social reform’, 852-56.

⁸³ J18/74, Religious Writings by Georgiana Carlisle, ‘Sunday Evening Prayer’. For the wider importance of the atonement to evangelicalism, see Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, *passim*.

⁸⁴ J19/9/15, Compilation of sermons, ‘And hereby we do know, that we know him, if we keep his commandments’ (Cudworth).

critique of worldliness from evangelicals such as Thomas Chalmers.⁸⁵ These ideals deeply shaped his view of himself as a public figure, giving him a tremendous spiritual need to work for the good of others. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he saw his life as a God-given mission. In a revealing passage in his diary, he prayed that God would foster in him ‘those considerate and unselfish tendencies which love for God should graft on love for man; enable me... to live up fully to all the high and serious purposes of my being’.⁸⁶ Both in public and private he urged that the foremost duty of a Christian was to their family, through the ‘kindness of social and domestic intercourse’.⁸⁷ However, as a bachelor and member of the ruling elite, his sense of duty was channelled more directly into public life.

As will be seen in later chapters, he fulfilled his need to be dutiful through philanthropy and in benevolent actions on his estate. He also found a natural outlet for these feelings in Whig politics. He seems to have agreed with the idea, propagated by Lord John Russell, that the historic role of the Whig aristocracy had been to serve the people and protect them from domestic and foreign tyranny. Indeed, he once linked his Whiggery back to Charles Howard (1536-1624), who commanded the English fleet against the Armada.⁸⁸ This ideal of political service was encouraged by his mother, who urged him to see himself as a Christian statesman who would be ‘moved by the power of virtue’ to accomplish great things for the people.⁸⁹

These views were to partly motivate his involvement in measures of social reform such as public health, which he saw as an arena in which he might do ‘real good’.⁹⁰ He was clearly moved by the accounts of preventable deaths he came across when shaping his sanitary legislation, going as far as to say that this ‘stagger[ed] the

⁸⁵ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world’ (Thomas Chalmers).

⁸⁶ J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 23rd 1844.

⁸⁷ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Sheffield Athenaeum and Mechanics’ Institute soiree, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, September 4th 1847, p. 7; J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘Likeness to God’ (William Ellery Channing).

⁸⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, October 15th 1831, p. 3. For Russell’s views on history, see Jonathan Parry, ‘Past and Future in the Later Career of Lord John Russell’ in Timothy Blanning & David Cannadine (eds.), *History & Biography: Essays in Honour of Derek Beales* (Cambridge, 1996), 142-172.

⁸⁹ J19/1/5/18, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, August 9th 1830; J19/1/46/73, Georgiana Carlisle to 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 11th 1849.

⁹⁰ J18/3/67/70, 7th Earl Carlisle to Georgiana Carlisle, January 13th 1849.

faith'.⁹¹ He had a similar humanitarian reaction to accounts of the sufferings of children employed in factories. Presenting a petition to limit their working day, he declared that Parliament was called to the topic 'by their duties as men and as Christians'.⁹² Social reforms were, in part, Christian philanthropy writ large.

The Whigs' activism in this arena has been subject to a number of different interpretations. David Roberts argues that Morpeth was part of a group of paternalist Whigs who saw it as their duty to promote the welfare of the people through state intervention.⁹³ Peter Mandler has presented the Whigs' social reforms in more political terms, as responses to outside pressure which chimed with their conception of themselves as the people's leaders. However, he generally endorses the idea that they were ultimately concerned with improving social conditions, and that in their approach to this issue Whigs were distinguished from liberals by their greater willingness to interfere in the market.⁹⁴ Boyd Hilton rightly qualifies this argument to a very great extent in his article on Morpeth, pointing out that both his Public Health Act and his position on factory labour were not all that interventionist. Nevertheless, he too interprets Whiggery in terms of opposition to 'free market' liberalism.⁹⁵

As will be seen, Morpeth was prepared to employ the state in many areas where other liberals were not. However, the idea that his thought might be understood in terms of a conflict between an interventionist government and an individualistic market is arguably a misconception, perhaps overly influenced by debates about the proper role of the state in the 1980s. His religious beliefs meant that he did not view government in that way. I discuss his social reforms further below, and in more detail at various points in the thesis. For now, it is sufficient to note that, on the whole, he did not seek to improve the *material* condition of the people by positive state action.

⁹¹ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 7th 1847.

⁹² Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third series, IX, February 1st 1832, col. 1092. Morpeth's relationship with the factory question is discussed in greater length on pp. 121-25.

⁹³ David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London, 1979), pp. 231-36, 263-65.

⁹⁴ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, *passim*.

⁹⁵ Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', p. 836. The qualifications evident in Hilton's article on Morpeth are absent from his magnificent survey *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? England, 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 519-23. This endorses Mandler's argument that the Whigs were committed to centralisation and interventionism, and opposed to 'poverty and social exploitation', and hence were less committed to the idea of a free market.

Morpeth thought that Parliament might be called upon to tackle distress in certain (extreme) cases, because it was a body of Christian men, and to relieve the sufferings of others was a Christian act. But social problems in themselves did not constitute an *a priori* case for intervention. This reflected Morpeth's belief that man's spiritual state was a far greater determinant of his well-being than his physical condition. God, he felt, had offered man a way to cope joyfully with his earthly trials. He thus preached from Melvill that a Christian should never be unhappy.⁹⁶ If this was comforting, it was also socially conservative, for it meant that he did not wish to alter the social structure.

Morpeth was actually far more interested in the duties of the elite than he was in the physical condition of the populace. His social legislation aimed, above all, to stimulate others to live up to their moral responsibilities. Thus his Public Health Act did not operate directly through the agency of the central state, but rather worked by overseeing existing structures of local government which were given new powers. Morpeth felt that municipal authorities were composed of men of 'practical benevolence', and that the extra tasks they were being given would tempt other 'useful and valuable men into the service of their fellow citizens'.⁹⁷ Similarly, he believed that reductions in working hours in factories should ideally be worked out voluntarily, to allow the textile masters the chance to willingly fulfil their 'high responsibilities' for the good of their workpeople.⁹⁸ His idea of interference on this issue was accordingly far less severe than many factory reformers wanted.

Morpeth, then, was not in the business of establishing some sort of watered down early-Victorian version of the welfare state. He was less concerned with what the state's power was used *for*, than with *how* it was used. His belief in mankind's inherent tendency to selfishness and corruption meant that he set a high standard for the morality of public figures. This view was commonplace among the Whigs of his generation. As Jonathan Parry and Richard Brent have detailed, Lord John Russell displayed a strong conviction of the need for virtuous and dutiful political leadership in his historical writings. Russell could immediately turn to the French Revolution to

⁹⁶ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'Unto the pure all things are pure' (Dewey); 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be' (Henry Melvill)

⁹⁷ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCI, March 30th 1847, col. 626.

⁹⁸ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, (H.C.), Third Series, XIX, July 5th 1833, cols 230-32.

illustrate what happened to an aristocracy whose licentiousness and corruption led it to neglect its public duties.⁹⁹ Morpeth drew similar lessons in his 1828 tragedy *The Last of the Greeks, or the Fall of Constantinople*, which presents the loss of this city to the Turks as divine punishment for its corruption and lack of virtue.¹⁰⁰

However, Morpeth did not need to look to an ancient foreign state for evidence of the abuses of power. Like all Whigs, he was sensitive to the corruptions of the British monarchy. He took a keen interest in the Queen Caroline affair of 1820, in which George IV's blatantly hypocritical behaviour towards his estranged wife was seen by many as a sign of his selfishness and immorality.¹⁰¹ Morpeth owned that he could 'fix my thoughts now on no other subject'.¹⁰² It was Parliament's support of the King's wish to have Caroline excluded from the liturgy which first converted him to parliamentary reform.¹⁰³ He later presented reform as a means of reducing political corruption.¹⁰⁴

Their concern with public duty meant that the Whigs, like all liberals, favoured legislation which was for the good of all rather than for a specific interest. They were apt to censure actions which favoured a particular group, especially if this was the aristocracy itself. E. A. Wasson has shown how Lord Althorp, a serious evangelical and titanic Leader of the House of Commons in Grey's administration, believed that politics should be a matter of Christian stewardship in the people's interest, which commanded disinterested action. He therefore attacked the distribution of sinecures and argued against the Corn Laws, presenting these as selfish.¹⁰⁵ Althorp is on the opposite side to Morpeth in the interventionist / non-interventionist taxonomy of Whigs and liberals presented by Mandler and Hilton.¹⁰⁶ However, in many respects their views were very similar. Morpeth too expressed a 'strong dislike' of

⁹⁹ Parry, 'Past and Future', esp. 146-54; Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 53-58.

¹⁰⁰ George W. F. Howard (later 7th Earl of Carlisle), *The Last of the Greeks, or the Fall of Constantinople: A Tragedy* (London, 1828), esp. pp. 31-32.

¹⁰¹ Louise Carter, 'British Masculinities on Trial in the Queen Caroline Affair of 1820', *Gender & History*, 20:2 (2008), 248-69.

¹⁰² Holland House Papers (British Library), Add. MSS 52010, f. 93, George Howard to Henry Fox, September 1st 1820.

¹⁰³ J18/3/58/98, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth (marked 1821).

¹⁰⁴ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, III, March 20th 1831, cols. 1217-20.

¹⁰⁵ E. A. Wasson, *Whig Renaissance: Lord Althorp and the Whig Party, 1782-1845* (London, 1987), pp. 45-54, 114-26.

¹⁰⁶ Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', 835, 838.

monopolies, arguing that the aristocracy should rise above their own interests ‘rather than above the people’. He too criticised the Corn Laws as unchristian.¹⁰⁷

It was through the removal of these impositions on the people that Morpeth most looked to improve the material well-being of the working classes. Far therefore from being opposed to a ‘free market’, Morpeth actively supported it. He felt that the people’s pocket was drained by selfish protectionism and the excessive taxation needed to pay for political corruption. Tackling abuses in these areas, he told his constituents, was ‘the best and surest mode of bettering your condition’.¹⁰⁸ This made perfect sense given his religious philosophy, which held that ‘the greatest sorrows we suffer here... we suffer from the selfishness or dishonesty... of other men’.¹⁰⁹

The next chapter reveals how these ideas of ‘disinterested government’ were crucial to popular liberalism in the 1830s. Morpeth’s religious beliefs meant that he was able to coalesce with his liberal supporters on this issue. An idealisation of duty and disinterestedness, however, was only one outcome of his spiritual critique of worldliness. It also led him to seek to foster the values of piety, love, kindness, charity and duty in the population at large. These values were brought together in the notion of character. Morpeth promised a ‘constant effort’ to ‘raise the character of the great body of our population’.¹¹⁰ Brent and Parry have both suggested that the improvement of national morality (character) was one goal of early-Victorian Whiggery, part of a wider liberal commitment to moral improvement.¹¹¹

The next section will suggest that this provides another way of understanding Morpeth’s social reforms. However, his ideals were not just (or even mainly) political. He believed that the Christian should promote moral values in all spheres of life. As will be seen in later chapters, his concern with the improvement of character dominated his actions as a Yorkshire philanthropist and landlord. Both within and without politics, Morpeth was engaged in a wide-ranging effort to encourage the

¹⁰⁷ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Leeds Coloured Cloth Hall, July 25th 1830, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, extraordinary edition, July 27th 1830; Speech of Lord Morpeth to the House of Commons on free trade, reported in *The Times*, February 13th 1846, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the West Riding election, *Leeds Mercury*, December 8th 1832, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘There remaineth a rest unto the people of God’ (Henry Melvill).

¹¹⁰ Lord Morpeth to the electors of the West Riding, *Leeds Mercury*, December 8th 1832, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 52-64; Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 113-27, 138-41.

moral progress of society. He delivered ‘what might be called a sermon’ on this theme to the Lincoln Mechanics’ Institute in 1851, in which he passionately stated that God ‘cannot but approve of every creature that He has made developing to the utmost extent of the faculties He has given him’.¹¹² This glaring (and rather wearing) enthusiasm was closely related to his incarnationalism.

‘A Growing Likeness to the Supreme Being’: The Incarnation and Progress

At its simplest, incarnationalism involves the belief that Jesus Christ was God made flesh (incarnate), and hence was both part human and part divine. This is fundamental to all Trinitarian belief, but as a matter of theological tone it achieved particular emphasis in Morpeth’s thought. Christ’s life therefore provided him with an ideal model of conduct, demonstrating the way all Christians should behave. He could thus find ‘very good’ a sermon in which Channing argued that Christ was a ‘living manifestation of his religion’.¹¹³ This increased his wish to demonstrate Christian principles in his own life. Characteristically, he was delighted when his local preacher opined that ‘our love ought to be framed on the pattern of our Saviour’s’.¹¹⁴

As Hilton has pointed out, Morpeth’s incarnationalism led him to conceive of God as a benevolent being.¹¹⁵ He recorded from Chalmers the idea that the Incarnation was how God had revealed his attributes of mercy and sympathy (‘I see the kindness of the Father in the tears which flowed from the Son’). It showed that God wished to aid men and women in their earthly trials and draw them towards Heaven.¹¹⁶ Morpeth’s faith was accordingly characterised by its joyousness; appropriately, his favourite Biblical passage was Isaiah 48:18 (‘Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy

¹¹² George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses in Aid of Popular Education* (London, 1852), pp. 123-24.

¹¹³ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 23rd 1843; ‘The Imitableness of Christ’s Character’, in William Ellery Channing, *The Works of William E. Channing* (New York, 1970), pp. 310-316. As a Unitarian, Channing would not of course have held to an incarnationalist viewpoint, but nevertheless his view that Christ’s life provided a pattern of godly conduct was highly compatible with incarnationalist Anglicanism. On this, see D. G. Wigmore-Beddoes, *Yesterday’s Radicals: A Study of the Affinity between Unitarianism and Broad Church Anglicanism in the Nineteenth-Century* (Cambridge: J. Clarke & Co., 2002 [first published 1971]), pp. 99-101.

¹¹⁴ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 25th 1843.

¹¹⁵ Hilton, ‘Whiggery, religion and social reform’, 854-56.

¹¹⁶ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘And was made man’ (Thomas Chalmers); ‘But ye are come unto Mount Sion’ (Samuel Wilberforce).

righteousness like the waves of the sea') which has as its theme the idea that one might achieve perfect contentment by following God's will.¹¹⁷

More importantly, however, he drew from the Incarnation the lesson that mankind might achieve a tremendous amount of moral progress. He preached that 'Christ descended into the world in our form... that he might allure and draw us up to God, and make us partakers of His divine form'.¹¹⁸ This confidence came from the idea that Christ was both human *and* divine, which Morpeth believed showed that man's fundamental nature was compatible with holiness. Whilst all men and women had to struggle against their baser nature, they might rise up to an almost divine level.¹¹⁹ Christ's life proved that this might be done, for he too had possessed 'human feelings and affections', and had overcome his own temptations at the crucifixion.¹²⁰

In this respect, the Incarnation performs a similar ideological function to the Holy Spirit, which Protestant Trinitarians believe dwells within all people and enables them, by guiding their conscience, to lead a righteous life. Morpeth felt that the two concepts together proved that 'the human nature rises to the divine in some of its sympathies'.¹²¹ David Bebbington has detailed how Gladstone reached similar conclusions after his faith moved in an incarnationalist direction, leading him to a more optimistic view of humanity.¹²² One influence on Gladstone was Morpeth's friend Robert Wilberforce, the Archdeacon of the East Riding from 1838. Morpeth admired Wilberforce's *Doctrine of the Incarnation* (1848), which he discussed with him in 1849.¹²³ Another influence on Gladstone was Henry Manning, whose works

¹¹⁷ J19/8/11, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 30th 1846.

¹¹⁸ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'And hereby we do know, that we know Him, if we keep His commandments' (Cudworth).

¹¹⁹ This is also the argument made in Hilton, 'Whiggery, religion and social reform', 854-55. Hilton suggests that these ideas were prominent in the work of Alexander Knox (1757-1831). Although Hilton does not indicate that whether Morpeth read his work, Knox seems actually to have been one of his favourite theologians, and there are some sermons by him in his commonplace book.

¹²⁰ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say' (James Parsons).

¹²¹ Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, March 24th 1850, in Lascelles (ed.), *Extracts*, p. 107.

¹²² David Bebbington, *The Mind of Gladstone: Religion, Homer, Politics* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 77-139. A more forceful argument which links incarnationalism with mid-nineteenth-century optimism is provided by Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, pp. 298-337.

¹²³ J19/8/21, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 22nd 1849; J19/8/22, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 6th 1849.

Morpeth eagerly digested in the early 1840s. He found ‘full of thought and beauty’ Manning’s suggestion that mankind might ‘climb up to the throne of God’.¹²⁴

This aspect of his thought also explains his admiration for Channing, who preached that humanity might achieve ‘a growing likeness to the Supreme Being’ by emulating Christ.¹²⁵ Morpeth included this ‘very striking’ sermon in his commonplace book, and was highly impressed by Channing’s ‘ardent sympathy with human want and progress’.¹²⁶ These views meant that Morpeth felt it was perfectly possible to build ‘the Kingdom of God on earth’. As he taught from Arnold, this existed in the heart of every good Christian; its establishment required merely that they replace ‘every violent and licentious passion’ with the values which Christ had taught in the Sermon on the Mount. It followed that a person’s character – that which decided whether he or she would be selfish or dutiful – was all important. Arnold declared that those who had ‘left their characters alone’ and left themselves to the mercy of ‘prevailing passion’ could not build the Kingdom of God.¹²⁷ Morpeth’s incarnationalism thus went hand-in-hand with the interest in ‘character’ he displayed throughout his life.

Morpeth’s confidence in mankind’s potential for improvement helped attach him to liberalism, which was naturally progressive in ethos. Most Whigs shared this progressivism. The ‘philosophic Whigs’ associated with the *Edinburgh Review*, such as Henry Brougham, had imbibed from Scottish philosophy the idea that societies advanced through stages. They associated modernity with commercial society, which they felt could be understood by enquiry (political economy) into its underlying laws.¹²⁸ There is very little evidence to say that he ever engaged with political economy, but Morpeth had something in common with these men. He too displayed a certain openness to enquiry, delighting in conversations about art, literature and science with scholars in the Whig Party like Thomas Babington Macaulay.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Castle Howard Library, Annotations in Morpeth’s hand in H. E. Manning, *Sermons* (London, 1842), pp. 18-19, 26, 53.

¹²⁵ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘Likeness to God’ (William Ellery Channing).

¹²⁶ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 23rd 1843; Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 27th 1843, in Lascelles (ed.), *Extracts*, p. 1.

¹²⁷ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ (Thomas Arnold).

¹²⁸ Biancamaria Fontana, *Rethinking the Politics of Commercial Society: The Edinburgh Review 1802-1832* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 183-84; Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, pp. 346-53.

¹²⁹ J19/8/20, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, February 12th 1849.

Nevertheless, his conception of progress was very different, being based around the moral and spiritual rather than the material. He noted that religion was the ‘essential element’ in deciding whether a people would advance. This probably owed something to Arnold, who developed this argument in his histories.¹³⁰ Morpeth’s thought also echoed that of Russell, who declared that it was to a ‘Christian spirit that we must look for a better and higher civilisation’.¹³¹ For Morpeth, progress was accordingly not inevitable. It had to be struggled for, as the spread of Christian principles relied on humanity engaging in a battle against its own selfish instincts. Indeed, he was apt to slip into military metaphor when talking of this theme; he spoke of ‘*battling* in [the] great conflict of existence... *enlisting* under the banner of progress’.¹³²

Two points may be drawn from this. Firstly, Morpeth had a profound commitment to individual moral effort. This shaped and limited his attitude towards government. As he told his Yorkshire constituents, whatever the state did, only they could control their ‘heart and conduct’; only they could be ‘useful members of society, and the accountable servants of heaven’.¹³³ Secondly, and accordingly, Morpeth felt that progress depended far more on the efforts of civil society than on the state. As will be seen in a later chapter, he thus enthusiastically supported the voluntary societies of moral reform which were ubiquitous in Victorian Britain.

Nevertheless, Morpeth did believe that the state might play some role in assisting the formation of ‘character’. This was a primary motive for his social reforms, which sought to encourage moral improvement. Morpeth felt that government might assist this in a negative sense, by checking vice and dishonesty. Hence he supported the Whigs’ contentious attempt to diminish poor relief for the able-bodied in the New Poor Law of 1834, believing this would increase industriousness.¹³⁴ He also looked for the state to play a more positive role, for instance in the reformation of criminals.

¹³⁰ Carlisle, *Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters*, p. 210. For an authoritative treatment of the idea of progress in Arnold’s historical writing, see Duncan Forbes, *The Liberal Anglican Idea of History* (Cambridge, 1952).

¹³¹ Speech of Lord John Russell at Exeter Hall, *The Times*, November 14th 1855, p. 10.

¹³² Speech at the Sheffield Athenaeum in Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses in Aid of Popular Education*, p. 109, my emphases.

¹³³ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Leeds Coloured Cloth Hall, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 8th 1832, p. 6.

¹³⁴ West Riding election speech of Lord Morpeth, reported in *Bradford Observer*, January 8th 1835, p. 2.

When Viceroy of Ireland he strongly patronised the prison reformer Walter Crofton, eulogising about his methods in an 1858 speech to the Social Science Association.¹³⁵

He was, however, probably most enthusiastic about education, which as Hilton rightly points out was the one social reform most compatible with his commitment to individual effort.¹³⁶ He supported state involvement in education both in England, where the Whigs looked to provide financial assistance to existing philanthropic societies (including those he patronised personally), and in Ireland, where they founded a non-denominational system of national education in the early 1830s. As Viceroy he was to ardently defend this system, declaring that he had a ‘strong interest’ in it.¹³⁷ He also looked to make the Church of England more effective, seeing it as vital for restoring the nation’s moral health.¹³⁸ This meant that he was committed to the connection between Church and state, declaring that this was the ‘surest and safest’ tool in the fight against infidelity.¹³⁹

As will be seen in later chapters, Morpeth’s support for the Establishment was to cause major tension within West Riding liberalism, as many of his nonconformist supporters regarded any connection between the state and religion as inherently corrupting. It is therefore worth examining Morpeth’s thought in this area a little further. As an aristocrat, he belonged to a culture bound up with the Church of England, which was one arena in which his class exercised its power. The Howards, for instance, had the gift of two livings.¹⁴⁰ A career in the Church was the accepted path for younger sons of aristocrats; his uncle Henry was the Dean of Lichfield, and

¹³⁵ J19/9/13, Handwritten speech on prison reform delivered by 7th Earl of Carlisle at the annual meeting of the Social Science Association in Liverpool, October 1858.

¹³⁶ Hilton, ‘Whiggery, religion and social reform’, 842.

¹³⁷ Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-regal Speeches*, p. 35; Allen Warren, ‘Palmerston, the Whigs and the Government of Ireland, 1855-1866’ in David Brown & Miles Taylor (eds.), *Palmerston Studies I* (Southampton, 2007), 101.

¹³⁸ For the Whigs’ attachment to a revived Established Church, Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 2-7.

¹³⁹ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Leeds Coloured Cloth Hall, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 8th 1832, p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ Specifically, Slingsby and Hovingham. A good guide to Yorkshire livings is provided by George Lawton, *Collectio Rerum Ecclesiasticarum de Diocesi Eboracensi* (2nd edn., London: Rivington, 1842).

his eldest brother William (1808-1889), 8th Earl of Carlisle, entered the Church despite being seriously mentally ill.¹⁴¹

Furthermore, his father's cousin was Edward Harcourt, the Archbishop of York; Morpeth often visited the Harcourts' home at Bishopthorpe near York, where he became a 'universal favourite'.¹⁴² Morpeth's upbringing probably led him to accept the connection between Church and state unquestioningly. In as far as he needed an intellectual justification for it, he found it in the work of Thomas Arnold, who argued that since Church and state ought to have the same aim (the moral improvement of society), there was no reason why they should be separate; 'the State in a Christian Country is the Church'.¹⁴³ Arnold's broader point was that both bodies were composed of Christians who ought to perform the same Christian functions. Morpeth found this argument 'very convincing'.¹⁴⁴

This points to an essential aspect in his thought. As has been seen, he believed that all men and women ought to be selfless, kind and dutiful. His support for social reforms can be seen in this light. They were the legislative equivalent of his private philanthropy, an instance of moral men helping other men to be moral. It was, above all, to an increase in this behaviour in society at large that Morpeth looked to solve the nation's problems. A brilliant instance of this thinking can be seen in a speech he gave to the Leeds Mechanics' Institute in 1845. He referred to a veritable calendar of distress – poor public health, inadequate dwellings and insufficient education for the working classes, a deep, stagnant mass of poverty'. Yet the conclusion to his address was characteristically optimistic;

¹⁴¹ G. C. Boase, 'Howard, Henry Edward John (1795–1868)', rev. M. C. Curthoys, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13914>, accessed 5 Nov 2009].

¹⁴² J18/60/534, Archbishop Harcourt to Georgiana Morpeth, undated.

¹⁴³ Thomas Arnold, *Fragment on the Church, in which are Contained Appendices on the Same Subject* (London, 1845), p. 145; Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 178-79.

¹⁴⁴ J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 4th 1844.

‘I believe that there is scarcely anything that might not be attained, if we could only one and all of us determine to rise up to what we might be; if it could only be felt by every one of us, no matter how humble his place, or how contracted his sphere, that each one has his own appointed work and mission... in which he might do much, very much, to smooth all the troubled elements of the daily life around him, and to aid to the general welfare and advancement of his species’.¹⁴⁵

What today seems like rather vacuous rhetoric reflected Morpeth’s conviction that a healthy society was an organic society, in which each person cared for and helped the improvement of all. Christianity was the best way to achieve this ideal society, for it taught people to look to others before themselves, thereby reducing discord. ‘Divine love’, he enthused, was ‘that which reconciles the jarring principles of the world, and makes them all chime together! Let us express this sweet harmonious affection, that... we may tune the world into better music’.¹⁴⁶

A ‘Common Chorus of Praise’: Social Harmony and Liberal Anglicanism

Morpeth’s commitment to the idea of an organic society had a significant impact on his politics. It meant that he broadly agreed with his liberal supporters, for Victorian liberalism can partly be defined as an attempt to reduce the tensions arising from class and religious differences.¹⁴⁷ It has already been noted that Morpeth disliked special privileges within the political system. His organicism re-enforced this, for it meant that he believed class government produced a divided society. He thus opposed the Game Laws on the grounds that they fostered ‘a spirit of irritation between the upper and lower classes, which is the greatest enemy of order’.¹⁴⁸

Morpeth also hoped to build a harmonious society through religious tolerance. This was one of the foremost principles of the Whig Party, and one which the Howard dynasty (nominally headed by the Catholic Dukes of Norfolk) held dear. Son of a Whig mother and half-Canningite father, he had grown up learning to praise religious

¹⁴⁵ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁴⁶ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, ‘And hereby we do know, that we know him, if we keep his commandments’ (Cudworth).

¹⁴⁷ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 3-5.

¹⁴⁸ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Leeds Coloured Cloth Hall, July 25th 1830, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, extraordinary edition, July 27th 1830.

tolerance above all other political values. At the age of just nine, he precociously wrote to his father to advise him on one of his speeches on the issue.¹⁴⁹ He had a lifelong hatred of religious intolerance and bigotry, feeling that this was ‘among the most unpleasant and distressing features of the times’.¹⁵⁰

In political terms, this toleration meant that Morpeth welcomed equal rights for nonconformists and Catholics. As noted above, he made his maiden speech in support of Catholic Emancipation. He was also a supporter of the removal of Jewish disabilities, a far less fashionable topic. He argued that if the state required duties of all its citizens regardless of religion, it could not in fairness bar them from civil rights on the grounds of religious worship.¹⁵¹ For similar reasons, Morpeth wished to relieve dissenters of ‘every species of civil inequality’, such as their exclusion from Oxford and Cambridge universities.¹⁵² In supporting these causes, he ran up against those who regarded exclusiveness as vital for the defence of the Establishment. Morpeth argued the contrary, declaring that only false religions needed ‘temporal props and bulwarks’. He consistently contended that tolerance in politics was commanded by the Christian principle of ‘doing as we would be done by’, and hence that when statesmen acted intolerantly to defend the Church, they ‘degraded those doctrines which they affected to support’.¹⁵³

Morpeth’s actions can be viewed as part of a wider Whig strategy which looked to introduce conciliatory, tolerant government as a way of reducing social tensions and binding non-Anglicans to the state. This was especially the case in Ireland, where the Whigs felt there was a pressing need to find a form of government acceptable to the Catholic majority. As Irish Secretary between 1835 and 1841, Morpeth was an integral part of a highly successful administration animated by a desire to reduce the religious tensions in Irish life.¹⁵⁴ Working with two successive Lord Lieutenants, Lords Normanby and Ebrington, he cooperated with the Irish nationalist leader Daniel

¹⁴⁹ Olien, *Morpeth*, p. 15.

¹⁵⁰ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 87.

¹⁵¹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCV, December 17th 1847, col. 1371.

¹⁵² Letter from Lord Morpeth to the electors of the West Riding, *Leeds Mercury*, January 17th 1835, p. 4.

¹⁵³ Speech of Lord Morpeth on Catholic Emancipation, reported in *The Times*, March 6th 1827, p. 2; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCV, December 17th 1847, col. 1373; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.L.), Third Series, CVI, Lords, June 26th 1849, cols 881-82.

¹⁵⁴ Morpeth’s Irish administration is well charted in Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 127-83, 204-32.

O'Connell, who allied with the Whigs against Peel in the 'Lichfield House Compact' of 1835. The administration tolerantly dispensed patronage to Catholics to demonstrate the Government's religious neutrality.¹⁵⁵

Alongside the energetic Under Secretary Thomas Drummond, Morpeth also reformed the Irish police force, encouraging the appointment of Catholic officers whilst curtailing Orangeism in the magistracy.¹⁵⁶ This culminated in the dismissal of one Colonel Verner, a magistrate who toasted a bloody Protestant victory, thus fuelling, for Morpeth, those 'bitter animosities springing from religious differences, which have disturbed the good order of society'.¹⁵⁷ The Whigs strategy for Ireland emerged most clearly in their commitment to the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Church of Ireland. They hoped to apply these for the moral improvement of the whole population, and specifically to the Irish national system of education, in which Protestant and Catholic children were given non-denominational moral, religious and secular instruction together (and denominational religious instruction separately).¹⁵⁸

The Whigs' belief in the Government's right to appropriate the revenues of the Irish Church was the cause of their brief fall from power in 1834, and the principle upon which the Melbourne administration was founded in 1835. As an attack on the exclusiveness of the Church it was attractive not just to Catholics but also to English dissenters.¹⁵⁹ It emerged out of their commitment to a wholesale reform of the Irish tithe system. Collections of tithes in Ireland had proved impractical, leaving the Church of Ireland's clergy impoverished, and had engendered violent conflict between the Catholic peasantry and British troops in the 'tithe-war' of the early 1830s. The Whigs wished to abolish the tithe system and replace it with a smaller tax or rent-charge to be paid by landlords. At the same time, they hoped to distribute any additional revenue to the moral education of all Irish people.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Angus Macintyre, *The Liberator: Daniel O'Connell and the Irish Party, 1830-1847* (London, 1965), pp. 144-45, 157-62.

¹⁵⁶ Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 137-42.

¹⁵⁷ Lord Morpeth to Col. Verner, September 5th 1837, in J. F. McLellan, *Memoir of Thomas Drummond, Under-Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1835-1840* (Edinburgh, 1868), pp. 299-300.

¹⁵⁸ The appropriation issue is detailed extensively in Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 65-103.

¹⁵⁹ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 108-12, 139-40.

¹⁶⁰ Donald Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution, 1800-1885* (New Haven, 1971), pp. 180-87.

This involved the Erastian view that the Church's resources were subject to Parliamentary control, a notion the Whigs justified by claiming that an Established Church had a duty to promote moral instruction and social harmony, which, owing to the fact that Protestantism was a minority religion in Ireland, the Church of Ireland was unable to do alone.¹⁶¹ In July 1835, Morpeth had a first attempt at combining tithe reform with appropriation, proposing to suppress vacant small benefices and reallocate these resources to the Irish education system. As noted above, Morpeth was an ardent defender of this system, and in 1838 he became a member of the education board. It can be seen as an attempt to foster future tolerance and harmony; lessons were based on scripture extracts and moral platitudes which encouraged Protestants and Catholic children to show kindness and tolerance to each other.¹⁶² Morpeth felt this system fulfilled 'that great Christian commandment of loving one another'.¹⁶³

Morpeth defended appropriation with the highly Liberal Anglican idea that it was the duty of all Christians to take the bitterness out of sectarian disputes, and not regard the Establishment as more important than the 'universal and eternal Christian Church'.¹⁶⁴ Tory critics of appropriation, however, could easily argue that the Government's plan involved the idea that Anglicanism was not superior to Catholicism.¹⁶⁵ They defeated Morpeth's Bill in the Lords, and also blocked similar proposals in 1836 and 1837.¹⁶⁶ This forced the Whigs to abandon appropriation, and in 1838 they passed a measure of tithe reform without it. Morpeth's experience of Irish politics arguably strengthened his adherence to religious tolerance, showing him it was justified in practice as well as in principle. His legislative endeavours had been frustrated by what he saw as religious bigotry, whilst he had seen first-hand the bitterness and suffering provoked by sectarian strife. Approaching the end of his career in Ireland as Viceroy, he reflected that 'every year... convinces me more and

¹⁶¹ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 65-66.

¹⁶² Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 220-29; Donald Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), pp. 157-60.

¹⁶³ Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-regal Speeches*, p. 35

¹⁶⁴ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the 1835 West Riding election, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 2nd 1835, p. 6.

¹⁶⁵ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, p. 66.

¹⁶⁶ Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, pp. 187-90.

more not only of the entire wrongfulness, but also of the utter un-reasonableness of intolerance'.¹⁶⁷

The policies and attitudes detailed above were generally attractive to other liberals. As will be seen, both Morpeth's willingness to reform the structures of the Church and his conciliatory strategy towards Irish Catholicism were praised by his liberal constituents, although hated by his Tory opponents - religious and Irish questions were central to party differences in Yorkshire in the 1830s. Nevertheless, there were subtle but significant differences between Whigs and liberals on the issue of religious tolerance. If they were mutually attached to the idea, they did not always mean the same thing by it. In particular, Congregationalists and Baptists, the mainstay of liberalism in Yorkshire, equated religious liberty with religious pluralism. To them, a church was an independent collection of members who had voluntarily chosen to worship together. They wished to establish a society in which multiple sets of different believers were allowed to freely pursue their own convictions.¹⁶⁸

Morpeth's vision of an ideal society was rather different. He did not want many separate sets of denominations which were divided from each other, but rather one broad, comprehensive national church. Brent is thus quite right to consider Morpeth a Liberal Anglican. He believed that different denominations not only could, but *should* come together around the basic Christian truths they held in common. He owned to Parliament that he would 'rather see all men agree under the general denomination of the Christians... they were too apt to attach to certain principles, doctrines and habits, the idea of Protestantism... and to overlook the more comprehensive scheme of Christianity'.¹⁶⁹ Morpeth included Catholics in this vision; indeed, the Whigs' support for the inter-denominational system of education in Ireland was perhaps the ultimate expression of Liberal Anglicanism.¹⁷⁰

Yet Morpeth's idea of a comprehensive Christianity would have eradicated all that was distinctly Catholic about Catholicism, from which he 'deeply, utterly and

¹⁶⁷ Speech of 7th Earl of Carlisle to the Queen's University, October 16th 1862, in Gaskin (ed.), *Viceregal Speeches*, p. 28.

¹⁶⁸ Timothy Larsen, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology* (Waco, 2004), pp. 145-56.

¹⁶⁹ Speech of Lord Morpeth in the House of Commons, *The Times*, February 1st 1840, p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, p. 220.

radically' dissented.¹⁷¹ Whilst more sympathetic to Catholics than many of his contemporaries, he regarded their doctrine of church authority to be unscriptural. Furthermore, he felt that Catholicism was an intolerant religion. Like many British liberals, he reacted angrily to the suppression of Protestant liberties by repressive Catholic regimes on the Continent.¹⁷² In 1853, he sent an impassioned letter to the *Leeds Mercury* protesting against the Italian Government's imprisonment of Francesco and Rosa Madiari for Protestant missionary activity (something of a *cause célèbre* in Britain), demanding that English Roman Catholics, for whose 'just rights' he had campaigned, showed their toleration by appealing to the Pope.¹⁷³

In fact, Morpeth displayed a distinct tendency to regard anything that was not his own particular brand of broad churchmanship as inherently intolerant. Any creed predicated on disputed aspects of Christianity must, he felt, inevitably be ungenerous towards other Christians. As he explained to his mother in 1831, he disliked evangelicalism and High Churchmanship for the way they led to a 'spirit of click [clique – DG] and illiberal construction of others'.¹⁷⁴ This may have been the lesson of experience; Morpeth had been furious that his evangelical friend Chichester had voted against Catholic Emancipation, accusing him of bigotry.¹⁷⁵

This attitude was underpinned by his theological views. Brent's account of the Whigs' Liberal Anglicanism reserves a significant role for the influence of a group of liberal theologians clustered around Oriel College, Oxford and Trinity College, Cambridge. This group included Thomas Arnold, Richard Whately, Henry Milman, R. D. Hampden and Baden Powell.¹⁷⁶ Whilst, as seen above, Morpeth's reading ranged more broadly than Brent's argument might imply, he certainly engaged with the work of a number of these scholars. His admiration for Arnold has already been

¹⁷¹ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the West Riding election, *Leeds Mercury*, May 9th 1835, p. 6.

¹⁷² For the European dimension to aspects of British liberalism in this period, see Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*; Michael Ledger-Lomas, "'Glimpses of the Great Conflict": English Congregationalists and the European Crisis of Faith, circa 1840-1875', *Journal of British Studies*, 46:4 (2007), 826-60.

¹⁷³ 7th Earl of Carlisle to Edward Baines, January 17th 1853, printed in *Leeds Mercury*, January 22nd 1853, p. 5. The background to this case is detailed in Anne Lohrli, 'The Madiari: A forgotten chapter of church history', *Victorian Studies*, 33:1 (1989), 28-50.

¹⁷⁴ J18/3/61/6, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, post-marked October 22nd 1831.

¹⁷⁵ J19/1/4/1, 3rd Earl of Chichester to Lord Morpeth, December 11th 1827; J19/1/4/24, 3rd Earl of Chichester to Lord Morpeth, [May-July 1828].

¹⁷⁶ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 145-83.

noted, but he also enjoyed Milman's scholarship and society.¹⁷⁷ He generally approved of Whately, who was Archbishop of Dublin during both of his periods in Irish politics, and Brent notes that he strongly supported the controversial appointment of Hampden as Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford in 1836.¹⁷⁸

These Liberal Anglican divines believed that the Church was a useful aid to faith, but not a divinely ordained body. Like evangelicals, they argued that men had a personal relationship with God, and that the Bible offered the only guide to religious truth. They were hence critical of the Tractarian view that the Church had a mediating role between man and God, rightly seeing this as Catholic in its inclinations. Morpeth fully agreed. In 1841, he made a stinging reference in Parliament to the publication by the Tractarian John Henry Newman of the *Remains* of R. H. Froude, which revealed that Froude had held some highly Catholic ideas concerning saints.¹⁷⁹ Upon receiving a letter of rebuke from the Tractarian leader Edward Pusey, he forthrightly replied that the latter's movement went against 'the most distinctive characteristics of the Reformed Faith' and 'the right of private judgment'.¹⁸⁰

The Liberal Anglicans' critique was based around their very different idea of how to interpret scripture. The Tractarian argument for Church authority was that the Church was the recipient of a divinely inspired and hence truthful historic tradition of interpretation. Liberal Anglicans, however, believed that God had addressed Himself to man in ways suited to prevailing circumstances at the time of revelation. The Bible was thus a historically specific text. Its meaning had to be worked out through biblical exegesis and the study of history. The Christian should derive from it a sense of what constituted a religious spirit, and apply that to their situation. It followed that each person had to interpret scripture by themselves, and not rely on an unhistorical notion of church tradition.¹⁸¹ Morpeth did not leave a detailed record of his opinions on this matter, but there are indications that he agreed with this idea of scripture. Certainly he was deeply interested in religious history and biblical studies. He

¹⁷⁷ J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, March 25th 1842; Diary entries for January 23rd 1847, November 10th 1847, April 16th 1850 in Lascelles (ed.), *Extracts*, p. 42, 55, 109.

¹⁷⁸ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, p. 139.

¹⁷⁹ Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 231-32. For the controversy over Froude, see Hilton, *Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, pp. 468-70.

¹⁸⁰ J19/1/30/42, Lord Morpeth to Edward Pusey, March 8th 1841.

¹⁸¹ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 159-77.

admired controversial histories of Christianity written by Milman and the German theologian August Neander, and once spent three years intermittently reading a six-volume introduction to the New Testament.¹⁸²

This view of the Bible underpinned the Liberal Anglican vision of a comprehensive church. They believed that doctrinal disputes arising from different (potentially fallible) interpretations of the Bible were relatively unimportant. What mattered was that all Christians could agree on the more fundamental points of Christianity. They were accordingly apt to be generous towards other Christians. However, this also meant that they felt all believers might come within the Church of England, which should be made a truly national church.¹⁸³ The result was a curious mixture of sympathy towards dissenters combined with a sort of theological snobbery which denied the intellectual and theological basis of their nonconformity. That many dissenters could not accept state involvement with religion was something which Morpeth never seems to have fully grasped. As will be seen in a later chapter, this contributed to damaging religious tensions in West Riding liberalism.

Summary: Faith and Geographical Orientation

This chapter has explored Morpeth's faith and demonstrated that this was inseparable from his Whiggery. It has argued that his belief revolved around a critique of selfishness and worldliness, which led him to idealise the idea that the Christian should be dutiful towards others. This drove his own participation in public life, and ensured that he was committed to the notion of disinterested government. He also hoped to inculcate the ideals of selflessness and duty in the population at large by improving their character, which he attempted to do both through non-political actions and through social reforms in the political arena. Morpeth saw the improvement of character as vital to social progress. His confidence that this might be achieved was related to his incarnationalism, which taught him that man could rise up to the divine.

¹⁸² J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, March 25th 1842; J19/8/20, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, March 13th 1849; J19/8/26, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, April 3rd 1851.

¹⁸³ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 167-72.

His actions were part of a wider attempt to build an organic and truly Christian society. This re-enforced his Whiggish commitment to religious tolerance and led him to promote the notion of religious harmony, an aspect of his thought related to his Liberal Anglicanism. Morpeth's thought broadly chimed with that of other liberals, who also valued tolerance, disinterestedness and moral improvement. Nevertheless his faith contained within it the seeds of political conflict, as he took a different view of questions involving the connection between Church and state than that held by some nonconformists. This chapter has been mainly concerned with establishing the basis of Morpeth's political and religious principles. The rest of this thesis explores how these were worked out in his political and non-political life in Yorkshire. This, of course, is a story which cannot just be reduced to religious ideology.

Before proceeding, however, it is worth pausing to illustrate how Morpeth's religious beliefs shaped his attitude towards his native county. As explored in the introduction, it has been argued by some historians that Whiggery was fundamentally metropolitan in ethos. Morpeth's life simply does not bear out this assertion. This can be shown through his diary, which helpfully records his location on a daily basis. A sample of this data across nine years is given in the table in Appendix One. This illustrates that, on average, he spent just 46% of his time in London. Most of the rest of his year was spent in Yorkshire. When he was not in office, and hence not tied to Westminster, the amount of time he spent in Yorkshire increased significantly to 69%, compared to just 13% in London. These were hardly the actions of a dedicated metropolitan.

There were good religious reasons why Morpeth's life did not revolve around the capital. He seems not to have established a regular place of worship in London, instead attending a range of different churches. In contrast, he had a set church-going routine in Yorkshire, always attending chapel at Castle Howard and then one of the estate churches on Sundays.¹⁸⁴ On a deeper level, he was arguably spiritually more comfortable with Yorkshire life than London life. Although he enjoyed the capital's intellectual society, his religious hatred of worldliness meant that he was decidedly not in favour of the sort of dissolute metropolitan existence apparently common to Whigs of the previous generation.

¹⁸⁴ J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 14th 1845.

Nineteenth-century evangelical moralists strongly criticised London's fashionable society as an arena in which people gave themselves over to their own pleasure.¹⁸⁵ Morpeth agreed, telling Yorkshire audiences that he had found the capital's 'giddy round of dissipation and frivolous routine of fashion' to be too concerned with 'selfishness and vanity'. This comment also applied to the 'ladder of ambition' which centred on Westminster.¹⁸⁶ As has been seen, Morpeth was critical of his own ambitious feelings, seeing these as unworthy. Upon attending a service in one of his estate villages during one such spiritual crisis, he could wistfully note that 'this is surely better than politics'.¹⁸⁷ For Morpeth, the capital was an enjoyable place, but also one of spiritual danger, which might be avoided in provincial life.

Of course, Morpeth was drawn to London by its centrality to political life. As has been noted, he saw politics as a matter of Christian duty, an arena in which he might serve others. However, that sense of duty could also be expressed elsewhere. This is perhaps why the time he spent in London decreased markedly when he was out of office; if he could not fulfil his conscientiousness through politics, then he could do so through philanthropic activities in Yorkshire. This is not to say that he could not do the same in London; he was a patron of numerous philanthropic societies in the capital. Yet it is to reflect that his world was not fixed around Westminster. He was equally comfortable mixing in Yorkshire with middle-class philanthropists and virtuous aristocrats like himself. Morpeth's links to Yorkshire ultimately sustained his political career in the county, which is explored in the next chapter.

¹⁸⁵ Marjorie Morgan, *Manners, Morals and Class in England, 1774-1858* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 56.

¹⁸⁶ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 84 (also p. 81 for similar sentiments).

¹⁸⁷ J19/8/32, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, February 16th 1855.

CHAPTER TWO

Lord Morpeth and Yorkshire Politics, 1830-1841

On August 6th 1830, Lord Morpeth was elected M.P. for the county of Yorkshire, topping the poll in the nation's largest constituency. This victory, a triumph for Whiggery, was to usher in over a decade of uninterrupted connection with Yorkshire's politics, the subject of this chapter. It is a narrative of both success and failure. After Morpeth and the Whigs had garnered further popularity through their support for parliamentary reform, in 1832 he became one of two M.P.'s for the new constituency of the West Riding of Yorkshire. He was returned once more at elections in 1835 and 1837, achieving over 12,500 votes in the latter, which may well have then been the highest number of votes ever polled for any candidate in any constituency. Yet his Conservative opponents were catching up. In 1841, they gained both seats in a shock defeat for the Whigs.¹ Although still popular among the local liberals, Morpeth was left bottom of the poll, a far cry from his earlier successes.

Morpeth's fluctuating provincial career might stand for the Whig Party as a whole. On the one hand, this was the greatest decade of aristocratic Whig Government. First in a reforming coalition under Earl Grey between 1830 and 1834, and then in two more solidly Whig administrations under Viscount Melbourne in 1834 and 1835-41, the Whigs passed landmark pieces of legislation such as the Great Reform Act of 1832, the abolition of colonial slavery of 1833, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 and many more. Yet they lost popularity in the country, with the Conservatives rapidly gaining ground in small town and county seats.² By 1839 the Government was in a precarious Parliamentary position and resigned. The resulting 'Bedchamber crisis', in which the Whigs returned to office through the whims of the youthful Queen Victoria, was a sorry state of affairs for a Party which had historically prided itself on its independence from the

¹ A full list of Morpeth's election results can be found in Appendix Two.

² D. H. Close 'The General Elections of 1835 and 1837 in England and Wales' (unpublished D.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1967); Robert Stewart, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830-1867* (London, 1978), pp. 142-45, 159-60; Ian Newbould, *Whiggery and Reform, 1830-1841: The Politics of Government* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 306-07.

monarchy. In 1841 the tottering Melbourne Ministry finally fell, weakened and demoralised by defeats in populous constituencies such as the West Riding.

It is therefore unsurprising that there have been almost as many interpretations of Whiggery in this decade as there have been historians. For Norman Gash, the 1830s revealed the Whigs' obsolescence. Too aristocratic and conservative for the radicals, too radical for the conservatives, their weak leadership and unprincipled opportunism was found out by the electorate.³ In what now seems a rather idiosyncratic argument, Ian Newbould suggested the Whigs aimed to restore social order and aristocratic authority, a project which saw them allied more with the Conservatives than with their liberal supporters. In this view, their fall in 1841 was not so much a devastating loss as a resigned handing over of the reins.⁴ Even historians who view Whiggery more positively are divided. Peter Mandler suggests that the Whigs fell because they had not yet sufficiently distinguished themselves from liberalism. Too hesitant, they were only beginning to develop centralising social policies which appealed to the people. These found fuller expression when they returned to power under Lord John Russell in 1846.⁵ Jonathan Parry, in contrast, argues that this decade saw the emergence of a more or less united liberal party, in which Whigs and liberals alike displayed opinions too far in advance of public opinion.⁶

What all the accounts above have in common is their focus on the Whigs' position at Westminster. This can only give a partial view of their relative appeal. By looking at Morpeth's career in Yorkshire, this chapter analyses Whiggery as a political force on the ground. As explored in the introduction, the size and diversity of its electorate make Yorkshire an ideal basis for such a study of political opinion. It will be suggested that the county's liberals were able to coalesce with Morpeth and the Whigs around the idea of disinterested government; the replacement of sectionalist or corrupt structures of government with ones designed for the benefit of all. This alliance developed first over parliamentary reform, and then around other economic, political and ecclesiastical 'monopolies'. It combined with shared values over topics such as religious tolerance and Irish policy to produce popular support for the Whigs.

³ Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction*, pp. 164-65, 183-86.

⁴ Newbould, *Whiggery and Reform*, pp. 305-21.

⁵ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 193-99.

⁶ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 94-149.

However, the Whig Government alienated certain sections of opinion in the county, allowing the Conservatives to make a remarkable resurgence. They garnered support from Anglicans concerned about the Whigs' policies on the Church in England and Ireland, and from agriculturalists worried about the liberals' views on free trade. The Conservatives also benefited from a tactical alliance with Yorkshire's radicals, who campaigned against the Government's seemingly harsh social policies on factory reform and poor relief. These appeared to make a mockery of the Whigs' claims to govern for the people. These developments made Whiggery in Yorkshire more dependent upon support from urban and dissenting liberals. Yet this too began to falter, as this group began to disagree with the Whig Government on ecclesiastical policy, and became frustrated at its inability or unwillingness to further reform 'monopolies' in the political system. If the 1830s saw the beginnings of the Liberal Party, it was a far from united one. The result was defeat for Morpeth in 1841.

In making this argument, this chapter establishes the importance of 'national' factors in Yorkshire politics in the 1830s, joining a number of works which have argued that events at Westminster had a greater influence in the constituencies in this decade than had hitherto been thought.⁷ However, it also emphasises Morpeth's own important role in Yorkshire's politics. He became the embodiment of Whiggery in the county. His advocacy of Whig policies, and the relationships he forged with his supporters, did much to shape the Whig-liberal coalition. In demonstrating this, this chapter supplements classic articles on West Riding politics by F. M. L. Thompson and Derek Fraser, in which Morpeth is inexplicably treated as a peripheral figure.⁸

⁷ See for instance Edwin Jaggard, *Cornwall Politics in the Age of Reform, 1790-1885* (Woodbridge, 1999); J. A. Phillips, *The Great Reform Bill in the Boroughs: English Electoral Behaviour, 1818-1841* (Oxford, 1992); Philip Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work: Local Politics and National Parties, 1832-1841* (Woodbridge, 2002); Matthew Cragoe, 'The Great Reform Act and the Modernization of British Politics: The Impact of Conservative Associations, 1835-41', *Journal of British Studies*, 47: 3 (2008), 581-603; Richard D. Floyd, *Church, Chapel and Party: Religious Dissent and Political Modernization in Nineteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 2008).

⁸ F. M. L. Thompson, 'Whigs and Liberals in the West Riding, 1830-60', *English Historical Review*, 74 (1959), 214-39; Derek Fraser, 'Voluntaryism and West Riding Politics in the Mid-Nineteenth Century', *Northern History*, 13 (1977), 199-231.

Origins of a Provincial Career: The Yorkshire Campaign of 1830

Morpeth's long political association with Yorkshire owed much to the relationships he established as M.P. for the undivided county constituency between 1830 and 1832. The first part of this chapter examines this stage of his life in depth, a process which also serves to introduce some of the major players in the county's political scene. Yorkshire had long been considered one of the nation's most important constituencies. It contained a wide range of interests, from the vast swathes of countryside in the Dales and Moors to the rapidly expanding towns of the West Riding. Leeds was the county's commercial centre and the basis of its thriving textile trade. Its population grew by 224% in the first half of the nineteenth century, reaching over 150,000 people by 1841. Bradford, another textile town, grew by a staggering 625% between 1810 and 1850, by when it contained 100,000 people.⁹ These towns and others like them such as Sheffield, Halifax and Wakefield did not have independent representation under the pre-1832 political system, and hence came under the county constituency. They provided the bulk of support for reforming politics.

The immense size of Yorkshire made for a dynamic and diverse electorate. Over 22,000 people voted in the 1807 election for the county, in which the Whig Lord Milton (the future 5th Earl Fitzwilliam) and the anti-slavery campaigner William Wilberforce beat the Tory Henry Lascelles in a famously expensive contest (Lascelles' campaign alone cost over £100,000).¹⁰ D. C. Moore's argument that county politics was localised and landlord-dominated certainly does not fit Yorkshire, where many of the electors were independent freeholders who had long been interested in Parliamentary affairs.¹¹ Aside from this, the county had far too many

⁹ R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle-Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990); pp. 36-37; Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban-Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 79.

¹⁰ Mark Pack, 'Aspects of the English electoral system, 1800-1850, with special reference to Yorkshire' (2 vols, unpublished D. Phil thesis, University of York, 1995), vol. 2, p. 348; E. A. Smith, 'The Yorkshire elections of 1806 and 1807: A study in electoral management', *Northern History*, 2 (1967), 62-90.

¹¹ For Moore's perspective, see D. C. Moore, *The Politics of Deference: A Study of the Mid-Nineteenth Century English Political System* (Hassocks, 1976), *passim*. For the vitality of Yorkshire's politics in the pre-reform era, Frank O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989), p. 339.

landed families for even a handful to control the region's politics.¹² In practice, however, a relatively small number of the most politically engaged members of the urban and landed elite exercised considerable sway over county politics on the reforming side, especially in the choice of candidates. It was to such men that Morpeth owed the start of his career in Yorkshire, which began when he was selected as a candidate for the county at a reformers' meeting in York on July 23rd 1830.¹³

This was not, in fact, his first engagement with Yorkshire's politics. He had been requisitioned to stand alongside the sitting M.P. Lord Milton in 1826, a signal honour for an inexperienced young man whose family had no tradition of involvement in Yorkshire politics. However, he was asked to decline by his indebted father, who was not in a position to fund a contest.¹⁴ Offered instead the representation of the borough of Morpeth (where the Howards owned much of the town), he issued a regretful reply, asserting his attachment to liberal principles.¹⁵ The Whig clergyman Sydney Smith, then living in Yorkshire, thought this statement was 'very generally approved of' in the county.¹⁶ When Milton gave up his seat in 1830, Morpeth was again approached by the reformers. Despairing that high costs put off potential candidates, they had agreed to fund the election through subscriptions, whilst also asking voters to convey themselves to the poll with the assistance of landowners, an expense which had previously fallen on candidates. With this settled, Morpeth eagerly accepted.¹⁷

In both 1826 and 1830, his proposed candidacy was endorsed by the county's wealthy Whig patricians, who included the Fitzwilliams of Wentworth Woodhouse, owners of a vast agricultural and industrial estate near Sheffield; the Dundases of Aske Hall near Richmond; and the Ramsden family, who owned parts of Huddersfield.¹⁸

¹² John Bateman's late nineteenth-century survey of landownership indicates that there were 128 families who owned more than 3,000 acres in Yorkshire (John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (reprint of 1883 4th edn., Leicester, 1971)).

¹³ *Leeds Mercury*, July 24th 1830, p. 3.

¹⁴ J19/1/3/23, George Strickland to Lord Morpeth, December 20th 1825; F6/3, James Loch to Georgiana Carlisle, January 3rd 1826.

¹⁵ Lord Morpeth's speech in reply to the requisition, January 14th 1826, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, January 21st 1826, p. 3.

¹⁶ Sydney Smith to Lady Grey, January 29th 1846, in Nowell C. Smith (ed.), *The Letters of Sydney Smith* (2 vols, Oxford, 1953), vol. 1, p. 421.

¹⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, July 24th 1830, p. 2.

¹⁸ Devonshire MSS (Chatsworth), 6th Duke of Devonshire Group, I, 1258, 4th Earl Fitzwilliam to 6th Duke of Devonshire, December 21st 1825; J19/1/3/26, Thomas Dundas to Lord Morpeth, December 30th 1825; Requisition to Lord Morpeth printed in *Leeds Mercury*, January 21st 1826, p. 3.

Interestingly, however, his most active champions came from the landed gentry, who formed the core of signatories on the 1826 requisition to him. Prominent in his support in both 1826 and 1830 were George Strickland of Hildenley Hall and Sir Marmaduke Wyvill of Constable Burton, M.P. for York from 1820 to 1830.¹⁹ At the 1830 meeting, he was proposed by Sir. J. V. B. Johnstone of Hackness near Scarborough, and backed by the future Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer and M.P. for Halifax Charles Wood, son of Sir Francis Wood of Hickleton Hall near Doncaster.²⁰

This example of gentry involvement in reforming politics was not necessarily unusual; it was, for instance, repeated in Cornwall.²¹ In Yorkshire, support amongst this group reflected a tradition of gentry-led reforming politics, which stretched back to the Yorkshire Association of the 1780s, headed by Marmaduke Wyvill's father Christopher. The legacy of the Association was visible at a large county meeting for parliamentary reform held in January 1823, which many of Morpeth's 1826 requisitionists attended. The meeting argued for parliamentary reform as a means of remedying corruption at Westminster.²² The reforming gentry also advocated changes in economic policy to alleviate agricultural distress. Strickland, for instance, wrote an 1826 pamphlet attacking the effect of the Corn Law on agriculture.²³ These calls were harnessed by Lord Milton, who attended the 1823 meeting and whose advocacy of parliamentary reform and free trade preceded that of many in the Whig Party.²⁴

By 1830, Morpeth was known as a critic of agricultural protection. Furthermore, he had expressed himself in favour of a reform of Parliament when speaking on Lord John Russell's failed plan to give seats to Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham in

¹⁹ J18/3/59/66, Requisition to Lord Morpeth to represent the county, January 14th 1826; J19/1/3/24, George Strickland to Lord Morpeth, December 25th 1825; Wyvill of Constable Burton Papers (North Yorkshire County Record Office), ZFW/12, Lord Milton to Marmaduke Wyvill, December 17th 1825; Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WWM/G/2/22, George Strickland to Lord Milton, July 31st 1830.

²⁰ Report of meeting of reformers at York, *Leeds Mercury*, July 24th 1830, p. 3.

²¹ Jaggard, *Cornwall Politics*, pp. 30-47, 74-85.

²² J. R. Dinwiddy, *Christopher Wyvill and Reform, 1790-1820*, Borthwick Papers, 39 (York, 1971), pp. 26-32; *Leeds Mercury*, January 25th 1823, pp. 2-3.

²³ George Strickland, *Observations upon the Corn Laws, Addressed to the Farmers and Manufacturers of Yorkshire* (Leeds, 1826).

²⁴ D. J. Gratton, 'Paternalism, Patronage and Estate Management: The Fifth Earl Fitzwilliam, 1786-1857', (unpublished PhD Thesis, Sheffield University, 1999), pp. 13-20, 60-61.

early 1830.²⁵ As a Yorkshire-born Whig of rising reputation, he was in many ways a logical replacement for Milton. However, his candidacy was also facilitated by his social relationships with his supporters. Charles Wood, for instance, was an old university friend.²⁶ He mixed with the local elite at occasions such as Doncaster and York Races and York Assizes.²⁷ Morpeth was also on friendly terms with many of the gentry families who lived in the vicinity of Castle Howard. Among his neighbours were George Strickland and also Francis Cholmeley of Brandsby, the latter of whom presented the requisition to him in 1826.²⁸ Indeed, the majority of those who signed this requisition were from the Castle Howard district, where Morpeth was best known.²⁹ His participation in these social networks helped launch his provincial career.

Nevertheless, Morpeth would never have achieved success as a Yorkshire M.P. had it not been for the support of the liberals of the West Riding towns.³⁰ The importance of this group was recognised in 1826, when the Leeds flax entrepreneur and factory owner John Marshall was invited to become the county's second reforming M.P. after its representation was increased from two members to four. Like Marshall, the most important of the West Riding's urban liberals were (generally upper) middle-class men engaged in a profession or trade. In Halifax, their ranks included major employers such as the textile mill-owners Jonathan and James Akroyd and the carpet manufacturer Francis Crossley, a future Liberal M.P. for Halifax and the West Riding.³¹ Bradford's liberal activists included the worsted manufacturers Henry Forbes and Robert Milligan (a future Liberal M.P. for the town), the shopkeeper Joseph Farrar, and the famed textile entrepreneur Titus Salt.³² Leeds' liberals included the solicitors T. W. Tottie and George Rawson, the accountant Thomas

²⁵ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Second Series, XVIII, March 31st 1828, col. 1391; XXII, February 23rd 1830, cols. 879-80.

²⁶ J18/3/57/50, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, November 19th [no year stated].

²⁷ J18/3/58/37, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, Bishopthorpe, Saturday, not dated; J18/3/58/47, George Howard to Georgiana Morpeth, postmarked September 22nd 1824.

²⁸ The Howards' social connections to the Cholmeley's are revealed by Cholmeley of Brandsby Papers (North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton), ZQG/XII/12/1/2206, Lord Morpeth to Francis Cholmeley, December 28th (not dated, but by context 1827 or 1828); ZQG/XII/12/1/2703, 6th Earl of Carlisle to Francis Cholmeley (not dated).

²⁹ J18/3/59/66, Requisition to Lord Morpeth to represent the county, January 14th 1826.

³⁰ Short biographical details of some of the leading West Riding urban liberals who appear in this thesis can be found in Appendix Five.

³¹ Toshihiko Iwama, 'The Middle Class in Halifax, 1780-1850' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 2003), pp. 148-68.

³² Koditschek, *Class Formation*, pp. 320-47. Salt was also a future M.P. for Bradford.

Plint, the wool-stapler George Goodman and the merchant Hamer Stansfeld.³³ Most important of all were Edward Baines and his son Edward, both future M.P.'s for Leeds and editors of the *Leeds Mercury*. This was the leading newspaper of the north of England, and its support was vital to any local reformer.³⁴

These men belonged to a dynamic commercial culture. They saw their own participation in economic life as a contribution to the progress of society. In contrast, they strongly disliked state interference in the economy, reserving particular ire for monopolies such as the Corn Law and the East India Company.³⁵ This was not necessarily the result of an attachment to *laissez-faire* principles per-se. Rather, it came from a belief that 'monopolies' favoured special interest groups above the good of the people at large. There was a strong feeling among Yorkshire's urban liberals in the late 1820s that the Government burdened the people through excessive taxation and duties on necessities, whilst leaving the interests of the aristocracy untouched. They regarded this as grossly unfair and irrational, for it reduced the consumption of the people to the detriment of all.³⁶

When defining its ideal Parliamentary candidate in July 1830, the *Leeds Mercury* thus called for men who were 'devoted to liberal principles; men who will support the cause of economy and reform; men who will make the public good the standard whereby to regulate their conduct; who will oppose all oppressive monopolies, whether at home or abroad; whose minds can keep pace with the light of the age in which they live'.³⁷ In this context, 'liberal' denoted *liberality* in politics, support for government which was broad-minded, generous and unselfish. As Joe Bord has recently reminded us, the notion of 'liberality' – a 'devotion to the general good against narrow interests' – was vital to reforming politics in the early-nineteenth century.³⁸ The political import of these ideas will be seen throughout this chapter.

³³ Leeds' political scene is discussed in Derek Fraser, 'The Fruits of Reform: Leeds Politics in the Eighteen-Thirties', *Northern History*, 7 (1972), 89-111.

³⁴ Donald Read, *Press and People, 1790-1850: Opinion in Three English Cities* (London, 1961), pp. 74-79. Edward Baines Senior (1774-1848) was M.P. for Leeds from 1834-1841. Edward Baines Junior (1800-1890), later Sir Edward Baines, was M.P. for Leeds from 1859 to 1874.

³⁵ Koditschek, *Class Formation*, pp. 242-47.

³⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, November 7th 1829, p. 2; March 6th 1830, p. 4.

³⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, July 3rd 1830, p. 2.

³⁸ Bord, *Science and Whig Manners*, pp. 79-80.

It would be tempting, then, to assume that the liberalism of these men was a direct result of their economic and social position. However, there was no inherent correlation between liberal politics and middle-class status. The Riding's manufacturers, for instance, were politically divided.³⁹ Of far greater importance was the fact that almost all of the West Riding's urban liberal leaders belonged to nonconformist congregations. Indeed, nonconformity in general was crucial to life in Yorkshire. The 1851 religious census revealed that 21.1% of the West Riding population attended nonconformist chapels, compared to an Anglican total of just 12.8%.⁴⁰ A large proportion of these dissenters belonged to the various Methodist sects. Although we still know too little about the views of Methodist voters, it seems that whilst the leadership of Wesleyan Methodism was Tory, ordinary Wesleyans and other Methodists were inclined to vote liberal.⁴¹

However, the most influential dissenting liberals in Yorkshire were Unitarians, Congregationalists (also called Independents) and Baptists. In Leeds, the Marshalls, Tottie and Stansfeld were attached to the Mill Hill Unitarian chapel. Goodman was a Baptist, whilst the Congregationalist Salem (later East Parade) Chapel included the Baines', Rawson and Plint. These congregations all tended to vote liberal.⁴² In Bradford, Forbes, Milligan, Farrar and Salt were all Congregationalists. In 1834 the former two men were involved in founding the *Bradford Observer*, a liberal nonconformist paper.⁴³ Elsewhere in Yorkshire, Huddersfield's leading liberal William Willans was a Congregationalist, whilst in Sheffield political opinion came to be shaped by Robert Leader's nonconformist *Sheffield Independent*.

³⁹ Sarah Richardson, 'Independence and Deference: A Study of the West Riding Electorate, 1832-1841' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 1995), p. 87.

⁴⁰ Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 708-09.

⁴¹ David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850* (2nd edn., London: Hutchinson, 1987), pp. 204-06; J. A. Hargreaves, 'Methodism and Electoral Politics in Halifax, 1832-1848', *Northern History*, 35 (1999), 139-60; John Vincent, *Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 69-70.

⁴² Morris has analysed this issue statistically, suggesting that in Leeds 58% of the congregation of South Parade Baptist Chapel, 71% of the Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel, and 92% of the Congregationalist East Parade Chapel voted Whig-liberal. This compares to just 21% of the Anglicans involved with rebuilding the Leeds Parish Church in 1837; Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, pp. 151-57.

⁴³ Horton Lane Congregational Chapel Records (John Rylands Library, Special Collections, Manchester), Register of Members 1835-1865; David James, 'William Byles and the Bradford Observer' in D. G. Wright & J. A. Jowitt (eds.), *Victorian Bradford* (Bradford, 1982), 115-36.

This reflected the vital influence religion played in shaping the political identities of dissenters, something well-explored in a Yorkshire contest in the work of Clyde Binfield, Derek Fraser and R. W. Ram.⁴⁴ There were, however, considerable theological differences within dissent, especially between the evangelical wing of nonconformity (the Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists) and the Unitarians, regarded as heretical by the former sects. Methodists and Unitarians were also more sympathetic to the Establishment than the other denominations, which were theologically more hostile to state involvement in religion.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, they could unite around a mutual commitment to religious toleration, something which disposed them to act with the Whigs. They joined Milton and the county's Whig gentry in fighting for Catholic Emancipation at the Yorkshire election of 1826, and campaigned in support of legislation on this topic in 1828.⁴⁶

More broadly, it can be argued that the reforming outlook of these dissenters was that of the outsider. Whilst over the course of the 1830s they came to dominate the social and political life of their towns, their political views had been formed under conditions of discrimination. Until 1828, they had (theoretically if not in practice) been barred from holding civil office under the Test and Corporation Acts. At municipal level, they were excluded from civic authorities (such as the Municipal Corporation in Leeds) which were generally closed, self-selecting and Anglican. Their local and national political experiences gave them a powerful sense that the political system was corrupt and needed to be reformed. To their dislike of economic monopolies, they added hatred of political and ecclesiastical ones.⁴⁷

The power of the urban liberals in Yorkshire politics was shown at the reformers' selection meeting of 1830, when they nominated the Whig-radical outsider Henry Brougham to stand alongside Morpeth against the wishes of the gentry, who preferred

⁴⁴ Clyde Binfield, *So Down to Prayers: Studies in English Nonconformity, 1780-1920* (London, 1977), pp. 54-99; Ronald William Ram, 'The Political Activities of Dissenters in the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire, 1815-1850' (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Hull, 1964); Fraser, 'Voluntaryism'; Derek Fraser, 'Edward Baines' in Patricia Hollis (ed.). *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* (London, 1974), 183-209.

⁴⁵ The most comprehensive account of the various dissenting denominations is Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: Volume II: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford, 1995).

⁴⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, June 10th 1826, p. 3; December 13th 1828, p. 3; Ram, 'Political Activities of Dissenters', pp. 100-05.

⁴⁷ Derek Fraser, *Urban Politics in Victorian England: The Structure of Politics in Victorian Cities* (Leicester, 1976), pp. 115-18.

a Yorkshireman and one of their own. Brougham's candidacy was assiduously promoted by the *Leeds Mercury*, and was backed by the dissenters because of his activism in the anti-slavery cause.⁴⁸ Dissenters regarded slavery as an abomination before God, and hence this had long been a major issue in Yorkshire liberalism. Dissenting Ministers such as the Leeds Congregationalist Thomas Scales and the Bradford Baptist Benjamin Godwin campaigned for Brougham, the first step in a politicisation of Yorkshire's nonconformist ministers which would be a vital influence in the county's politics over the next two decades.⁴⁹

It was therefore essential that Morpeth win over the West Riding. The *Leeds Mercury* had generally supported his candidacy, appreciating the support he had shown in Parliament for measures of economic reform and the freedom of the press.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it is fair to say that he did not, as yet, have any popular support in the region. Strickland wrote that when he first touted Morpeth as a possible candidate among the reformers of Leeds, his name was received with 'some degree of coldness'.⁵¹ Brougham reported that his followers were alienated by Morpeth's connection with the landed squires who had opposed his own campaign, and that he had difficulty persuading them not to put up another candidate.⁵² This may well be an exaggeration, but it certainly seems that Morpeth was initially viewed as an outsider, someone who had little connection with the West Riding. Recognising this, Strickland noted that 'Lord Morpeth is liked and approved of where known but the misfortune is that he is little known in the West'.⁵³

Morpeth set out to remedy this in an energetic canvass which focused particularly on the West Riding towns. The canvass was a vital part of the electoral process, in which candidates showed their respect for the independence and opinion of the electorate in

⁴⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, July 17th 1830, p. 2; Report of meeting of reformers at York, *Leeds Mercury*, July 24th 1830, p. 3; Brougham Papers (British Library), 9391, John Marshall to Henry Brougham, July 24th 1830.

⁴⁹ Revd. Benjamin Godwin, 'Reminiscences of Three Score Years and Ten' (Typescript of original manuscript in Bradford Central Library, Local Studies Department), Vol. II, pp. 512-13.

⁵⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, July 17th 1830, p.2.

⁵¹ Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments [Sheffield Archives], WWM/G/2/22, George Strickland to Lord Milton, July 31st 1830.

⁵² Devonshire MSS (Chatsworth), 6th Duke of Devonshire Group, I, 1961, Henry Brougham to B. Currey, July [28th] 1830.

⁵³ Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments [Sheffield Archives], WWM/G/2/8, George Strickland to Lord Milton, July 1830.

a series of highly ritualised events.⁵⁴ However, it also helped to connect politicians and their supporters by showcasing their opinions, character and talents on the platform. Canvassing meetings were routinely reported in the local press, and presented an opportunity for politicians to disseminate their views to a large audience. Morpeth had never before spoken to an outdoor meeting, and consequently his tour of the Riding was something of a baptism of fire in public oratory; he regularly addressed crowds of more than 10,000 people. Fortunately, his booming voice and eloquent turn of phrase made him an excellent public speaker, something which increased the Riding's good opinion of him.⁵⁵

It was, however, Morpeth's principles rather than his style which were important. Here too he did not disappoint. He expressed his strong opposition to slavery on religious grounds, allowing him to join in Brougham's dissenting anti-slavery support. His speeches were suffused with references to religion, and reflected his Liberal Anglicanism. At the nomination in York, for instance, he hoped that the audience might all come together in 'the worship of a common Creator, the doctrines of a common Gospel, and the faith of a common Cross'.⁵⁶ Morpeth's evident tolerance and religiosity appealed to the dissenting electorate. After his election, he was sent a petition against slavery by the leading Leeds Congregationalist Revd. Richard Winter Hamilton, who approvingly referred to the 'frequent allusions made to Christianity' during his campaign. His piety was also viewed positively by Anglicans. One Yorkshire curate suggested that it had secured 'many a vote'.⁵⁷

He also garnered support through his views on economic and political reform. In speeches at Bradford, Leeds and York, he expressed a 'strong dislike to all monopolies' including the Corn Law and the East India Company. He referred to his wish to economise in government expenditure and cut taxation to ease the burdens of the people, presenting this as the main cause of social distress. He also expressed himself willing to reform Parliament, arguing that this would make the voice of the people (and particularly the people of Yorkshire) heard in the legislature, and thus

⁵⁴ Frank O'Gorman, 'Campaign rituals and ceremonies: the social meaning of elections in England, 1780-1860', *Past & Present*, 135 (1992), 79-115.

⁵⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, July 31 1830, p. 2.

⁵⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, August 7th 1830, p. 3.

⁵⁷ J19/1/5/27, Richard Winter Hamilton to Lord Morpeth, Leeds, November 5th 1830; J19/1/5/47, Tresham Gregg to Lord Morpeth, February 1st 1831.

help dry up ‘the numberless fountain heads of corruption’.⁵⁸ These ideals were very similar to those advocated by the urban liberals, and were thus unsurprisingly attractive to them. The *Mercury* reported that Morpeth produced the ‘deepest impression... even to enthusiasm’.⁵⁹ He was accordingly elected alongside Brougham and two Tory members, delighting the local Whigs by heading the poll.⁶⁰

Morpeth had secured this victory by consciously presenting himself as the public’s representative, someone who would fight their battles against ‘monopoly’. As explored in Chapter One, these ideals were sincerely felt, deeply rooted in his religious views. However, their expression was also undoubtedly a conscious political strategy, designed to attract votes. Presenting Morpeth at the nomination in 1830, Charles Wood appealed to the idea that he wanted no ‘exclusive privilege... he has identified himself with the people – he has taken up their interests and feelings’.⁶¹ This campaign contained the seeds of an alliance between West Riding liberalism and Whiggery, based around the idea that the Whigs offered disinterested government for the good of all. As the next section will show, this coalition grew over the next two years as Morpeth and the Whigs joined popular forces in championing parliamentary reform. This saw Morpeth establish relationships with Yorkshire’s reformers which lasted a political lifetime. It also set the ideological conditions which dominated politics in the county for the rest of the decade.

Whiggery Ascendant: Morpeth and Parliamentary Reform in Yorkshire

Henry Brougham’s election for Yorkshire in 1830 has sometimes been seen as a catalyst for the 1832 Reform Act, an event which demonstrated the overwhelming demand for reform.⁶² This is something of a historiographical myth. The need for parliamentary reform had not been that much more prominent in Brougham’s campaign than it had been in Morpeth’s; indeed, the themes they focused on were

⁵⁸ Speeches of Lord Morpeth reported in *Leeds Mercury*, July 31st 1830, p. 3; August 7th 1830, p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, August 14th 1830, p. 2.

⁶⁰ J18/3/61/60, Charles Wood to Georgiana Carlisle, not dated [but August 1830 by context]. Morpeth achieved 1,464 votes to Brougham’s 1,295, with the liberal Tory Richard Bethell next on 1,123 votes and the Tory William Duncombe on 1,064 votes. The poll was forced by the eccentric radical Martin Stapylton, who received just 94 votes.

⁶¹ *Leeds Mercury*, August 7th 1830, p. 2.

⁶² See, for instance, Michael Brock, *The Great Reform Act* (London, 1973), pp. 95-98.

very similar. Moreover, Yorkshire's liberals do not seem to have attached any special significance to Brougham's election with regards to parliamentary reform at the time. The *Leeds Mercury*, usually an excellent guide to local opinion, placed this only fourth on a list of priorities it drew up for the new session, behind free trade and the abolition of slavery.⁶³ It is therefore to events in late 1830 which we must look to explain the dominant role reform came to play in the county's politics. This development owed much to Brougham himself, who decided to use his new authority as M.P. for Yorkshire to take on the leadership of the reform cause.⁶⁴

As William Hay has detailed, following the election he used the celebratory dinners given to him and Morpeth in the West Riding as a 'second canvass' on the subject, promising to bring forth a measure which would give seats to great towns such as Leeds. This greatly excited the local liberals.⁶⁵ Morpeth invariably spoke first at these dinners, so his opinion on this plan is difficult to ascertain. However, he already agreed with its fundamental premise, and certainly offered no opposition. The Whig leadership disliked Brougham, but they were prepared to back reform. On November 2nd 1830, Brougham announced his intention to bring forward his measure in the Commons, whilst Earl Grey committed the Whigs to reform in the Lords. In reply, the Duke of Wellington refused to concede any measure of reform, bringing about the downfall of his ministry. Grey formed a coalition Government pledged to 'peace, retrenchment and reform'. Although Brougham was neutralised by his appointment to the Woolsack, Grey promised that the Government would produce a measure in the spring.⁶⁶

These events galvanised politics in Yorkshire. Political unions were formed to campaign for reform in Sheffield, Keighley, Huddersfield, Leeds and Bradford across the winter, whilst meetings were held to petition Parliament in several West Riding towns in February 1831.⁶⁷ The urban liberal middle-class took the lead in this movement. The Sheffield Political Union was led by the town's nonconformist elite,

⁶³ *Leeds Mercury*, August 14th 1830, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Devonshire MSS (Chatsworth), 6th Duke of Devonshire Group, I, 1960, Henry Brougham to 6th Duke of Devonshire, July 1830.

⁶⁵ Hay, *Whig Revival*, pp. 169-70.

⁶⁶ Brock, *Great Reform Act*, pp. 115-31.

⁶⁷ Nancy Lopatin, *Political Unions, Popular Politics and the Great Reform Act of 1832* (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 45-60; *Leeds Mercury*, January 29th 1831, p. 2; February 12th 1831, p. 2.

whilst in Halifax agitation was led by Jonathan Akroyd and Rawdon Briggs, a Unitarian banker who became the town's M.P. in 1832.⁶⁸ In Leeds, Edward Baines and John Marshall campaigned under the banner of the Leeds Association for Promoting within the County of York the Free Return of Fit Representatives to Parliament, an organisation arising out of Brougham and Morpeth's election. This was supplemented by the Leeds Political Union, led by the glass manufacturer Joshua Bower, who tried to link the operative and middle classes. Both were later rivalled by the working-class Leeds Radical Political Union, which rejected the Reform Bill in favour of universal male suffrage. Nevertheless, the movement did witness a large degree of class cooperation.⁶⁹

The West Riding undoubtedly made particularly fertile territory for the reform cause. Despite their wealth and size, none of the region's great towns had its own M.P. As can be seen in Appendix Three, before 1832 the Riding had just five parliamentary boroughs, all ancient market towns on the eastern, less industrial side of the region. The smallest, Knaresborough, Aldborough and its neighbour Boroughbridge, all had less than 100 voters each and were notoriously corrupt. On a national scale, Yorkshire's reformers could point to the iniquity of a system which sent so many M.P.'s from Cornwall, and none from towns such as Leeds, Bradford, Halifax and Wakefield, which added far more to the national prosperity. The Riding, it was argued, was not adequately represented. As Edward Baines Junior argued, such a system could only be 'radically and essentially defective'.⁷⁰

However, as elsewhere in the country, the parliamentary reform movement in Yorkshire was not just concerned with remedying deficiencies in representation. Rather, it represented a critique of the political system, which was regarded as corrupt and oppressive. Reformers traded on the well-established radical language of 'Old Corruption', the idea that the aristocratic government taxed the wealth of the productive classes in order to divert this to its own class through pensions and

⁶⁸ Lopatin, *Political Unions*, pp. 56-57; Iwama, 'The Middle Class in Halifax', pp. 164-65.

⁶⁹ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, pp. 124-25; Asa Briggs, 'The Background of the Parliamentary Reform Movement in Three English Cities (1830-2)', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10:3 (1952), 293-317.

⁷⁰ Report of a meeting at Bradford in *Leeds Mercury*, February 25th 1831, p. 3. For similar arguments, see also the reports of reform meetings in the edition for February 12th 1831.

sinecures.⁷¹ This parasitism, reformers argued, rested on the rotten boroughs, and would vanish in a properly representative Parliament. This view bore actually bore little relation to the reality of government expenditure, but its impact was considerable. Although originally developed by radicals such as William Cobbett, it resonated with the West Riding's more moderate liberal leaders. Benjamin Godwin quoted John Wade's *Black Book*, the most accessible radical critique of 'Old Corruption', as evidence of the greed of the aristocracy. One Leeds reformer saw sinecurists as the 'vermin which have crept into the root of the national tree'. Edward Baines Junior likewise attacked a system which 'betrays the fruits of our industry into the hands of ministerial and courtly rapacity'.⁷²

Historically, these ideas had achieved greatest resonance in times of economic depression, and it was thus significant that the reform campaign took place in the midst of a recession. At a meeting in Halifax in February 1831, Jonathan Akroyd argued that the country's distress arose from 'the want of a faithful, true, and proper representation of the people', a statement met with 'immense applause'.⁷³ These arguments went hand-in-hand with the liberals' critique of Parliament as monopolistic and self-interested. It was declared that a reformed Commons which better represented the will of the people would have been more careful with the public money, and would never have allowed such monopolies as the East India Company or the Corn Law or, indeed, permitted the immoral system of colonial slavery to continue.⁷⁴ For Yorkshire's liberals, the economic and political situation had become indelibly linked. The *Leeds Mercury* declared that 'the objects of Parliamentary and Economical Reform are now in the crisis of their fate'.⁷⁵

These arguments were couched in language which was at times quite anti-aristocratic. Nevertheless, moderate reformers like the Baines' did not desire a social revolution,

⁷¹ Philip Harling, *The Waning of 'Old Corruption': The Politics of Economical Reform in Britain, 1779-1846* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 137-44.

⁷² Speeches of J. Clapham and of Edward Baines Junior reported in *Leeds Mercury*, February 12th 1831, p. 3 and of Benjamin Godwin in *Leeds Mercury*, February 25th 1831, p. 3.

⁷³ Speech of Jonathan Akroyd at a meeting for reform in Halifax, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, February 12th 1831, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Speeches of Rawdon Briggs, James Richardson, J. Clapham in *Leeds Mercury*, February 12th 1831, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, February 12th 1831, p. 2.

or even necessarily to fill Parliament with the middle-class.⁷⁶ Their target was an aristocracy which did not live up to its duty to work for the common good - which seemed selfish, lazy, avaricious and arrogant. As recent scholarship has pointed out, the parliamentary reform movement thus needs to be seen in the context of a broader cultural critique of a seemingly self-absorbed and materialist aristocratic culture. In this view, the moral failings of the aristocracy were inseparable from the deficiencies of the institutions they dominated.⁷⁷ John Marshall tellingly linked the opposition to reform shown by the Lords with greed and frivolity; ‘It is not by his brilliant success in the fashionable world, or by his unremitting attention to his stud, that the performance of his duty as a hereditary legislator will be most satisfactorily proved... the privilege of his exalted station, is not to be shown by his obtaining every office within his reach for a relation’.⁷⁸

In this climate, there was potentially tremendous scope for popular attachment to the Whigs’ ideal of disinterested government for the people. Yet the critique of the aristocracy necessarily tainted the Whigs to some degree as well. Indeed, their leadership of fashionable society meant that they had historically been a soft target for ‘Old Corruption’ style criticisms; Fox’s opponents, for instance, had highlighted the ‘immoral’ behaviour of his circle to suggest that the Whigs would use office to satisfy their own desires.⁷⁹ Local reformers had some reason to doubt that the Whig Party would bring in an adequate measure. As even its supporters pointed out, the Whigs were just as guilty of controlling rotten boroughs as the Tories.⁸⁰ The York Whig Club, set up to campaign for reform in 1818, soon declined as its members became alienated from moderate local Whig landowners such as the 4th Earl Fitzwilliam, who was far from enthusiastic about reform. The Whig Party’s sincerity on the issue was questioned by some of the Club’s members in the late 1820s.⁸¹ Given the opposition any plan of reform was likely to face in Parliament, it was

⁷⁶ Fraser, ‘Edward Baines’ in Hollis (ed.), *Pressure from Without*, 185.

⁷⁷ Joanna Innes, ‘Reform in English Public Life: The Fortunes of a Word’ and Jennifer Hall-Witt, ‘Reforming the aristocracy’: opera and elite culture, 1780-1860’ in Arthur Burns & Joanna Innes (eds), *Rethinking the Age of Reform, 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 71-97, 220-37.

⁷⁸ Speech of John Marshall at a Leeds reform meeting, *Leeds Mercury*, February 12th 1831, p. 3.

⁷⁹ Harling, *Waning of ‘Old Corruption’*, pp. 48-49; Phyllis Deutsch, ‘Moral Trespass in Georgian London: Gaming, Gender and Electoral Politics in the Age of George III’, *Historical Journal*, 39:3 (1996), 637-56.

⁸⁰ Speech of Edward Baines Junior, *Leeds Mercury*, February 25th 1831, p. 3

⁸¹ Peter Brett, *The Rise and Fall of the York Whig Club, 1818-1830*, Borthwick Papers, 76 (York, 1989), pp. 25-27.

worried that the Whigs would not have the will or strength to live up to their promises. The meetings held in Yorkshire were designed not just to show support for the Ministry, but also to heighten its resolve.⁸²

It was therefore vital that the Whigs proved their disinterestedness by taking decisive action. Doubts on this score were greatly dispelled by Lord John Russell's announcement of the Government's Reform Bill on March 1st 1831. This was more far-reaching than most people had expected. Edward Baines Junior declared to Morpeth that 'I never knew so strong and unanimous a feeling on any political subject, as that which pervades the numerous population of this Riding in favour of this happy and glorious measure'.⁸³ He had good reason to be pleased, for the Bill promised to greatly benefit Yorkshire. Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Halifax and Huddersfield were to receive seats at the expense of rotten boroughs, and the county representation was to increase from four members to six, split into constituencies based on the three Ridings. The Bill also promised to introduce a £10 householder qualification for the boroughs and a change in the county franchise.⁸⁴

The Bill met with a rapturous reception in Yorkshire, and large meetings were held in support of the Ministry across the county in March.⁸⁵ Meanwhile, in Parliament Morpeth spoke in favour of the Bill, calling it a 'safe, wise, honest and glorious measure'.⁸⁶ There was no one reason why the Whigs favoured parliamentary reform. Morpeth's sisters regarded it as a 'specific against revolution', a feeling perhaps influenced by their mother's unfortunate experience of having her carriage 'groaned at' by a mob during the tumultuous events of November 1830.⁸⁷ Morpeth, however, viewed reform much more positively. As noted above, he saw it as necessary to stem political corruption. This attitude arose from his high sense of public duty.

⁸² *Leeds Mercury*, January 29th 1831, p. 2.

⁸³ J19/1/5/51, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, March 6th 1831

⁸⁴ Brock, *Great Reform Act*, pp. 137-40. Note, however, that many West Riding liberals disliked the fact that their region was to have the same number of seats as the other Ridings, which they considered to be less important.

⁸⁵ *Sheffield Independent*, March 12th 1831, p. 2; *Leeds Mercury*, March 19th 1831, p. 3, March 26th 1831, p. 3.

⁸⁶ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, (H.C.), Third Series, II, March 2nd 1831, cols. 1217-20.

⁸⁷ Georgiana Ellis to Caroline Lascelles, November 11th 1830, March 4th 1831, in Maud Mary Wyndham, Baroness Leconfield (ed.), *Three Howard Sisters: Selections from the Writings of Lady Caroline Lascelles, Lady Dover and Countess Gower, 1825-33* (London, 1955), p. 161, 190. Differing Whig approaches to the Reform Bill are discussed in Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 128-31.

Furthermore, he approved of the Bill's voting qualifications, feeling that they were not too high as to exclude the industrious, but not so low as to threaten social order. He declared to the Commons that the Bill would 'give to industry and integrity at once an excitement and a reward', presenting it as a stimulus to morality. Above all, he hoped that reform would bind people to the government, ensuring that their grievances were properly heard. This would unite the kingdom 'in one feeling of concord and harmony'.⁸⁸ Parliamentary reform thus appealed to his wish to produce a harmonious and organic society.

Morpeth's rhetoric depended on being able to demonstrate that the people desired the Bill. In this, he was able to draw on his connection with Yorkshire.⁸⁹ In both March and December 1831, he presented large petitions to the Commons arising from meetings in the county, using these to highlight the people's pressing yet constitutional demand for reform.⁹⁰ In reply to his March speech, his fellow Yorkshire M.P. William Duncombe suggested that the relevant meeting had been a 'complete failure'. An argument ensued as to the true meaning of the petition, revealing the political significance attached to the opinion of Yorkshire.⁹¹ The county had long been seen as a political barometer, and its views were thought to signify public opinion in general. By highlighting his relationship with Yorkshire, Morpeth invested himself with authority to speak in the debates, a tactic he used throughout the Bill's passage.⁹² He was helped here by the moderation of Yorkshire audiences. Whilst Nottingham, Derby and Bristol all experienced rioting during the reform

⁸⁸ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, (H.C.), Third Series, II, March 2nd 1831, cols. 1217-20; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, VII, September 19th 1831, cols 167-69.

⁸⁹ Interestingly, Morpeth was generally opposed to amendments to the Reform Bill which might have benefited Yorkshire, and even voted against his friend Lord Milton's attempt to increase the number of seats offered to boroughs (including those in Yorkshire) from one to two (Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, V, August 4th 1831, cols 782-83; August 10th 1831, cols. 1157-58). He felt Milton's amendments threatened the balance between the agricultural and manufacturing interests which the Bill aimed to strike, and more generally wished to see the Bill pass through the Commons without delay. His constituents do not seem to have objected to this.

⁹⁰ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, III, March 28th 1831, cols 1088-90; IX, December 7th 1831, cols 98-99.

⁹¹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, III, March 28th 1831, cols 1088-90; IX, December 7th 1831, cols 98-99.

⁹² See, for instance, Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XII, May 11th 1832, col. 823 in which Morpeth argues that his position as M.P. for Yorkshire meant he 'had a claim, to speak on their behalf, and on his own, what seemed best fitted to this painful and solemn crisis'.

agitation, Morpeth happily informed the Commons of Yorkshire's 'orderly behaviour'.⁹³

Morpeth's claim to speak for Yorkshire was endorsed by the county's reformers. His support for the Bill in Parliament was highly commended in the local reforming press.⁹⁴ The Reform Bill itself greatly increased admiration for the Whigs. Indeed, such was the state of feeling that in April 1831 the *Leeds Mercury* declared the necessity of abandoning the concord which had seen the liberals historically share the county representation with the Tories; the return of four reformers, it declared, would better reflect the opinion of the county.⁹⁵ Meanwhile, after Russell's measure had failed to obtain a sufficient majority, Grey persuaded the King to dissolve Parliament in order to obtain fresh support. The Leeds Association led a meeting which selected Morpeth, Strickland, Johnstone and J. C. Ramsden as suitable 'reform' candidates for the ensuing election.⁹⁶ Their canvass in April provided a show of support for the Ministry, with one meeting at Leeds attended by 20,000 people. Having been 'hailed as patriots and welcomed as deliverers', Morpeth and his fellow reformers were returned in triumph after the Tories wisely decided not to contest the election.⁹⁷

This dialogue between representative and constituency continued throughout the rest of 1831 and 1832. Numerous meetings were held across the county to petition Parliament in favour of reform during the crises of October 1831, when the Lords rejected the Reform Bill, and May 1832, when the Grey Ministry was temporarily forced into opposition. Aside from presenting such petitions, Morpeth sought to associate Whiggery with popular opinion by taking part in the provincial movement for reform, such as the county meeting held in York in October 1831. He was joined at this meeting by other Whig aristocrats such as Lord Milton and by members of the Whig gentry such as Sir Francis Wood, who led the reform campaign in Doncaster. Morpeth aimed to dissociate the Whigs from the anti-reforming aristocracy. To

⁹³ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, IX, December 7th 1831, col. 99. With the riots elsewhere in mind, Morpeth privately reflected that Yorkshire's reformers were a 'set of lambs and doves'; J18/3/61/73, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle [by context October 1831].

⁹⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, March 5th 1831, p. 3; *Sheffield Independent*, March 12th 1831, p. 2.

⁹⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, April 9th 1831, p. 2.

⁹⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, April 16th 1831, p. 2.

⁹⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, April 27th 1831, p. 1; May 7th 1831, p. 2. The Tories' decision not to contest the election is noted in Spencer Stanhope MSS (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford), SSPT/11/5/3/48, J. P. Tempest of Tong Hall to J. Spencer Stanhope, September 10th 1832.

cheers, he referred to the historic disinterestedness of the Whig dynasties. The heads of the Whig houses, he suggested, were ‘on the side of that people in whose greatness they have so large a birthright and inheritance’.⁹⁸

This strategy met with a good deal of success. It became common for Yorkshire’s reformers to contrast the seemingly disinterested behaviour of the Whigs – whom, it was pointed out, had sacrificed their own rotten boroughs and begun to attack the pension list - with that of the corrupt and anti-reforming Tories. John Marshall Jnr. pointed to the presence of the Whig gentry and aristocracy at reform meetings to suggest that they were on the side of the people.⁹⁹ Even at the height of the crisis of May 1832, George Rawson was careful to distinguish the ‘selfish’ anti-reforming aristocracy from the Whigs, who had ‘secured for themselves a lasting dwelling place in the affections of an enlightened and grateful people’.¹⁰⁰

This pro-Whig feeling was of great significance in Morpeth’s career. The *Leeds Mercury* argued that his ‘able, zealous, and important services’ for reform made him an ideal candidate for the anticipated new constituency of the West Riding. He was officially asked to stand in this capacity by a body of commercial and manufacturing men after the county meeting of October 1831.¹⁰¹ Indeed, such was his celebrity that Castle Howard experienced an influx of visits from West Riding voters, who reportedly left disappointed at not seeing him.¹⁰² Riding this tide of popularity, after the Bill’s passage he was swept into office alongside George Strickland in the uncontested West Riding election of December 1832.

‘The Pride of Yorkshire’: Morpeth as M.P. for the West Riding

In becoming M.P. for the West Riding, Morpeth opened a new chapter in his career. He was now the representative of a large region to which he had no connection based on property, a position of great honour which signalled the popularity he and the

⁹⁸ Speech of Lord Morpeth at a County Meeting for Reform, York, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, October 15th 1831, p. 3.

⁹⁹ Speech of John Marshall Junior reported in *Leeds Mercury*, October 15th 1831, p. 3.

¹⁰⁰ Speech of George Rawson at a meeting called by the Leeds Association, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 15th 1832, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ *Leeds Mercury*, August 13th 1831, p. 3; October 15th 1831, p. 3.

¹⁰² J19/1/6/31, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, August 14th 1832.

Whigs had garnered over the Reform Act. The West Riding was the nation's largest post-1832 constituency, with 18,000 electors in 1832, and as many as 29,000 by 1837.¹⁰³ When it is considered that the number of voters polling at the 1807 election for the undivided county constituency was 22,000, it seems likely that the Act had increased the size of the Riding's electorate, despite the fact that some of the county's pre-1832 electors now voted in the new boroughs.

The Riding took on Yorkshire's former role of being the embodiment of national public opinion, a microcosm of the nation whose decisions were eagerly looked to by commentators and politicians alike. It was an extremely diverse constituency, with a mixture of agricultural, commercial, manufacturing and small-town interests. When canvassing the Riding in 1835, Morpeth noted that he had been 'yesterday never out of sight of crowds and factories, today on high moors, crossing a mountain torrent without a bridge'.¹⁰⁴ As might be expected from a county constituency, landed and agricultural interests were politically important. In a detailed psephological study, Sarah Richardson has calculated that roughly 3,500 of the county voters were landowners with freehold lands worth £100 per annum or more, whilst 21% of the Riding's voters in 1836 qualified as £50 tenants-at-will.¹⁰⁵

Richardson has attempted to measure the 'deference' of this rural electorate, but with ambiguous results. She found a high 'dissidence' rate within townships, which would appear to indicate independent voting. On the other hand, certain 'closed' villages do appear to have voted solidly with their landlords when compared to their neighbours, suggesting some degree of deference. As Richardson notes, however, this may be a result of the fact that voters in outlying areas needed to be conveyed to the poll, the organisation and funding of which tended to fall to landlords.¹⁰⁶ As they were hardly likely to transport the voters of the opposing camp, the degree of apparent deference detected in Richardson's study may be something of a mirage.

¹⁰³ Mark Pack, 'Aspects of the English electoral system, 1800-1850, with special reference to Yorkshire' (2 vols, unpublished D. Phil thesis, University of York, 1995), vol. 2, p. 351.

¹⁰⁴ J18/3/62/42, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, Wednesday, postmarked 1835.

¹⁰⁵ Sarah Richardson, 'Independence and Deference: A Study of the West Riding Electorate, 1832-1841' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Leeds, 1995), p. 220.

¹⁰⁶ Richardson, 'Independence and Deference', pp. 226-44.

In any case, the Riding had a mass of freeholders (roughly two thirds of the 1837 electorate) whose vote was beyond the reach of most influences.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, there was a large degree of ‘urban penetration’ in the Riding. Many of the region’s towns (such as Dewsbury and Rotherham) continued to come within the county constituency, whilst even voters who lived within the new parliamentary boroughs could qualify for the county vote under a 40 shilling freehold. Richardson suggests that Leeds, for instance, provided 5.3% of the county electorate in 1837, and that the total number of ‘urban’ voters from both parliamentary and non-parliamentary boroughs was 23.1%.¹⁰⁸ Philip Salmon puts this total far higher, using Parliamentary returns to suggest that the parliamentary boroughs provided 25% of the county electorate, contributing to an ‘urban’ total of nearly 70%.¹⁰⁹

In practice, this meant that Morpeth continued to depend upon a coalition between the dissenting liberal townsmen and the Whig aristocracy and gentry such as the Woods, Fitzwilliams and the Wharfedale reformer F. H. Fawkes of Farnley Hall.¹¹⁰ Morpeth was well aware of the fact that he owed his position as much to the towns as the land; indeed, he was later to call Edward Baines of the *Leeds Mercury* one of the ‘Foster-Fathers of my public life’.¹¹¹ Even those townsmen who could now participate in borough elections continued to play an active role in county politics. Contests for the West Riding tended to be regarded as an extension of the borough campaigns. The *Bradford Observer* declared that the symbolic importance of the Riding in national politics was such that its elections were more significant than those for all of Yorkshire’s boroughs.¹¹² As major population centres, towns such as Leeds and Bradford also acted as foci for political meetings and canvassing. Furthermore, local newspapers such as the *Leeds Mercury*, its Tory rival the *Leeds Intelligencer* and

¹⁰⁷ Pack, ‘Aspects of the English electoral system’, vol. 2, p. 351 indicates that of the 1837 West Riding electorate of 29,076 voters, 19,670 voters were freeholders.

¹⁰⁸ Richardson, ‘Independence and Deference’, p. 218

¹⁰⁹ Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 174-75. The difference between Salmon and Richardson’s figures may well lie in the fact that the boundaries between ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ in areas such as the Calder Valley are by no means obvious, and it is not clear if they are measuring what constitutes ‘urban’ in the same way. Note, however, that as Salmon’s totals are derived mainly from Parliamentary returns from the 1850s, and it is possible that they overestimate the number of urban voters for the earlier period.

¹¹⁰ Fawkes’ activities on his Wharfedale estate have been charted in Marion Sharples, *The Fawkes Family and their Estates in Wharfedale, 1819-1936*, Thoresby Society, 2nd series, 6, (Leeds, 1997).

¹¹¹ Baines Papers (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds), WYL/383/4, Lord Morpeth to Edward Baines Junior, August 6th 1848.

¹¹² *Bradford Observer*, August 3rd 1837, p. 4.

liberal imitators the *Sheffield Independent* and *Bradford Observer* were crucial in raising political awareness and were seen to represent liberal public opinion.¹¹³

The alliance between the Riding's landed and urban reformers was a loose affair, maintained more by social contacts and shared convictions than institutional organisation. The social and geographical diversity of the liberal leadership meant that keeping the alliance together was problematic, a difficulty made worse by the fact that Morpeth resided outside his constituency. Opportunities for contact between the region's reformers were relatively few. West Riding liberalism functioned most effectively at elections, when individuals campaigned in their own localities before coming together for polling. When canvassing the towns, Morpeth invariably stayed with an influential local activist, building social as well as political relationships with his supporters. He forged real friendships out of these occasions, most notably with the Totties, whom he described as 'the best and kindest people on earth'.¹¹⁴ The whole campaign was kept under the loose supervision of a central committee, on which townsmen and squires served in shared support of their candidate.¹¹⁵

There were some attempts to bring the county's reformers together, such as the grand 'Reform' dinner held in Leeds in 1833.¹¹⁶ Attendance at such events was thought to be an important part of Morpeth's political duty. The *Leeds Mercury* reported that the dinner was organised to give the county's reformers an 'intercourse with their representatives... to make known their own opinions and feelings'.¹¹⁷ Morpeth excelled at such occasions, which allowed him to display his considerable personal charm. His nephew recorded that he had a 'power beyond anyone I have known of attracting and attaching people. There was about him a bonhomie, a sympathy, and a kindness both in look and in manner that were quite irresistible'.¹¹⁸ This opinion was widely shared; Robert Wilberforce, for instance, found Morpeth to be 'very agreeable' company, perceptively noting that he displayed the characteristics through

¹¹³ David Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700-1870* (London, 1997), pp. 73-75.

¹¹⁴ J18/3/63/69, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, marked 1832; J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 19th 1845.

¹¹⁵ Thus in January 1835 Morpeth's committee consisted of two members of the Marshall family, alongside Fawkes, Wood, and the Catholic landowner Sir Edward Vavasour.

¹¹⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, November 9th 1833, pp. 7-8.

¹¹⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, November 2nd 1833, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Lord R. C. Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, *My Reminiscences*, 2 vols (London, 1883), vol. 1, p. 113.

‘which men “gain” in public life’.¹¹⁹ This added to his popularity; the *Leeds Mercury* felt that he had ‘captivated his constituents’ by his ‘sweetness’.¹²⁰

However, West Riding liberalism was not of course maintained through conviviality alone. Its terms had been set by the parliamentary reform campaign. It is worth re-emphasising that the region’s liberals did not see reform as an end in itself. Rather, they believed it to be a means to an end - the removal of other ‘abuses’ and ‘monopolies’. The *Sheffield Independent* expected that the Reform Act would bring about ‘all future reformatations’.¹²¹ Reformers often spoke of the Act in horticultural terms, as a plant which would bear ‘fruit’ in time. The *Leeds Mercury* hoped that the ‘crop’ would include an end to the East India Company’s monopoly and to colonial slavery, as well as an alteration in the Corn Laws.¹²² Nominating Morpeth at the 1832 West Riding election, Leeds’ John Nussey hoped that he would ‘cut away with an unsparing hand everything that is partial, defective and corrupt, or opposed to the productive industry and weal of this county’.¹²³ As has been argued by Miles Taylor for a later period, liberal politics was thus based around Parliamentary action.¹²⁴

Morpeth fully agreed with the sentiments of his liberal constituents. He stated that he saw Reform ‘not only as a desirable end, but as a beneficial instrument’, and vowed ‘to keep up no monopoly because it benefits one class to the heavier injury of others’.¹²⁵ He too hoped that the Reform Act would bring about retrenchment and free trade and aid the anti-slavery cause, and also that it might lead to the reform of abuses in the Church of England. Morpeth and his supporters alike were thus presenting the idea that the Whig Government, with the aid of a reformed Parliament, would fight against ‘monopoly’. West Riding liberalism was accordingly based around politics at Westminster. The *Leeds Mercury* could declare that the 1835 West Riding election was ‘NATIONAL... a great pitched battle between the Reformers and the Tories [which] will decide whether one party or the other is to have the government of this

¹¹⁹ Wilberforce MSS (Bodleian Library, Oxford), c. 61, folio 43, Robert Wilberforce to Samuel Wilberforce, August 18th 1845.

¹²⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, July 15th 1837, p. 4; October 6th 1857, p. 3.

¹²¹ *Sheffield Independent*, November 3rd 1832, p. 2.

¹²² *Leeds Mercury*, June 2nd 1832, pp. 2-3.

¹²³ Speech of J. Nussey at the 1832 West Riding election, *Leeds Mercury*, December 22nd 1832, p. 8.

¹²⁴ Miles Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism, 1847-1860* (Oxford, 1995).

¹²⁵ Speech of Lord Morpeth, *Leeds Mercury*, December 22nd 1832, p. 8.

kingdom'.¹²⁶ It is therefore unsurprising that, as Sarah Richardson has shown, electors throughout the West Riding constituencies demonstrated a high degree of partisanship.¹²⁷ A vote for Morpeth was seen to be a vote for the Whig Ministry, both before and after he officially joined the Government in 1835.

This was not party allegiance in the modern sense of loyalty to an organisation. Rather, it involved commitment to a set of principles, which reformers looked to the Whigs to fulfil. All of this created a huge amount of anticipation about what the Government would accomplish. The Whig-liberal alliance in the West Riding worked best when it seemed to be living up to these high hopes by instituting further reforms. For instance, the Government received some kudos from its actions on slavery. This topic had continued to occupy many West Riding liberals since Brougham's election, with figures such as the Baines', Henry Forbes, Benjamin Godwin, Richard Winter Hamilton and Thomas Scales all taking a leading role in local anti-slavery meetings.¹²⁸ Despite some reservations at the system of apprenticeship which went with it, the Whigs' Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 was hailed by Yorkshire's liberals.¹²⁹ Morpeth's support for the Act was praised at the 1835 election.¹³⁰

Nevertheless, the Whigs were not necessarily being expected to produce specific pieces of legislation. As Jonathan Parry has observed with respect to the Parliamentary party, liberals were far too diverse a bunch to coalesce around agreement on individual measures. In Yorkshire, as in Westminster, liberalism revolved instead around a set of relatively abstract values or slogans.¹³¹ As might be expected from the argument above, the idea of 'no monopoly' was the most important in the West Riding, and was employed to rally liberals in the region throughout the 1830s. This notion also deeply shaped popular liberalism over the Pennines in Oldham and Bolton, suggesting that opposition to 'Old Corruption' had an abiding political legacy.¹³²

¹²⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Richardson, 'Independence and Deference', pp. 93-105.

¹²⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, January 26th 1833, p. 8; April 13th 1833, p. 8.

¹²⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, May 23rd 1833, p. 3, June 8th 1833, p. 8.

¹³⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5.

¹³¹ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 14-17.

¹³² Peter Taylor, *Popular Politics in Early Industrial Britain: Bolton, 1825-1850* (Keele, 1995); Michael Winstanley, 'Oldham radicalism and the origins of popular Liberalism, 1830-1852', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 619-43.

West Riding liberals also agreed on the importance of ‘tolerance’ and ‘civil and religious liberty’, which helped unite the Anglican Whig squires and the dissenting townsmen. At the 1835 West Riding contest, banners were displayed in Sheffield with the words ‘Morpeth and civil and religious freedom’.¹³³ The idea of liberty also had strong associations with the anti-slavery campaign. When addressing Bradford in 1835, Morpeth declared his support for liberty in the context of Milton and Wilberforce’s anti-slavery election of 1807.¹³⁴ These symbolic references to past triumphs were fairly common. The Leeds ‘Reform’ dinner of 1833, for instance, reserved a conspicuous place for the ‘Reform Chair’, which had carried Milton after his victory in 1807.¹³⁵ Historical allusions such as this can be seen as an attempt to foster party unity by reminding liberals of what they had achieved together in the past.

More evidently, the various ideals of West Riding liberalism were symbolically joined together in the colour orange. Orange banners, flags and posters were used at West Riding elections to identify supporters with the liberal cause and were contrasted to the Tory blue. One canvass even saw the liberals dress up a man in blue, place a fool’s cap on his head, put him on a jackass and chase him through the streets.¹³⁶ As James Vernon has argued, the use of colours at elections arose from popular culture and local tradition.¹³⁷ However, it also served the function of dividing the electorate between competing ideals of government. In January 1835, Morpeth drew on this to stress the importance of liberal unity. He stated that ‘some might wish to go a little slower, and others a little quicker in the path of Reform, but when they once saw the orange and blue standards raised together, they would flock to the orange, and support that civil and constitutional freedom, that safe and useful reform with which the orange cause in Yorkshire had ever been identified’.¹³⁸

¹³³ Report of canvassing tour in *Leeds Mercury*, May 2nd 1835, p. 7.

¹³⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, May 2nd 1835, p. 8.

¹³⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, November 9th 1833, p. 7.

¹³⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, July 22nd 1837, p. 5, reporting Morpeth’s tour of Saddleworth at the 1837 West Riding election.

¹³⁷ James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, c.1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 164-65.

¹³⁸ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the West Riding election, *Bradford Observer*, January 8th 1835, p. 2.

Like all group identities, this one worked by defining itself against an ‘other’ – Toryism. In many senses, the parliamentary reform agitation had rigidified the division between the Whigs and liberals and the Tories. Conservatives who might have claimed to represent liberal opinion in the 1820s, such as Sir Robert Peel, now found themselves damned as reactionaries, their opposition to the Reform Bill having damaged their liberal credentials.¹³⁹ The Conservative Party as a whole was painted by Yorkshire’s liberals as greedy and monopolistic. The *Leeds Mercury* argued that the Tories exhibited a ‘selfish determination to *cling to every abuse and monopoly* for the sake of the profit they derive from them’.¹⁴⁰

This arguably points to something fundamental about the party system in the 1830s. To a far greater degree than most historians have realised, this was not just concerned with political principles and policies. It was also about the personal qualities of the politicians involved.¹⁴¹ The liberal charge that the Tories were ‘monopolists’ involved the belief, real or feigned, that they were an inherently selfish party who lacked any moral devotion to the common good. In turn, their ideal of disinterested government required governors who were unselfish and dutiful. This concentrated attention on the moral qualities of the Whigs. To be sure, reformers felt that the Whigs could prove their disinterestedness through political action. Yet this in itself was not enough. After all, it was entirely feasible that the Whigs had passed the Reform Act merely to gain power, and had no real commitment to reform. Benjamin Disraeli, for one, did his best to encourage this idea, using his writings to suggest that it was the Whigs, not the Tories, who were the truly unprincipled and greedy faction.¹⁴²

To understand this link between the personal and political, it is necessary to return to the notion of character explored in the introduction to this thesis.¹⁴³ There was a widespread belief in contemporary thought that a person’s inner character determined their actions. As developed particularly through evangelicalism (and bearing in mind

¹³⁹ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p. 97.

¹⁴⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5.

¹⁴¹ From another perspective, Michael Ledger-Lomas has suggested that disagreements over the private characters of Fox and Pitt were one way of expressing political differences in this period; Michael Ledger-Lomas, 'The character of Pitt the Younger and party politics, 1830-1860', *Historical Journal*, 47:3 (2004), 641-61.

¹⁴² See the series of Disraeli’s articles from the 1830s collected together in Benjamin Disraeli, *Whigs and Whiggism: Edited, with an introduction, by William Hutcheon* (London, 1913).

¹⁴³ As I have examined this idea at length in the introduction, I have only given a brief summary here.

that many West Riding liberals were evangelical dissenters), the man of truly good character did not just *appear* to be dutiful, moral or unselfish. Rather, these qualities were ones which they earnestly held in their heart. There was thus an inherent connection between private virtues and public life. Yet at the same time, this focus on inner moral qualities made it hard for contemporaries to distinguish sincere actions from selfish and artificial attempts to gain power and prestige. As politics was perhaps the ultimate route to self-advancement, the actions of a politician in public life were insufficient in themselves to establish trustworthiness.

To that end, commentators were apt to look to the private life of public figures for clues as to their moral character. The early-nineteenth-century moralist William Roberts, for instance, argued that even the trivial actions of politicians revealed their ‘private worth’, which was, he suggested, ‘the surety and pledge of his public honour’.¹⁴⁴ The Leeds radical Samuel Smiles likewise argued that character created confidence in public men because it was based on ‘integrity in word and deed’.¹⁴⁵ This phenomenon crossed the political spectrum. The Tory *Hull Packet* advised Yorkshire’s electors to look to ‘uprightness of public *and private* character’ when choosing a candidate. If they had been ‘humane and munificent in private life’, then they were could be trusted to represent others. If, however, they had been ‘arrogant... selfish and uncharitable’, this showed that they did not care for the people.¹⁴⁶

The *Leeds Mercury* consistently contrasted the moral standard of its favoured politicians with that of its opponents. At the election for Leeds in 1832, for instance, it compared the ‘manliness’ and ‘real dignity of character’ of the liberal candidates John Marshall Junior and T. B. Macaulay with the ‘trickish and hollow’ nature of the Tory protagonist Michael Sadler, who it saw as ‘constitutionally a flatterer and a wheedler’. The electors, it declared, were ‘men of moral sense’ who demanded moral integrity.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ William Roberts, *The Portraiture of a Christian Gentleman* (New York, 1831), pp. 68-70.

¹⁴⁵ Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help, with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance* (London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1997 [1st published 1859]), pp. 235-37.

¹⁴⁶ *Hull Packet and Humber Mercury*, August 7th 1832, p. 4, emphasis in original.

¹⁴⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, September 8th 1832, p. 4; *Leeds Mercury*, September 15th 1832, p. 4.

Morpeth's personal qualities therefore became of paramount importance. His high standard of morality was thought by observers to greatly add to his popularity and authority as a politician.¹⁴⁸ It was often emphasised by Yorkshire's liberals in attempts to rally support for him. At the 1835 West Riding contest, for instance, Lord Milton highlighted Morpeth's 'unsullied virtue in private life'.¹⁴⁹ The *Leeds Mercury* stated that he had a 'public character above suspicion, with private virtues beyond praise', whilst George Hadfield, the liberal candidate for Bradford, declared that he 'held the public and private character of Lord Morpeth in the highest estimation'.¹⁵⁰ All of this had political relevance because Morpeth's private morality gave credibility to his rhetoric of disinterestedness by suggesting that he really did care for the common good. The *Reformer* could thus proclaim that Morpeth's character was 'without reproach', and that his 'honesty and integrity have never been questioned'. The *English Gentleman* likewise later stated that 'what he is, he appears. A more safe man to trust with power, there is not now before the public'.¹⁵¹

It is accordingly necessary here to modify Peter Mandler's argument that the Whigs benefited politically from their aristocratic status.¹⁵² Morpeth's example suggests that this was true only to the limited extent that the Whigs were seen to be moral exceptions to their class. They could not afford to appear 'aristocratic', for this was associated in the liberal mind with selfishness and corruption. Throughout the 1830s, the *Leeds Mercury* routinely referred to Tory 'monopoly' as 'aristocratical'.¹⁵³ Recognising this, Morpeth continuously played down his status before Yorkshire audiences, even referring to his noble birth as an 'accident' in one speech which attracted the derision of the local Tories.¹⁵⁴ This sort of flattery was sound political

¹⁴⁸ James Grant, *Random Recollections of the House of Commons* (Philadelphia, 1836), p. 115; G. H. Francis, *Orators of the Age* (New York, 1847), pp. 159-66.

¹⁴⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, May 9 1835, p. 6. This Lord Milton was the son of the Lord Milton who won the 1807 Yorkshire election, who in the meantime had become the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam.

¹⁵⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, May 16th 1835, p. 4; George Hadfield to Henry Walker, April 27th 1835, printed in *Bradford Observer*, April 30th 1835, p. 5.

¹⁵¹ Article from *The Reformer* reprinted in *Leeds Mercury*, May 23rd 1835, p. 7; *The English Gentleman*, January 10th 1846, p. 9.

¹⁵² Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 1-7. Mandler frames this argument against older accounts which suggested that the aristocracy survived only because it adopted a high moral standard. Instead, he rightly emphasises the continuing vitality of aristocratic political service. I would argue, however, that a suitable standard of private morality was essential to the appeal of their rhetoric of disinterestedness.

¹⁵³ *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, May 2nd 1835, p. 6. Negative references to this speech from Yorkshire Tories include Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, 8th [May] 1835 in Margaret Smith (ed.), *The Letters of*

tactics, for a minority of the more radical West Riding liberals felt that Morpeth's status cast his reforming opinions into doubt. He reported that before the 1832 election 'several political unions attempted a demonstration against me... on the grounds of my birth, and my not being supposed to carry some liberal opinions far enough'. One meeting at Barnsley vowed to oppose him, declaring that it had 'had enough of Lords and Dukes'.¹⁵⁵

For the rest of the West Riding liberals, it was Morpeth's moral qualities which showed that he was not a typical selfish aristocrat. For instance, they often highlighted his amiability in private.¹⁵⁶ The willingness to mix with and respect those of lower social status was thought by contemporaries to indicate a good and unselfish character, for it showed that one put store in moral worth rather than external appearances.¹⁵⁷ This aspect of Morpeth's character thus served to suggest that he was not too conceited or self-interested to represent the people. The political commentator G. H. Francis felt that Morpeth's evident lack of pride 'compels us to believe all he utters. He not only entertains popular opinions, but, what is infinitely more captivating with the multitude, he expresses them popularly'. Francis astutely observed that this 'blending of the personal with the political character' was 'very agreeable to the English people, who love to see men sincere and earnest'.¹⁵⁸ It is worth noting that the Whig-liberal coalition in Yorkshire would therefore not have worked to nearly the same extent had Morpeth been the worldly and exclusive patrician presented by some historians as typical of Whiggery. His ability to harness the idea of 'government for the people' rested on his own high moral rectitude, and the fact that his supporters could appreciate this through interaction with him.

Charlotte Brontë, Volume One (1829-1847) (Oxford, 1995), p. 138; Richard Oastler, *Eight Letters to the Duke of Wellington: A Petition to the House of Commons: And a Letter to the Editor of the Agricultural and Industrial Magazine* (London, 1835), pp. 84-85.

¹⁵⁵ Lord Morpeth to Lord Althorp, December 26th 1832, in Denis Le Marchant, *Memoir of John Charles, Viscount Althorp, Third Earl Spencer* (London, 1876), pp. 447-48; Report of a meeting at Barnsley, *Leeds Mercury*, December 8th 1832, p. 8.

¹⁵⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, May 9 1835, p. 6; May 16th 1835, p. 4; August 14th 1841, p. 4; J19/1/32/79, George Lowther of Selby in Yorkshire to Lord Morpeth, July 21st 1841. The appreciation of amiability in the Whigs was not just confined to Morpeth. The *Mercury* also felt that T. B. Macaulay had gained much popularity in Leeds from his 'affability' and the 'qualities of heart' he displayed in 'familiar conversation' (*Leeds Mercury*, June 23rd 1832, pp. 2-3; September 8th 1832, p. 4).

¹⁵⁷ Anon., *The English Gentleman: His Principles, His Feelings, His Manners, His Pursuits* (London, 1849), pp. 57-58, 69-70; Smiles, *Self-Help*, pp. 241-44; Roberts, *Portraiture of a Christian Gentleman*, pp. 25-27.

¹⁵⁸ Francis, *Orators of the Age*, pp. 160-61.

However, the Whigs' claim to govern would ultimately be tested on the political stage. The idea that Morpeth was disinterested and dutiful would have meant little if he had seemed to contradict this at Westminster. Contemporaries expected public figures to act in accordance with their professed beliefs and historic conduct. This was also related to the idea of character, for if a man was sincere in his avowed principles, it followed that his actions ought to be consistent. As was noted in the introduction, consistency in both public and private was the hallmark of the man of sound character. Here, too, the West Riding's liberals could claim that Morpeth was superior to the Tories. At the election in spring 1835, Morpeth's consistency was contrasted in the liberal press to that of his Tory challenger John Stuart Wortley. The *Sheffield Independent*, for instance, claimed that whilst Wortley was attempting to deceive the public, Morpeth could 'appeal to all his conduct... as proof of his sincerity'.¹⁵⁹

The context of this was the attempt by the Tory leadership to reclaim the idea of disinterestedness. This was done most notably by Sir Robert Peel, whose Tamworth Manifesto of 1834 suggested that his party could offer reform.¹⁶⁰ Following his leader, Wortley argued in his canvass that he would support necessary reforms. In the light of his and the Tory's opposition to the Reform Bill, the *Leeds Mercury* presented this merely as evidence of a devious inconsistency, which proved that the Tories would do anything they could to get their grasping hands on the levers of power.¹⁶¹ In Halifax, Charles Wood drew a similar lesson, alleging that the Tories' professions of reform involved the 'basest political profligacy, the most disgusting political apostasy... a total loss of character'. The manly course for the Tories was to focus on defending existing institutions, and leave reform to the Whigs.¹⁶² Liberals were thus deploying ideas of character and manliness to suggest that voters had a clear choice between two distinct parties, only one of whom was truly reforming.

Morpeth seemed to his Yorkshire supporters to have sincerely fulfilled his promises to support reforming measures. At the uncontested West Riding election of January

¹⁵⁹ *Sheffield Independent*, May 2nd 1835, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ David Eastwood, "Recasting our lot": Peel, the nation, and the politics of interest' in Laurence Brockliss & David Eastwood (eds.), *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c.1750-c.1850* (Manchester, 1997), 29-43.

¹⁶¹ *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5.

¹⁶² Speech of Charles Wood, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, January 10th 1835, p. 6.

1835, a walkover which revealed the disorganisation in the Tory ranks, he was able to draw cheers by referring to his Parliamentary opposition to the Corn Laws and to colonial slavery. Morpeth firmly identified himself with Grey's reforming administration, and drew on the idea that the Government had made economical reforms in areas such as the reduction of taxation and the removal of the East India Company's monopoly. The Whigs had been temporarily forced out of office by King William IV, and Morpeth was able to claim that this was because they had been 'too closely wedded to the cause and work of real Reform'. In supporting speeches, Sir Francis Wood likewise claimed that the Whigs had done 'more good for the people than any other Administration has done for forty years', whilst Fawkes claimed that the Tories were up to their old trick of governing 'for the benefit of the few to the injury of the many'.¹⁶³

The idea that the Whigs represented disinterested government when the Tories did not was a very powerful one, able to rally tremendous support from the liberals. It was in evidence again at Morpeth's contest against Wortley in May 1835, an election caused by his appointment as Irish Secretary in Melbourne's administration, which had replaced Sir Robert Peel's short-lived Tory Ministry. Liberals presented this as a straight fight between 'reform' and 'anti-reform'. The *Halifax and Huddersfield Express* felt that the difference was 'marked and decided. It is a question of real reform or as-little-as-possible reform'. The *Leeds Mercury* declared that, unlike Wortley, Morpeth had always been a friend to reform and 'loves it'.¹⁶⁴ Although he was now more firmly attached than before to the Whig Ministry, this does not seem to have disadvantaged him. The *Bradford Observer*, no blind follower of the Whigs, felt that a vote for Morpeth was a vote for the project started by the Reform Act, 'the reformation of all existing abuses'.¹⁶⁵ It particularly looked forward to the Whigs' promised Municipal Corporations Bill, which looked to open up corporations for election and allow unincorporated towns such as Bradford to petition for corporation.

Having felt themselves oppressed by self-electing corporations such as that of Leeds, the West Riding's dissenting elite had long supported corporation reform, which they

¹⁶³ Speeches at the nomination reported in *Leeds Mercury*, January 24th 1835, p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ *Halifax and Huddersfield Express and Weekly Advertiser*, April 23rd 1835, p. 2; *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5; *Leeds Mercury*, May 2 1835, p. 5.

¹⁶⁵ *Bradford Observer*, April 30th 1835, p. 4

regarded as a necessary accompaniment to the Reform Act.¹⁶⁶ Morpeth had promised Whig support for this in Parliament when moving the amendment to the King's Speech in April 1835; both the *Bradford Observer* and the *Leeds Mercury* thus claimed that a vote for him was a vote for this measure.¹⁶⁷ Finally, Yorkshire's liberals also supported the Whigs' Irish policy. Morpeth's appointment as Irish Secretary ensured that this was a major issue at this election, although Ireland had not featured heavily in West Riding liberalism before. The Riding's dissenters approved of the Whigs' plan to appropriate the surplus revenues of the Church of Ireland, which fitted in well with their general wish to make the Church less worldly and corrupt.¹⁶⁸ More broadly, the region's liberals favourably contrasted the Whigs' strategy of working with the Irish Catholics to the Tories' allegedly coercive and divisive approach. Morpeth's supporters thus claimed that the Whigs offered the prospect of peace in Ireland, ideas Morpeth did much to encourage in his election addresses.¹⁶⁹

The result was a decisive victory for the Whigs, with Morpeth beating Wortley by 9,066 votes to 6,259. Morpeth's advocacy of reforming principles and high moral character had done much to attach the West Riding to Whiggery, and made him tremendously popular in the process; the *Bradford Observer* went as far as to call him the 'pride of Yorkshire'.¹⁷⁰ The Whig leadership, reeling from Lord John Russell's defeat in South Devon, seized on the result in the West Riding as evidence of popular attachment to the Government. Georgiana Carlisle reported that the Party regarded her son's victory as 'an immense thing politically'.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, this triumphalism was not entirely warranted. Despite the popularity of Morpeth himself and general appeal of Whig Government, tensions had begun to appear in the Riding's Whig-liberal coalition. They are the subject of the next section.

¹⁶⁶ Fraser, *Urban Politics*, pp. 116-18. The links between the demands for municipal and parliamentary reform have also been explored in Philip Salmon, 'Reform Should Begin at Home': English Municipal and Parliamentary Reform, 1818-1832' in Clyve Jones, Philip Salmon, Philip & Richard W. Davis (eds.), *Partisan Politics, Principle and Reform in Parliament and the Constituencies, 1689-1880* (Edinburgh, 2005), 93-113.

¹⁶⁷ *Bradford Observer*, April 23rd 1835, p. 4, April 30th 1835, p. 4; *Leeds Mercury*, May 9th 1835,

¹⁶⁸ *Bradford Observer*, April 30th 1835, p. 4; *Leeds Mercury*, May 2nd 1835, p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, May 9th 1835, p. 5; Speech of James Richardson at the West Riding election, *Leeds Mercury*, May 16th 1835, p. 6; Speeches of Lord Morpeth on his canvassing tour, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 2th 1835, p. 6; May 9th 1835, p. 6.

¹⁷⁰ *Bradford Observer*, April 23rd 1835, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ J19/1/9/31, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, May 14th 1835.

The Problem of Dissent

The problem for the Whigs was that the Reform Act had generated unrealistic expectations about what they would do in office. This inevitably led to some disappointment. Radicals in particular very quickly became disenchanted with the outcome of the Reform Act. However, this feeling also to some degree affected the moderates who formed the core of Morpeth's support. Although they were generally happy with the measures the Whigs had undertaken, they became disillusioned at the speed at which 'reform' was taking place. In April 1833, the *Sheffield Independent* noted the Whigs' declining popularity in the region. Although it avowed a 'strong prepossession' in their favour, it felt that the Government could justly be charged with a 'degree of inertness, a weak apprehensiveness of change, a subserviency to official and aristocratic prejudices'.¹⁷² Even the normally enthusiastic *Leeds Mercury* warned in late 1833 that 'much yet remains to be done', particularly highlighting the Government's evident lack of enthusiasm for the repeal of the Corn Law, a running sore which the Anti-Corn Law League would exploit at the end of the decade.¹⁷³

However, the biggest source of tension was the Whigs' inability to satisfactorily resolve dissenting grievances. The importance of dissent to Yorkshire liberalism has already been noted. However, the Reform Act gave further electoral power to dissenters, and saw them wish to use their new influence to obtain legislation on a range of issues relating to their interests. The period immediately following 1832 thus saw an increased politicisation of dissent, with intense lobbying of the Whig Government which dissenters saw as their political ally. Importantly, however, this went alongside a gradual shift in dissenting political leadership from the Unitarians, who had forged social and political ties with the Whigs, to the Congregationalist and Baptist sects, who were more hostile to the Establishment.¹⁷⁴

At national level, this politicisation was epitomised by the formation of the United Committee of Dissenting Deputies in the spring of 1833. The Committee quickly

¹⁷² *Sheffield Independent*, April 13th 1833, p. 2.

¹⁷³ *Leeds Mercury*, November 2nd 1833, p. 5. Morpeth's own opinions on free trade were somewhat in advance of most of his colleagues.

¹⁷⁴ David Bebbington, 'The Dissenting Political Upsurge of 1833-34' in David Bebbington & Timothy Larsen (eds.), *Modern Christianity and Cultural Aspirations* (London, 2003), 224-45.

presented the Government with a list of dissenting grievances, including their inability to be married by their own rites, the enforced payment of church rates, Anglican control over the registration of births, marriages and deaths, and the exclusion of dissenters from the ancient Universities.¹⁷⁵ In Yorkshire, ministers such as the Bradford Baptist Benjamin Godwin led their chapels in petitioning the Whigs to address these problems. Meetings were held for this reason in Sheffield and Huddersfield in late 1833 and early 1834, whilst the Yorkshire Baptist Association also pressed the Government to tackle their grievances.¹⁷⁶

Of all the dissenting grievances, the most important was that of the church rate, a tax levied by churchwardens on all inhabitants (including dissenters) for the upkeep of Anglican Church fabrics. J. P. Ellens and Richard Brent have rightly suggested that, for many dissenters, this was one of the most significant political issues of this period.¹⁷⁷ At local level, they resisted the enforcement of rates by attempting to appoint friendly churchwardens at vestry elections, which had become a rancorous part of political culture. In Leeds, dissenters led by Baines gained control of the vestry in 1828, but were subject to a counter-assault from 1833. Otley, Morley and Doncaster all witnessed bitter contests over rates in 1832 and 1833.¹⁷⁸

The dissenters' protest here was not so much about having to physically pay the rates as it was about the principle behind them. Congregationalists and Baptists in particular had come to see them as a social and scriptural evil.¹⁷⁹ Firstly, dissenters objected to the idea that they should pay for doctrines they fundamentally disagreed with, an attitude which later became even more pronounced as the Oxford Movement seemed to give rise to 'popery' in the Church of England. More fundamentally, the whole idea of a church rate contradicted their basic principle that a church should be a

¹⁷⁵ Lord Bernard Manning, *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies* (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 175-76.

¹⁷⁶ Brougham Papers (British Library), 47138, George Rawson to Henry Brougham, March 15th 1834; Godwin, 'Reminiscences', Vol. II, p. 575; *Leeds Mercury*, January 18th 1834, p. 8; *Sheffield Independent*, January 11th 1834, p. 4; H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Baptists of Yorkshire: Being the Centenary Memorial Volume of the Yorkshire Baptist Association* (Bradford, 1912), p. 301.

¹⁷⁷ J. P. Ellens, *Religious Routes to Gladstonian Liberalism: The Church-Rate Conflict in England and Wales, 1832-1868* (University Park, PA, 1994), *passim*; Richard Brent, 'The Whigs and Protestant dissent in the decade of reform: the case of church rates, 1833-1841', *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), 887-910.

¹⁷⁸ Fraser, *Urban Politics*, pp. 31-32; *Leeds Mercury*, October 6th 1832, September 7th 1833, p. 8.

¹⁷⁹ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, pp. 1-9.

voluntary group of members who had independently chosen to come to God.¹⁸⁰ The Sheffield nonconformist Revd. J. Pritchard thus argued that the rates interfered with ‘the right of every one to decide for himself in all matters between God and his soul’. He representatively contended that Christ’s was a spiritual rather than a temporal Kingdom. There was hence no scriptural basis for state involvement with religion, and thus none for the idea that citizens should be forced to support a given doctrine.¹⁸¹

As this suggests, dissenting opposition to church rates was fundamentally bound up with their hostility to the Established Church. The *Leeds Mercury* stated that the rates were a ‘continual remembrancer of the wrong’ produced by the Establishment’.¹⁸² Most of Yorkshire’s Congregationalists and Baptists seem to have become committed to disestablishment in principle by the early to mid-1830s, differing only on whether or not pressing for this would be tactically wise. This set them on a collision course with pro-Establishment Whigs like Morpeth. Nevertheless, Morpeth had shown his commitment to church reform at the West Riding election of 1832. The question, then, was how far his and the Whigs’ Anglicanism could be made compatible with the resolution of dissenting grievances.

Dissenters were initially very hopeful that the Whigs would swiftly reform the rates system, taking encouragement from the abolition of the similar church cess in Ireland in 1833.¹⁸³ However, the Government’s failure to respond to their demands led to frustration. Epitomising this feeling was George Hadfield, who wrote to the *Leeds Mercury* on the subject in November 1833. He rightly pointed out that the Whigs’ idea of church reform was designed to strengthen the Establishment, and argued against working with them. He asserted that the only solution to dissenting problems was the separation of Church and state. Hadfield’s ‘militant’ attitude was opposed by moderates such as Baines, who felt that advocacy of disestablishment, however desirable, would damage the chance of other more feasible legislation. In contrast to Hadfield’s claim that the Whigs would ‘deal treacherously by dissenters’, the *Leeds*

¹⁸⁰ Timothy Larsen, *Contested Christianity: The Political and Social Contexts of Victorian Theology* (Waco, 2004), pp. 149-50.

¹⁸¹ Speech of Revd. J. Pritchard at Queen Street Chapel, Sheffield, reported in *Sheffield Independent*, January 4th 1834, p. 2.

¹⁸² *Leeds Mercury*, May 17th 1834, p. 5

¹⁸³ Brent, ‘Whigs and Protestant dissent’, 890-91.

Mercury argued that they could trust the Whigs. A measure on church rates, it suggested, would provide evidence of their sincerity.¹⁸⁴

Ironically, however, calls for disestablishment had made it politically difficult for the Whigs to concede dissenting demands. Russell dismissively declared to the United Committee that ‘the abolition of church rates could hardly be advocated without involving the question of the connection between Church and State’.¹⁸⁵ Interestingly, after this disappointment the Dissenting Deputies asked Morpeth to present a petition to the Government on their behalf. He had become known as a champion of dissenters. He had, for instance, presided over a Wesleyan Methodist missionary meeting in early 1833, an act praised by one Methodist elector as evidence of his tolerance.¹⁸⁶ He had also spoken against the necessity for Quakers to take an oath upon entering civic office, something which, as he told Parliament, had conscientiously prevented the upstanding Barnsley Quaker and poet Thomas Lister (a political supporter of his) from taking up a position he had obtained for him. Morpeth’s interest in Lister’s case was commended in Yorkshire.¹⁸⁷

Nevertheless, Morpeth’s cosy relations with the local dissenters were to be tested. Lord John Russell’s failed Dissenters’ Marriage Bill of 1834 was condemned in the Yorkshire nonconformist press as a half-measure which maintained the dominance of the Church of England, for dissenters still had to get banns read by the Anglican clergy.¹⁸⁸ The alliance between Whiggery and dissent came under further strain when Lord Althorp finally announced a Whig measure on church rates in April 1834. Althorp proposed to replace these with a £250,000 fund, to be paid for by a land tax. This was simultaneously designed to meet dissenting demands whilst also strengthening the Establishment, by providing funds for churches which could not currently levy a rate. Dissenters, however, strongly denounced the measure. The land

¹⁸⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, November 8th 1833, p. 5, 8. Baines’ trust in the Whigs was echoed by a meeting on church rates at Huddersfield, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, January 18th 1834, p. 8, at which Mr Jos. Batley stated to cheers that whilst some dissenters had fears that the Government was too connected with the Church to do justice to dissenters, he had complete confidence in them.

¹⁸⁵ Minutes of the United Committee of Dissenting Deputies, January 22nd 1834, cited in Ellens, *Religious Routes*, p. 37.

¹⁸⁶ J19/1/6/74, G. Marsden to Lord Morpeth, May 4th 1833; Letter to the editor from ‘A Wesleyan’, *Leeds Mercury*, May 9 1835, p. 8.

¹⁸⁷ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XVII, May 8th 1833, cols 1040-43; William Smith, *Old Yorkshire* (8 vols, London, 1881-1891), vol. 8, pp. 242-43.

¹⁸⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, March 8th 1834, p. 2

tax still involved the principle of state involvement in religion, and would still in effect require dissenters to pay for competing denominations. It would, furthermore, have taken away their influence in the vestry.¹⁸⁹ The proposal merely highlighted the differences between Whigs and dissenters over the Establishment. It seemed that the Whigs had fundamentally misunderstood the reasons behind dissenters' demands.

The *Sheffield Independent* felt that the 'conduct of the Government towards the dissenters has deeply injured it in the estimation of that numerous and intelligent portion of the community'. Significantly, both the *Independent* and the nonconformist *Bradford Observer* felt that the Government was too 'aristocratic', which was West Riding liberal shorthand for associating it with (in this case ecclesiastical) 'monopoly'.¹⁹⁰ The Whigs' actions encouraged calls for disestablishment. Having previously avoided the topic, the West Riding Congregational Union advocated disestablishment at its conference in September 1834.¹⁹¹ Sensing a rising tide of anti-government opinion, the *Leeds Mercury* called for moderation, warning that mutual hostility between dissenters and the Whigs would 'entirely destroy the ascendancy of the Liberal Party' and merely benefit the bigoted Tories. Yet even the *Mercury* found the Whigs 'cold and timid'. It warned the Government that 'if they alienate the dissenters, they lose all their power in the country... We assure them that the question of church rates is that on which the union or disunion of the liberal party turns'.¹⁹²

Acrimony on the issue in Yorkshire was maintained by contested attempts to levy church rates in Otley, Dewsbury, Wakefield and Leeds. Otley's contest, which saw the Whig squire F. H. Fawkes lead the pro-rate party, revealed the divisions the issue could cause within the local liberal ranks.¹⁹³ At the Bradford election of early 1835, dissenters unsuccessfully ran George Hadfield as a pro-disestablishment candidate,

¹⁸⁹ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁹⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, May 10th 1834, p. 2; *Bradford Observer*, July 24th 1834, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ West Riding Congregational Union, *Nonconformity to Ecclesiastical Establishments: The Third Circular Letter of the Ministers and Delegates of the Congregational Union for the West Riding of Yorkshire, Read at their Public Meeting held in Wakefield, Wednesday September 24th 1834* (Idle, 1834).

¹⁹² *Leeds Mercury*, May 17th 1834, p. 5.

¹⁹³ *Leeds Mercury*, August 16th 1834, p. 8; September 20th 1834, p. 5; December 27th 1834, p. 8; April 25th 1835, p. 8.

thereby allowing a Tory victory.¹⁹⁴ For Morpeth, these were difficult political developments. When canvassing Bradford at the West Riding election of January 1835, he faced some testing questions from Godwin on dissenting issues. Although he satisfied Godwin by declaring his opposition to the current system of church rates, he faced further questions as to why he voted for Althorp's measure. He replied that he could not leave the maintenance of parish churches to chance.¹⁹⁵ This desire to strengthen the Church was at odds with many of his constituents. When asked whether he would support disestablishment on his next canvass in April, he bluntly replied 'never'. The *Bradford Observer* declared that he was 'far too conservative of the Establishments, and no part of his speech... excited greater disapprobation than that in which he declared his unalterable attachment to a state religion'.¹⁹⁶

These problems should not be exaggerated. The critical comments about the Whigs in the Yorkshire press were partly designed to pressurise the Government, and did not necessarily represent deep hostility. Morpeth achieved convincing victories in the 1835 elections on the back of solid liberal and dissenting support. As previously noted, even the militant George Hadfield gave him his endorsement. Dissenters could still feel that the Whigs offered a far better prospect for their interests than the Tories; they had accordingly rallied to them during Peel's brief ministry of 1834-35.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, there was a sense among them that the Whigs were on probation. As will be seen below, the Government's subsequent failure to satisfy dissent fractured Yorkshire liberalism in the later 1830s. For the moment, however, these brewing troubles were contained.

Whiggery Assailed: Conservative and Radical Opposition, 1830-1837

To be politically significant, the tensions within liberalism had to be matched by a credible Conservative challenge. Unfortunately for Morpeth, from being in a moribund state in 1832, Yorkshire Toryism grew in strength in the mid-1830s. Having not seriously expected victory at the 1835 contest, the Tories were

¹⁹⁴ D. G. Wright, 'A Radical Borough: Parliamentary Politics in Bradford, 1832-1841', *Northern History*, 4 (1969), 140.

¹⁹⁵ *Bradford Observer*, January 8th 1835, p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ *Bradford Observer*, May 7th 1835, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹⁷ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, p. 49.

encouraged by the fact that Wortley gained a respectable 40% of the vote. Lady Wharncliffe reported that her son was ‘doing himself great credit... it is believed at the next election he is sure of coming in’.¹⁹⁸ This prediction was not far wrong. Although Wortley was once again beaten at the general election of 1837, he substantially reduced the liberal majority, polling only a thousand votes less than Morpeth and just four hundred less than Strickland.¹⁹⁹ This section aims to explain this revival.

In purely electoral terms, it had much to do with the importance of voter registration, rightly seen by Philip Salmon as crucial to West Riding politics in this decade. The post-1832 electoral system required each county elector to register their entitlement to vote. Should this entitlement be objected to, it had to be defended in the annual revision courts. The whole business was costly and time-consuming. As a result, registration devolved onto committed activists, who naturally tried to register their own voters and object to others, contributing further to electoral partisanship.²⁰⁰ The Conservatives established a network of effective Associations for this purpose; one was formed in the West Riding in April 1835.²⁰¹ The liberals quickly countered by forming the West Riding Reform and Registration Association (W. R. R. R. A) under Fawkes’ chairmanship. This operated alongside borough organisations whose work extended to the county electorate, such as the Bradford Reform Society, which was led by Robert Milligan, Henry Forbes and Joseph Farrar. Between them, the two parties added a staggering 10,000 voters to the West Riding register in 1835.²⁰²

Salmon records that the period from 1835 to 1837 saw the West Riding Conservatives achieve comparatively more success on the register, gaining a reported 2,000 votes and successfully striking out three times as many electors on the opposing side than

¹⁹⁸ Wharncliffe Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WHM/693/1244, Lady Wharncliffe to Lady Erne, April 25th 1835.

¹⁹⁹ At the 1837 election, the result was 12,576 votes for Morpeth, 11,892 votes for Strickland and 11,489 votes for Wortley.

²⁰⁰ Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 174-82 for the West Riding and throughout for the link between the registration system and partisanship.

²⁰¹ Matthew Cragoe, ‘The Great Reform Act and the Modernization of British Politics: The Impact of Conservative Associations, 1835-41’, *Journal of British Studies*, 47, 3 (2008), 581-603; Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, p. 176.

²⁰² Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 176-77; Records of the Bradford Reform Society (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford), DB4/C1/2, Minute Book, minutes for February 7th 1835, July 4th 1836.

their liberal rivals. This was clearly reflected in Wortley's improved result at the poll.²⁰³ New claims, too, were biased in their favour. This was perhaps because the Conservative Party's previously poor state had left many of their supporters off the register, and hence they were able to play catch-up.²⁰⁴ It may also have been the result of superior organisation on their side. The heterogeneous nature of Yorkshire liberalism meant that the W. R. R. A. was always a troubled body. Urban activists seem to have neglected the county registration to concentrate on the borough contests, whilst the urban liberal leaders were likewise more inclined to subscribe funds to the local borough organisations than to the W. R. R. A. The latter was left in the hands of Whig squires like Fawkes and Charles Wood, who were perhaps temperamentally unsuited to the task.²⁰⁵

However, a study of registration can only go so far in explaining the dynamic of West Riding politics. It may explain how people came to vote, but it cannot explain why they did so. The factors motivating liberal electors were explored above. It is now necessary to turn to the politics and beliefs of their opponents. Robert Stewart has argued that the 1830s saw the Conservative Party increasingly become a landed and Anglican force.²⁰⁶ This was not entirely the case in the West Riding; Sarah Richardson has shown that the Conservatives also gained a majority of the voters in some of the region's urban and manufacturing areas.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, by the mid-1830s the Conservatives certainly had solid support in rural areas and from the Anglican clergy. Writing in 1835, Georgiana Carlisle recorded great opposition to Morpeth 'amongst the clergy and the farmers'.²⁰⁸

This reflects the dominance of two issues in Conservative politics in this decade: agricultural protection, and the defence of the Established Church and constitution. Farmers who had supported the Whigs over parliamentary reform now turned to the

²⁰³ Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, p. 178.

²⁰⁴ Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 78-80 (for the time-lag in the register on a national scale); p. 181 (for new claims in the West Riding being biased in favour of the Tories).

²⁰⁵ Hickleton MSS (Borthwick Institute for Archives, York), A4/35, Sir F. L. Wood to Charles Wood, May 6th [1839]; A4/40, Charles Wood to 6th Earl Fitzwilliam, [probably 1865], setting out the history of organisational politics in the West Riding. This is also the broad argument made in Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 179-82.

²⁰⁶ Robert Stewart, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830-1867* (London, 1978), p. 155.

²⁰⁷ Richardson, 'Independence and Deference', pp. 232-43.

²⁰⁸ Devonshire MSS (Chatsworth), 6th Duke of Devonshire Group, II, 3312, Georgiana Carlisle to Blanche Burlington, May 5th 1835.

Conservatives to defend the Corn Law.²⁰⁹ The importance of the free trade ideal to Yorkshire liberalism ensured that this development was marked in the Riding. Wortley felt that he enjoyed a ‘great body of support’ in agricultural areas at the 1835 election, whilst well-connected agriculturalist reformers such as Fawkes also reported that the farmers were largely against Morpeth.²¹⁰

It was, however, the ‘Church in Danger’ cry which most benefited the Riding’s Conservatives. In particular, they reacted to the events of 1834-35, which saw national politics turn on the Whigs’ commitment to the idea of appropriating the surplus revenues of the Church of Ireland for the good of the whole Irish population, Protestant and Catholic. The Melbourne administration of 1835 was founded on this principle.²¹¹ This was seen by Conservatives as a direct threat to the Establishment. Significantly, the Whigs achieved office in concord with Daniel O’Connell’s Irish Catholic party, who agreed to work with them to oppose Peel in the ‘Lichfield House Compact’ of February 1835. It thus seemed to Conservatives that the Whigs were willing to endanger the Established Church through alliance with a Catholic who was openly hostile to the Union between England and Ireland. Peel’s enforced resignation in April re-enforced these fears.

Revealingly, whilst the Riding’s Tories had not been able to find a candidate in January 1835 when Peel was in office, the Whigs’ alliance with O’Connell saw them very quickly rally to the defence of the Church. When they asked Wortley to stand against Morpeth in April, Lord Wharncliffe reported that although he did not wish his son to contest the Riding, ‘the feeling is so strong that... I could not throw cold water upon the scheme’.²¹² Nationally, the by-elections accompanying Melbourne’s new Ministry saw vigorous Conservative opposition to the Whigs based around Irish policy.²¹³ Morpeth’s appointment as Irish Secretary ensured that the West Riding

²⁰⁹ Travis Crosby, *English Farmers and the Politics of Protection, 1815-1852* (Hassocks, 1977), pp. 85-104.

²¹⁰ Wharncliffe Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WHM/693/1245, Hon. James Stuart Wortley to Lord Wharncliffe, April 25th 1835; Carlisle MSS, J19/1/9/18, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, May 4th 1835 (reporting Fawkes’ opinions).

²¹¹ Brent, *Liberal Anglican Politics*, pp. 97-105, and see the discussion of this issue in this work, pp. 63-64.

²¹² Wharncliffe Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WHM/693/1240, Lord Wharncliffe to Lady Wharncliffe, April 14th 1835.

²¹³ Stewart, *Foundations of the Conservative Party*, pp. 96-98.

became a key battleground in this political fight. This has been largely overlooked by previous historians of West Riding politics, which is startling given the pivotal importance of Ireland for party warfare in the region over the next few years.

The Conservative election strategy revolved almost entirely around the threat the Whigs posed to the Irish Church and thus the Union. Writing to a friend, Charlotte Brontë hoped that voters would ‘stand by their country and their religion in this day of danger’, whilst her father Patrick, who played a central role in local campaigning, symbolically flew a Tory flag from the top of his church at Haworth.²¹⁴ Morpeth’s brother-in-law William Lascelles (who sparked a family drama by proposing Wortley) suggested that the Whigs intended to plunder the Church and asked voters not to leave Ireland ‘to the tender mercies of Mr. O’Connell’. Wortley criticised Morpeth’s vision of a harmonious Ireland as hopelessly utopian, and highlighted the threat the Whigs’ plans posed to the Establishment.²¹⁵

All of this was done fairly politely on the hustings. Wortley and Morpeth had been close friends at university, and neither wished to impugn the other. Conservative propaganda, however, attacked Morpeth and the Whigs with an intense ferocity. It clearly attempted to rally the anti-Catholic sentiment which pervaded nineteenth-century Britain.²¹⁶ The Bradford Tory politician and squire William Busfield [later Busfield-Ferrand] argued that a vote for Morpeth was a vote to subordinate Protestantism to Popery.²¹⁷ In Halifax, the Tories apparently circulated leaflets which listed a series of indecent questions asked by Catholic priests to women in confession.²¹⁸ Posters, such as that reproduced at the end of the chapter as Illustration Two, accused the Whigs of placing Catholicism above Protestantism. One stated that a vote for Morpeth would overthrow the Reformation and see the country fall once

²¹⁴ Charlotte Brontë to Ellen Nussey, May 8th 1835, in Margaret Smith (ed.), *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, Volume One (1829-1847)* (Oxford, 1995), p. 138; Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (London, 1995), pp. 222-23; *Bradford Observer*, April 30th 1835, p. 4. My thanks to Marthe Tholen for the references to the Brontës.

²¹⁵ Reports of the West Riding nomination in *Bradford Observer*, May 7th 1835, p. 4; *Leeds Mercury*, May 9th 1835, p. 6.

²¹⁶ For the prevalence of anti-Catholicism in early-Victorian Britain, see John Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (Oxford, 1991), *passim* and esp. pp. 83-87 for the relationship between anti-Catholicism and the political debates on the Irish Church in the mid-1830s.

²¹⁷ Speech of W. Busfield at the 1835 West Riding election cited in J. T. Ward, *W. B. Ferrand, The Working Man’s Friend, 1809-1889* (East Linton, 2002), p. 16.

²¹⁸ *Halifax and Huddersfield Express and Weekly Advertiser*, May 14th 1835, p. 3.

more into Catholic hands.²¹⁹ This propaganda was successful. One elector suggested that ‘the Whigs have associated themselves with the Papists to disseminate the doctrines of Popery’.²²⁰ The Sheffield based religious controversialist Tresham Gregg wrote to Morpeth vowing to ‘stir up our Christian world to make a holy stand against your Lordship’s dangerous policy’.²²¹

The focus of these attacks was often the Whigs’ alliance with O’Connell, who became something of a bugbear for the Tories. Nationally, O’Connell was portrayed by unsympathetic commentators such as the caricaturist John Doyle (H.B.) as the malevolent and devious force behind the Whig Government.²²² This notion was given full expression in Yorkshire. In a common critique, the Tory *Sheffield Mercury* suggested that ‘Lord Morpeth must be regarded as the puppet of O’Connell’.²²³ Importantly, this line of attack called into question Morpeth’s independence as a public figure. The *Leeds Intelligencer* argued that he had no opinion of his own, and instead ‘an amazing facility for taking up and adapting those of others. Such facility must prove invaluable in the tail of a Ministry of which O’Connell is the concealed head’.²²⁴

As independence was considered to be a key trait of manliness, Conservatives unsurprisingly attacked Morpeth’s alleged dependence on O’Connell through the notion that he was unmanly. Once more, the personal was linked to the political. In a series of biting propaganda pieces, Morpeth’s opponents presented him as boyish and effeminate. One poster nattily described him as ‘the admirer of Dan, who scarcely is worthy the name of a man’.²²⁵ In this, they may well have taken some inspiration from John Doyle, who presented Morpeth as the boy to O’Connell’s man in a series of devastating cartoons.²²⁶ Lacking the ability to represent this idea visually, the

²¹⁹ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees), Political Posters, KC174/84, ‘Electors of the West Riding’; KC174/85, ‘To the Electors of the West Riding’ [1835].

²²⁰ Letter signed ‘An Elector of the West Riding’, in *Leeds Intelligencer*, May 9th 1835, p. 3

²²¹ J19/1/11/25, Tresham Gregg to Lord Morpeth, March 26th 1836.

²²² J. R. McCord, ‘The Image in England: The Cartoons of HB’, in Maurice O’Connell (ed.), *Daniel O’Connell: Political Pioneer* (Dublin, 1991), 57-71.

²²³ *Sheffield Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 4.

²²⁴ *Leeds Intelligencer*, April 25th 1835, p. 2.

²²⁵ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees), KC174/102, ‘Electors, Attention’ (undated poster).

²²⁶ See for instance John Doyle’s caricature ‘Oliver being introduced to the respectable old gentleman’, which has Morpeth as Oliver being paraded before O’Connell’s malevolent Fagin (H.B.’s Political

Yorkshire Tories focused on seemingly unmanly traits in Morpeth's behaviour such as his allegedly immature oratorical style. The *Sheffield Mercury* described this as 'effeminate twaddle... scarcely equal to the meridian of lady's boarding school'.²²⁷

One particularly common approach was to highlight his love of poetry. This led to election posters like that reproduced below as Illustration Three. This purports to be a poem written by Morpeth, signed (for obvious reasons) MorePat. It starts by mocking his poetical effusions ('Electors of Yorkshire a poet am I / and write pretty verses to make ladies sigh') before highlighting his dependency on O'Connell.²²⁸ Poetry and other scholarly activities were associated with an effeminate culture of leisure rather than manly graft.²²⁹ Emphasising this aspect of Morpeth's life helped imply that he did not possess the strength to combine the duties of the Riding with his new post.²³⁰ It was also used to suggest that he was a vain man who placed his own appearance above Protestant principles. The *Sheffield Mercury* suggested that his desire to publish his own verses showed that he was 'more intent upon the figure than the fact'. It then pointedly asked whether the Irish Church was to be 'handed over through the effeminate agencies of a stripling Whig to the tender mercies of O'Connell'.²³¹

These criticisms stung. Morpeth was forced to directly defend his versifying at the 1835 West Riding contest. More importantly, he and his supporters were also obliged to stress his support for the Establishment. The *Leeds Mercury* countered Tory allegations that Morpeth had turned Catholic by assuring its readers that he remained a staunch Churchman.²³² The Anglican support which Morpeth had previously been

Sketches, No. 576, published by T. McLean, February 26th 1839). My thanks here to Dr Christopher Ridgway of Castle Howard for facilitating access to the house's collection of Doyle's cartoons and for sharing his own research into artistic representations of Morpeth. This has revealed that Doyle's frequent depictions of Morpeth were largely focused around his boyish physiognomy, and has indicated that the critique of his manliness in these cartoons was even more prevalent than I had originally conceived.

²²⁷ *Sheffield Mercury*, April 4th 1840, p. 4. For a similar line of attack, see *Leeds Intelligencer*, April 25th 1835, p. 2.

²²⁸ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees), KC174/88, 'To the Electors of the West Riding of Yorkshire' (1835).

²²⁹ Ruth Clayton-Windscheffel has shown that Gladstone likewise suffered from accusations of effeminacy as a result of his scholarly activities; Ruth Clayton-Windscheffel, *Reading Gladstone* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 197-202.

²³⁰ *Leeds Intelligencer*, April 25th 1835, p. 2; May 9th 1835, p. 2.

²³¹ *Sheffield Mercury*, May 2nd 1835, p. 4.

²³² *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1835, p. 5; Election speech of Lord Morpeth reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 2 1835, p. 6.

able to gather from his piety, however, had now begun to evaporate. The *Mercury's* defences probably only served to emphasise the religious differences between Morpeth and his nonconformist supporters.

Morpeth's position as Irish Secretary ensured that Ireland was once more a key feature in the 1837 West Riding election, when the Tory lines of attack on this issue were very similar to what they had been previously. The liberals once more attempted to counter the Tory threat by campaigning around the idea of 'Justice to Ireland'.²³³ Yet highlighting this issue probably benefited the Tory candidate Wortley more than it did Morpeth and his colleague Strickland. Whilst, as noted above, the region's liberals did give their support to the Whigs' strategy on Ireland, as an issue this was arguably never capable of rallying them to the same degree as the 'no monopoly' cry. However much they believed in religious tolerance and social harmony, it was always harder to enthuse liberals about a policy concerned with men in another country, and who (more pertinently) professed a religion many of them despised.²³⁴

Indeed, the focus on Ireland may even have contributed to a diminution of support among the Wesleyan Methodists, a notably anti-Catholic sect. The Tory Wesleyan leadership strongly attacked the Whigs' policies on the Irish Church.²³⁵ One Wesleyan Conservative appealed directly to his brethren on this issue in a poster of 1835, suggesting that Morpeth and the Whigs wished to destroy Protestantism and Methodism. The poster employed the old anti-Catholic trope of claiming that the Pope was the Antichrist, suggesting that Morpeth wished to 'seat the Man of Sin on his anti-Christian throne, as the destroyer of our common scriptural Christianity'.²³⁶ Research by J. A. Hargreaves has shown that Methodist county voters in the Halifax district gradually drifted towards Conservatism in this period. Between 1835 and 1837, the Wesleyan vote went from being nearly 2-to-1 in favour of the liberals to

²³³ *Bradford Observer*, July 20th 1837, p. 5; Report of the canvass in the supplement to the *Leeds Mercury*, July 22nd 1837, pp. 1-3.

²³⁴ The weakness of 'Justice to Ireland' as an electoral cry on a national scale is highlighted in Close, 'The General Elections of 1835 and 1837', pp. 404-08.

²³⁵ Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society*, pp. 184-85.

²³⁶ Raymond Burton Collection, West Riding election posters, 1832-37 (Borthwick Institute for Archives, York), folio 9.4, 'To the Protestants of the West Riding of Yorkshire, especially to the WESLEYAN METHODISTS', Leeds, May 8th 1835. The 'Man of Sin' here is a biblical reference to the Antichrist, found in Thessalonians. My thanks for help in interpretation here to Adam Morton, whose own forthcoming York thesis on early-modern images of the Papacy demonstrates how the Pope was widely depicted as the Antichrist by seventeenth-century English Protestants.

around equal, a proportion retained in the 1841 election.²³⁷ It seems plausible to suggest that it was the Whigs' Irish policy which caused these voters to look more favourably on the Tories.

Nevertheless, the Conservative revival cannot be attributed to religious factors alone. It was powerfully aided by developments within Yorkshire radicalism, notably the inter-related factory reform and anti-poor law campaigns. These movements evolved in opposition to local liberalism and Whig Government, and are therefore revealing about the reception of Whiggery in this period. The factory movement in Yorkshire was sparked by Richard Oastler's famed letters on 'Yorkshire Slavery', which appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* in late 1830. Oastler, a Tory, highlighted the long hours and grim conditions of children working in the region's factories, and called for statutory limitations on child labour. He directly appealed to Morpeth as the region's M.P., calling on him to take up the factory cause.²³⁸

These letters propelled Oastler to the leadership of what was to become a large popular campaign for state intervention in factory working hours. Although he worked alongside sympathetic elite figures such as the manufacturer John Fielden of Todmorden and the Anglican Revd. G. S. Bull of Bierley, the movement was composed predominantly of ordinary working men, drawing particular strength from adult factory operatives and out of work or underemployed weavers. They formed the backbone of local short-time committees, set up across the West Riding to campaign for factory reform in the course of 1831.²³⁹ The movement grew in the context of changes in the textile industry, particularly the gradual replacement of domestic outwork with production within factories. This process was accompanied by widespread mechanisation, which favoured the employment of women and children,

²³⁷ J. A. Hargreaves, 'Methodism and Electoral Politics in Halifax, 1832-1848', *Northern History*, 35 (1999), 139-60. Hargreaves' suggestive study is based on a relatively small sample of around 40 Wesleyan votes, and is not therefore necessarily a statistically reliable guide to the rest of the immense West Riding electorate.

²³⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, October 16th 1830, p. 4.

²³⁹ For general works on the factory movement and its leaders, see J. T. Ward, *The Factory Movement, 1830-1855* (London, 1962); Robert Gray, *The Factory Question and Industrial England, 1830-1860* (Cambridge, 1996); Cecil Driver, *Tory Radical: The Life of Richard Oastler* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970 (1st published 1946)); S. A. Weaver, *John Fielden and the Politics of Popular Radicalism, 1832-1847* (Oxford, 1987); J. C. Gill, *The Ten-Hours Parson: Christian Social Action in the Eighteen-Thirties* (London, 1959).

who were better able to work with machinery and cost less.²⁴⁰ These developments by no means applied to the whole of the industry, but many of Yorkshire's major employers were at the vanguard of change. John Marshall's factories at Leeds, for instance, employed at least 260 children between the ages of 10 and 13, and were heavily machine-oriented.²⁴¹

Yorkshire's factory reformers somewhat naively hoped that limitations on child labour would be beneficial to adults, by stimulating greater demand for adult labour and bringing about a *de facto* reduction in the adult working day. These hopes were naturally economically motivated. They no doubt appealed to the hard-hit domestic weavers who had previously formed the backbone of the textile industry. However, these ideas were also rooted in concerns about manliness and independence. As Robert Gray has argued, the movement drew on old radical arguments that labour entitled the working man to respect. By taking away that labour, mill-owners could be presented as having 'robbed' workmen of their independence, violating their rights and their masculinity. Factory reform was seen as a way of restoring the balance between capital and labour and therefore protecting the independence of workmen.²⁴²

Nevertheless, there was genuine humanitarianism here as well, with real concerns about the physical and moral effects of factory work on children. Factory reformers held a religiously-motivated belief that the workplace should be subject to a moral economy. In their eyes, mill-owners guilty of inflicting cruel conditions on children were tyrants, who had placed the pursuit of Mammon before their duties to God. Oastler and Bull argued that it was the duty of all Christians to come to the aid of suffering factory children.²⁴³ At a short-time meeting in April 1832, Bull justified his attendance on the grounds of 'religion and humanity'.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ Ward, *Factory Movement*, pp. 1-31.

²⁴¹ Papers of John Marshall & Co. (Brotherton Library, University of Leeds), MS200/18/11, Replies to Queries by Inspector of Factories, 1833, returned January 11th 1834. A general history of the Marshall's including their role in pioneering technical change is provided by W. G. Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds: Flax-Spinners, 1788-1886* (Cambridge, 1960).

²⁴² Gray, *Factory Question*, pp. 23-37.

²⁴³ Gray, *Factory Question*, p. 43; Gill, *Ten-Hours Parson*, pp. 37-47.

²⁴⁴ *Leeds Intelligencer*, April 26th 1832, p. 2.

Although the factory campaign initially received a sympathetic reception, it quickly became subject to political tensions. Oastler's 'Yorkshire Slavery' letters attacked what he saw as the hypocrisy of the dissenting mill-owners, who campaigned against slavery abroad whilst the children in their own factories were treated little better than slaves themselves.²⁴⁵ Throughout 1831 factory reformers disrupted anti-slavery meetings as a way of highlighting these faulty moral priorities. This made it difficult for liberals to support their campaign.²⁴⁶ Meanwhile, in February 1831 the radical M.P. Sir John Hobhouse announced his intention to bring in a bill to ban labour by children under the age of 9 and restrict the labour of under 18's to 11.5 hours on weekdays. The cautious *Leeds Mercury* asked for the opinions of 'practical men'. However, many influential liberal manufacturers opposed the Bill, with William Ackroyd of Otley and James Akroyd of Halifax leading a counter-campaign. They denied the allegations of cruelty, and argued that foreign competition would take advantage of restrictions on child labour, resulting in disaster for the industry and hence their workpeople.²⁴⁷

This was not mere rhetoric; many mill-owners were influenced by their religion to use their economic position for the good of society. Employers such as Marshall undertook a variety of paternalistic projects for their workforce.²⁴⁸ In this light, the welfare of their employees was dependent on the success of the firm. More generally, employers resented the idea of state interference in their business, and many preferred to come to a private understanding with their employees over hours of labour. The Marshalls, for instance, voluntarily reduced their hours of work from 69 to 66 a week in 1834.²⁴⁹ Whatever the motives, however, the result of manufacturing opposition was that Edward Baines came out against Hobhouse's Bill in the *Mercury*, turning him into a hated figure for the factory reformers.²⁵⁰ The factory movement was increasingly being drawn into party politics. The *Leeds Intelligencer* immersed itself in the short-time campaign, delighting in the opportunity to smear its hated liberal

²⁴⁵ The factory reformers' use of the language of slavery is detailed in Gray, *Factory Question*, pp. 37-47.

²⁴⁶ Godwin, 'Reminiscences', Vol. II, p. 550.

²⁴⁷ Ward, *Factory Movement*, pp. 36-38.

²⁴⁸ Gray, *Factory Question*, pp. 109-20.

²⁴⁹ Rimmer, *Marshall's of Leeds*, pp. 106-07, 215; Papers of John Marshall & Co. (Brotherton Library, University of Leeds), MS/200/18/9, 'Eleven Hours Time – Notice to the Workpeople of Messrs Marshall & Co., March 1846'.

²⁵⁰ Read, *Press and People*, p. 124.

rival.²⁵¹ Oastler spent the next decade attacking Yorkshire's dissenting liberals as sham Christians, 'Sunday Saints' and 'weekday devils' who put on a show of piety and philanthropy in public whilst being guilty of supporting cruelty and tyranny in private.²⁵²

When Hobhouse's Bill was amended in Parliament to apply only to the cotton industry, the factory movement rallied around a new standard of a ten-hour day. Believing that a reformed parliament would be unlikely to pass this, Oastler campaigned against parliamentary reform, picking up support from groups such as the Leeds Radical Political Union who were disappointed with the extent of the Reform Bill. The factory movement found a new Parliamentary champion in Michael Sadler, who introduced a ten-hours bill in March 1832. Sadler's Bill was widely attacked by manufacturers, who saw his plan as completely impractical. It was forced by the Whigs into Committee, seen by the factory movement to herald its defeat.²⁵³ These party divisions were most clearly exposed at the Leeds election of 1832, when Sadler unsuccessfully stood against John Marshall Junior and T. B. Macaulay. Factory reform was naturally a vital issue in the campaign, with alleged cruelty in Marshall's mills highlighted throughout.²⁵⁴

The factory movement had thus evolved in opposition to Yorkshire liberalism. Morpeth had found himself in the middle of this political warfare. As Peter Mandler has detailed, he played an important role in the early history of the factory question and was relatively sympathetic to the reform movement. He presented several petitions, worked alongside Hobhouse to produce the legislation of early 1831, and

²⁵¹ For the bitter rivalry between the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Leeds Intelligencer*, see David Thornton, 'Edward Baines, Editor: Great Man, Great Liar? The Press Assessment', *Thoresby Miscellany*, 2nd series, 14 (2004) 37-66.

²⁵² Richard Oastler, *A Letter to Those Sleek, Pious, Holy and Devout Dissenters... The Shareholders in the Bradford Observer* (Bradford, 1834), p. 5. For similar themes, see Richard Oastler, *The Unjust Judge, or the 'Sign of the Judge's Skin': A Letter to George Goodman Esq., Mayor of Leeds... with a Postscript, Congratulating his Worship, on the Wonderful Discovery of his Species, made by Lord Morpeth, at the late Civic and Ministerial Guzzling* (Leeds, 1836), pp. 9-10; Richard Oastler, *A Well-Seasoned Christmas Pie For 'The Great Liar of the North', Prepared, Cooked, Baked and Presented by Richard Oastler* (Bradford, 1834), *passim*; Richard Oastler, *The Huddersfield Dissenters Stark Staring Mad! Because the Mask has Fallen! The Fourth Letter to Edward Baines Esq. M.P.* (Leeds, 1835).

²⁵³ Ward, *Factory Movement*, pp. 42-78.

²⁵⁴ Derek Fraser, 'The Fruits of Reform: Leeds Politics in the Eighteen-Thirties', *Northern History*, 7 (1972), 94-97.

sat on Sadler's committee of 1832.²⁵⁵ Mandler has presented his response to the issue as one of a practical legislator who was forging a new 'Foxite' style of centralised social legislation, the opposite of the emotional, religious attitude of evangelical factory reformers such as Lord Ashley.²⁵⁶ In fact, as noted in the previous chapter, Morpeth's response was a largely Christian and humanitarian one. To stop children being overworked seemed to him to be a 'great and humane duty' to which Parliament was called 'as men and as Christians'. In June 1832, he presented a petition from Yorkshire in favour of Sadler's bill signed by over 180,000 people, agreeing that 'humanity demanded a speedy corrective to the evils of which the petition referred'.²⁵⁷

In theory, then, Morpeth might have been a potential ally of the factory reformers, and as Mandler rightly records was initially seen as such.²⁵⁸ Yet his position within Yorkshire liberalism ensured that this relationship quickly collapsed. Even in 1831, one local radical published a critique of his willingness to present petitions from the 'tyrant' Huddersfield mill-owners.²⁵⁹ It is this local context, largely missing from Mandler's account, which led the factory reformers to distrust Whiggery.²⁶⁰ When Hobhouse's Bill was mutilated, they blamed pressure from Yorkshire's liberal manufacturers, stinging Morpeth into a public denial in the *Mercury* in November 1831. However, in an unfortunate echo of the *Mercury's* position, he referred to the need to pay attention to the 'delicate' state of trade and listen to 'practical experience', leading Oastler to riposte that he was placing manufacturing profits above moral principles.²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ Peter Mandler, 'Cain and Abel: Two Aristocrats and the Early-Victorian Factory Acts', *Historical Journal* 27:1 (1984), 83-109. See also the discussion of factory reform in Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 85-92.

²⁵⁶ Mandler, 'Cain and Abel', 84-85.

²⁵⁷ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third series, IX, February 1st 1832, col. 1092; XIII, June 27th 1832, cols 1054-55.

²⁵⁸ Mandler, 'Cain and Abel', 90-91.

²⁵⁹ John Hanson, *Humanity versus Tyranny! Being an Expose of a Petition, Presented to the House of Commons by Lord Morpeth, August 3rd 1831, from Ten Factory-Mongers Resident in Huddersfield and its Neighbourhood* (Leeds, 1831).

²⁶⁰ The links between distrust of local liberalism and distrust of the Whig Government over the factory issue are highlighted in J. A. Jowitt, 'Parliamentary Politics in Halifax, 1832-1847', *Northern History*, 12 (1976), 172-201. This suggests that the factory movement's opposition to the Whigs in Halifax was mediated by their dislike of the Akroyds, who were leading local liberals and manufacturers strongly opposed to factory reform.

²⁶¹ Letter of Lord Morpeth, *Leeds Mercury*, November 5th 1831, p. 3; Letter of Richard Oastler, *Leeds Intelligencer*, November 10th 1831, p. 3.

Oastler challenged Morpeth to prove his commitment to factory reform by publicly protesting against the factory system. This he consistently refused to do. Despite his sympathy with the factory movement, he would not commit to its ten hour standard, and did not denounce the manufacturers. This seemed to factory reformers to be designed to placate his liberal supporters. The *Leeds Intelligencer* warned Morpeth that ‘the game he is playing is understood two hundred miles off’.²⁶² His association with the hated *Leeds Mercury* did no favours to his credibility with the movement. One radical recorded that he ‘viewed with suspicion every man eulogised by [Baines]’. The factory reformers were increasingly beginning to feel that, as Oastler later put it, there were ‘strings and wires reaching from the *Mercury* office to St. Stephen’s’.²⁶³ At the 1832 West Riding election, Morpeth once more refused to pledge himself to a ten-hours measure, despite being asked to do so by Bull.²⁶⁴

Morpeth’s relationship with the factory movement reached a new low in 1833. In January, the short-time campaign received new impetus from the report of Sadler’s Committee, described by one historian as a ‘massive indictment of industrial conditions’.²⁶⁵ With Sadler out of Parliament, the movement responded by finding a new champion in Morpeth’s old university friend Lord Ashley. Morpeth, however, also hoped to take Sadler’s place. He had declared that he would act on the factory question if Sadler was defeated at Leeds.²⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the *Leeds Mercury* had declared its hope that he would fulfil this pledge.²⁶⁷ Factory reformers interpreted this to mean that Morpeth would propose an eleven-hour day, which would then be trimmed in Parliament so as to present no real reduction at all. Oastler warned his followers to beware of Baines’ ‘Whig trap’, baited with ‘that excellent, amiable and able young nobleman Lord Morpeth’.²⁶⁸

²⁶² *Leeds Intelligencer*, March 22nd 1832, p. 2.

²⁶³ Opinion of John Ayrey, cited in Ward, *Factory Movement*, p. 71; Letter of Richard Oastler, *Leeds Intelligencer*, February 23rd 1833, p. 4.

²⁶⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, December 22nd 1832, p. 8.

²⁶⁵ Ward, *Factory Movement*, p. 61.

²⁶⁶ Broughton Papers (British Library), Add. MS 47226, 169, Lord Morpeth to Sir John Hobhouse, January 19th 1833.

²⁶⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, January 12th 1833, p. 4.

²⁶⁸ *Leeds Intelligencer*, January 17th 1833, p. 2 and report of Oastler’s speech at a short-time meeting in Bradford on January 14th 1833 in the same issue, p. 4.

In February 1833, speaking in the Commons Morpeth announced his intention to produce in his own measure on the same day that Ashley declared that he would bring forward a ten-hours bill, and moreover recorded his intention to produce his bill six days before Ashley's.²⁶⁹ His actions were a tactical disaster, seemingly confirming the idea that he was the tool of the mill-owners, an accusation repeated in *The Times*. Ashley protested to Morpeth that he seemed 'greatly embarrassed by the interests of your constituents', whilst the *Intelligencer* felt that Morpeth's plan had been dictated by Baines.²⁷⁰ The outcry was such that Morpeth dropped his proposal.

Taken in the context of Morpeth's position within Yorkshire liberalism, these actions destroyed any chance of an alliance between the Whigs and the factory movement. Oastler stated that Morpeth's relations with the liberal manufacturers meant that he 'was in fact *their champion*, and consequently cannot be ours'.²⁷¹ In fact, there is little evidence to suggest that Morpeth's actions were the result of his links to Yorkshire's manufacturers, a notion he hotly refuted in Parliament.²⁷² Later in 1833 he voted against the move to place Ashley's bill into a commission, and called for an eleven-hours limitation as a compromise measure, the position he held to throughout his lifetime. As well as banning the employment of young children outright Morpeth's ideal legislation would have imposed limitations on 14-18 year olds, a fairly strong position which would probably not have been welcomed by the mill-owners.²⁷³

Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that Morpeth's relations with manufacturers such as the Marshalls did shape his views on the factory question. Knowing these men as he did, he strongly doubted the accounts of cruelty which formed the basis of the factory movement. His proposed eleven-hour legislation merely aimed to eliminate any unusual instances of overwork by reducing the working day to what he believed was the industry average. Importantly, Morpeth believed that the masters were capable of caring for their workpeople themselves. Rather than impose unwelcome

²⁶⁹ Ward, *Factory Movement*, p. 87.

²⁷⁰ *The Times*, February 7th 1833, p. 4. J19/1/6/70, Lord Ashley to Lord Morpeth, February 6th 1833; *Leeds Intelligencer*, February 14th 1833, p. 3.

²⁷¹ Letter of Richard Oastler, *Leeds Intelligencer*, February 23rd 1833, p. 4.

²⁷² Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third series, XV, February 8th 1833, cols. 390-91.

²⁷³ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third series, XVI, April 3rd 1833, cols. 99-100; XIX, July 5th 1833, cols 230-31.

legislation on them, he aimed to work with them, believing that they ought to have a chance to fulfil their moral duties.²⁷⁴

However, by defining the terms of a debate around a ten-hour day, the factory movement presented Morpeth with a dilemma. He continued to be in ‘sad perplexity’ on the question right into the 1840s.²⁷⁵ Ultimately, however, for Morpeth this was not an issue which turned around hours of labour. As seen in the previous chapter, he felt that the real problems in society were spiritual and moral rather than physical. He thus hoped that the factory system would be leavened by ‘intellectual, moral and religious improvement’, something which he felt that the mill-owners could encourage. This would give labourers a comfort independent of work, whilst also teaching them to be ‘more competent disposers of their own offspring’.²⁷⁶ Morpeth’s approach therefore was not so much a centralising as a localising one, related directly to his wish to produce a benevolent and organic society.

The factory reformers, however, considered his position to be ridiculous; how, they argued, could operatives be expected to attend education at the end of a day of arduous labour?²⁷⁷ Their unwillingness to coalesce with Morpeth reflected their ideology. The language of the movement was one of religiously-infused melodrama. It separated the world into moral absolutes, viewing the demand for ten-hours as one of pure morality and Christian justice.²⁷⁸ Compromise, such as that proposed by Morpeth, was therefore not an option; it was presented as a façade for devious hidden motives, whose proponents needed to be unmasked as hypocritical and unchristian. Oastler wrote to his fellow campaigner John Fielden that ‘the Lord of Hosts is with

²⁷⁴ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, (H.C.), Third Series, XVI, April 3rd 1833, cols. 99-100; XIX, July 5th 1833, cols 230-32.

²⁷⁵ J19/8/11, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 29th 1846.

²⁷⁶ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, (H.C.), Third Series, XIX, July 5th 1833, cols 230-32; Reports of Morpeth’s speeches in *Leeds Mercury*, December 8th 1832, p. 6; December 22nd 1832, p. 8.

²⁷⁷ Speech of Revd. G. S. Bull, *Leeds Intelligencer*, December 27th 1832, p. 4; Richard Oastler, *Eight Letters to the Duke of Wellington: A Petition to the House of Commons: And a Letter to the Editor of the Agricultural and Industrial Magazine* (London, 1835), pp. 75-77.

²⁷⁸ Gray, *Factory Question*, pp. 53-54; Eileen Groth Lyon, *Politicians in the Pulpit: Christian Radicalism in Britain from the Fall of the Bastille to the Disintegration of Chartism* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 134-35.

us', highlighting the need to 'tear off the mask' of their opponents to expose their 'collective and individual villainy'.²⁷⁹

The factory reformers accordingly quickly moved to depict Morpeth as untrustworthy and duplicitous. Responding to Morpeth's *faux pas* in announcing his measure on the same day as Ashley, Oastler painted him as a 'sleek and oily' traitor, who would 'betray the infant's sacred cause, like Judas, with a kiss'. Bull likewise questioned Morpeth's sincerity and character, contrasting his private amiability with his public conduct.²⁸⁰ For Oastler, Morpeth's alliance with what he saw as the murdering dissenting manufacturers of the West Riding literally damned him. He suggested that he would quake at the Day of Judgement, and declared that his 1835 election victory was the work of Satan himself.²⁸¹

This bellicose language served an important political purpose. By casting doubt on Morpeth's earnestness and linking him to the interests of the manufacturers, the factory reformers called into question the Whigs' claims to disinterestedly govern for the general good. After the 1835 election, Bull published a pamphlet satirically entitled *Morpeth, the Friend of the Oppressed*, which contrasted his conduct on factory reform with his populist rhetoric.²⁸² Far from appealing to the people, the actions of Whigs and liberals over the factory question alienated some of the support they had enjoyed over parliamentary reform, ensuring that they were regarded by some working-class radicals with something not far short of hatred.

This hostility was reinforced by Althorp's Factory Act of 1833, which, following the recommendations of the Royal Commission set up to neutralise Ashley, prohibited the employment of under 9's and limited the labour of under 13's to 8 hours. This proposal was disliked by factory reformers because it did not adopt their ten-hour

²⁷⁹ Papers of Fielden Brothers (John Rylands Library, Special Collections, Manchester), FDN/4, Richard Oastler to John Fielden, June 11th 1836.

²⁸⁰ Letter by Richard Oastler, published February 9th 1833, cited in Driver, *Tory Radical*, p. 214; George Stringer Bull, *Factory Children: At A Public Meeting of the Borough of Bradford, held on... February 19th 1833* (1833), p. 11.

²⁸¹ Oastler, *The Unjust Judge*, pp. 9-15; Richard Oastler, *Yorkshire Slavery: the 'devil-to-do' amongst the dissenters at Huddersfield* (Leeds, 1835), p. 5.

²⁸² George Stringer Bull, *Morpeth, The Friend of the Oppressed!* (Leeds, 1835).

standard, offered no prospect of a reduction in adult working hours - and perhaps also because it rather stole their thunder.²⁸³

The result was that the factory movement established an alliance with the Whigs' Tory opponents. This was not the result of any ideological fusion; radicals were generally suspicious of the Tories, whilst Tory leaders sympathetic to the factory movement such as Oastler were rare.²⁸⁴ The alliance was a tactical one based around their mutual antipathy to the Whig Government in general, and to Morpeth in particular. At the May 1835 West Riding election, Morpeth's opponent John Stuart Wortley was seconded by the factory reformer Matthew Thompson. Thompson declared himself to be a former supporter of Morpeth's who had found his conduct on the factory question unsatisfactory. Morpeth managed to dodge the issue, which was in fact declining in importance by 1835.²⁸⁵ In its place came a new, interrelated and more powerful radical campaign: against the New Poor Law.

The New Poor Law (properly the Poor Law Amendment Act) of 1834 was one of the key legislative measures of the Whig Governments of the 1830s. It was designed to address abuses in the pre-1834 system of poor relief, principally the practice of giving outdoor relief to able-bodied men, which critics alleged encouraged a culture of pauperism (and hence higher rates) whilst also inflating agricultural wages. The Act tackled this problem by demanding that all relief take place within workhouses, whose conditions would be made deliberately worse than those outside (the principle of 'less eligibility') to discourage able-bodied scroungers. This system was to be applied uniformly across the country. Parishes were grouped together into new Poor Law Unions, which formed the principal administrative unit of the locality. Ratepayers in these Unions elected a Board of Guardians to supervise the provision of relief, whilst the Guardians themselves were subject to the direction of an (unelected) three-man Poor Law Commission based in London.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Ward, *Factory Movement*, pp. 110-11.

²⁸⁴ Felix Driver, 'Tory Radicalism? Ideology, Strategy and Locality in Popular Politics during the Eighteen-Thirties', *Northern History*, 27 (1991), 120-38.

²⁸⁵ Report of the nomination in *Bradford Observer*, May 7th 1835, p. 4.

²⁸⁶ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 131-39.

Whilst in practice these recommendations were never fully carried out (many unions continued to provide outdoor relief), the Act was seen to herald a revolutionary change in the treatment of poverty. It passed relatively smoothly through the Commons, attracting cross-party support. However outside of Parliament the New Poor Law was subject to a huge amount of resistance, spawning an anti-poor law movement which was particularly virulent in the North.²⁸⁷ Leading the opposition in Yorkshire were Oastler, Bull, Fielden and the short-time committees, who saw in the Law the same uncaring philosophy which they felt had characterised the Whigs' actions over factory reform.²⁸⁸

Despite this continuity with the earlier factory movement, the anti-poor law campaign had its own dynamic and possibly attracted more support. Criticisms of the new Law were diverse. Some ratepayers opposed the Act as an unconstitutional intrusion of the central state into their affairs, particularly resenting the unelected Commission.²⁸⁹ A more trenchant criticism was that the law ignored the poor's divine right to relief in favour of the harsh dictates of political economy.²⁹⁰ The Sheffield campaigner Samuel Roberts, for instance, argued that the law was 'irreconcilable with Christian principles', an attitude shared by Oastler. Yorkshire activists published 'The New Book of Common Prayer', a satirical version of the catechism and liturgy professedly written by the Poor Law Commissioners, thereby very effectively contrasting the cruelty of the law with true Christianity.²⁹¹

Yorkshire campaigners also pointed out that the Law was unsuitable for northern economic and social conditions, a viewpoint shared even by some of its supporters. The abuses which had motivated the legislation were mainly confined to the south of England. Moreover, much northern poverty resulted from cyclical fluctuations in the textile trade. With large numbers of people periodically unemployed, workhouses

²⁸⁷ Nicholas Edsall, *The Anti-Poor Law Movement, 1834-44* (Manchester, 1971); John Knott, *Popular Opposition to the 1834 Poor Law* (London, 1986).

²⁸⁸ Edsall, *Anti-Poor Law Movement*, pp. 53-61.

²⁸⁹ Edsall, *Anti-Poor Law Movement*, pp. 8-10.

²⁹⁰ Lyon, *Politicians in the Pulpit*, pp. 165-90.

²⁹¹ Samuel Roberts, *Lessons for Statesmen, with Anecdotes Respecting Them, Calculated to Preserve the Aristocracy from Destruction, and the Country from Ruin* (London, 1846), p. 5; Richard Oastler, *Damnation! Eternal Damnation to the Fiend-Begotten "Coarser Food" New Poor Law* (London, 1837); G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service Kirklees), KC174/127 (not dated), 'The New Book of Common Prayer'.

were likely to be overwhelmed.²⁹² The biggest factor driving popular opposition, however, was plain fear. As Knott has noted, the old system of poor relief was a vital source of social security to the labouring population. The new Law threatened to take this comfort away, and to do so in a particularly brutal fashion. Stories abounded of cruelties in workhouses: of wives being forcibly parted from husbands, of inmates being deliberately starved to death, of bodies sold for dissection. The popular name for the workhouse – the Bastille - had obvious associations of cruelty and tyranny.²⁹³

Yorkshire was quick to react to the Law – Bull, for instance, gave a series of lectures opposing it in Bradford in December 1834.²⁹⁴ However, the anti-poor law campaign reached its height during the winter of 1836-37, when the Commissioners, having already tackled the south, tried to establish unions in Yorkshire. Unfortunately, the county was suffering from an economic recession which severely afflicted the textile trade, and the combination of unemployment and the threat of the workhouse led to what one author has described as a ‘demoralising terror’.²⁹⁵ Resistance to the Commissioners was widespread, their visits frequently ending in riot. Oastler suggested that the authors of the Act faced ‘damnation’, called the law treason against God, and publicly called for the people to oppose it.²⁹⁶

The Bradford Short-Time Committee transformed itself into the Bradford Anti-Poor Law Committee in January 1837, whilst similar committees were established in other West Riding towns. In March 1837, a meeting of delegates in Bradford established a central anti-poor law organisation, which commenced a campaign of meetings, demonstrations and petitions. One meeting on Hartshead Moor on May 16th was attended by 200,000 people, revealing the depth of feeling against the law. Meanwhile, anti-poor law campaigners at Todmorden, Bradford and Huddersfield resisted the implementation of the Act by electing opponents to the law as Guardians. This strategy was for a time successful, with the Government only achieving pro-law

²⁹² Edsall, *Anti-Poor Law Movement*, pp. 46-48.

²⁹³ Knott, *Opposition*, pp. 16-30, 79-83, 225-41.

²⁹⁴ *Bradford Observer*, January 1st 1835, p. 6

²⁹⁵ Driver, *Tory-Radical*, p. 331; Knott, *Opposition*, pp 89-93.

²⁹⁶ Oastler, *Damnation*, p. 12.

majorities by appointing ex-officio Guardians and protecting meetings with troops, tactics which further entrenched hostility to the Ministry.²⁹⁷

The Act was firmly identified in the mind of anti-poor law campaigners with the Whigs; one speaker at Hartshead Moor described it as an instance of ‘Whig filth and rottenness’.²⁹⁸ The anti-poor law movement therefore naturally resulted in political opposition to proponents of Whig-liberalism at local level. Oastler attacked Earl Fitzwilliam as a supporter of a ‘cruel, tyrannical, execrable and atrocious measure’, whilst Baines, now M.P. for Leeds, was burnt in effigy in several Yorkshire towns after criticising the Hartshead Moor meeting in the *Mercury*.²⁹⁹ As the chief representative of Whiggery in Yorkshire, Morpeth also came in for much abuse. At the West Riding election of January 1835, he faced angry questions on the New Poor Law when canvassing Bradford.³⁰⁰

Morpeth himself backed the Law. As Irish Secretary he played an important role in passing the Irish Poor Law of 1838, which introduced the new English workhouse system into Ireland.³⁰¹ At the 1835 election, he expressed his hope that the New Poor Law would encourage self-reliance and independence by making it harder to abuse the system, which in turn would give encouragement to industrious and honest labourers. Morpeth could therefore defend the Law as part of his aim of ‘bettering the condition of the labouring classes’. His critics certainly did not see it this way, and his speech met with cries of ‘shame’ from the crowd.³⁰²

Opposition to Morpeth and the Whigs increased as the anti-poor law campaign intensified between 1836 and 1837. It was a central feature in the 1837 West Riding contest. Oastler asked the voters to declare that ‘this horrible Bastille law shall not be established here... Let Morpeth and Strickland count their show of hands from those

²⁹⁷ Knott, *Opposition*, pp. 90-118, 145-95; Weaver, *John Fielden*, pp. 163-78.

²⁹⁸ Knott, *Opposition*, p. 120.

²⁹⁹ Richard Oastler, *The Fleet Papers, Being Letters from Richard Oastler to Thomas Thornhill, Esq* (London, 1841), p. 107; Knott, *Opposition*, p. 123.

³⁰⁰ *Bradford Observer*, January 8th 1835, p. 2.

³⁰¹ For background, see Peter Gray, *The Making of the Irish Poor Law, 1815-1843* (Manchester, 2009).

³⁰² *Bradford Observer*, January 8th 1835, 2.

of you who hate their wives and hate their babes'.³⁰³ Fawkes reported that the increase in support for Wortley evident in the canvass was a direct result of the Law's unpopularity, and advised Morpeth to be 'very explicit' about its benefits by taking his campaign to the heartlands of the anti-poor law movement.³⁰⁴

Morpeth accordingly strongly defended the law in his campaign, arguing that its effect had been to raise the 'character and self-respect of the industrious classes'.³⁰⁵ He also drew attention to his own proposed legislation for an Irish poor-law, which had been praised in the liberal press. Yorkshire's liberals had pressed for the introduction of poor relief into Ireland (Morpeth had presented a petition on this from the county earlier in the decade), as they believed this would stop the Irish poor migrating to the West Riding towns.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, this tactic of highlighting the poor laws badly misfired, merely fuelling antagonism to the Government. At Huddersfield, where Morpeth had previously met with friendly receptions, the liberal candidates were pelted with stones by an angry mob. The crowd carried banners with the words 'No Bastille', and a fork holding a piece of bread, a symbolic representation of the food in the workhouse, was forced into Morpeth's hands. In scenes previously unprecedented in his career, he could not obtain a hearing and had to withdraw.³⁰⁷

The increasingly ugly political atmosphere reached its climax at the nomination, when Morpeth's speech was interrupted by a violent and prolonged clash between his supporters and Oastler's followers, in which a man was killed. The liberals accused Oastler of starting the riot through inflammatory rhetoric. Oastler retaliated in a pamphlet, addressed to Morpeth, which suggested that it was the liberals who started the violence, whilst also accusing them of hiring a band of ruffians to kill him.³⁰⁸ Morpeth, Oastler declared, could state that 'I have waded through the blood of the

³⁰³ Richard Oastler, *West-Riding Nomination Riot: A Letter to Viscount Morpeth, M.P. for the West-Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1837), pp. 5-6, citing Oastler's address to the West Riding working-men before the election.

³⁰⁴ J19/1/15/2, F. H. Fawkes to Lord Morpeth, July 16th 1837.

³⁰⁵ Report of the canvass in the supplement to the *Leeds Mercury*, July 22nd 1837, pp. 1-3.

³⁰⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, February 18th 1837, p. 2; *Bradford Observer*, July 20th 1837, p. 5; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, IV, August 10th 1831, col. 1113.

³⁰⁷ Report of Morpeth's canvass in the supplement to the *Leeds Mercury*, July 22nd 1837, pp. 1-3.

³⁰⁸ Richard Oastler, *West-Riding Nomination Riot: A Letter to Viscount Morpeth, M.P. for the West-Riding of Yorkshire* (London, 1837).

innocent, unarmed and unsuspecting victims; my feet are clotted with the blood of murder'.³⁰⁹ This language once more reflected Oastler's use of the melodramatic mode, which was carried over from the factory reform movement. Elaine Hadley has suggested that the anti-poor law campaign was suffused with melodrama, in which the victims of the law were portrayed as innocents, whilst its supporters were seen to be corrupt figures whose public roles masked sinister hidden motives.³¹⁰

This language directly linked public policy to private character. Oastler, for instance, charged Morpeth with being insincere, highlighting the difference between his rhetoric of disinterestedness and the Government's conduct towards the poor.

'The inhabitants of the Riding welcomed you as their deliverer. They had received the solemn promise of a Howard that their chains should be broken – that liberty and plenty should be the reward for their exertions in favour of 'Reform' - and, in triumph, you were returned, because the people confided in your Lordship's honour, and believed that, through your instrumentality, they would receive the promised boon. Since then, however, instead of liberty, they have been rewarded with transportation and imprisonment... You promised them bread, and you have given them a stone. Instead of food, you have given them a serpent. The faith of a Howard has been broken – that honoured name has, in your Lordship, been disgraced... your broken pledges have defiled your name – they have procured for you the deserved execrations of an insulted and betrayed people'.³¹¹

This passage was a clever attempt to tap into radical anger at the disappointing outcome of the Reform Act. Morpeth, Oastler suggested, had promised the people much, but was now a member of a Government which treated them with contempt. He was not worthy of the noble name of Howard, an inversion of the idea that the Whigs were the historic champions of the people. His references to stones and serpents called the reader's attention to Luke 11, the biblical passage which promises that God will answer prayer. In this text, Jesus expounds on God's charity by stating that men would give food when asked for food, rather than stones or serpents. If even men answered the calls of others in this way, then God's charity was infinitely

³⁰⁹ Oastler, *West Riding Nomination Riot*, p. 3.

³¹⁰ Elaine Hadley, *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalised Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885* (Stanford, 1995), pp. 77-132.

³¹¹ Oastler, *West Riding Nomination Riot*, pp. 3-4.

greater. Oastler was suggesting that Morpeth and the Whigs had not answered the people's prayers and had, in fact, betrayed them in a most unchristian manner.

The contention that the Whigs' treatment of the poor contradicted the promises of the Reform Act was made by other radicals, and seems to have done much to alienate them from the Whigs. At Bradford, Morpeth was grilled by the leading local radical Peter Bussey, who had worked with the Whigs over parliamentary reform but turned against them over the factory issue and the New Poor Law.³¹² William Muff, another former Bradford supporter annoyed at the law, wrote to Morpeth to declare that he was 'not a representative of the people in the true spirit of the constitution... the labouring classes of this country [are] neglected, insulted, and persecuted... treated by the privileged classes with nothing short of contempt'.³¹³ Although the anti-poor law campaign was largely a movement of the un-enfranchised, given the Tory-radical political alliance these feelings may explain the increase in support for the Conservatives.

Any attempt to measure this quantitatively would require a massive and probably unfeasible psephological exercise, but an impressionistic assessment can be gleaned from looking at the Riding's boroughs. Sarah Richardson has suggested that the radicals of Huddersfield, who had been split in the 1834 borough election, moved 2-to-1 to support Oastler when he unsuccessfully contested the constituency in 1837.³¹⁴ The Conservative revival may have been based on newly registered voters rather than a transfer of existing voters; it is unclear to what extent there was a 'floating' vote. Moreover, Oastler was a somewhat exceptional Tory in being so closely tied to radicalism. Nevertheless, if this movement of radicalism against the Whigs was repeated in the county election, it would partly account for Wortley's improved result at the 1837 poll.

³¹² *Bradford Observer*, July 27th 1837, p. 2. Bussey's role in Bradford radicalism is noted in Koditschek, *Class Formation*, p. 326, 486-90.

³¹³ J19/1/15/49, William Muff to Lord Morpeth, August 30th 1837.

³¹⁴ Sarah Richardson, 'The fate of honest radicals in the politics of the West Riding in the age of Reform', unpublished paper presented at the 'Radical Riding' conference, University of Bradford, April 2007. My thanks to Dr Richardson for kindly sharing this paper.

Whiggery Defeated: West Riding Politics 1837-1841

By the late 1830s, Conservatism in the West Riding was in good shape. However, the unstable concord between it and Yorkshire radicalism broke over the rise of Chartism, which grew rapidly in the county from 1838 under the dynamic leadership of Feargus O'Connor. Yorkshire Chartism grew out of the anti-poor law and short-time movements and channelled their anti-Whig sentiment.³¹⁵ At the 1841 West Riding election, the Chartists George Julian Harney and Lawrence Pitkeithley (a Huddersfield radical who had been heavily involved in the short-time and anti-poor law campaigns) stood as 'hustings' candidates. Before withdrawing, they received a significant amount of support from the (largely un-enfranchised) crowd at the show of hands.³¹⁶ Ironically, though, the rise of Chartism may actually have helped the Conservatives, for anxious voters pinned the blame for it on the Government.³¹⁷

In contrast, the Whigs were looking increasingly fragile. Poor election results had left the Government's legislation reliant either on the concurrence of the Irish radicals or that of the Tories. The result was an impression of weakness and indecision, which, as Norman Gash observed, is vital to understanding the public's opinion of the Whigs in this period.³¹⁸ The Government's inability to produce reforming legislation and willingness to work with its opponents in Parliament led to widespread disillusionment amongst Yorkshire's liberals, who had defined themselves around the idea that reform would be carried decisively and against the wishes of the monopolistic Tories. In 1838, the *Sheffield Iris*, a radical liberal paper, spoke of a 'strong undercurrent' of opinion against the Whigs resulting from their 'vacillation, effrontery and wrong-headedness'.³¹⁹ Its more moderate rival the *Sheffield Independent* agreed, stating that it was hard to find 'any real difference in opinion existing between the Tories and the Ministry'.³²⁰ For Morpeth, these were ominous developments, since he was attached in the West Riding mind to the Whig Ministry. This increased still further when he was appointed to the Cabinet in February 1839.

³¹⁵ Edsall, *Anti-Poor Law Movement*, pp. 167-86.

³¹⁶ A. R. Schoyen, *The Chartist Challenge: A Portrait of George Julian Harney* (London, 1958), pp. 105-09.

³¹⁷ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 193-94.

³¹⁸ Gash, *Reaction and Reconstruction*, p. 183.

³¹⁹ *Sheffield Iris*, March 27th 1838, p. 2.

³²⁰ *Sheffield Independent*, March 17th 1838, p. 2.

These tensions among the reformers have been overlooked in Thompson and Fraser's accounts of West Riding liberalism, which present it as a more or less united force until the 1840s. They developed over dissatisfaction with the Whigs' policy in three areas: slavery, church rates and free trade. Morpeth was central to all of them. Starting with slavery, it was seen above how, despite some qualms about the apprenticeship system, Yorkshire's liberals had welcomed the Whigs' abolition of colonial slavery in 1833. However, over the course of the 1830s their opinion changed. By 1837, campaigners such as the Birmingham Quaker Joseph Sturge had published accounts of the cruelties of the apprenticeship system, presenting this as little better than slavery. Sturge headed a movement demanding the immediate end of apprenticeship, whose leaders included Revd. Thomas Scales of Leeds. The Government, however, proved unresponsive to this pressure. The abolitionists, who according to Alex Tyrell had now 'lost respect for all the political parties', organised a massive public campaign for abolition which reached its height in early 1838.³²¹

In March 1838 George Strickland proposed a motion of immediate abolition, which was voted down by an alliance of Ministerialists and Conservatives. This provoked massive hostility to the Government among anti-slavery campaigners.³²² Morpeth bore the full brunt of this feeling in the West Riding. The *Sheffield Independent* furiously claimed that he should have resigned before voting with the Ministry on this issue.³²³ At a meeting in Bradford, his actions were strongly censured and a resolution condemning his conduct passed. This was all the more damaging because the meeting contained men who had previously been among his most faithful adherents in the town. Henry Forbes, for instance, declared that whilst he had formerly 'almost idolised' Morpeth, his position was now in jeopardy. He concluded that the Ministry had sacrificed some of its strongest supporters.³²⁴ Another constituent wrote of the

³²¹ Alex Tyrell, "'The "Moral Radical Party" and the Anglo-Jamaican Campaign for the Abolition of the Negro Apprenticeship System', *English Historical Review*, 99:392 (1984), 481-502; David Turley, *The Culture of English Anti-Slavery, 1780-1860* (London, 1991), pp. 43-57.

³²² Izhak Gross, 'Parliament and the Abolition of Negro Apprenticeship, 1835-1838', *English Historical Review*, 96: 380 (1981), 560-76.

³²³ *Sheffield Independent*, April 7th 1838, p. 2. I have regrettably been unable to establish why Morpeth voted against Strickland's motion.

³²⁴ Report of Anti-Slavery meeting in Bradford in *Leeds Mercury*, April 14th 1838, p. 8. The feeling against Morpeth in the West Riding on this issue is also referred to in W. Busfield to Joseph Farrar

‘very intense feeling of disappointment and dissatisfaction’ which Morpeth’s vote had produced, particularly among the dissenters, and felt this would endanger his electoral prospects.³²⁵ Fawkes concurred, feeling that if a general election were to be held the issue ‘would possibly unseat Lord Morpeth’.³²⁶

The difference between Morpeth and his dissenting constituents on the apprenticeship question was symptomatic of the Whigs’ worsening relations with political nonconformity. It was seen above how dissenting frustration with the Government over church rates had created tensions in West Riding liberalism by 1835. Relations were improved somewhat over the next two years. The passing of the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act was regarded as a triumph for dissent, allowing nonconformists in Leeds to gain control of the corporation.³²⁷ In the next ten years the town’s Mayors included the Baptist George Goodman, the Congregationalist doctor James Williamson and the Unitarians T. W. Tottie and Hamer Stansfeld. The Whigs further pleased dissenters in 1836 by passing Bills dealing with their grievances on marriage and civil registration, and partly helped overcome the problem of their exclusion from the ancient universities by founding the secular University of London.³²⁸

However, the effect of these triumphs was hampered by the Government’s continued inability to solve the church rate problem. Upon discovering that the Whigs did not intend to produce a measure on this issue in 1836, the dissenting *Patriot* declared that they were no longer to be trusted.³²⁹ The Church Rate Abolition Society was founded in October 1836 to pressurise the Government, and by early 1837 meetings were being held across the country (including in Halifax and Sheffield) to demand the abolition of the rates.³³⁰ This forced the Government to produce a church rate plan, tabled by Thomas Spring Rice in March. The measure proposed to abolish the rates

[1838], printed in Joseph Farrar, *A Few Events, Incidents and Experiences in the Life of Joseph Farrar, J.P., of Bradford, written by Himself* (Bradford, 1889), p. 74.

³²⁵ J19/1/18/3, J. Williamson to Lord Morpeth, May 1838 [This may be Dr James Williamson, the second Mayor of Leeds in the reformed Corporation, a Congregationalist].

³²⁶ Hickleton MSS (Borthwick Institute for Archives), A4/15, F. H. Fawkes to Sir F. L. Wood, April 22nd 1838.

³²⁷ Watts, *The Dissenters*, pp. 470-76; Derek Fraser, *Power and Authority in the Victorian City* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 52-55.

³²⁸ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, pp. 137-38.

³²⁹ *The Patriot*, May 11th 1836, cited in Ellens, *Religious Routes*, p. 55.

³³⁰ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, pp. 54-58; *Leeds Mercury*, January 28th 1837, p. 7; *Sheffield Independent*, January 21st 1837, p. 4.

and pay for parish fabrics through a fund to be created by more efficient management of church property. The West Riding's dissenters were enthusiastic about the Bill. In Leeds a meeting of over a thousand people was held to support it. Speakers included the Congregationalist Revd. Thomas Scales and the Baptist Revd. J. E. Giles, who denounced church rates as unscriptural. Similar meetings featuring the Riding's leading liberal dissenters were held in Wakefield, Huddersfield and Bradford.³³¹ William Byles, the editor of the *Bradford Observer*, went so far as to cut short his honeymoon to take part in the campaign.³³²

However, opposition to the measure in Parliament was fierce, including some hostility from Whig backbenchers. The Bill's second reading in May saw the Ministry achieve a majority of just five, effectively killing the measure, which the Government postponed by proposing a select committee on church property. Meanwhile, the Whigs' poor showing in the 1837 elections was blamed by some senior figures, including Fitzwilliam, on the church rate issue. The party leadership agreed privately not to pursue the matter.³³³ J. P. Ellens has detailed how the Government's subsequent lack of action damaged its standing in dissenting eyes and encouraged renewed calls for disestablishment.³³⁴ In 1838, Robert Leader of the *Sheffield Independent* argued that the Government was merely controlled by the opposition, and it would be better if the Tories were to take power. Although the *Leeds Mercury* felt this argument ridiculous, it reflected the lack of faith many dissenters now had in the Whigs.³³⁵

Friction on this question in Yorkshire was not helped by developments within local Anglicanism. In 1837 church rates were successfully levied in Rotherham despite opposition. Earl Fitzwilliam contentiously appeared on the pro-rate side of the debate, adding to the tensions in the Riding's liberal coalition.³³⁶ In Leeds, the failure of the Government's church rate plan compelled the town's churchwardens to ask for a meeting to levy a rate. The result was a stormy and fractious affair, soothed only by the temperate line of the dynamic new vicar Walter Farquhar Hook. However, Hook

³³¹ *Leeds Mercury*, April 1st 1837, p. 7; April 15th 1837, p. 8

³³² F. G. Byles, *William Byles by his Youngest Son* (Weymouth, 1932), p. 31.

³³³ Brent, 'Whigs and Protestant Dissent', 905-09; Ellens, *Religious Routes*, pp. 63-67.

³³⁴ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, pp. 69-83.

³³⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, March 10th 1838, p. 4.

³³⁶ *Sheffield Independent*, October 28th 1837, p. 2.

revived the Anglican cause in Leeds, leading to (unrealised) fears that a rate would be imposed in 1838.³³⁷ Bradford also received a new vicar, the pusillanimous Dr. William Scoresby, who bizarrely achieved renown as an Arctic scientist.³³⁸ Scoresby unsuccessfully attempted to levy a rate in November 1839, inflaming opinion in the town and causing its nonconformists to found a Church Rate Abolition Society, in which Robert Milligan and William Byles played a prominent role.³³⁹

However, the major issue which separated dissent from the Whigs in the late 1830s was the imprisonment of the so-called ‘church rate martyrs’ (nonconformists who had been jailed for contempt of court after conscientiously refusing to pay), of whom one of the most prominent was the Essex Congregationalist John Thorogood. Edward Baines brought the attention of the Thorogood case to the Commons, using it to argue for an abolition of church rates.³⁴⁰ In February 1840 the radical M.P. Thomas Slingsby Duncombe asked to bring in a Bill to release Thorogood and allow dissenters who objected to the payment of church rates to be exempt if they agreed not to take part in vestry politics.

The Government, however, opposed this measure, with Lord John Russell disastrously seeming to adopt a dismissive attitude towards Thorogood’s plight in his reply. Russell had formerly been regarded as a champion by dissenters, and his sneering tone infuriated them.³⁴¹ A meeting of the Bradford Church Rate Abolition Society held shortly afterwards strongly condemned Russell and was marked by hostility to the Government. Forbes, who chaired the meeting, declared that Russell’s speech had ‘enabled them to judge what to expect from him in future’. He concluded that the dissenters must embark on a ‘new era’ in which they organised themselves separately from the Whigs. A Leeds anti-church rate gathering held in April saw the Baptist Revd. J. E. Giles likewise condemn Russell’s ‘about-face’ on the issue, whilst the meeting discussed the necessity of disestablishment.³⁴²

³³⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, August 19th 1837, p. 8; Fraser, *Urban Politics*, p. 34.

³³⁸ Elizabeth Baigent, ‘Scoresby, William, junior (1789–1857)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn., January 2009 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24854>, accessed 24 Nov 2009].

³³⁹ Byles, *William Byles*, p. 46; *Leeds Mercury*, November 30th 1839, p. 5.

³⁴⁰ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XLVII, April 30th 1839, cols. 684-92.

³⁴¹ Ram, ‘Political Activities of Dissenters’, pp. 161-62.

³⁴² *Bradford Observer*, February 27th 1840, p. 3; *Leeds Mercury*, April 11th 1840, p. 6.

Thorogood was released in November 1840, but in the same month a new ‘martyr’ was created in William Baines of Leicester. The Government’s refusal to release him fuelled the militant dissenting cause. In April 1841 his pastor Edward Miall founded the *Nonconformist*, a journal which condemned the dissenting alliance with the Whigs and campaigned for disestablishment. In May the liberal M.P. John Easthorpe proposed the complete abolition of church rates. The Government again opposed this measure. Morpeth spoke to admit the validity of dissenting grievances, but stated that he would not consent to any measure which left the maintenance of parish churches to chance.³⁴³ This was damaging to his electoral prospects. Shortly before his speech, the moderate Congregationalist leader Robert Vaughan had written to advise him that dissenting dissatisfaction with the Government was ‘deep and prevalent’, and that many planned to abstain at the next election.³⁴⁴

Vaughan’s warning was seemingly confirmed by the West Riding Baptist Association, who under the leadership of Revd. J. E. Giles informed Morpeth that he would not receive their vote unless he was ‘prepared to forward the claims of Protestant Dissenters’. Giles stated that Morpeth’s opposition to William Baines’ liberation, combined with Russell’s speeches, had produced ‘far greater injury than it was ever in the power of the more open hatred of the Tories to inflict’. The dissenting *Eclectic Review* highlighted Giles’ correspondence with Morpeth as evidence of dissatisfaction with the Whigs.³⁴⁵ After the alarmed Fawkes and Baines Junior had both written to Morpeth to stress the importance of the Baptists, he wrote an open letter in which he re-asserted his sympathy with dissenters. This letter apparently smoothed matters over, with Giles reporting it had produced ‘delight’ when read at a meeting of the Baptist Association.³⁴⁶ Nevertheless, it is clear that by 1841 Morpeth’s relationship with politicised dissent in the Riding were severely strained.

³⁴³ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, pp. 82-85; Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third series, XLVIII, May 25th 1841, cols 783-84.

³⁴⁴ J19/1/31/34, Robert Vaughan to Lord Morpeth, May 17th 1841.

³⁴⁵ J19/1/31/47, J. E. Giles to Lord Morpeth, May 27th 1841; *The Eclectic Review*, July-December 1841, New Series, X, (London, 1841), pp. 111-12.

³⁴⁶ J19/1/31/42, F. H. Fawkes to Lord Morpeth, May 27th 1841; J19/1/31/60, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, June 5th 1841; Lord Morpeth to J. E. Giles, May 31st 1841, printed in *Leeds Mercury*, June 19th 1841, p. 7; J19/1/31/63, J. E. Giles to Lord Morpeth, June 8th 1841.

One final question damaging the alliance between Whigs and liberals in Yorkshire was that of the Corn Laws. As seen above, opposition to agricultural protection had long been a mainstay of West Riding liberalism, part of its broader attack on aristocratic ‘monopolies’. This was an area in which Whigs and liberals were able to cooperate. Many West Riding liberal landowners, including Fawkes and Fitzwilliam, were strongly opposed to the Corn Laws.³⁴⁷ Morpeth himself had long been one of the ardent Whig supporters of free trade. He considered the Corn Laws to be not only irrational, but also unchristian, believing that they were in conflict with the wishes of God, who had so arranged the world to encourage men to trade with each other. He even stated that if he supported the Corn Laws, he could not sincerely give his prayer for his daily bread.³⁴⁸ This religious belief in free trade was shared by many dissenters; Morpeth presented a petition against the Corn Laws from the Protestant Dissenting Deputies, who considered them to be ‘opposed to the spirit of religion’.³⁴⁹

However, despite the support of the Whig leadership, Parliamentary attempts to amend the Corn Laws in 1838 and 1839 were defeated by large majorities.³⁵⁰ This encouraged the rise of an extra-parliamentary campaign in the shape of the Anti-Corn Law League, led by Richard Cobden and John Bright. Between March 1839 and March 1841 branches of the League were established in all of the major West Riding towns.³⁵¹ The *Leeds Mercury*, *Bradford Observer* and *Sheffield Independent* backed the League, whilst influential West Riding urban liberals such as the Baines’, William Willans, Thomas Plint, Francis Crossley, Hamer Stansfeld, Jonathan Akroyd, Robert Milligan and Joseph Farrar were all strongly involved in its campaign.³⁵² The League claimed to be an apolitical body which stood above party in its demand for the total

³⁴⁷ Ward, J. T. ‘West Riding Landowners and the Corn Laws’, *English Historical Review*, 81 (1966), 256-72.

³⁴⁸ Report of Morpeth’s speech on Villiers’ motion to repeal the Corn Laws, *The Times*, April 3rd 1840, p. 4.

³⁴⁹ J19/1/31/61, Robert Vaughan to Lord Morpeth, June 1841. On dissenting opposition to the Corn Laws, see also Paul Pickering & Alex Tyrrell, *The People’s Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London, 2000), pp. 88-110.

³⁵⁰ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p. 145.

³⁵¹ Information taken from the chronological list of Anti-Corn Law associations in Pickering & Tyrrell, *People’s Bread*, pp. 253-60.

³⁵² *Leeds Mercury*, January 19th 1839, p. 4; January 26th 1839, p. 6; March 16th 1839, p. 4; Iwama, ‘The Middle Class in Halifax’, pp. 172-73; Joseph Farrar, *A Few Events, Incidents and Experiences in the Life of Joseph Farrar, J.P., of Bradford, written by Himself* (Bradford, 1889), p. 65; F. G. Byles, *William Byles by his Youngest Son* (Weymouth, 1932), p. 45.

and immediate repeal of the Corn Law.³⁵³ In 1839, Baines Junior warned Morpeth that the feeling for total repeal in Yorkshire was ‘exceedingly strong’ and that if Ministers resisted this demand they would ‘lose what remains of their popularity’.³⁵⁴

This call was unrealistic given the Whigs’ Parliamentary situation. Nevertheless, as Baines had predicted, the Whigs’ refusal to adopt the standard of total and immediate repeal fuelled dissatisfaction with the Government among the Riding’s liberals.

Where their opposition to ‘monopoly’ had previously benefited the Whigs, it was now being employed in a manner which was at best lukewarm towards them, and in some cases openly antagonistic. When a Whig candidate was defeated by a Leaguer at the Walsall by-election of early 1841, Jonathan Akroyd published an open letter from the Halifax Anti-Corn Law Association congratulating the town’s voters.

Akroyd despaired that the nation’s ‘landlord legislators’ still clung to the Corn Law. ‘The strife of this holy war’, he dramatically declared, ‘has commenced’.³⁵⁵

The growing frustration of West Riding liberals with the Whig Ministry over free trade was epitomised by the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association (L. P. R. A.), founded in September 1840 by James Garth Marshall and Hamer Stansfeld. Although opposed by the Baines’, the L. P. R. A. was supported by many of the town’s most active liberals, including George Goodman, Joshua Bower and Thomas Plint. It called for household suffrage and the secret ballot, believing that the continuance of the Corn Law was attributable to undue aristocratic influence in Parliament. These demands put the L. P. R. A. on a collision course with the Government, which had declared against further measures of parliamentary reform in Lord John Russell’s famous ‘Finality Jack’ speech of November 1837.

More fundamentally, the L. P. R. A. was in effect a repudiation of the historic premise of the Riding’s Whig-liberal alliance; that a Whig Government would combat ‘monopoly’ through a reformed Parliament. Plint declared the Reform Bill to have been a ‘failed measure’ and noted that the Whigs were ‘unable and unwilling’ to repeal the Corn Laws. Stansfeld, who now felt little but ‘contempt’ for aristocratic

³⁵³ Norman McCord, *The Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1846* (London, 1958), pp. 16-23.

³⁵⁴ J19/1/22/38, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, February 2nd 1839.

³⁵⁵ J. Akroyd of the Halifax Anti-Corn Law Association to the Electors of Walsall in *The Anti-Corn Law Circular*, January 28th 1841, p. 15.

political leadership, felt that Parliament ‘misrepresents us... there are none to help us but ourselves’. Whilst most members of the L. P. R. A. stated they preferred the Whigs to the Tories, it is clear that their enthusiasm had waned.³⁵⁶ Revealingly, when Earl Fitzwilliam publicly questioned the L. P. R. A., James Garth Marshall issued a reply accusing the Whigs of not having done their duty to the people. Their measures, good as they were, were mere ‘drops of water in the bucket of national grievances’. Marshall pointedly asked Fitzwilliam whether he was content to have retired to his ‘hunting, shooting and other diversions. Believe me, you have far more to do yet’.³⁵⁷

The increasing radicalism of the urban section of the West Riding’s liberal forces alienated the landed. Charles Wood wrote that he rarely came to Yorkshire without finding ‘one or more of our old Whig friends grown lukewarm, or gone over to the Tories’.³⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the Bradford Reform Society resolved not to support any Parliamentary candidate who would not support the abolition of church rates, the repeal of the Corn Laws and the extension of the franchise.³⁵⁹ These divisions were exposed at the West Riding election of July 1841. Sensing blood, the Conservatives for the first time fielded two candidates, with Wortley and E. B. Denison being pitted against Morpeth and his new fellow Whig candidate Lord Milton, son of the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam. The result was a devastating defeat for the Whigs. Morpeth came bottom of the poll with 12,031 votes, over a thousand votes behind the leader Wortley.³⁶⁰

It is clear that Morpeth’s defeat can at least partly be attributed to organisational factors. Liberal activists felt that the Tories had been more successful and more organised in getting their voters to the poll. They also suggested both before and after the contest that the Tories had gained the all-important upper-hand on the register.³⁶¹

³⁵⁶ Report of L.P.R.A. meetings in *Leeds Mercury*, September 5th 1840, p. 6; February 13th 1841, p. 6; Speech of Hamer Stansfeld at a meeting for free trade in Huddersfield, *Leeds Mercury*, April 3rd 1841, p. 6.

³⁵⁷ James Garth Marshall to Earl Fitzwilliam, February 5th 1841, in *The Times*, February 12th 1841, p. 2., reprinted from the *Leeds Times*.

³⁵⁸ Hickleton MSS (Borthwick Institute for Archives), A4/50A, Charles Wood to James Stansfeld, July 27th 1840.

³⁵⁹ Records of the Bradford Reform Society (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford), DB4/C1/2, Minute Book, meeting of May 17th 1841.

³⁶⁰ The totals for the election were 13,165 votes for Wortley, 12,780 votes for Denison, 12,080 votes for Milton and 12,031 votes for Morpeth.

³⁶¹ Hickleton MSS (Borthwick Institute for Archives, York), A4/35, Sir F. L. Wood to Charles Wood, May 6th 1839; J19/1/20/88, John W Tottie to Lord Morpeth, November 30th 1838; *Leeds Mercury*, July 10th 1841, p. 4; J19/1/32/64, J. Cheriman of Doncaster to Lord Morpeth, July 20th 1841.

In his account of West Riding politics, Philip Salmon has attributed the Conservative's victory largely to the registration. The number of electors on the register had gone from 29,346 in 1837 to 31,215 in 1841, an increase which coincides with that in the number of voters polling for the Conservatives.³⁶²

However, a study of these organisational factors can only partly understand the liberals' predicament. Their difficulties in registration reflected the broader tensions within their ranks. By 1840, the West Riding Reform and Registration Association was financially reliant on landed reformers, with important contributions from urban activists having dried up.³⁶³ Fawkes was clear that the resulting financial and hence political troubles were the product of ideological division. There was, he moaned, 'no bond of union between us or we should not now be as we are prostrate before a powerful antagonist'.³⁶⁴

Moreover, Morpeth's defeat arguably cannot be explained simply by the register, because it is apparent that his support declined; he polled over 500 votes less than in 1837. Even if we accept that all of the newly registered voters were Conservative, this is a fairly significant decrease, suggesting either a transfer of allegiance, deliberate abstention or, more likely, a lower turnout resulting from simple apathy and disenchantment. The *Leeds Times* noted that 'at no election which has taken place in Yorkshire for very many years has the enthusiasm in favour of the Liberal candidates been less'.³⁶⁵

On the surface, the circumstances of the election ought to have worked in Morpeth's favour. The Tories made the now ritual references to the Whigs' Irish policy. The *Leeds Intelligencer* declared that it was Morpeth's 'slavish leanings' towards O'Connell' that had prepared his defeat.³⁶⁶ Morpeth did not help himself here by

³⁶² Salmon, *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 180-81; Pack, 'Aspects of the English Electoral System', vol. 2., p. 353.

³⁶³ William Aldam of Frickley Papers (Doncaster Archives), DDWA/P/10/14, F. H. Fawkes to William Aldam, December 27th 1841.

³⁶⁴ Thomas Wilson Papers, Dibb Lupton Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds), WYL160/DB/178, F. H. Fawkes to Thomas Wilson, August 31st 1841. Salmon records the importance of divisions in the liberal ranks in influencing the registration in *Electoral Reform at Work*, pp. 179-80.

³⁶⁵ *Leeds Times*, July 10 1841, p. 8.

³⁶⁶ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (WYAS Kirkstrees), KC174/81, Statement of the principles of E. B. Denison, May 31st 1841; *Leeds Intelligencer*, July 17 1841, p. 4.

giving a speech in which he referred to the relative chastity of Irish women, allowing the opposition to label him as the defamer of English womanhood.³⁶⁷ Yet the lines of demarcation on Ireland had already been decided. The election was fought principally around the issue of free trade. In an attempt to rally electoral support, the Whig budget of 1841 contained a number of free trading policies, including a reduction in the duties on timber and sugar and, most notably, a proposal to replace the current Corn Laws with a small fixed duty of 8s.

The *Leeds Mercury* thus presented the contest as one of ‘Monopoly or No Monopoly’.³⁶⁸ If anything was likely to appeal to the Riding’s liberals, it was a cry like this. Morpeth campaigned almost exclusively on free trade.³⁶⁹ Apparently forgetting their criticisms of Morpeth’s vote on the apprenticeship issue, the liberal leaders of the Riding towns once more came out in his support. Although prepared for a hard contest, most were confident of victory. There was a feeling that the Riding’s commercial interests naturally disposed it towards free trade. Charles Wood felt that ‘corn laws in the Riding would be too absurd’.³⁷⁰

These calculations proved to be badly mistaken. Far from defeating the Tories, the Whigs’ budget proposals benefited them, rallying their support among the farmers across the nation.³⁷¹ Morpeth noted that the agricultural districts were solidly for his opponents. The free trade cry also seems to have alienated sections of the Whigs’ remaining landed support.³⁷² The 6th Earl of Carlisle, noting this trend, felt that ‘the corn law... was the great cause of disaster’.³⁷³ This left Morpeth more dependent on the urban, manufacturing vote. Yet this did not support the Whigs to the degree which had been expected. Morpeth felt that ‘the manufacturing portions of the constituency

³⁶⁷ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (WYAS Kirklees), KC174/102, ‘Electors, Attention’ (poster, by context 1841).

³⁶⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, June 12th 1841, 4.

³⁶⁹ See the reports of the electioneering in *Leeds Mercury Extraordinary*, June 23rd 1841.

³⁷⁰ Hickleton MSS (Borthwick Institute for Archives), A4/50a, Charles Wood to James Stansfeld, June 8th 1841.

³⁷¹ Stewart, *Foundations of the Conservative Party*, pp. 152-56; Crosby, *English Farmers*, pp. 114-17.

³⁷² Lord John Russell Papers (The National Archives), PRO/30/22/4B/21, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, July 9th 1841; J19/1/31/80, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, June 22nd 1841 (reporting the opinion of Charles Wood).

³⁷³ J19/1/32/13, 6th Earl of Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, July 9th 1841.

have entirely failed in making any adequate exertion to counteract the known hostility of the agricultural'.³⁷⁴

One reason for this was that the protectionist argument did not just appeal to agriculturalists. As the research of Anna Gambles has revealed, protectionists suggested that the Corn Laws benefited the whole of society by shielding home markets. In their view it was protection which was the truly disinterested policy, and free trade which was sectionalist and misguided. They argued that free trade was designed to benefit only the manufacturer, and would in fact counterproductively lower home consumption. This was, at heart, an argument about wages. Protectionists contended that removing the Corn Law would throw agricultural labourers out of work. They would then flood the employment market, allowing manufacturers to reduce wages. This would, in turn, lower the demand for produce.³⁷⁵ Wortley and Denison made precisely these arguments in their campaign.³⁷⁶

Coming in the midst of a recession, this seems to have hit home among the electorate. It helped the Conservatives to retain a share of radical support, for these ideas coincided with the radical belief that the Whigs hypocritically professed to serve the people whilst actually conniving with the manufacturers to betray them. One radical poster printed a satirical poem in Morpeth's voice on this theme; 'I thought to myself, I can make them believe / (You know a Whig Lordling did never deceive) / That cheap bread and high wages go hand in hand / And that commerce shall never be more at a stand / To their Masters I'll tell a far different story / And say that low wages are all for their glory... Our Farmers being ruined, their only recourse / Will be weaving or death, lower wages of course / But what signifies that – follow Neddy's advice / You'll find red-herring soup and black bread very nice'.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Lord John Russell Papers (The National Archives), PRO/30/22/4B/21, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, July 9th 1841. A similar analysis is contained in J18/60/983, Charles Wood to Georgiana Carlisle, July 9th 1841.

³⁷⁵ Anna Gambles, 'Rethinking the politics of protection: Conservatism and the Corn Laws, 1830-52', *English Historical Review*, 113 (1998), 928-52.

³⁷⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, June 26th 1841, p. 6.

³⁷⁷ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees), radical poster headed 'To all honest men', by context 1841.

The last line is a reference to ‘Neddy’ Baines and his support for the New Poor Law, which again featured heavily in the campaign. At the canvass in Bradford, Morpeth’s opponents put up a man who recounted a tragic tale of his son’s imprisonment in the ‘Bastille’. The *Leeds Intelligencer* mockingly invited Morpeth to ‘spin, in lady-like numbers, the beauties, and harmonies, and the humanity of Bastille discipline’.³⁷⁸ This tactic of highlighting the poor law went hand-in-hand with the critique of the Whigs’ free trade policy, for if this threw people out of work they would, by the Whigs’ legislation, end up in the workhouse. As an electoral strategy this evidently worked; the 6th Earl of Carlisle felt that his son’s defeat was partly due to the unpopularity of the Law.³⁷⁹ It may also have helped bring in Chartist voters for the Tories. Feargus O’Connor had advised the Chartists to tactically vote Conservative to bring down the Government, so when the Chartist ‘hustings’ candidates withdrew their supporters probably transferred their support to Wortley and Denison.³⁸⁰

Morpeth had been left reliant on his historic middle-class, urban and dissenting allies. Yet as noted above, the Government’s policies had led this section of West Riding liberalism to become less enthusiastic about Whiggery. Whilst the Baptist leaders do not seem to have carried out their threat to deliberately abstain at the election, the Whigs’ church rate policies may well have led to a decline in turnout. The *Eclectic Review* felt that whilst Morpeth himself still had the respect of dissenters, the Tory victory in the Riding could be attributed to the fact that the Whig Ministry had ‘collectively lost their good opinion’.³⁸¹

More telling was the fact that the Whigs’ proposal to replace the Corn Law with a fixed duty did not sufficiently appeal to the Riding’s free-traders, who wanted total and immediate repeal. In the context of their growing dissatisfaction with the Whigs’ timidity, it seemed to some liberals that the Government was insincere in its proposals. Charles Wood was told by a group of West Riding manufacturers that the Whigs had ‘done nothing for us until it was too late, and we want to see what t’others

³⁷⁸ *Bradford Observer*, July 1st 1841, p. 1; *Leeds Intelligencer*, June 12th 1841, p. 5.

³⁷⁹ F6/3, 6th Earl of Carlisle to James Loch, July 21st 1841.

³⁸⁰ Malcolm Chase, ‘“Labour’s candidates”: Chartist challenges at the Parliamentary polls, 1839-1860’, *Labour History Review*, 74:1 (2009), 68-70.

³⁸¹ *The Eclectic Review*, July-December 1841, New Series, X, (London, 1841), p. 228.

will do'. Wood astutely observed that the Riding had been lost 'by the discredit of the Government'.³⁸²

It is clear that Morpeth remained, in many senses, a popular politician. He had, after all, received over 12,000 votes, which was more than many early-Victorian statesmen were given in a lifetime. The doubts the Riding's liberals had about Whiggery as a whole did not necessarily apply to him; they greatly appreciated his moral qualities, and seem to have regarded him with immense affection. His defeat was described by the region's liberals as a 'national calamity', the 'greatest disgrace to which any constituency has been subjected', a cause of 'burning shame'.³⁸³

Eager to express their appreciation for his political services and private character (and perhaps assuage their guilt in not preventing his defeat) his supporters presented him with a magnificent casket made of bog oak and silver gilt, pictured in Illustration Four at the end of this chapter. It cost over a thousand guineas, all of which was funded by public subscription. It was accompanied by a testimonial roll signed by over 38,000 people, far more than the official West Riding electorate.³⁸⁴ This was in effect a very political document, a way of keeping alive the liberal cause in its moment of defeat.³⁸⁵ However, it also shows the personal popularity Morpeth had accrued in Yorkshire. This may well have inflated support for him; the Tory *Yorkshire Gazette*, for one, found that the Conservative victory in the West Riding was all the more rewarding because the 'great weight of [Morpeth's] private character' had previously made their cause seem hopeless.³⁸⁶

³⁸² Charles Wood to Francis Thornhill Baring, July 22nd 1841, in Thomas, Earl of Northbrook (ed.), *Journals and Correspondence, from 1808 to 1852, of Sir Francis Thornhill Baring, afterwards Lord Northbrook* (Winchester, 1905), pp. 198-99. For similar sentiments, see *Bradford Observer*, July 15th 1841, p. 2; *Sheffield Iris*, July 13th 1841, p. 6.

³⁸³ *Sheffield Iris*, July 13th 1841, p. 6; *Sheffield Independent*, July 10th 1841, p. 8; J19/1/32/47, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, July 14th 1841.

³⁸⁴ Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WWM/G/5, Papers relating to Lord Morpeth's testimonial, 1841. The casket and testimonial remain at Castle Howard. Not all West Riding liberals were happy at the testimonial; both Fawkes and Fitzwilliam thought the money which had been placed towards its immense cost would be better employed on registration activities (see WWM/G/5/6, Fawkes to Fitzwilliam, September 4th 1841).

³⁸⁵ That such testimonials could serve political functions is noted in Simon Morgan, 'The reward of public service: nineteenth-century testimonials in context', *Historical Research*, 80:208 (2007), 261-85.

³⁸⁶ *Yorkshire Gazette*, July 17th 1841, p. 4.

Ultimately, however, the Riding's elections were decided, not on personal appeal, but on national political issues.³⁸⁷ Morpeth had lost the election because he was associated with an unpopular Government, which reduced the enthusiasm for his cause and ensured that the liberals were not able to counter the Conservative challenge. One is dealing here with fractions rather than absolutes – a voter not turning out here, a transfer of allegiance there. However, in a constituency as large and as finely balanced as the West Riding, these fractions had a significant cumulative effect. The defeat of the Whigs in such a symbolically important constituency was widely regarded as a disaster for the Ministry. Charles Wood felt it to have been the 'worst thing which has befallen the Government'.³⁸⁸ The result for the Riding was echoed around the country, enabling Peel to take office later in the year. Bruised from his defeat, Morpeth took the opportunity to embark on a year-long tour of America. For the moment, Whiggery in the West Riding was moribund.

Summary

In summary, this chapter has argued that the 1830s saw Morpeth establish a significant amount of popular support for the Whigs in Yorkshire. He formed a strong political bond with the county's liberals, harnessing their desire for disinterested government for the people. This strategy developed over constitutional, economic and religious questions, and which aligned the county's politics firmly towards the actions of the Whig Government at Westminster. In particular, liberals supported Morpeth in the belief that he and the Whigs would tackle 'aristocratic' monopolies, reflecting the continuing influence of 'Old Corruption' in liberalism at popular level.

This case-study of the West Riding accordingly suggests that Whiggery did not, as Peter Mandler has indicated, operate through social policies designed to appeal over and above liberalism to the people at large. As will be seen later in the thesis, this interpretation fits the politics of the 1840s far better than that of the 1830s. In fact, the Whigs' record on social questions in this decade led to massive hostility to the

³⁸⁷ Leeds' vicar Revd. W. F. Hook could thus state that, whilst he admired Morpeth's moral qualities far more than that of the Conservative candidates, he voted Conservative because he agreed with their policies rather than Morpeth's; Revd. W. F. Hook to 'My dear Friend', July 13th 1841, in W. R. Stephens, *The Life and Letters of Walter Farquhar Hook*, 2 vols, (3rd edition, London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1879), vol. 2, pp. 126-27.

³⁸⁸ J18/60/983, Charles Wood to Georgiana Carlisle, July 9th 1841.

Government from Yorkshire's radicals, which greatly assisted the Conservatives. This antagonism evolved through the local context of Morpeth's association with the West Riding's dissenting and manufacturing liberals, which seemed to erode the credibility of the Whigs' claims to govern for the general good.

The 1830s witnessed the emergence of the Whig-liberal alliance in Yorkshire. Over time, however, divisions within the party began to appear. It began to splinter as the Whig Government failed to live up to the promise of the Reform Bill. Of course, high political hopes usually lead to disappointment, and the Whigs' experience in this decade is not unusual in the annals of political history. In this respect, older accounts such as that of Gash tracing the 'decline' of the Whigs are perhaps more accurate than their critics might allow. Nevertheless, it was not the case, as Gash argued, that the Whigs were unprincipled or conservative. Rather, the tensions in the liberal ranks were a reflection of the Government's weak parliamentary position, combined with more telling theological differences between the Whigs and their dissenting supporters which made religious policy, in particular, problematic.

There was, however, still scope for Whig involvement in Yorkshire's politics. Morpeth had formed a strong emotional attachment to the West Riding, and had no desire to abandon it. Even in defeat, he had felt overwhelmed by 'attachment to the people themselves'.³⁸⁹ In a magnanimous farewell speech he vowed not to sit for another constituency. His address was widely held to exemplify statesmanlike manliness. It increased the Riding's good opinion of him still further, reportedly preserving a 'romantic attachment' to him among his former constituents.³⁹⁰ In 1846, he fulfilled his vow by returning to represent the West Riding after a lengthy absence from politics. As a subsequent chapter will show, the political world he returned to was significantly different from the one he had left, and if anything even more tumultuous. In between times, however, Morpeth maintained his association with the Riding by participating in its philanthropic culture. The importance of this in his life, and its connection to his politics, is the subject of the next chapter.

³⁸⁹ J20/2, Lord Morpeth to Charles Howard, July 13th 1841.

³⁹⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, July 17th 1841, p. 4; *Leeds Times*, July 17th 1841, p. 4; *Bradford Observer*, February 1st 1844, p. 4. For praise of this speech, see also J19/1/32/41, Thomas Johnstone of Wakefield to Lord Morpeth, July 15th 1841; J19/1/32/32, William Busfield to Lord Morpeth, July 13th 1841; J19/1/32/43, William Leatham to Lord Morpeth, July 16th 1841.

ILLUSTRATION TWO: A Conservative Election Poster, 1835

ELECTORS
OF THE
West Riding of Yorkshire

Your Fellow-Countrymen in South Devonshire,
have done their Duty nobly, by Rejecting,
By a Majority of 628,
Lord John Russell
The Minion of O'CONNELL, the Supporter
of Popery against Protestantism ;

And if he again attempts to get into Parliament, it must be through the medium
of one of those Close Boroughs, which he has been Denouncing all his Life.

Will you then be such Traitors to the Welfare
of your Country, as not to follow their Glorious Example? No, you will not.—

The same Fate awaits LORD MORPETH.

You will send this **NOMINEE** of a Greedy
Faction,—this **TOOL** of the Irish Roman Catholic Repealers, back to Castle
Howard, to Spin Rhymes on the unhappy Fate of the Fat Bullocks which are
fed on the “ Fair Scenes of his Home.”—**YOU WILL REJECT THIS**

Northern “Intruder,”
Who has not an Acre in the West Riding, and secure

A TRIUMPHANT MAJORITY
FOR YOUR FRIEND AND NEIGHBOUR,

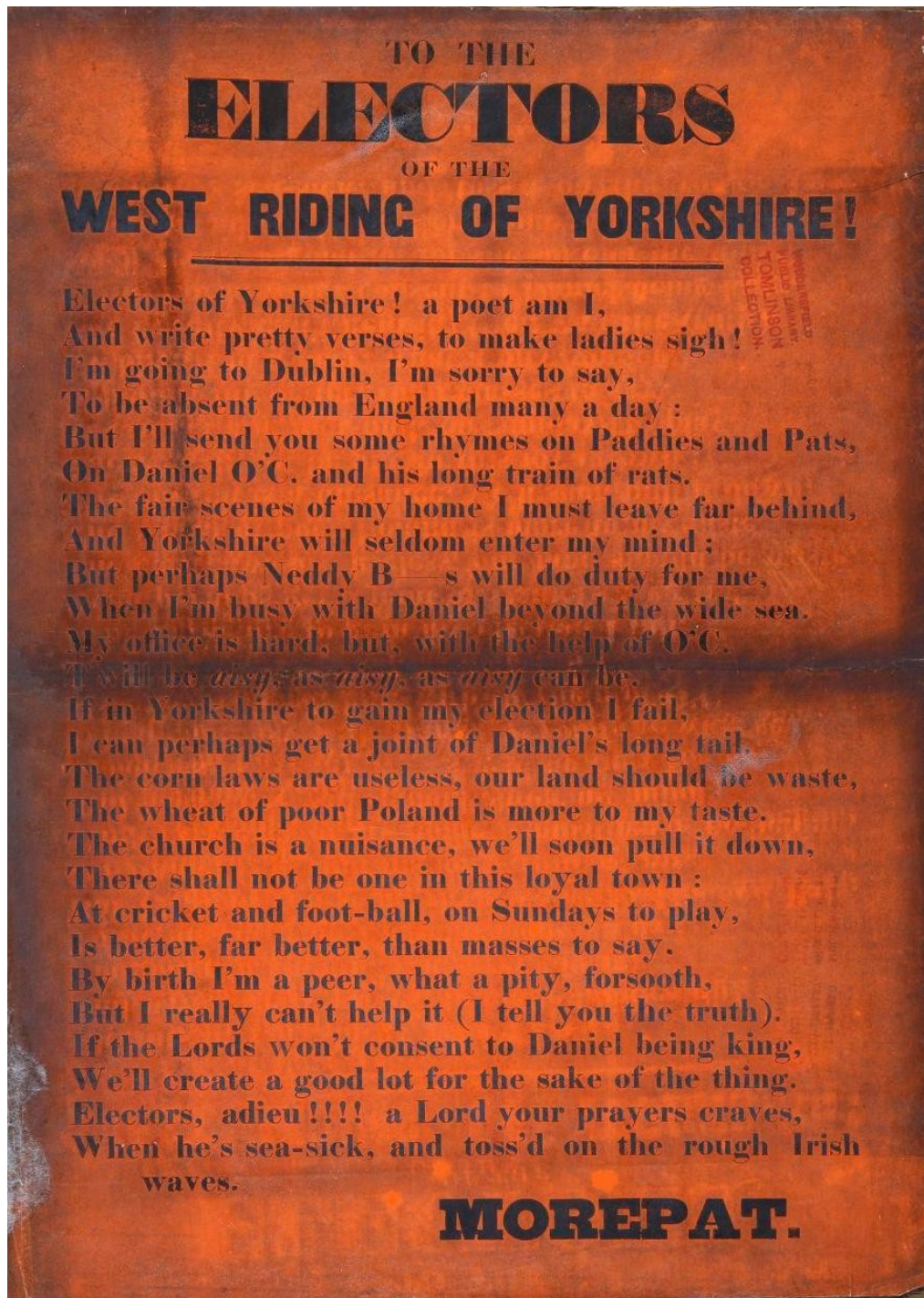
John Stuart Wortley.
An **ENEMY** to **POPERY & HUMBUG.**

T. KEMP, PRINTER, HUDDERSFIELD.

This Conservative Party election poster from the May 1835 West Riding election attacks the Whigs' Irish policy.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees), KC174/84. Photograph by Peter Smith, by permission of West Yorkshire Archive Service.

ILLUSTRATION THREE: Conservative Propaganda from the 1835 Election



This poster from the 1835 West Riding election, in the form of a mock poem in Morpeth's voice, attacks the Whigs' Irish policy.³⁹²

³⁹² G. W. Tomlinson Collection (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees), KC174/88. Photograph by Peter Smith, by kind permission of West Yorkshire Archive Service.

ILLUSTRATION FOUR: Morpeth's West Riding Testimonial Casket



This casket in the Castle Howard Collection was given to Lord Morpeth by the liberal electors of the West Riding after his defeat at the 1841 election. It accompanied a testimonial scroll signed by over 38,000 people.

CHAPTER THREE

Lord Morpeth as a Philanthropist

The last chapter analysed Lord Morpeth's political career in the West Riding, a topic pursued again in the next chapter. However, politics was only one important element of Morpeth's relationship with the region. He was also strongly involved with the county's philanthropic organisations. By the time of his death, he was known as one of Yorkshire's – indeed England's - foremost philanthropists. In an effusive obituary, the *Leeds Mercury* described him as the 'zealous advocate of all good causes', the epitome of a 'kindly-hearted, large-souled, generous man'.¹ In exploring these activities, this chapter details a major aspect of his life: one which, furthermore, was of pivotal importance in his political career.

The first part of this chapter shows how Morpeth's altruism was an expression of his religious beliefs, helping him fulfil his spiritual need to work for the good of others. Moreover, it will be argued that he saw philanthropic activity as a way of realising his religiously-inspired vision of a progressive, harmonious, unselfish and moral society. This was of direct import for his political views. Through philanthropy, he engaged with social questions which came to preoccupy him as a statesman. The second part of this chapter suggests that his participation in social reforms in areas such as health and education, were informed by the projects he undertook at philanthropic level.

The third part of the chapter illustrates the ways in which Morpeth's philanthropic activities maintained and deepened his connection to the West Riding, sustaining his connection with the constituency outside the formal political arena. Furthermore, it will be argued that his benevolence helped to enhance his profile as a politician, adding to the idea that he was a man of excellent moral character. This proved to play a vital role in his career. In overview, then, this chapter analyses the numerous connections between Morpeth's roles as a philanthropist and a politician, suggesting that they cannot be treated as two separate spheres of analysis.

¹ *Leeds Mercury*, December 6th 1864, p. 2.

'That Kindly and Considerate Spirit': Morpeth as a Philanthropist

Morpeth was very actively involved with an array of philanthropic ventures. These included the anti-slavery campaign, Christian missions, educational societies, Sunday schools, Mechanics' Institutes, lunatic asylums, working-class housing and many more.² Although diverse, his favourite causes all aimed at the moral improvement of society. They were part of a culture of voluntary associations for moral reform which, as M. J. D. Roberts has shown, was a crucial element in nineteenth-century British life. Although some of these associations were connected in various ways to political structures, those who supported them argued that they performed important functions which the state could not provide. Typically, they were also defined by a suspicion of charitable relief-giving, which it was feared might encourage a degrading dependency culture. In this view, the truest charity encouraged people to help themselves.³

There have been a number of interpretations of the early-Victorian culture of moral reform. An arguably now outdated view presents these associations as agencies of social control, in which a 'bourgeois' ideology was imposed onto the working classes who, it was hoped, would thereby accept middle-class hegemony.⁴ A class-based approach also informs the work of R. J. Morris and Simon Gunn on Leeds and Manchester respectively. Rightly pointing to the importance of philanthropic life in civic culture, these scholars suggest that this helped the formation of middle-class identity, which defined itself against an immoral and irreligious working-class 'other' which it attempted to reform. Morris further argues that voluntary associations offered the town's middle-class a neutral arena in which they could come together and overcome their political and religious divisions.⁵

Against these accounts, it might be argued that philanthropy drew much of its strength from willing lower-class participation; something which, as will be seen,

² An extensive list of these can be found in Appendix Four.

³ M. J. D. Roberts, *Making English Morals: Voluntary Association and Moral Reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁴ See, for instance, Koditschek, *Class Formation*, pp. 293-319; Steven Shapin & Barry Barnes, 'Science, Nature and Control: Interpreting Mechanics' Institutes', *Social Studies of Science*, 7 (1977), 31-74.

⁵ Simon Gunn, 'The ministry, the middle-class and the 'civilising mission' in Manchester, 1850-80', *Social History*, 21:1 (1996), 22-36; Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, pp. 161-203, 249-63.

proved to be of importance in Morpeth's involvement in it. The 'respectable' portion of the working-class served as organisers and activists for philanthropic causes (such as Sunday Schools), or as eager participants in ventures organised from above.⁶ The work of Frank Prochaska has been vital here in presenting philanthropy as an expression of a vibrant and widespread religious culture, through which all classes could come together in the idea that to improve oneself and help improve others was good and righteous. Prochaska has thus contended that it is appropriate to see early-Victorian philanthropy as what it purported to be – an act of Christian kindness.⁷

Prochaska's argument effectively shifts the interpretation of Victorian philanthropy away from its perceived benefits on the behaviour of the recipient, instead focusing attention on what it was thought to say about the donor. This offers considerable assistance in understanding Morpeth's life. His philanthropy was a direct result of his belief that one was commanded to work for the good of others, something which he believed expressed one's love for God. He was accordingly apt to explain his charity through Jesus' instruction in Matthew 25:40; 'In as much as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me'.⁸

It was argued in Chapter One that Morpeth's political life was also an expression of this sense of duty. It is thus doubtless significant that his involvement with philanthropy increased markedly after his return from the Americas in 1842, when he was out of Parliament. He clearly found himself morally uncomfortable with this enforced leisure. The anxiety this caused is revealed in an entry at the start of his diary in October 1843, in which he recorded all the engagements he had undertaken in the previous year. These included attendance at the meetings of an impressive range of organisations, such as the British and Foreign Bible Society, York Diocesan Education Society, the Sunday School Union and the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Morpeth, however, was dissatisfied with his own performance, noting that 'I feel sensibly how very little I have done, and hope that other years have

⁶ Thomas Walter Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (New Haven, 1976); Frank Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: The Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 20-25.

⁷ Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London, 1988), pp. 6-7, 21-30.

⁸ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Halifax Sunday School jubilee, *Leeds Mercury*, June 6th 1846, p. 11.

larger and better accumulations'.⁹ Increasing his philanthropic commitments helped him to satisfy his need to serve others when he could not do this through politics.

In turn, participation in one cause often led him to engage in another. For instance, he became an active magistrate and poor-law Guardian in the 1840s, again probably a result of his need to use his time constructively. This led him into related ventures such as the North and East Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum at Clifton near York, an institution controlled and founded by the magistracy of these two Ridings.¹⁰ Morpeth had a lifelong interest in asylums, no doubt sparked by the insanity of his brother William. He was appointed onto the building committee of the Clifton asylum at the Quarter Sessions of January 1844, attending several times that year.¹¹ He remained a regular attendee of the management committee until his appointment as Viceroy of Ireland in 1855.¹² As this suggests, once he had established a connection with a cause, he usually maintained it for a lengthy period of time. As a result, his philanthropy continued undiminished after his return to active politics in 1846.

Speaking at the British and Foreign Bible Society in Selby, Morpeth claimed that 'all the good done in the world' was done by people who did not mind adding to already onerous burdens, who in fact found it 'impossible for them to keep still in the blessed work of doing good'.¹³ It was a good description of Morpeth himself, but it was also one reason for his patronage of philanthropic institutions. As seen in Chapter One, he believed that a progressive society was a selfless society. He therefore hoped for an increase in what he called a 'kindly and considerate spirit', feeling that only a

⁹ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, opening comments (October 1843).

¹⁰ Magisterial control of county asylums was enshrined in the 1845 Lunacy and County Asylums Acts, which made county asylums for paupers mandatory. Although the Clifton Asylum came under the Act, its formation actually pre-dated it (in 1844), and included magisterial control from the outset. The links between county asylums and the magistracy and poor-law systems are detailed in Peter Bartlett, *The Poor Law of Lunacy: The Administration of Pauper Lunatics in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* (London, 1999).

¹¹ North and East Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum Records (Borthwick Institute for Archives), CL1/1/1/1, Committee minute book, January 2nd 1844 (reporting North Riding Quarter Sessions), January 19th, March 13th, April 18th, April 22nd, November 19th, December 19th 1844.

¹² North and East Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum Records (Borthwick Institute for Archives), CL1/1/1/1&2, Committee minute books, record that Morpeth attended on January 29th 1845, February 17th 1845, October 11th 1845, September 10th 1846, August 30th 1847, December 31st 1847, December 23rd 1850, April 19th 1851, December 30th 1851, September 26th 1854, October 5th 1854 (which he chaired) and January 26th 1855.

¹³ *Leeds Mercury*, November 27th 1858, p. 5.

‘persevering, discerning, conscientious benevolence’ would cure mankind’s ills.¹⁴ He gave associations of moral reform his support because he saw them as beacons of human kindness, which proved that this could triumph over man’s self-interest.

Lying behind these sentiments was the idea that by acting on God’s command to love thy neighbour, philanthropy worked in harmony with His divine order. Selfishness, on the other hand, could be seen to oppose God’s wishes and hence create distress. David Turley has noted that the need to align society with Providence in this regard was a major motivation for anti-slavery activists, who saw slavery as the ultimate expression of an ungodly and socially damaging selfishness.¹⁵ Indeed, Morpeth’s belief that an absence of benevolence could be detrimental to society as a whole was most clearly expressed through the anti-slavery campaign.

As previously noted, Morpeth had long been ardently opposed to slavery. However, his involvement with this cause increased after his journey around the Americas in 1841-42. He had found the experience of seeing real-life slavery profoundly shocking, noting on one occasion that it ‘almost made my blood boil’.¹⁶ He openly supported American abolitionists during his tour and vowed to assist their movement, declaring that this would henceforth occupy ‘the main portion of my interest, hopes and aspirations’.¹⁷ Upon his return, he became a member of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, which was interested in the Americas, detailing the scenes he had witnessed at its annual meeting in June 1843.¹⁸

Thereafter, he self-consciously aimed to foster the links between British and American abolitionism, noting that English anti-slavery events allowed him to ‘bear my testimony’ to ‘American friends’.¹⁹ He also continued his personal connections with these abolitionists, hosting Charles Sumner and Harriet Beecher Stowe on their

¹⁴ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, pp. 82-83.

¹⁵ Turley, *Culture of English Anti-Slavery*, pp. 17-23.

¹⁶ J19/8/7, Lord Morpeth’s American diary, February 16th 1842, May 29th 1842.

¹⁷ Lord Morpeth to Mrs Chapman, October 28th 1842, in *The Times*, January 19th 1843, p. 5, reprinted from the *Liberty Bell* (an American anti-slavery periodical).

¹⁸ *The Examiner*, June 24th 1843, p. 391.

¹⁹ J19/8/36, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, December 27th 1858, referring to his attendance at the Leeds Young Men’s Anti-Slavery Society meeting that day.

visits to England.²⁰ His most evident contribution was to write the preface for the English edition of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852, in which he presented abolitionists as 'fighting a battle unparalleled either in ancient or modern-day heroism'.²¹ In doing so, he engaged with a seminal moment in domestic culture; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the most famous and widely-read books of the nineteenth-century. It profoundly changed British views of American slavery, becoming a primary reference point for discussion of the topic.²²

Morpeth used the preface to declare that abolitionists were 'proxies of an all-ruling Providence'.²³ He felt that slavery was an ungodly institution, believing that its flagrant disregard of God's command to love one's fellow men created suffering among the slaves themselves, denied them their God-given freedom and restricted their capacity for moral and spiritual development.²⁴ However, he did not see those who supported or perpetrated slavery as somehow abnormally cruel. Rather, he suggested that their actions reflected the weakness and selfishness of all human nature.²⁵ Indeed, he implied that few people would resist the abuse of power inherent in the slave system if raised to accept this as legal and acceptable.²⁶

However, he believed that this operated with a 'terrible reaction' to society at large. Finding the American slave states relatively backward, he noted that slavery had acted to 'blunt the moral sense, to sap domestic virtue, to degrade independent

²⁰ J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, May 3rd 1853; J19/8/35, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, October 30th 1857. Morpeth's sister Harriet Sutherland also engaged with American abolitionism, as detailed in Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women in Political Society*, pp. 122-27.

²¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: A Tale of Life Among the Lowly, with a Preface by the Right Hon. The Earl of Carlisle* (London, 1852), p. viii.

²² Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens (GA), 2005), p. 163.

²³ Preface in Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, p. xii.

²⁴ George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Two Lectures on the Poetry of Pope, and on his own Travels in America: Delivered to the Leeds Mechanics' Institution & Literary Society, December 5th and 6th, 1850* (Leeds, 1851), pp. 34-35, 43-44.

²⁵ Preface in Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pp. vi-vii.

²⁶ This argument with respect to Morpeth's preface has also been made in Martin Wiener, *Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law and Policy in England, 1830-1914* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 20. Wiener intriguingly suggests that concerns made by early-Victorians about selfish behaviour in others reflected psychological anxiety about their own weaknesses. It is thus interesting to note that Morpeth's argument in his preface may have been related to his own personal experience that slavery dulled his moral senses; he noted whilst in America that 'I feel sometimes that I have not duly shuddered at [slavery] – that it becomes almost familiarised to me. I am sure it has that effect on almost all who live in the midst of it' (J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, May 29th 1842).

industry... to sow the seeds of suspicion, alarm and vengeance'.²⁷ This, it seemed, was what happened when a people allowed self-interest to triumph over moral duty.

Morpeth, however, did not need to look to America to worry about the impact of selfishness and materialism. His philanthropic activities in the 1840s took shape amidst the widespread belief that Britain's moral health was in crisis – the so-called 'Condition of England' problem. This was, in part, a reaction to apparent immorality in the lower ranks of society, concerns which were focused particularly on the urban working-class. It was worried that the urban poor were faced by a bewildering array of temptations – gin-shops, gaming houses, inns and brothels – all of which encouraged them to subordinate their morality to the brutish gratification of the passions. This degeneration was thought to lead them to become easy prey for the grasping clutches of criminal gangs and radical demagogues.²⁸ Indeed, radical movements like Chartism were viewed as a manifestation of these problems. As Robert Saunders has demonstrated, British elites saw Chartism, not as an expression of legitimate political grievances, but as an indication of a 'social pathology'.²⁹

Nevertheless, these troubles were also seen to be a result of the moral failings. Thomas Carlyle, who coined the term 'Condition of England', argued that if the working classes were immoral and rebellious, this was because they had not been given the proper moral guidance or care, and had become alienated from the rest of society. The aristocracy had given itself over to a wasteful culture of leisure, and the urban middle-class elite to the selfish pursuit of profit. The result was a disconnection between the different social orders, which required the restoration of harmonious relations through more benevolent and engaged leadership.³⁰ The 'Condition of England' question, then, presented the spectre of a divided and materialistic society – precisely the opposite of what Morpeth wished to promote.

²⁷ J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, closing comments.

²⁸ Tristram Hunt, *Building Jerusalem: The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (2nd edn., London: Orion Books, 2005), pp. 45-73; Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 26-35.

²⁹ Robert Saunders, 'Chartism from above: British elites and the interpretation of Chartism', *Historical Research*, 81:213 (2008), 463-84.

³⁰ John Morrow, *Thomas Carlyle* (London, 2006), pp. 75-103. For the idea that contemporaries sought to combat Chartism through greater engagement with the working-classes, see also Saunders, 'Chartism from above'.

Morpeth, however, did not reject the idea of urban life *per se*. Like many liberals, he regarded the city as a potentially fruitful arena of moral, intellectual and economic progress.³¹ Although respecting their engagement with social questions, he thus rejected the ‘foolish’ nostalgia for a rural golden age propagated by the Young England group, dryly noting that this had ‘rather too much of Old England for me’.³² Nevertheless, he worried that the culture of the city might produce a selfish anomie, in which the inhabitant forgot his moral duties in a self-absorbed commercialism.³³ Here too his anxiety could draw on an American example. Whilst he had been impressed by the philanthropic culture of the United States, he felt that this was held back by the ‘preponderating sway’ of ‘the empire of dollars and cents’.³⁴

These ideas had a considerable impact on Morpeth’s philanthropy. This can be best seen through his patronage of Mechanics’ Institutes, which provided popular, secular education for adults. First established in London and Glasgow in the early 1820s, the Mechanics’ Institute movement grew particularly strongly in Yorkshire. Leeds acquired an Institute in 1825, Halifax in 1825 and York in 1827.³⁵ The growth was such that in 1837 Edward Baines Junior, a major player in the development of institutes in the county, established the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics’ Institutes (Y.U.M.I.), a body designed to share best practice and the costs of lecturers. By 1849, it boasted 86 member institutions and 15,860 members.³⁶ Morpeth became its most

³¹ For the liberal defence of the city, Lees, *Cities Perceived*, pp. 40-48.

³² Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 79.

³³ This was a widespread contemporary anxiety about urban life; see Hunt, *Building Jerusalem*, pp. 55-57.

³⁴ Carlisle, *Two Lectures*, pp. 41-43. It is difficult to substantiate the contention, but it seems likely that Morpeth’s experiences in America may have shaped his thought in a number of ways. Like Alexis de Tocqueville, he regarded the country as a ‘great experiment’ in social organisation which might provide an indication as to how to run one’s own society (Carlisle, *Two Lectures*, p. 40). Although I have cited Morpeth’s criticisms of American slavery and materialism here, compared to many English travellers he was a generally sympathetic observer of American life.

³⁵ The most authoritative account of these developments remains Mabel Tylecote, *The Mechanics’ Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire Before 1851* (Manchester, 1957).

³⁶ *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics’ Institutes, Read at the Twelfth Annual Meeting, held in Beverley, May 30th 1849* (Leeds, 1849), p. 1. Originally called the West Riding Union, the organisation changed its name to the Yorkshire Union in 1841 to reflect the establishment of many institutes elsewhere within Yorkshire. The history of Y.U.M.I. is extensively detailed in J. Popple, ‘The Origin and Development of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics’ Institutes’, 2 Vols (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Sheffield, 1960).

notable patron, leading Baines Junior to describe him as an ‘ardent friend of the cause of popular education’.³⁷

As conceived by the initial founders of the movement, who included the Whig rationalist Henry Brougham, Mechanics’ Institutes were designed to stimulate manufacturing by giving an education in science and political economy to the industrial workforce. However, this aim floundered due to a distinct lack of demand. Members simply did not have either the will to attend talks on their own industries or the knowledge to understand complex scientific lectures. As a result, many institutes turned to providing basic education in reading, writing and arithmetic in evening classes, an opportunity seized by non-industrial as well as industrial workers and particularly by young men. The typical institute was composed of the ‘respectable’ portion of the upper-working and lower-middle classes, and included clerks, skilled artisans, and small tradesmen as well as operatives.³⁸

From the 1830s the Institutes broadened their curricula to include the humanities, and provided attractive social recreations such as excursions in a bid to attract new members.³⁹ Most (although not all) institutes in Yorkshire were organised by the urban middle-class elite. In Leeds, the Institute was organised by the likes of the Baineses and the Marshalls, who were also involved with the town’s prestigious Philosophical and Literary Society. In Bradford, the Institute was controlled by men such as Robert Milligan and the Baptist minister Revd. James Acworth.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, as Morpeth’s example attests, there was considerable scope for aristocratic involvement. Probably as a result of his position as the West Riding’s M.P., he patronised a number of Yorkshire’s institutes in the late 1830s.⁴¹ It was, however, in presiding over soirées that he found his niche. Annual soirées had come

³⁷ Speech of Edward Baines Junior at the soirée of the Leeds Mechanics’ Institute, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, February 22nd 1845, p. 7.

³⁸ Tylecote, *Mechanics’ Institutes*, pp. 70-81, 88-112; Edward Royle, ‘Mechanics’ Institutes and the working classes, 1840-60’, *Historical Journal*, 14 (1971), 305-21.

³⁹ See the case-studies of the Manchester, Huddersfield, Halifax and Bradford Institutes in Tylecote, *Mechanics’ Institutes*, pp. 129-240.

⁴⁰ Leeds Mechanics’ Institute & Literary Society Records (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds), WYL/368/1, Minute Book, 1841-46; Gerry Wright, ‘Bradford Mechanics’ Institute in the Nineteenth Century’ (unpublished M. Phil Dissertation, University of Leeds, 1996).

⁴¹ *Leeds Mercury*, May 19th 1838, p. 5; January 5th 1839, p. 7; May 25th 1839, p. 5.

to be seen as highly important to the work of Mechanics' Institutes by the 1840s. They offered the institutes an opportunity to showcase their work, raise funds and attract new supporters and members.⁴² Morpeth chaired the Y.U.M.I. soirée at Wakefield in May 1844, the Leeds Institute's soirée in February 1845, the Y.U.M.I. soirée at Huddersfield in June 1846, the Bradford Institute's soirée in October 1846, the Sheffield Institute's soirée in September 1847 and November 1849 and the Y.U.M.I. soirées at Hull and Leeds in June 1849 and June 1851.⁴³

Morpeth's support was thought to help confer legitimacy on the institutes. In their early years, they had encountered some opposition from conservatives concerned with the possible political effects of educating the lower orders, and from some Anglicans who disapproved of their secular ethos (perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, most of those involved in the early movement were Whigs or nonconformist liberals).⁴⁴ The *Mercury* felt that Morpeth's patronage 'rendered an eminent service' by demonstrating that popular education enjoyed the approbation of the respectable nobility.⁴⁵ Indeed, such was the Leeds Institutes' appreciation of his services that they hung his portrait in their hall. He was not the only Whig notable to give their blessing to Yorkshire's institutes; Charles Wood, Earl Fitzwilliam and Lord John Russell all attended soirées in the county in the 1840s and 50s.⁴⁶

Morpeth was in great demand as a president of such occasions. As a well-known public figure and local celebrity, he increased attendance at the soirées and hence swelled the coffers of the institutes. The *Leeds Mercury* reported that Morpeth had been a 'great attraction' at the 1844 Y.U.M.I. soirée.⁴⁷ His speeches, which typically extolled the benefits of popular education, were ideally suited to such occasions. As

⁴² The growing importance of soirées is noted in *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Read at the 6th Annual Meeting held in Halifax, April 26th 1843* (Leeds, 1843), p. 6.

⁴³ *Leeds Mercury*, May 4th 1844, p.5; February 22nd 1845, p. 7; June 6th 1846, p. 4; October 10th 1846, p. 7; September 4th 1847, p. 7; June 14th 1851, p. 4; Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 112; J19/8/22, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 6th 1849.

⁴⁴ Thomas Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain* (Liverpool, 1970), pp. 120-123.

⁴⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, June 6th 1846, p. 4.

⁴⁶ Leeds Mechanics' Institute & Literary Society Records (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds), WYL/368/1, Minute Book, September 7th 1842, August 24th 1852; WYL/368/53, Report of the Leeds Mechanics' Institute & Literary Society for 1852; *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Read at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting, held in Skipton, June 2nd 1852* (Leeds, 1852).

Fitzwilliam's patronage of popular education in Sheffield is noted in D. J. Gratton, 'The Fifth Earl Fitzwilliam's Patronage in the Church and Education: A Whig Nobleman Does His Duty', *Northern History*, 38: 2 (2001), 289-90.

⁴⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, May 4th 1844, p. 5.

the perceptive Goldwin Smith noted, his particular brand of ‘heartfelt flummery’ made him an unrivalled philanthropic speaker.⁴⁸ His addresses were later collected together in a volume designed to raise funds for Y.U.M.I.⁴⁹ Morpeth clearly took these speeches seriously, taking care that they might benefit his audience. On one occasion, he privately noted that he had ‘taken pains’ with his address, hoping that ‘it had things to dwell on the memories of quiet listeners’.⁵⁰

More unusually, he volunteered to actually lecture before a Mechanics’ Institute, becoming the first titled aristocrat ever to do so. Having prepared long in advance, in December 1850 he delivered two lectures on the poetry of Pope and his American travels to the Leeds Institute. He spoke for over two hours on each occasion, before audiences of over a thousand people.⁵¹ These lectures were then published and spread throughout Yorkshire’s institutes, and the exercise was later repeated by Morpeth at other institutions elsewhere.⁵² They caused a quiet sensation. The committee of the Leeds Institute could not ‘too strongly express their gratitude’ that a nobleman and Cabinet Minister had humbled himself in this way.⁵³ In an extended editorial, the *Leeds Mercury* felt that his example would have ‘consequences of the greatest value’. Even Thomas De Quincey, who called the lectures an ‘eccentric step’ in a critical commentary, felt that Morpeth had set a valuable precedent.⁵⁴

It can therefore be seen that Morpeth’s enthusiasm for Mechanics’ Institutes was extremely strong. He declared that they ‘exactly fall in with my sympathies, and stir

⁴⁸ Goldwin Smith, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1910), pp. 301-02.

⁴⁹ George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses in Aid of Popular Education* (London, 1852).

⁵⁰ J19/8/13, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 22nd 1846.

⁵¹ *Leeds Mercury*, December 7th 1850, p. 4 and reports in *Leeds Mercury*, December 14th 1850, pp. 6-7 and supplement. The lengthy preparations which Morpeth put into these lectures are shown in J19/8/24, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 7th 1850, October 2nd 1850.

⁵² George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Two Lectures on the Poetry of Pope, and on his own Travels in America: Delivered to the Leeds Mechanics' Institution & Literary Society, December 5th and 6th, 1850* (Leeds, 1851). Morpeth added to these lectures by delivering another one on the poetry of Gray in Sheffield in 1852 and again in Bradford in 1855 (J19/8/30, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, December 14th 1852; *Leeds Mercury*, January 13th 1855, p. 8). He gave his lecture on Pope to the Aberdeen Institute in 1853 (J19/8/30, Diary, March 29th 1853) and the Rotherham Institute in 1854 (J19/8/31, Diary, December 8th 1854); his lecture on America to the Hull Literary and Philosophical Society in 1858 (J19/8/36, Diary, November 24th 1858); and his lecture on Gray in the same week to the Selby Institute (*Leeds Mercury*, November 27th 1858, p. 5).

⁵³ *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Read at the Fourteenth Annual Meeting, held in Leeds, June 11th 1851* (Leeds, 1851), p. 16, 60.

⁵⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, December 7th 1850, p. 4; Thomas De Quincey, ‘Lord Carlisle on Pope’, in Edmund Baxter (ed.), *The Works of Thomas De Quincey: Volume 17* (London, 2001), pp. 195-201.

up all my warmest interest'.⁵⁵ This zeal was directly related to his belief that associations of popular education helped to overcome the social divisions and materialism of urban life. Institutes were, he declared, especially important in places such as Leeds, whose 'ceaseless hum of tongues' and 'roaring clatter of wheels' might have the effect of encouraging an immoral anomie.⁵⁶ He thus appreciated the way in which Mechanics' Institutes offered a 'neutral ground' in which men of different classes and interests could come together through mutual self-respect.⁵⁷

Morpeth also valued associations such as Mechanics' Institutes because he felt they encouraged the religious tolerance which he considered the spirit of true faith. Philanthropic institutions had traditionally been sites of inter-denominational cooperation, but this came under strain in the 1830s and 40s owing to increasing tensions between the High and Low church.⁵⁸ This led Morpeth to praise those organisations which did involve collaboration between different sects, such as the secular Mechanics' Institutes and the Sunday School movement. As he expressed himself at a jubilee of the Halifax Sunday School Union in June 1846, he would support any venture which promoted 'religious concord' by bringing different denominations together in a 'common chorus of praise' to the Creator.⁵⁹

Morpeth's support for philanthropic institutions therefore directly reflected his desire to promote a benevolent and harmonious society. However, he also valued endeavours of moral improvement for their effect on those they hoped to reform. As noted above, contemporaries were extremely anxious about the moral condition of the working-classes, especially those who lived in urban areas. Morpeth shared these concerns. He agreed that urban labourers were 'too likely to be corrupted by evil associations and bad companionship'.⁶⁰ By the 1840s his favourite cause of popular education had come to present itself as a solution to this problem.

Prominent here was the idea that education offered rational recreation, providing a morally wholesome and useful alternative to gaming-houses and gin-shops. The

⁵⁵ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 78.

⁵⁶ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, pp. 78, 126-27.

⁵⁷ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 96.

⁵⁸ Roberts, *Making English Morals*, p. 145.

⁵⁹ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 87.

⁶⁰ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 95.

Ripon Mechanics' Institute could accordingly declare in 1852 that its aim was to 'attract the uneducated from... follies and vices', whilst the Otley Institute likewise hoped that it diverted operatives from 'frivolous, vicious habits, and all that conduces to debase and demoralise the human character'.⁶¹ In practice, members of these institutions were drawn from the 'respectable' working-class, and were thus less likely to frequent the debauched haunts which so excited contemporary imaginations. However, this was a powerful idea, into which Morpeth fully entered. Popular education, he declared, helped to 'raise the toiling masses... above the range of sordid cares and low desires'.⁶²

Furthermore, he believed that popular education acted to morally elevate its recipients, helping to produce a more 'contented and virtuous people'.⁶³ He saw it as something which taught men to cultivate the 'divine part' of their nature and place this above their 'material wants'. It was, he declared, to be prized mainly for the effect it had in fostering 'the formation of individual character, the building of moral habits, the whole pervading discipline of duty'.⁶⁴ In this respect, his altruistic actions can again be seen as a response to the 'Condition of England' crisis. As he put it in a speech in Huddersfield in 1843, the spread of education throughout society was, 'in these times... indispensable to the welfare and *even to the salvation* of the country'.⁶⁵

Morpeth's enthusiasm here was so intense because, as noted in Chapter One, his religious views led him to believe that it was possible for all men to improve themselves. Speaking to the Lincoln Mechanics' Institute in 1851, he argued that educational institutions helped 'the progress of mankind and the advance of our species'. It was a topic in which he avowed a 'fervid' interest.⁶⁶ For Morpeth, the institutions had the sanction of God. He declared his hope that they would continue until 'there shall be no dark corner un-illuminated... no haunt of obscene revelry un-rebuked... no abode of ignorance unenlightened'. This would allow the British to

⁶¹ *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Read at the Thirteenth Annual Meeting, held in Darlington, May 22nd 1850* (Leeds, 1850), p. 59; *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Read at the Fifteenth Annual Meeting, Held in Skipton, June 2nd 1852* (Leeds, 1852), p. 16.

⁶² Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 113.

⁶³ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 95.

⁶⁴ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, pp. 72-73, 90-91

⁶⁵ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 72, my emphasis.

⁶⁶ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 123.

become, ‘in the judgment of Him who judgeth not as man judgeth, a wise and understanding people’.⁶⁷

However, unsurprisingly given his religious beliefs, Morpeth’s response to apparent working-class immorality also took a more directly religious form. He was convinced that the problem arose from the absence of Christianity among the poor, being influenced here by the thought of socially-engaged theologians such as J. S. Boone. He regularly attended Boone’s church at Paddington, and was highly impressed by his influential sermon on *The Need of Christianity to Great Cities* (1844), which painted a grim portrait of urban temptations and the resulting need for increased spiritual provision in cities.⁶⁸

As Appendix Four records, Morpeth subscribed to a number of church-building and missionary societies.⁶⁹ This support was in keeping with his belief that it was incumbent on the Christian to help spread the word of God. Like many raised in an evangelical household, he was encouraged to support organised evangelism as a child, subscribing to the British and Foreign Bible Society (B.F.B.S.) from the tender age of nine.⁷⁰ As an adult, he engaged with the B.F.B.S. more than any other missionary venture. He once subscribed £100 at a collection for it, regularly attended its annual meetings in London, and indeed confessed his disappointment at not being made its President.⁷¹ In addition, Morpeth was also involved with the Society’s auxiliary branches in Yorkshire, occasionally chairing meetings in York from the mid-1840s onwards. In 1858 he extended this patronage by presiding over some meetings in Bradford and Selby.⁷²

⁶⁷ Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, pp. 116-17.

⁶⁸ J19/8/4, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 8th 1844. For an analysis of Boone’s sermon, Lees, *Cities Perceived*, p. 30.

⁶⁹ This information is partly drawn from the Castle Howard Annual Accounts (F5/5).

⁷⁰ J19/1/1/25, Georgiana Morpeth to George Howard, February 6th 1812.

⁷¹ J19/8/30, Diary of the 7th Earl of Carlisle, February 7th 1853, March 9th 1853.

⁷² For York, see J19/8/9, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 23rd 1845; J19/8/29, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, October 25th 1852; J19/8/30, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, March 23rd 1853. For Bradford and Selby, *Leeds Mercury*, October 9th 1858, p. 7; November 27th 1858, p. 5.

The B.F.B.S. aimed to distribute cheap Bibles both at home and abroad.⁷³ Morpeth was enthusiastic about its overseas work, hoping that this would continue until ‘every shrine of idolatrous worship has been cleaned’. However, he owned that the Society’s particular appeal was that it did not neglect the heathen in Britain.⁷⁴ This link between the domestic and the international was central to the Society’s ethos. Alison Twells has argued that the Society expressed a ‘civilising mission’, which treated the non-believing English working-class as analogous to the colonial native, both of whom were thought to require moral and spiritual reformation. For the patrons of the Society, the operative distinction was not between nations, but between believers and non-believers. This arose from evangelical theology, which argued that all humans were equal in the eyes of God, equally sinful and capable of salvation.⁷⁵

Morpeth certainly agreed with this, teaching from Chalmers that all the world’s ‘thousand varieties of character’ were reducible to two groups, the carnal and the spiritual.⁷⁶ He freely made links between domestic and foreign non-believers, grouping them together in light of their brutish qualities. He thus stated that missionary work helped to tame the ‘tiger instinct of the heathen’, and overcome ‘the slavery of the heart and soul to... corrupted and perverted passions’.⁷⁷ Morpeth believed that the Bible helped to humanise the non-believer by encouraging self-control, encouraging him to place his God-given qualities above his animalistic ones. Evangelism thereby offered a way to fight the moral degradation of the domestic working-classes.

Morpeth, Whiggery and the ‘Condition of England’ Problem

It has been seen above that Morpeth’s philanthropy was heavily concerned with the ‘Condition of England’ problem. This is arguably of considerable significance for the

⁷³ An overview of the technical work of the Society is provided by Leslie Howsam, *Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge, 1991).

⁷⁴ Speech of the 7th Earl of Carlisle at the British and Foreign Bible Society, Bradford Auxiliary, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, October 9th 1858, p. 7.

⁷⁵ Alison Twells, *The Civilising Mission and the English Middle Class, 1792-1850: The ‘Heathen’ at Home and Overseas* (Basingstoke, 2009).

⁷⁶ J19/9/15, Commonplace book of sermons, ‘But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you’ (Thomas Chalmers).

⁷⁷ Speeches of the 7th Earl of Carlisle at the British and Foreign Bible Society, Bradford and Selby Auxiliaries, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, October 9th 1858, 7, November 27th 1858, p. 5.

historiography of the Whig Party. As Peter Mandler has cogently demonstrated, the need to respond to ‘Condition of England’ issues was a key theme driving Whig policy in the 1840s, developed particularly through legislation on public health and education.⁷⁸ Morpeth was heavily involved in these areas, which were accordingly of crucial political importance in his second spell in West Riding politics after 1846. These developments are explored in the next chapter, which also details his legislative activities in greater depth. This section will suggest that Morpeth’s political approach to these issues was deeply connected to his philanthropy.

Indeed, the division between philanthropy and politics in these two chapters is a highly arbitrary and in many ways unsatisfactory one, adopted only to preserve the thematic structure of the thesis. As will become apparent, both Morpeth’s actions at Westminster and his provincial political career were heavily shaped by his involvement in local structures of philanthropic activity. This argument stands in contrast to that adopted in Mandler’s account of the Whigs’ ‘Condition of England’ strategy, which presents as a centralising and primarily political response to social grievances designed to demonstrate the relevance of aristocratic government.⁷⁹

Mandler’s account thus tends to juxtapose this approach to the sort of voluntary philanthropic culture which Morpeth participated in.⁸⁰ Whilst I am sympathetic to the idea that the Whigs instituted a socially active state, I would contend that this represents a misreading of their intentions. Morpeth was always clear that the state might only ever enhance voluntary effort, being convinced that it could merely play a supporting role to individual benevolence in tackling social problems. This attitude was arguably representative of Whiggery as a whole. Jonathan Parry has suggested that Lord John Russell, for one, looked to use the state primarily to ‘encourage private philanthropy and stimulate human virtue’.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 236-67.

⁷⁹ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 176-78, 247-48.

⁸⁰ This tends to be more implied than explicitly stated, but see Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 1-3, 6-7, 37-38, 65, 182, 186, 205. Mandler does recognise that Whig aristocrats engaged with a philanthropic culture of moral improvement (*Aristocratic Government*, pp. 276-78), but nevertheless he presents this as a second-rate alternative to social reforms in the political arena, pursued only after the Whigs had faded from political importance in the 1850s.

⁸¹ Jonathan Parry, ‘Past and Future in the Later Career of Lord John Russell’ in Timothy Blanning & David Cannadine (eds.), *History & Biography: Essays in Honour of Derek Beales* (Cambridge, 1996), 155.

For Morpeth, the 'Condition of England' problem required a partnership between the state and voluntary agency. This approach can be better appreciated by exploring his attitude to health and elementary education. The Whigs were among the first statesmen to show an interest in the topic of public health. This was an expression of increasing awareness of the deleterious social effects of poor sanitary conditions in Britain's towns, which had been revealed by social investigators such as James Kay and Leeds' Robert Baker in the 1830s.⁸² In 1840, the Whig politician R. A. Slaney obtained a Select Committee on the Health of Towns, which led to Lord Normanby bringing forward failed legislation which aimed to make buildings more sanitary.⁸³

The health question was brought to the forefront of contemporary attention by Edwin Chadwick's sensational 1842 *Report into the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, an outcome of investigations arising from Chadwick's work on the Poor Law Commission and ordered by the Melbourne Ministry. The *Report* highlighted unnecessary ill-health, disease and high mortality caused by poor sanitation and overcrowding, particularly in London and the industrial North.⁸⁴

Chadwick's publication sparked a campaign for better sanitary conditions, of which the Health of Towns Association (H.T.A.) was the most important proponent. Founded in late 1844, the H.T.A. was led by the social reformer Dr Thomas Southwood Smith, who was assisted by another medical man, the ear surgeon Joseph Toynbee. Whig aristocrats were prominent from the outset, with Morpeth, Normanby, Slaney, Viscount Ebrington and Robert Grosvenor all becoming leading patrons. The H.T.A argued for the necessity of sanitary reform to check preventable disease, which particularly hit the poor. It was, in part, a political lobbying group which called for central state intervention. As Mandler points out, it thus conveniently fitted alongside Whig goals on this topic.⁸⁵

⁸² Baker's researches are detailed in M. J. Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain: The Foundations of Empirical Social Research* (Hassocks, 1975), pp. 126-31. Kay's work is explored from a more theoretical perspective in Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 52-72, 78-87.

⁸³ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 177-78.

⁸⁴ For background, see R. A. Lewis, *Edwin Chadwick and the Public Health Movement, 1832-1854* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970 [1st published 1952]), pp. 29-70.

⁸⁵ Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 225-26. For background on the H.T.A., see also R. G. Paterson, 'The Health of Towns Association in Great Britain, 1844-49: An exposition of the primary

Nevertheless, the sanitary movement cannot be seen in purely political terms. It had much in common with the other causes which Morpeth patronised. The H.T.A., for instance, was a self-consciously benevolent organisation which presented sanitary reform as a compassionate act.⁸⁶ This was a rallying cry for men like Morpeth, who, as noted in Chapter One, joined the public health cause largely on humanitarian grounds.⁸⁷ Indeed, Morpeth seems to have greatly enjoyed the company of his fellow sanitarians, who were often as religious as himself; for instance, he regularly discussed faith with Toynbee, finding no-one so 'pure-minded'.⁸⁸

Moreover, the H.T.A. can arguably be seen as an expression of the same culture of moral reform which dominated other contemporary philanthropic organisations.⁸⁹ As Christopher Hamlin has detailed, the sanitary movement was a highly moralistic one, which drew attention to the effects of the urban environment on working-class behaviour.⁹⁰ Living in sub-standard social conditions was thought to blunt the moral senses. Joseph Toynbee felt that the poor must 'inevitably be corrupted by the brutish condition in which they live', and even declared to Morpeth that 'any act which tends to frustrate the mental or bodily powers of man is one of irreligion'.⁹¹

Treatises on the 'Condition of England' problem routinely made links between the urban environment, ill-health, immorality and crime.⁹² These connections achieved their fullest expression in Chadwick's *Report*. Chadwick strongly associated morality

voluntary health society in the Anglo-Saxon public health movement', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 22:4 (1948), 373-99.

⁸⁶ Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 248-52.

⁸⁷ See Chapter One, pp. 50-51.

⁸⁸ J19/8/24, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 10th 1850.

⁸⁹ This argument is made in Roberts, *Making English Morals*, p. 158.

⁹⁰ Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, *passim*.

⁹¹ J19/1/44/65, Joseph Toynbee to Lord Morpeth, October 16th 1847; J19/1/44/79, Joseph Toynbee to Lord Morpeth, December 12th 1847.

⁹² For a sample, see for instance, James Kay, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes employed in the Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (reprint of 1832 2nd edn., London: Frank Cass, 1970), pp. 5-8, 22-34, 62-64; William Strange, *An Address to the Middle and Working Classes on the Causes and Prevention of the Excessive Sickness and Mortality Prevalent in Large Towns* (London, 1845), pp. 10-13, 32-34; Thomas Beggs, *An Inquiry into the Causes and Extent of Juvenile Depravity, Dedicated by Special Permission to the Right Hon. The Earl of Carlisle* (London, 1849), pp. 41-49; Hector Gavin, *Sanitary Ramblings, Being Sketches and Illustrations of Bethnal Green* (London, 1848), pp. 78-79; Thomas Beames, *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present and Prospective* (2nd edn., London: Thomas Bosworth, 1852), *passim*.

with a clean, spacious and wholesome domestic environment, which he unsurprisingly did not find in the urban slums which formed the objects of his study.⁹³ The *Report* argues, for instance, that overcrowding promoted indecency, incest and prostitution, and that filth in the home encouraged men into intemperance and crime.⁹⁴ Moreover, Chadwick suggested that unsanitary living conditions were responsible for encouraging the allegedly selfish, materialistic and brutish actions of the urban poor. In one of the more famous lines of the *Report*, he stated that ‘seeing the apparent uncertainty of the morrow, the inhabitants really take no heed of it, and abandon themselves... to whatever gross enjoyment comes within their reach’.⁹⁵

As has been well explored, Chadwick took a highly deterministic view of moral behaviour, which minimised the role of individual agency. This effectively gave him an imperative to instigate collective discipline through the agency of the state, re-ordering the behaviour of the poor by manipulating their environment.⁹⁶ In presenting his public health legislation, however, Morpeth did not use this sort of argument, only occasionally mentioning the moral benefits of sanitary reform. This may have been sound debating tactics, but it also reflected the fact that he rejected Chadwick’s determinism. He accepted that surroundings might have an impact on morality. However, where Chadwick saw a collective, Morpeth saw individual souls, each capable of moral reasoning and effort regardless of circumstances. The corollary was that he did not believe a few new pipes and sewers would radically change behaviour.

Revealingly, Morpeth expressed his concerns about the link between immorality and urban living conditions through non-political ventures. He was a particularly keen patron of Toynbee’s Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes.⁹⁷ This venture sought to build healthier and more spacious rented housing for London’s working-classes in a bid to overcome the moral and physical

⁹³ Mary Poovey, *Making a Social Body: British Cultural Formation, 1830-1864* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 115-31. The argument that Chadwick’s *Report* was a highly ideological document is also authoritatively made in Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, pp. 156-87.

⁹⁴ Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain, edited and with an introduction by M. W. Flinn* (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 190-200, 323-34.

⁹⁵ Chadwick, *Report*, p. 198.

⁹⁶ Poovey, *Making the Social Body*, pp. 127-31; Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, pp. 165-87.

⁹⁷ J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, June 10th 1845; J19/8/9, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 3rd 1845; J19/8/10, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 10th 1846; J19/8/18, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 4th 1848.

problems resulting from overcrowding.⁹⁸ In a Yorkshire context, he supported a similar project to provide the female factory workers of Bradford with boarding houses. He encouraged this project on moral grounds, declaring that the current residence of female workers in overcrowded common lodging houses exposed them to many ‘moral dangers’. Surrounding them with the ‘sanctity of a home’ would help combat their exposure to ‘bad companionship, the evil associations, the ever-open gin-shop, the midnight street, the solicitations to guilt, the easy path to infamy’.⁹⁹

The connection Morpeth made here between prostitution and the absence of wholesome domesticity strongly echoed Chadwick. The difference, however, was that Morpeth did not expect a change in the environment to be sufficient to reform behaviour. His aim, he declared, was to help the women ‘improve and elevate their *own* character and condition’.¹⁰⁰ This could be aided by providing more conducive moral surroundings, but it ultimately depended on the individual who might, nonetheless, be assisted by philanthropic institutions of moral reform. For Morpeth, sanitary reform was only part of a wider project of improvement, which could only hope to solve social ills when taken collectively. His approach to the ‘Condition of England’ problem involved a mixture of both political and non-political actions.

One area which sanitary reformers thought would aid their cause was education.¹⁰¹ This topic more strongly reveals the connection between politics and philanthropy tentatively traced above. It was seen earlier that Morpeth was an enthusiastic patron of secular education for adults. However, he was equally keen on elementary education for children. Until the introduction of state education in 1870, the latter was largely the province of two societies; the British and Foreign School Society

⁹⁸ John Tarn, *Five Per Cent Philanthropy: An Account of Housing in Urban Areas between 1840 and 1914* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 22-28; Susannah Morris, ‘Market solutions to social problems: working-class housing in nineteenth-century London’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 54:3 (2001), 525-45, esp. 528-29. The Association sought to make profit, but this was explicitly philanthropic in ethos; it was held that levying a viable rent would stimulate working-class self-reliance and industry. It was further argued that this would stimulate philanthropic housing elsewhere by showing that it was compatible with commercial interests. For Morpeth’s agreement with this argument, see his speech to the Association (as Earl of Carlisle) recorded in Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes* (London, 1867), p. 15.

⁹⁹ Speech of Lord Morpeth at a meeting to improve the social, moral and intellectual condition of the female factory operatives of Bradford, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, October 10th 1846, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰ Speech of Lord Morpeth, *Leeds Mercury*, October 10th 1846, p. 7, my emphasis.

¹⁰¹ Toynbee, for instance, felt that the causes of education and sanitary reform went ‘hand in hand’; J19/1/44/98, Joseph Toynbee to Lord Morpeth, February 11th 1848.

(B.F.S.S.) and the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. The latter provided a strictly Anglican education in which children were taught the catechism and morality alongside basic instruction. The B.F.S.S. provided a similarly religious education based on the Bible, but was a non-sectarian society which came to be associated with dissent.¹⁰²

These societies, both founded in the early nineteenth-century, concentrated on providing weekday instruction. Even then, provision was extremely deficient by modern standards. Much was left to Sunday Schools, which were an important source of secular as well as religious instruction.¹⁰³ It is thus unsurprising that, as noted above, Morpeth was a strong supporter of the work of Yorkshire's Sunday Schools. In June 1846 he addressed a large meeting of Sunday School teachers at Halifax, enthusiastically commending their sense of Christian duty. Whilst Morpeth considered these teachers as noble evangelists, his support was also given with the 'Condition of England' problem in mind. He argued that Sunday Schools were particularly important in 'crowded districts', helping to bring to virtue those children who might otherwise be lost to the 'temptations of this wicked and wary world'.¹⁰⁴

However, it is with the B.F.S.S. and the National Society that this section is principally concerned, for these were directly connected to the state. In 1833, the Grey Ministry provided the societies with grants for school-building. This reveals how the Whigs sought to develop a partnership with private philanthropic effort, for the grants came with the important proviso that they were matched by voluntary contributions, which it was hoped they would stimulate. In 1839, this system was extended and tied to government inspection overseen by a Privy Council committee. An additional £10,000 was provided to the societies to enable them to construct teacher-training colleges, after Lord John Russell's plan to found a state-run multi-

¹⁰² There is arguably a pressing need for up-to-date monographs on both the National Society and B.F.S.S. The education system as a whole is well-served by Pamela Horn, *Education in Rural England, 1800-1914* (Dublin, 1978) and John Hurt, *Education in Evolution: Church, State, Society and Popular Education, 1800-1870* (London, 1971).

¹⁰³ Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability*, *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Sunday School Union meeting, Halifax, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, June 6th 1846, p. 11.

denominational training school, designed to be a model for the societies, was abandoned after opposition from the National Society.¹⁰⁵

It is important to stress that the Whigs supported education primarily for its religious and moral ends. Thus, in defending state involvement in education, Lord John Russell referred extensively to the religious ignorance of the populace, on one occasion giving the testimony of West Riding adolescents who had ‘never heard of Jesus Christ’, ‘never go to Church’ and ‘never pray’.¹⁰⁶ Morpeth too stressed the moral value of education. He argued that it helped to check ‘vice and ignorance and degradation’, putting children ‘on the road of self-reliance and of duty’.¹⁰⁷

This enthusiasm was reflected in private philanthropy. The Whig leadership was highly involved with the British and Foreign School Society. Morpeth was an active patron, and was joined by other figures in the Party such as Viscount Ebrington and Russell, who served as the Society’s Vice-President.¹⁰⁸ Morpeth attended the B.F.S.S.’s meetings in London from 1834 onwards, chairing those of 1848, 1849 and 1850.¹⁰⁹ Given the sizeable dissenting populations in large towns, Morpeth declared that the B.F.S.S. was ‘eminently suited’ to suit the needs of ‘extensive districts’.¹¹⁰

Some Whigs were suspicious of the National Society, seeing it as unduly intolerant towards dissent. This was the attitude of Morpeth’s father, the 6th Earl of Carlisle, who in 1839 turned down an invitation from his cousin Edward Harcourt, Archbishop of York, to help fund a new training college being constructed by the National

¹⁰⁵ For an overview of the Government’s role in providing educational grants, see Denis Paz, *The Politics of Working-Class Education in Britain, 1830-1850* (Manchester, 1980).

¹⁰⁶ Speech of Lord John Russell, Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, LXVI, February 28th 1843, cols 94-95.

¹⁰⁷ Speech of the 7th Earl of Carlisle at the Irish National Board of Education, Examination of Teachers in Training, June 16th 1857, in Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-Regal Speeches*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁸ This is not, of course, to say that there was any direct relationship between the Whigs’ membership of the societies and the provision of the educational grants. This has been demonstrated by Ian Newbould, ‘The Whigs, the Church, and Education, 1839’, *Journal of British Studies*, 26:3 (1987), 332-46, which convincingly argues that Russell acted autonomously of the BFSS on the 1839 proposals.

¹⁰⁹ See the reports of the Society’s meetings in the *Morning Chronicle*, May 13th 1834, p. 3; May 9th 1848, p. 3; *Liverpool Mercury*, May 11th 1849, p. 7 and J19/8/23, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, May 6th 1850.

¹¹⁰ Speech of 7th Earl of Carlisle at the meeting of the British and Foreign School Society, *Morning Chronicle*, May 11th 1852, p. 6.

Society's York Diocesan branch.¹¹¹ The college aimed to fill a strong local demand for qualified teachers for the National Schools in the diocese of York and the newly created diocese of Ripon, which administered the college jointly with York from 1842.¹¹² Carlisle, however, refused Harcourt's plea for financial aid, accusing the National Society of being sectarian and expressing his resentment of its hostility to Russell's plans for a state model school.¹¹³ The Archbishop's son William Harcourt was so incensed that he felt the need to issue a lengthy reply on Christmas Day.¹¹⁴

Morpeth, however, did not share these qualms. A far more stringent Anglican than his father, he fully supported the National Society. From late 1843 onwards he regularly visited its training college in York, finding that it did its work 'uncommonly well'.¹¹⁵ From 1845 he served as a director of the college, a post he held until his death. The offer of a directorship arose from his pivotal role in founding the York Yeoman School, an annex to the college which served as a practicing school for the teachers; his involvement in the establishment of this institution is discussed in Chapter Five.¹¹⁶ He was not merely a figurehead patron for the college, instead being actively involved in its board of management.¹¹⁷ Thus in August 1850, he took time out of manic preparations for Queen Victoria's visit to Castle Howard to attend a mundane college meeting, an act, he noted, 'of some self-denial'.¹¹⁸

In light of the fact that many in the Whig Party leadership preferred to support the B.F.S.S., it is worth noting that Morpeth was by no means the only liberal patron of the National Society in Yorkshire. The college also drew support from local Whigs

¹¹¹ The institutional history of the college, from which the account here is drawn, is outlined by William Etherington, 'A History of St. John's College, York, 1841-1914' (unpublished MEd Thesis, University of Leicester, 1969). The college is now York St. John University.

¹¹² The need for a teacher-training school was detailed by Charles Thomas Longley, the new Bishop of Ripon, in 1838; Charles Thomas Longley, Lord Bishop of Ripon, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Ripon at the Primary Visitation of the New Diocese, in July & August 1838* (London, 1838), pp. 25-26.

¹¹³ Account of a letter from Carlisle in Archbishop Harcourt to Revd. William Harcourt, January 19th [1840], in Edward William Harcourt (ed.), *The Harcourt Papers: Vol. XII* (Oxford, n.d.) pp. 259-262.

¹¹⁴ Revd. W. V. Harcourt to 6th Earl of Carlisle. December 25th 1839, in Edward William Harcourt (ed.), *The Harcourt Papers: Vol. XIV: Memoir of William Harcourt* (Oxford, 1905), pp. 118-22.

¹¹⁵ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 13th 1843.

¹¹⁶ See below, pp. 251-53.

¹¹⁷ Records of the York Diocesan Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (Fountains Learning Centre, York St. John University), YDS/MB/3-6, Board of management minute books.

¹¹⁸ J19/8/24, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 25th 1850.

such as Sir J. V. B. Johnstone, Lord Wenlock, the Earl of Zetland and Earl De Grey. In addition, other patrons included Tories such as Lord Feversham and John Stuart Wortley, and leading Yorkshire Anglicans such as H. D. Erskine, Charles Longley (Bishop of Ripon) and Robert Wilberforce, Archdeacon of the East Riding. Wilberforce, who was depressed about the spiritual lethargy of the local clergy, felt that the college was ‘almost the only thing which is going well in the Diocese’.¹¹⁹

These men were able to lay aside their political differences and work together for the good of the Church. Indeed, their shared support of the college seems to have facilitated a remarkably chummy atmosphere. Morpeth was a personal friend of many of his fellow patrons, and their joint efforts gave another bond to their relationship. For instance, before one important meeting of the college’s board of management, Morpeth called at Escrick, the home of his friend Lord Wenlock, to discuss strategy with assorted guests. He liked the party so well that he felt compelled to begin a religious book, ‘to excuse the frivolity of the evening’.¹²⁰ The relationships Morpeth built up were beneficial for some of his colleagues; for example, Erskine was appointed Dean of Ripon in 1847 as a direct result of his recommendation.¹²¹

As this suggests, Morpeth’s philanthropy worked through a local context, drawing on social and religious networks he had already established in the county.¹²² Owing to the National Society’s connection with the state, his actions directly linked these provincial activities to his life at Westminster. This was to have significant political repercussions in Yorkshire in 1847, when the Whig Government of which Morpeth was a member controversially proposed to further extend state aid to teacher training colleges. These proposals and the political storm caused by them are extensively

¹¹⁹ Wilberforce MSS (Bodleian Library, Oxford), c.61, folio 54, Robert Wilberforce to Samuel Wilberforce, September 1845. For Wilberforce’s worries about the state of the diocese, see David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: A Study of the Wilberforces and Henry Manning* (London, 1966), pp. 277-80.

¹²⁰ J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 7th 1845.

¹²¹ See Lord John Russell Papers (The National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/6E/191, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, August 23rd 1847 (recommending Erskine); J19/1/44/49, Lord John Russell to Lord Morpeth, September 19th 1847 (confirming Erskine’s appointment); Papers of H. D. Erskine (Bodleian Library, Oxford), MSS Eng. Lett. C401, 202, Lord Morpeth to Henry Erskine, September 21st 1847 (confirming Russell’s intentions). Morpeth also unsuccessfully lobbied for Longley to be promoted to the Archbishopric of York following Archbishop Harcourt’s death in 1847 (J19/8/16, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 7th 1847). Longley did eventually become Archbishop of York in 1860.

¹²² See the discussion of Morpeth’s participation in Yorkshire’s society in pp. 77, 243-46.

discussed in the next chapter, but the fallout was such that it is accordingly worth exploring this aspect of Morpeth's philanthropy in some depth here to set the scene.

Morpeth's support for the York college directly reflected his Churchmanship. He felt that its aim of providing a religious education warranted the 'full and united support of members of the Church'.¹²³ The leaders of the National Society in Yorkshire poured almost all of its resources into teacher training, having become convinced that this, rather than school building, offered the best way of securing the future of Anglicanism in the county.¹²⁴ Teachers were conceived by local Anglicans as performing a task similar to that of a clergyman.¹²⁵ It was thought that they should be trained in a similar way. Like those elsewhere, York's college gave its pupils a thorough course in subjects such as scripture, church history, Latin, music and drawing (with surprisingly little practical training in teaching), and involved a strict moral and religious regime.¹²⁶ Morpeth approvingly hoped that the college would give its trainees the 'graces of the heart... which the real Christian must possess'.¹²⁷

Moreover, Morpeth was an avid enthusiast for the very idea of teacher training, which he felt was ardently necessary. Contemporaries had come to realise that teachers had a huge influence on the behaviour of their charges. Yet they were typically poorly trained and paid, putting good candidates off the profession.¹²⁸ The Whig leadership strongly engaged with this problem. Lord John Russell declared that there was 'no profession... more important' than teaching, feeling that there was a huge difference between the morality of those children taught by a well-trained schoolmaster and those who were not.¹²⁹ Morpeth likewise felt that there was 'no class in society, be

¹²³ Speech recorded in *Report of the York Central Diocesan Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England, 1850* (York, 1850).

¹²⁴ *Report of the York Central Diocesan Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England, 1849* (York, 1849), p. 13.

¹²⁵ Robert Wilberforce, *A Letter to the Gentry, Yeoman, & Farmers of the Archdeaconry of the East Riding* (Bridlington, 1842), pp. 15-16; *Report of the York Central Diocesan Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England, 1848* (York, 1848), p. 10.

¹²⁶ Records of the York Diocesan Society for the Education of the Poor (Fountains Learning Centre, York St. John University), YDS/REP, Box 23, prospectus for the York training college in *Report of the Ripon Diocesan Board of Education, 1849* (Leeds, 1849). For an informative account of daily life in early-Victorian teacher training colleges, see Horn, *Education*, pp. 85-114.

¹²⁷ Lord Morpeth's speech at a meeting of the York Central Diocesan Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, December 22nd 1846, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 26th 1846, p. 8.

¹²⁸ Horn, *Education in Rural England*, pp. 20-29, 36-54.

¹²⁹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCI, April 19th 1847, cols 958-59.

they nobles, or statesmen, or legislators' who exercised 'a more direct influence for good'.¹³⁰

As Irish Secretary, he had accordingly been supportive of the teacher training department of the Irish board of national education, on which he sat between 1838 and 1841.¹³¹ He had also enthusiastically endorsed Russell's proposals for a model state-run teacher training school in 1839.¹³² The failed plans had been partly formulated by James Kay (later Kay-Shuttleworth), the secretary of the Privy Council committee on education. When the disappointed Kay opened a private teacher-training college at Battersea in 1840 as consolation, he found himself patronised by a number of Whig aristocrats, including Morpeth's sister Harriet, whom he described as 'among my very best friends'. Morpeth himself regularly visited Battersea, and subscribed the immense sum of £500 for Kay's efforts there.¹³³

For Morpeth, teacher-training institutions such as those at Battersea and York contributed to the moral advancement of society. Teachers, he claimed, carried the 'hopes of a people' through their influence on the rising generation.¹³⁴ In supporting state aid to educational societies, Morpeth hoped to encourage this progress. Yet he was clear that this ultimately depended on voluntary effort. As he told the management of the York college, whatever the actions of the state, 'there would still be much more which private effort, private superintendence, private generosity must always do best, and will frequently alone be able to do'.¹³⁵

¹³⁰ J19/1/63/93, Hand-written script by Morpeth for a speech at an examination of school-masters, dated March 1856.

¹³¹ Donald Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1970), pp. 147-49.

¹³² Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XLVIII, June 14th 1839, cols. 259-68.

¹³³ James Kay-Shuttleworth Papers (John Ryland's Library, University of Manchester), 207, Harriet Sutherland to James Kay [1840]; 219, James Kay's Journal, Thursday July 8th (1841); 232, Lord Morpeth to James Kay, September 6th 1841.

¹³⁴ J19/1/63/93, Hand-written script by Morpeth for a speech at an examination of school-masters, dated March 1856.

¹³⁵ Speech of Lord Morpeth to the York Diocesan Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, reported in the *Leeds Mercury*, December 26th 1846, p. 8.

Philanthropy, Politics and Public Image

It can be seen, then, that Morpeth's philanthropy connected at many points with his political ideals. However, it also shaped his political fortunes more directly, by sustaining his engagement with the West Riding. Indeed, his willingness to attend the soirées of Mechanics' Institutes and the like in the mid-1840s may represent a conscious attempt to maintain his association with his former constituents. When speaking before audiences at philanthropic gatherings in the West Riding towns, he invariably highlighted his previous role as their representative. Indeed, he professed to prefer such occasions to political gatherings, for the former, unlike the latter, encouraged an atmosphere of 'harmony' rather than social division.¹³⁶

In reality, however, philanthropic institutions occupied a sometimes uneasy space between social integration and social conflict. As Martin Gorsky has argued, they could act as intentional or unintentional symbols of political and religious identity.¹³⁷ It has already been noted that Yorkshire's Mechanics' Institutes, for instance, struggled to attract Tory and Anglican support despite an openly neutral stance.¹³⁸ They were instead predominately patronised by the Riding's liberal nonconformists. At the Leeds Institute, the Baineses and Marshalls were joined by important liberals such as the Unitarian Revd. Charles Wicksteed, T. W. Tottie, Thomas Plint and John Hope Shaw. Likewise, the liberal political organiser Joseph Farrar was a driving force behind the Bradford Institute.¹³⁹

As was seen in the last chapter, these men had provided the core of Morpeth's political support in the Riding in the 1830s. Although the differences which had opened up between them and the Whigs remained, Morpeth's altruistic activities

¹³⁶ This was a very familiar refrain. See, for instance, Carlisle, *Lectures and Addresses*, pp. 73, 78, 83-84, 96.

¹³⁷ Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth Century Bristol* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 195-200.

¹³⁸ One notable exception was Morpeth's friend H. D. Erskine, the Dean of Ripon, who became a tremendous patron of the Institutes in Yorkshire. Like Morpeth, Erskine supported popular education on the grounds that it promoted moral improvement and social harmony; see the various cuttings of his speeches to the Institutes in Papers of H. D. Erskine (Bodleian Library, Oxford), MS. Eng. Misc. b. 166, which also reveal his activism in the cause.

¹³⁹ Leeds Mechanics' Institute & Literary Society Records (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds), WYL/368/1, Minute Book, 1841-1846; Wright, 'Bradford Mechanics' Institute', pp. 89-91. Background on the Leeds Mechanics' Institute is also provided by A. D. Garner, & E. W. Jenkins, 'The English Mechanics' Institutes: the case of Leeds, 1824-42', *History of Education*, 13 (1984), 139-52.

offered him a chance to overcome these by interacting with such men outside the political arena. Indeed, on one of his first charitable engagements in the Riding following his defeat at the 1841 election, Edward Baines Junior, also in attendance, publicly urged him to return to political life.¹⁴⁰ As well as mixing with them at charitable meetings, Morpeth also often went to stay at the homes of his more influential supporters beforehand.¹⁴¹

This does seem to have been appreciated. As seen in the previous chapter, the West Riding's liberals were politically and culturally hostile to aristocratic exclusivity. They correspondingly praised those aristocrats like Morpeth who were prepared to mix with their social inferiors on an equal footing. At a liberal dinner of early 1846, the Halifax industrialist Edward Akroyd (son of Jonathan) referred favourably to this aspect of his behaviour. It was, he declared, fortunate that patricians like Morpeth engaged with the manufacturing classes of the Riding; 'they learnt from observation the sentiments which prevail... by mixing among them they were carried along with the tide of information of the day'.¹⁴²

After Morpeth returned as representative of the West Riding in 1846, his philanthropic and political life became still more entwined. For instance, in October 1846 he presided over the soirée of the Bradford Mechanics' Institute. He took the opportunity to extensively engage with the town, staying for two nights and touring a variety of economic and philanthropic institutions. Whilst there, he resided with the manufacturer Henry Forbes, who joined him in speaking at the Mechanics' Institute. Forbes took the opportunity to assemble a party of important liberal activists for dinner.¹⁴³ This example reveals the way in which Morpeth could smoothly combine political and non-political functions.

In turn, these engagements in the West Riding exposed him to social conditions in the region. The political import of this can perhaps best be seen through the issue of

¹⁴⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, December 23rd 1843, p. 4.

¹⁴¹ To give one example, before attending the Leeds Mechanics' Institute soirée in February 1845 he stayed with his former election agent Tottie in his 'well known house'; J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 19th 1845.

¹⁴² Speech of Edward Akroyd at a Liberal fund-raising dinner for the West Riding election, held at the Leeds Music Hall on January 14th 1846, and reported in the *Leeds Mercury*, January 17th 1846, p. 7.

¹⁴³ J19/8/13, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 5th – October 7th 1846.

factory reform, which once more became an important topic in Yorkshire in the 1840s. Morpeth found the question to be a highly ‘perplexing’ one.¹⁴⁴ Since the 1830s, both his family and many of his colleagues in the Whig leadership had come round to supporting a measure for ten-hours, accepting this as part of their ‘Condition of England’ strategy.¹⁴⁵ Morpeth agreed with them that a reduction in hours would assist the moral improvement of factory operatives, noting that this would give them more time to attend ‘mechanics’ institute and... lectures’.¹⁴⁶

Nevertheless, he once again did not support Lord Ashley’s proposals for a ten-hours Bill when these were debated in March 1846 and March 1847, thereby voting against many of the Whigs. He instead unsuccessfully proposed an eleven-hours compromise, whilst also stating that he would prefer to eschew interference altogether, leaving reductions in working-hours to be arranged voluntarily between masters and workmen.¹⁴⁷ Morpeth’s opposition to Ashley resulted partly from his belief that the condition of factory labourers depended more on their working environment and material wealth than their hours of labour. He was particularly reluctant to pass legislation on this matter when the issue of the Corn Laws, which would also influence the prosperity of labourers, remained unsettled.¹⁴⁸

In his account of Morpeth’s involvement with factory reform, Peter Mandler has further suggested that he expediently voted against Ashley because of a pressure campaign from his constituents.¹⁴⁹ Certainly there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that such a campaign existed. Alongside the Lancashire entrepreneur W. R. Greg, Yorkshire manufacturers such as James Garth Marshall and Edward Akroyd wrote to Morpeth to urge him to oppose Ashley and instead propose an eleven-hours Bill. Like Morpeth, these men suggested that the condition of factory operatives depended more on free-trade, education and sanitation than the length of their

¹⁴⁴ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 17th 1847.

¹⁴⁵ For the Howards’ support of ten-hours, J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 24th 1844. For the Whigs’ acceptance of ten-hours, Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 219-22, 240-41.

¹⁴⁶ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XC, March 3rd 1847, cols 786-87.

¹⁴⁷ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, LXXXVI, May 23rd 1846, cols 1023-28; XC, March 3rd 1847, cols 784-87.

¹⁴⁸ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, LXXXVI, May 23rd 1846, cols 1024-26.

¹⁴⁹ Mandler, ‘Cain and Abel’, 102-04.

working day.¹⁵⁰ Morpeth directly quoted Marshall's letter in Parliament, stating that he could not cite a 'higher authority'. He even referred to experiments in Marshall's mills to prove that an eleven-hours compromise would be both profitable and acceptable to the operatives.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, Mandler's contention that this pressure led Morpeth to act against his better judgment cannot be supported. Shortly afterwards he went against a mass of his constituents on the issue of state education; political calculation was never a large factor in Morpeth's thought. His willingness to support the manufacturers was instead a direct result of his personal experience of the West Riding towns. When attending philanthropic occasions in the region he often toured the local factories. His observations confirmed him 'against Ashley and interference' by showing that working conditions were not as bad as the factory movement alleged.¹⁵² Indeed, he was impressed by what he saw of the masters' attempts to improve their employees. It was these 'philanthropic efforts', he argued, which proved that they might be trusted to voluntarily care for their workpeople without unduly restrictive legislation.¹⁵³

The primary way in which Morpeth's philanthropy was of political importance, however, was in shaping his public image. His altruism was very much in the public eye, widely reported in both the local and national press. As Donald Read has noted with regard to Sir Robert Peel, the reporting of the non-political lives of statesmen helped to humanise them in the eyes of voters.¹⁵⁴ As noted in the introduction, these activities were seen to be an important indication of a politician's moral character. The flipside of this was that philanthropy could be politically charged. As the 'Condition of England' question came to be of increasing prominence at Westminster, engagement with the issues it involved took on an enhanced political meaning.

¹⁵⁰ J19/1/41/43, W. R. Greg to Lord Morpeth, February 14th 1846; J19/1/41/86, Edward Akroyd to Lord Morpeth, May 1846 (with annotations in Morpeth's hand to indicate possible lines to be quoted); J19/1/41/81, James Garth Marshall to Lord Morpeth, Headingley, May 2nd 1846; J19/1/41/84, James Garth Marshall to Lord Morpeth, Headingley, May 8th 1846.

¹⁵¹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XC, March 3rd 1847, col. 785.

¹⁵² J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 20th 1845 (upon touring Mr. Wilkinson's flax works at Leeds, on a visit to preside over the Mechanics' Institute). For similar sentiments after touring Akroyd's factory at Halifax on another visit primarily motivated by a philanthropic occasion, see J19/8/11, Diary of Lord Morpeth, June 3rd 1846.

¹⁵³ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, LXXXVI, May 23rd 1846, col. 1024; XC, March 3rd 1847, col. 785.

¹⁵⁴ Read, *Peel and the Victorians*, pp. 46-47, 78.

Morpeth's contemporary Lord Ashley, for instance, was criticised by liberals for fighting for the cause of the factory labourers whilst the tenants on his father's Dorset estate were neglected.¹⁵⁵ Morpeth's philanthropy, too, could be used against him. His support of the aforementioned venture to house female factory workers in Bradford, for instance, upset the local short-time committee, which protested that this was 'monstrously inconsistent' with his votes against the ten-hours bill. The committee's secretary used the occasion to further assert that Morpeth's support of the town's Mechanics' Institute was a 'mere burlesque upon philanthropy', when workers did not have the time to educate themselves because of their long working day.¹⁵⁶

Generally, however, reaction to Morpeth's engagement with charitable causes was overwhelmingly positive. Historians in general have shown little interest in exploring the relationship between philanthropy and political image. However, Peter Shapely and Martin Gorsky have both suggested that philanthropic activities helped to fulfil the unwritten moral criteria required of a political representative.¹⁵⁷ This chapter aims to build on these accounts by suggesting that Morpeth's philanthropic activities added to the perception that he was a man of good character.

It was seen in the last chapter how this impression helped convince voters that he was trustworthy and sincere. His benevolence merely added to this enviable moral reputation. When he attended the Leeds Mechanics' Institute in 1845, his activities were praised by several speakers, with Baines Junior stating that his personal qualities had made him the 'most popular man in Yorkshire'.¹⁵⁸ Approbation of Morpeth's philanthropy crossed the political spectrum. David Bartlett, an American radical observer by no means friendly to the aristocracy, recorded that Morpeth's

¹⁵⁵ Geoffrey B. A. M., *The Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, 1801-85* (London, 1981), p. 198.

¹⁵⁶ Letter from the Bradford Short-Time Committee to Lord Morpeth, printed in *Bradford Observer*, October 15th 1846, pp. 6-7. Morpeth was later to get into a similar scrape as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, where his patronage of Protestant Ragged Schools (perceived by Catholics to be an attempt to proselytise their own children) caused a 'great sensation' (J19/1/64/85, Alexander MacDonnell to 7th Earl of Carlisle, May 3rd 1856). Morpeth resolved thereafter to be scrupulously neutral in his support of Protestant and Catholic charities, and considered reducing his philanthropy to avoid any similar controversies (Leveson-Gower Papers (The National Archives), PRO/30/29/23/7/13, 7th Earl of Carlisle to Lord Granville, May 6th 1856).

¹⁵⁷ Peter Shapely, 'Charity, status and parliamentary candidates in Manchester: A consideration of electoral and charity fields and the social basis of power, 1832-1910', *International Review of Social History*, 44 (1999), 1-21; Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy*, p. 200.

¹⁵⁸ *Leeds Mercury*, February 22nd 1845, p. 7.

‘philanthropic disposition’ made him ‘truly worthy of honour and renown’, and noted that this was a widespread feeling among the English working-class radicals he had met.¹⁵⁹ The *Hull Packet*, a Tory newspaper, felt that (politics aside) there was no man of ‘whom Britain may be more justly proud’ than Morpeth. It praised his ‘widespread and costly benevolence’ and ‘systematic self-denial’, which it felt demonstrated his pure Christian morality.¹⁶⁰

As Alan Kidd has perceptively noted, the high cultural status of generosity in early-Victorian society meant that philanthropy could enhance the reputation of public figures.¹⁶¹ This reflected the importance placed on good works in contemporary religious thought. Despite their belief in justification by faith alone, this was the case even for the nonconformist evangelicals who formed the core of West Riding liberalism. The Leeds Congregationalist Richard Winter Hamilton, for instance, declared that ‘continuance in well-doing is the only proof that we are in salvation’. The York Congregationalist minister James Parsons likewise declared that religion ought to ‘encourage our benevolence and self-denial’.¹⁶²

To fully understand why Morpeth’s philanthropy made such an impact, it is necessary to return to the intellectual underpinnings of the idea of character as set out in the introduction. As applied to Morpeth, thus far in this thesis this notion has been mainly associated with earnestness, sincerity, dutifulness and consistency. Yet, as previously noted, the man of good character was also thought (like Christ) to be tender and benevolent, demonstrating his most human (manly) qualities. Walter Houghton has usefully explored this aspect of Victorian thought through the notion of ‘enthusiasm’. He points to the (by no means rigid) distinction between this and earnestness; put simply, earnestness involved overcoming one’s baser passions, whereas enthusiasm marked the sublimation of those passions in willing zeal for a noble cause.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ David Bartlett, *London By Day and Night* (New York, 1852), pp. 196-99.

¹⁶⁰ *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, February 7th 1845, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Alan Kidd, ‘Philanthropy and the Social History Paradigm’, *Social History* 21:2 (1996), 189. In his history of philanthropy in England, David Owen likewise suggested that it was almost a social requirement for the Victorian elite to contribute to good causes; David Owen, *English Philanthropy, 1660-1960* (London, 1964), pp. 165-67.

¹⁶² Richard Winter Hamilton, *Sermons: Second Series* (Leeds, 1846), p. 189; James Parsons, *Sermons* (London, 1830), p. 319.

¹⁶³ Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957), pp. 218-304.

In as far as these two notions can be separated, Morpeth can certainly be placed with the enthusiasts. This was important, for in contemporary eyes, wishing to be moral undoubtedly counted for more than just acting so. Thus Walter Hook, the vicar of Leeds, preached that ‘the good Christian is not he who when he acts deliberately acts well (this is the business of the beginner), but he whose very impulses are good, who not only *chooses* but *prefers* what is right’. The Congregationalist polemicist William Leask similarly argued that a man of good character would ‘not wait to be plied with argument for [charity]’. The truly moral man was one whose ‘philanthropy was excited by the urgency of the cry’.¹⁶⁴ It was an apt description of Morpeth.

Morpeth’s followers were able to draw upon the praise his philanthropy generated to help rally political support for him. At the 1835 West Riding contest, for instance, James Richardson spoke on the hustings to describe Morpeth as ‘the nobleman whom the poor esteem as their friend and protector – the man who visits them in the haunts of poverty, reading to the widow and the sick the scriptures of truth’.¹⁶⁵ The idea that he was a benevolent man was also ubiquitous at his re-election of early 1846, when F. H. Fawkes referred to his ‘genuine benevolence and Christian charity’.¹⁶⁶ Once he had returned to West Riding politics, this continued to play an important role in shaping his reputation. For instance, in June 1846, the *Leeds Mercury* devoted a lengthy editorial to the fact that he had given up his holiday to attend meetings of local Sunday Schools and Mechanics’ Institutes. It argued that

‘the admirable judgment and excellent heart of our representative lead him to value things, not according to their outward show, but according to their substantial merits. Un-inflated by high station, unsophisticated by the world of fashion which surrounds him, and un-engrossed by literary or political tastes, Lord Morpeth looks with the eye of a philanthropist and a philosopher on the mass of the population... there is no class of society to whom he does not become the friend and counsellor’.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ W. F. Hook, *Five Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1837), p. 16 (emphasis in original); William Leask, *True Manhood: A Lecture* (London, 1848), pp. 25-26.

¹⁶⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, May 16th 1835, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Report of Fawkes’ speech in *Leeds Mercury Extraordinary*, February 4th 1846.

¹⁶⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, June 6th 1846, p. 4.

At a time when the condition of the people was a hot political topic, this was a valuable image indeed. The electoral effect of all this is, however, hard to quantify. It was seen in the last chapter that political principles tended to count for more than ‘character’ when it came to voting. One man who did switch his allegiance is the Revd. J. W. Whiteside, the incumbent of Trinity Church in Ripon, previously a lifelong Tory. Whiteside had become dissatisfied with Peel over his support for the Maynooth grant. As the Whigs also backed the grant his conduct may appear unusual. Whiteside explained that Morpeth’s participation in philanthropic institutions had added to his belief in his ‘honourable personal character’. He felt that Morpeth’s proven moral principles and religious convictions would be a ‘better safeguard than the more political expediency of the modern statesmen’, specifically the slippery Peel.¹⁶⁸

Summary

In summary, this chapter has explored the central importance of philanthropy to Morpeth’s life and its connections with his political career. Philanthropic activities were a vital expression of Morpeth’s faith, fulfilling his strong sense of duty and his belief in mankind’s God-given potential for progress. Moreover, his support for institutions of moral reform can be seen as an attempt to combat contemporary concerns about the materialism and disaffection of the working-class. This response to the ‘Condition of England’ problem dovetailed his political interest in this topic.

Critically, this chapter has shown how Morpeth’s philanthropy expressed his belief in the vital role of individuals in securing progress. It was accordingly argued that he believed the state could play only a supporting role in solving social problems, being most useful in assisting private philanthropy. As has been seen, his philanthropy further helped him engage with his Yorkshire supporters, forming political useful networks and providing him with an advantageous public image. However, the connection between philanthropy and politics could also open up political tensions. This topic will be explored further with respect to the question of education in the next chapter, which focuses on Morpeth’s provincial political career in the 1840s.

¹⁶⁸ J19/1/41/22, Revd. J. W. Whiteside to Lord Morpeth, January 30th 1846.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lord Morpeth and West Riding Politics, 1841-1848

‘The most popular man in the Kingdom’
(*Leeds Mercury* on Lord Morpeth, December 6th 1845)

‘Save us from our former friends’
(*Leeds Mercury* on Lord Morpeth, February 26th 1848)

Chapter Two traced a steady decline in the Whigs’ popularity in Yorkshire in the 1830s, culminating in Morpeth’s defeat at the West Riding election of 1841. This chapter extends the narrative of West Riding politics into the 1840s. It was a decade which witnessed the revival of Whiggery as a political force. After Peel’s Conservative Ministry disintegrated over the Corn Law, the Whigs returned to office under Lord John Russell between 1846 and 1852. His administration, in which Morpeth served in the Cabinet as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, was in many ways the climax of early-Victorian Whig Government.¹ It was preoccupied with the ‘Condition of England’ problem. As Peter Mandler has demonstrated, alongside leading Whigs such as the 3rd Earl Grey, Russell developed a ‘Condition of England’ strategy which revolved around free trade, public health and education, designed to improve the material, moral and social condition of the people.² Morpeth, who had responsibility for public health, was heavily engaged with all three areas.

The Government’s actions were nothing if not contentious. As will be seen, its social reforms raised fundamental questions about the proper role of the state. The resulting controversies are well charted in histories of the period.³ Yet we have relatively little

¹ Morpeth was Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests until 1850, when he became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, retaining his seat in the Cabinet.

² Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 227-56. For the thought of Grey (then Lord Howick), see his paper ‘On the State of the Working Classes’, submitted to Russell in January 1845; Grey Family Papers (Durham University Library, Special Collections), GRE/B123/5/15.

³ Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*, pp. 237-41; Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 236-67; G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 181-92; W. C. Lubenow, *The Politics of Government Growth: Early Victorian Attitudes towards State Intervention, 1833-48* (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp. 84-103; David Roberts, *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State* (New Haven, 1960), pp. 70-85.

indication as to how these events shaped the fortunes of Whiggery in the provinces. Morpeth's career offers a valuable opportunity to assess this. He returned as M.P. for the West Riding in early 1846, holding the post until his succession to the peerage in October 1848. The region's politics in this period turned on precisely the issues which he was most involved with both as a statesman and as a private individual. This chapter shows how this confluence between Morpeth's provincial and national interests had an important impact on events.

The first part of the chapter details the period up to 1846, which saw the West Riding's Whigs and liberals unite once more around the idea of free trade. This was greatly facilitated by Morpeth's willingness to work alongside the Anti-Corn Law League. Yet it will be argued that this reunion merely hid the religious tensions which had emerged in West Riding liberalism at the end of the 1830s. The second part of the chapter shows how these resurfaced over the Whigs' social reforms, especially on education. The Whigs faced massive hostility from some nonconformists, who protested against their plans to expand the state's role in supporting religious education.

It will be contended that this generated an anti-statist attitude which also caused this portion of liberal dissent to react negatively to Morpeth's public health proposals, the subject of the third part of the chapter. Nevertheless, it will also be argued that these reforms attracted fresh support for the Whigs. This chapter thus suggests that this period saw a transformation in West Riding politics, whereby debates over what role the state should play in tackling the 'Condition of England' problem disrupted the party political scene. The final part of the chapter discusses the impact of these developments on the 1847 election and beyond. Morpeth's role in shaping these events was a pivotal one. In demonstrating this, this chapter supplements and extends existing accounts of West Riding politics which have not recognised his influence.⁴

⁴ Thompson, 'Whigs and Liberals'; Fraser, 'Voluntaryism'.

Free Trader: Morpeth and the Anti-Corn Law League

To start the story of West Riding politics in the 1840s, it is essential to begin with free trade, the dominant issue of the first half of the decade. Morpeth's position on this therefore became crucial to his career. It was seen in a previous chapter how the Anti-Corn Law League had proliferated in Yorkshire in the late 1830s, channelling opposition to 'monopoly' among the county's urban liberals. After their defeat at the 1841 election, these men quickly declared themselves uncompromisingly committed to the League's position of total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws.

This attitude was strongly expressed at a free trade meeting in Leeds in December 1841. Those attending included Hamer Stansfeld, Edward Baines Junior, Thomas Plint, Thomas Scales, Joshua Bower and Samuel Smiles (editor of the radical *Leeds Times*) from Leeds, Robert Milligan, Henry Forbes, Titus Salt and William Byles from Bradford, William Ackroyd from Otley and Jonathan Akroyd from Halifax; in short, a large proportion of the men who had been the most important activists in the liberal cause in the 1830s.⁵ To loud and prolonged cheers, Plint avowed his hope that there was not 'a manufacturer or a working man in the West Riding who will demand anything short of the total abolition of the Corn Laws'.⁶

Speakers at this meeting referred extensively to the recession then afflicting the Riding's manufacturing industry, which it was thought was causing distress - and hence social unrest - among the working classes. This was blamed entirely on the Corn Laws, and free trade was thus presented as something which would salve the county's ills. It was further suggested that agricultural protection afflicted not only the material but also the moral and intellectual condition of the labouring populace, by denying them the means they needed to better themselves. These problems were attributed to the self-interest of the aristocratic legislature, which was again presented as the root cause of the Corn Laws. Stansfeld spoke of the need to reject the aristocratic 'golden idols' who they had been 'apt so servilely to worship'. Forbes

⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, December 18th 1841, p. 6.

⁶ Thomas Plint, *Speech of Mr Thomas Plint, Delivered at the West Riding Meeting of Anti-Corn Law Deputies, Held in the Music Hall, Leeds, December 13th 1841* (Leeds, [1841]), p. 15.

likewise declared that ‘too many legislators regarded nothing but what affected their own pockets... the passion of selfishness reigned in the breast of far too many’.⁷

Although not directly aimed at the Whigs, this anti-aristocratic tone was certainly unfavourable to them. The Whigs’ fixed duty proposals of early 1841, which many of the speakers had (albeit perhaps half-heartedly) campaigned for, were now deemed woefully inadequate, and indeed the reason for their recent electoral loss. Plint declared that he was glad the Whigs were no longer in office, as the free trade cause would no longer be ‘trammelled by particular views and particular opinions’.⁸ When Leeds’ M.P. William Aldam tried to defend the fixed duty plan, he was castigated by the other speakers.⁹ Opposition to the Whigs’ position became more strident as the League’s campaign progressed. In February 1843, Baines Junior published letters to Russell in the *Leeds Mercury*, calling on the Whigs to cast off the fixed duty on the grounds that this was inconsistent with the principles of free trade.¹⁰

One reason for this hardening of attitudes was that many free traders believed that the Corn Laws contradicted the wishes of Providence.¹¹ The Yorkshire League campaigner John Buckmaster could thus feel that he was doing a ‘religious work, as holy in the sight of God as any missionary’.¹² It was commonly declared among the West Riding’s Leaguers, many of whom were nonconformists, that protection (and the selfishness which upheld it) denied the people the fruits of God’s bounty and negated His wish that men should trade with one another. They hoped that reordering the world in accordance with God’s will would bring about material growth and

⁷ Speeches reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 18th 1841, p. 6.

⁸ Plint, *Speech of Mr Thomas Plint*, p. 15.

⁹ Speeches reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 18th 1841, p. 6.

¹⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, February 25th, March 4th, March 11th 1843, p. 4.

¹¹ The link between attachment to free trade and ideas about Providence is brilliantly demonstrated in Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988), *passim*. Hilton draws a distinction between an ‘optimistic’ vision of free trade, which believed it capable of bringing about material growth, and a ‘retributive’ vision, which saw it as part of a static Providential order. He persuasively argues that the latter idea influenced the thought of Anglican evangelicals and the Liberal Tories. He also suggests (pp. 246-48) that the League possessed the ‘optimistic’ vision. However, he equates this with a primarily secular rather than religious ethos, partly because his analysis is focused on Cobden rather than on the nonconformist evangelicals who were the mainstay of the League in Yorkshire. Arguably, these men held to an ideal of free trade which was both optimistic and religious, but there is a need for further work on the relationship between nonconformist religious and economic thought.

¹² John Charles Buckmaster, *A Village Politician: The Life Story of John Buckley* (Horsham, 1982 [1st published 1897]), p. 178.

greater harmony between classes and nations.¹³ Compromise thus became less palatable.

The League's leadership also did much to resist the Whigs' proposals, believing that they had to avow complete political neutrality and unyielding commitment to total and immediate repeal to bring about a meaningful measure of free trade. In September 1843, they decided to oppose any politician who did not support their principles.¹⁴ In December that year, the visit of the League's leader Richard Cobden to Yorkshire on a fund-raising tour saw him make an impassioned argument for the League's position. Many West Riding liberals agreed that the time had come to abandon conventional party politics, and instead achieve their goals by applying pressure through the League.¹⁵

As Paul Pickering and Alex Tyrell have detailed, provincial organisation was vital to the League's campaign, helping to maintain local interest in free trade and build pressure for repeal.¹⁶ Yorkshire was one of its strongholds, second only to its headquarters in Lancashire in its contribution to the League's finances and in the number of its branch associations.¹⁷ Strangely, however, the League's activities in the West Riding have been somewhat neglected by historians. Even Pickering and Tyrell ignore a lot of useful Yorkshire material and cite only one West Riding newspaper. Cobden, however, was clear that the Riding's symbolic political significance and status as a commercial and manufacturing region made it a key area of operations. It was, he declared, quite 'impossible to exaggerate' its magnitude.¹⁸

¹³ See, for instance, the speech of Mr Robinson at a meeting in Holmfirth reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 25th 1843, p. 6; that of Hamer Stansfeld and Jonathan Akroyd reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 16th 1843, p. 6; and the open letter from Edward Baines Junior to Hamer Stansfeld in *Leeds Mercury*, March 29th 1845, p. 4.

¹⁴ Norman McCord, *The Anti-Corn Law League, 1838-1846* (London, 1958), pp. 155-56; Paul Pickering & Alex Tyrell, *The People's Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London, 2000), p. 29.

¹⁵ Reports of anti-corn law meetings in *Leeds Mercury*, December 16th 1843, p. 6.

¹⁶ Pickering & Tyrell, *The People's Bread*, pp. 41-61, 191-212. The League's basis as a national movement which drew its strength from the provincial activity is also highlighted in Anthony Howe, *Free Trade and Liberal England, 1846-1946* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 33-37.

¹⁷ Pickering & Tyrell, *The People's Bread*, p. 46; Howe, *Free Trade*, p. 33.

¹⁸ Richard Cobden to Henry Forbes, June 29th 1844, in Anthony Howe (ed.), *The Letters of Richard Cobden: Volume One, 1815-1847* (Oxford, 2007), p. 367. For similar sentiments, see Richard Cobden to Peter Rylands, June 1st 1843, in Howe (ed.), *Letters of Richard Cobden*, p. 326; Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 153, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, June 24th 1844.

However, Cobden was frequently dissatisfied with his neighbours across the Pennines. One of his concerns was the residual influence of the Riding's Whig-liberal alliance. Accounts of the relationship between the League and the Whigs in Yorkshire have tended to focus on Earl Fitzwilliam, one of the greatest landed defenders of free trade.¹⁹ In fact, it was Morpeth who lay at the heart of Cobden's problem. As seen in the last chapter, he remained popular among the Riding's liberals. At the close of 1842, Charles Wood was consulted by local Leaguers to see if Morpeth would head their movement.²⁰ In December 1843, Baines Junior publicly called upon him to return to politics at a charitable meeting they both attended.²¹ However, like most of the Whig leadership, Morpeth had not committed to total and immediate repeal, raising the possibility that the League would be duty bound to oppose him. Cobden fumed that 'the West Riding people are quite idolatrous in their attachment to him'.²²

Under these circumstances, immense interest was generated when Morpeth announced that he would attend a free trade meeting in Wakefield in January 1844, an event which marked his re-entry into political life. The meeting was to be attended by Cobden, John Bright and almost every important Leaguer in Yorkshire. Morpeth was warned in advance that nothing less than a declaration for the League's principles would satisfy his audience.²³ The *Sheffield Independent* noted that his presence brought an 'interest wholly unparalleled' to the occasion.²⁴ The reason for this excitement was that it was thought that Morpeth's speech would indicate the opinion of the Whig leadership.²⁵ Here, in one event, was the possibility that the Whigs would join with the League and present a united front against protection.

It is evident that the meeting expected Morpeth to announce his conversion to total and immediate repeal. The *Leeds Mercury* recorded that he was received with a 'burst of enthusiasm which we do not remember to have at any time seen surpassed'. The

¹⁹ Thompson, 'Whigs and Liberals', *passim*; Derek Fraser, 'Edward Baines' in Patricia Hollis (ed.), *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* (London, 1974), esp. 188-93.

²⁰ J19/1/35/9, Charles Wood to Lord Morpeth, December 23rd 1842. Wood told the Leaguers that this was 'quite out of the question'.

²¹ *Leeds Mercury*, December 23rd 1843, p. 4.

²² Richard Cobden to C. P. Villiers, January 28th 1844, in Howe (ed.), *Letters of Richard Cobden*, p. 352.

²³ J19/1/37/7, J. G. Marshall to Lord Morpeth, January 8th 1844.

²⁴ *Sheffield Independent*, February 3rd 1844, p. 8.

²⁵ See, for instance, the speech of H. G. Ward (the radical M.P. for Sheffield) in *Leeds Mercury*, February 3rd 1844, p. 6.

cheering lasted for several minutes.²⁶ The audience hung on his every word. When he mentioned that he no longer had any official connection with the Riding, one man cried out 'you shall do'. His declaration that he could no longer support the Whigs' proposals of 1841 was met with thunderous applause.²⁷ Yet he could not bring himself to utter the words his audience so longed to hear. Both Fitzwilliam and a 'rather alarmed' Russell had written to Morpeth to remind him of the Whigs' commitment to a fixed duty. The latter feared that no party would be able to carry total repeal.²⁸ Although privately noting that his heart was with the League, Morpeth seems to have agreed that their position was not practical.²⁹ He accordingly announced that whilst he would prefer total repeal to the current law, he could not debar himself from supporting a small fixed duty if returned to office.³⁰

If this was an instance of his statesmanlike sincerity, then it was also a political blunder of monumental proportions, the greatest of his career. Had Morpeth committed to the League, he would probably have become one of the most prominent leaders of the free trade movement. Cobden himself declared that he had attended the meeting in the hope that he would become the League's leader in Parliament. Morpeth, he stated, could have been the 'Moses to conduct us through this desert'.³¹ As it was, Morpeth's announcement was met with cries of disappointment, the rest of his speech listened to with 'cold patience'. He privately wondered whether he had been 'right in subjecting myself to this', and excused himself by noting that he would rather be unpopular than appear indifferent.³² Less popular he certainly was. Whilst the Riding's liberals retained their respect for his character, observers were clear that his speech had 'wholly dissatisfied' his audience.³³ The *Bradford Observer* felt that he had 'alienated the affection' of the Riding, and stated that if he wished to contest

²⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, February 3rd 1844, p. 4. The *Mercury* reported an 'intense curiosity' among the audience as to what Morpeth would say.

²⁷ Reports of the meeting in *Leeds Mercury*, February 3rd 1844, supplement; *The Times*, February 2nd 1844, p. 8.

²⁸ J19/1/37/19, Earl Fitzwilliam to Lord Morpeth, January 23rd 1844; J19/1/37/20, Lord John Russell to Lord Morpeth, January 23rd 1844; J19/1/37/22, H. Russell to Lord Morpeth, January 25th 1844.

²⁹ J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 31st 1844.

³⁰ *The Times*, February 2nd 1844, p. 8.

³¹ *Leeds Mercury*, February 3rd 1844, supplement.

³² J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 31st 1844.

³³ J19/1/37/27, R. G. Jackson of Huddersfield to Lord Morpeth, February 2nd 1844; J19/1/37/37, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, February 8th 1844.

the constituency again he needed to ‘get rid of the trammels of party’.³⁴ Morpeth had just postponed a junction between the Whigs and the League.

Cobden seized the moment to re-organise West Riding politics on his own terms. Immediately after Morpeth’s speech, he rose to tell the meeting that they must now be prepared to sacrifice him to demonstrate their attachment to the League’s principles.³⁵ In private correspondence over the following year, he hammered home the necessity for Yorkshire’s free traders to oppose any Whig who did not fully cooperate with the League.³⁶ The reason for this was that he was well aware that the Riding’s liberals still esteemed local Whigs such as Fitzwilliam and Morpeth. When unrealised rumours surfaced that the latter would contest the borough of Morpeth, an anxious Cobden urged Edward Baines Junior to tell him to make clear that he would vote for repeal if given the opportunity, thus avoiding the possibility of a split with the League.³⁷ By January 1845, however, Cobden was pleased to record ‘a much stronger feeling in favour of principle in Yorkshire and less of *man-worship*. The free-traders to a man will oppose even Lord Morpeth himself unless he comes out for free trade’.³⁸

Cobden’s plans for the Riding revolved around its electoral machinery. Tired of its ineffectiveness in Parliament, the League had turned its attention to the registration of voters, particularly in counties where they realised it was possible to qualify voters under possession of a 40s freehold.³⁹ Wishing to take advantage of this method in the Riding, in late 1844 the League leadership, alongside local activists, instituted negotiations with Fitzwilliam and other local Whigs to re-organise the West Riding Reform and Registration Association. This approach was met with an icy rebuff.⁴⁰

³⁴ *Bradford Observer*, February 1st 1844, p. 4; February 8th 1844, p. 4.

³⁵ Report of speech in *Leeds Mercury*, February 3rd 1844, supplement.

³⁶ Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 164, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, October 19th 1844; 172, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, November 11th 1844.

³⁷ Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 149, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, February 6th 1844.

³⁸ Richard Cobden to Charles Pelham Villiers, January 12th 1845 in Howe (ed.), *Letters of Richard Cobden*, p. 379.

³⁹ John Prest, *Politics in the Age of Cobden* (London, 1977), pp. 77-86.

⁴⁰ Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 161, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, October 11th 1844; 172, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, November 11th 1844.

Cobden huffily declared to Baines Junior that ‘unless the Whig squires will join the towns heartily you would be better without their half-hearted fellowship’.⁴¹

Baines Junior, however, did not wish to alienate Fitzwilliam, and warned Cobden that doing so would risk damaging the free trade cause in Yorkshire.⁴² Other liberals, however, were far less concerned about this prospect than the moderate Baines. In day-to-day control of the relevant machinery in any case, they decided to go ahead with registration activities without Fitzwilliam’s consent. This was encouraged by Cobden, who promised £1000 of the League’s money to avoid the necessity of calling on the pockets of the Whig squires.⁴³ Both the League leadership and the Riding’s leading free traders urged voters to qualify themselves under the 40s method. They also advertised property which might be subdivided to enfranchise as many people as possible.⁴⁴

Importantly, the League was also directly engaged in creating votes in the Riding using this method via its headquarters in Manchester. A subsequent parliamentary inquiry indicated that the League’s Manchester solicitors and agents were heavily involved in the West Riding registration, and that between £90,000 and £98,000 had passed through the hands of the League’s accountants to buy property in the Riding, South Lancashire and North Cheshire. This property was then divided into shares and leased, qualifying the shareholders.⁴⁵ Between them these registration efforts obtained a majority of over 2,000 voters for free trade in the Riding in 1845, an impressive achievement given the state of the liberal party in 1841.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 164, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, October 19th 1844.

⁴² Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 175, Edward Baines Junior to Richard Cobden, November 12th 1844.

⁴³ George Wilson Papers (Manchester City Archives), M20/8, Richard Cobden to George Wilson, February 14th 1845.

⁴⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, October 26th 1844, p. 4; Report of free trade meeting in Leeds, December 7th 1844, supplement. The League produced a pamphlet for the Riding demonstrating the importance of registration; National Anti-Corn Law League, *How to Win Counties: The West Riding of Yorkshire* (Leeds, 1846).

⁴⁵ *Parliamentary Papers*, Report from the Select Committee on the Votes of Electors, 1846 (451), VIII.175, pp. 308-13. Pickering & Tyrell, *The People’s Bread*, pp. 30-32, provides an instructive account of the League’s registration activities, but erroneously suggests that the expenditure of £98,000 referred to above was for the West Riding alone.

⁴⁶ Fraser, ‘Voluntaryism’, 205.

On one level, all of this represented a shift away from the Whigs, a statement that West Riding politics was henceforth to be organised on the terms of the region's liberal townsmen. However, despite their commitment to total and immediate repeal, these men retained, as Cobden exasperatedly reported, a 'hankering after the old alliance with the Whig proprietors'.⁴⁷ Whilst Fitzwilliam was now an isolated figure, they maintained the wish that Morpeth might join their cause. At a free trade meeting in Leeds in December 1844, John Bright referred to the fact that his audience hoped that were an election to be held, they would 'be able to return Lord Morpeth'. Bright was happy to turn this to his advantage, noting that whilst Morpeth was 'very popular', they would not be able to elect him without attention to the registration.⁴⁸

In 1845, the prospect of a concord between the Whigs and the Riding's repealers improved. In April, local Whig landowners such as Fawkes, more sympathetic to the League than Fitzwilliam, agreed to re-organise the West Riding Reform and Registration Association (W. R. R. R. A.) on a more thoroughly free-trading basis.⁴⁹ Although not ostensibly connected to the League, the new body was mainly staffed by Leaguers and shared its headquarters with the Leeds Anti-Corn Law Association.⁵⁰ Nationally, the Whig Party leadership also moved closer towards the League's position. Morpeth was converted to total and immediate repeal on the grounds that this might combat the Irish famine. Determined to be rid of his 'fixed-duty fetters', in November he sent a letter to Edward Baines Junior announcing this and sending a contribution of £5 to join the League. This communication was received on the same day that Russell issued an independent statement for total repeal to his constituents in the City of London.⁵¹

Together these letters had an electrifying effect, greatly reducing the Leaguers' objections to a political alliance with the Whigs. Baines Junior felt that they were

⁴⁷ George Wilson Papers (Manchester City Archives), M20/8, Richard Cobden to George Wilson, February 14th 1845.

⁴⁸ Report of free trade meeting in Leeds, December 7th 1844, supplement.

⁴⁹ Hickleton MSS (Borthwick Institute for Archives, York), A4/37, F. H. Fawkes to Charles Wood, April 9th 1845; A4/38, 'Principles, Rules and Objects of the West Riding Liberal Registration Association, Adopted at a Meeting of Delegates at Normanton, January 7th 1849' (setting out a history of registration efforts over the last few years).

⁵⁰ Fraser, 'Voluntaryism', 203-05.

⁵¹ Lord Morpeth to Edward Baines Junior, November 24th 1845, printed in *Leeds Mercury*, November 29th 1845, p. 9; Lord John Russell Papers (National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/4E/21, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, December 4th 1845.

'great facts' which would 'tell mightily on public opinion'.⁵² Mark Phillips, the M.P. for Manchester, even offered to resign his seat so that Morpeth might be immediately re-instated in Parliament.⁵³ Morpeth's letter, read at a free trade meeting in Leeds, was received with 'several rounds of enthusiastic cheering'. Immediately, Baines Junior suggested that the meeting would now carry Morpeth 'upon their shoulders into the House of Commons'. Cobden, who was at the meeting, said that his £5 was worth £5,000 for the League. Stansfeld declared that all difficulty about Morpeth ('admired and beloved by them all') becoming their candidate was now ended.⁵⁴ Such sentiments were widely repeated across the Riding in the following weeks.⁵⁵

Morpeth had fully restored his popularity by this act, almost guaranteeing that he would be the liberal candidate for the next West Riding election. Meetings after his announcement saw the Riding's Leaguers agree with Fawkes, Wood and the W. R. R. R. A. to work together for this end.⁵⁶ Even the Whigs' almost farcical inability to form a Government after Peel temporarily resigned in December could not dent their enthusiasm.⁵⁷ They got a chance to put these thoughts into action when an opportune vacancy was created in the Riding upon the succession of John Stuart Wortley to the peerage on December 19th. An ecstatic Cobden anticipated that Morpeth's victory would end the Corn Law in the same way which Wilberforce's had the slave trade.⁵⁸ The *Leeds Mercury* sickeningly hoped that Morpeth and the Riding would be 'like lovers after separation... more ardently attached than ever'.⁵⁹

The period of early 1846 proved to be the high watermark of Morpeth's fame as a statesman. The immense respect the early-Victorian public had for his philanthropy and moral character was now added to a strong political appeal. Articles lauding his

⁵² George Wilson Papers (Manchester City Archives), M20/8, Edward Baines Junior to George Wilson, November 26th 1845.

⁵³ George Wilson Papers (Manchester City Archives), M20/8, Mark Phillips to George Wilson, November 28th 1845.

⁵⁴ Report of the meeting in *Leeds Mercury*, November 29th 1845, supplement.

⁵⁵ *Sheffield Independent*, November 29th 1845, p. 8; *Bradford Observer*, November 27th 1845, p. 4; Report of free trade meetings at Bradford and Halifax in *Leeds Mercury*, November 29th 1845, p. 8.

⁵⁶ J19/1/40/38, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, November 28th 1845; J19/1/40/64, Charles Wood to Lord Morpeth, December 12th 1845.

⁵⁷ For background on these events, see F. A. Dreyer, 'The Whigs and the political crisis of 1845', *English Historical Review*, 80 (1965), 514-37.

⁵⁸ Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 195, Richard Cobden to Edward Baines Junior, December 22nd 1845.

⁵⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, January 3rd 1846, p. 4.

virtues abounded in both the local and the national press. The *Mercury*, for instance, reprinted an article entitled ‘Lord Morpeth and His Claims’.

‘[Lord Morpeth has] moral worth and mental greatness... making him a most fit depository for the nation’s hopes and fears... we can safely, we believe, place an unusual amount of confidence in his probity and firmness, and indeed it is to these high *moral qualities* that he owes his... glorious prominence’.⁶⁰

Indeed, it is difficult to overstate the degree to which Morpeth’s character was thought to add to his political reputation; the idea recurs again and again in contemporary commentary about him. As the article above suggests, his moral qualities were thought to demonstrate his political sincerity. In this context, this served the important function of suggesting that the Whigs’ professions of support for total and immediate repeal were credible and not just a ploy for power. The *English Gentleman*, writing on this theme, declared Morpeth to be the ‘incarnated respectability of the Whig Party’.⁶¹ The *Sheffield Independent* likewise drew attention to his ‘high moral and intellectual excellence... transparent integrity... utter abstinence of popularity hunting’. Linking the political and personal in this way allowed the *Independent* to suggest that free trade was a moral cause taken up by moral men. It contrasted Morpeth’s ‘human and Christian sentiments’ with those of the protectionist Lord Ashley, who it claimed hypocritically professed to serve the poor whilst the labourers in his own neighbourhood were ‘starving and depraved’.⁶²

All of this meant that Morpeth achieved an almost unassailable status in the run up to the election. Even the protectionist *Leeds Intelligencer* conceded that he had some ‘personal influence’ which meant that ‘numbers’ might support him irrespective of their politics.⁶³ The Conservative Party, moreover, was in disarray following Peel’s conversion to repeal, whilst the League’s activities had ensured the liberals a majority on the register. The West Riding election of February 1846 was a walk-over, more a celebration of free trade than a political contest. Ever alive to the dramatic, Morpeth

⁶⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, January 10th 1846, p. 11, reprinting an article from *The Universe*.

⁶¹ *The English Gentleman*, January 10th 1846, p. 9. This article was reprinted in the *Leeds Times*, January 17th 1846, p. 6, in order to highlight Morpeth’s integrity for Yorkshire audiences.

⁶² *Sheffield Independent*, February 7th 1846, p. 8.

⁶³ *Leeds Intelligencer*, January 10th 1846, p. 4

rode to the hustings on a new horse he had dubbed 'Free Trader'.⁶⁴ His victory speech was almost totally concerned with free trade, arguing that this accorded with the wishes of God and would improve the condition of the people.⁶⁵ After his return to the Commons, he delighted his constituents with an impassioned speech which cited his own victory in the Riding as proof of the public's demand for repeal.⁶⁶

Surrounded by his old supporters at the election, cheered by crowds bathed in orange, Morpeth was reminded of the triumphs of Yorkshire Whiggery in the 1830s, feeling that his victory 'recalled old glories'.⁶⁷ Yet in fact the Riding's politics had profoundly changed. As Charles Wood told Earl Fitzwilliam, 'the Whig Party in the Riding, in the old sense of the word, does not exist. The liberal strength is in the towns, and the new race of young electors there have little sympathy... for the old Whig aristocracy'.⁶⁸ Morpeth's election was in fact more of a triumph for the League than for the Whigs. It had been achieved because he was a member of the League, with the assistance of the League, and on the back of a majority paid for by the League. There was much truth in Cobden's assertion that if it were not for him 'Lord Morpeth might still have been rustivating at Castle Howard'.⁶⁹

Thus, whilst Morpeth's actions had helped bring about a reunion between the Whigs and liberals over the specific issue of free trade, this did not necessarily represent a resumption of the historic commitment by the Riding's liberals to the idea of Whig government. Importantly, the religious tensions which had emerged in the 1830s between the Whigs and the Riding's nonconformists remained unabated. Over the next two years, these tensions were to come to the fore. The next section details how divisions between the Whigs and some of the region's liberals soon emerged, sparked by the Government's social reform policies. Morpeth was centrally involved in the ensuing controversy at both local and national level.

⁶⁴ J19/8/10, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 2nd, 4th 1846.

⁶⁵ Report of Morpeth's election in *Leeds Mercury Extraordinary*, February 4th 1846.

⁶⁶ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, LXXXIII, February 13th 1846, cols 804-17; *Leeds Mercury*, February 14th 1846, p. 4.

⁶⁷ J19/8/10, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 4th 1846.

⁶⁸ Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WWM/G/11/7, Charles Wood to Earl Fitzwilliam, August 29th 1846.

⁶⁹ Cobden Papers (British Library), Add. MS 43664, 3, Richard Cobden to Joseph Parkes, February 17th 1846.

With local liberals jubilant at the repeal of the Corn Laws, Morpeth's popularity in the Riding continued throughout 1846, aided no doubt by the many philanthropic engagements he undertook in Yorkshire that year. It was no surprise when he was again unopposed at an election following the formation of Russell's Government in July. The *Leeds Mercury* cautiously looked forward to the new administration, noting that the Whigs had greater sympathy with the populace than the Tories. Ominously, though, it avowed that it differed from them on religious issues.⁷⁰

The election had been made necessary owing to Morpeth's appointment as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests. He had in fact been rather disheartened at being given this unglamorous position, feeling that he was 'going out instead of coming in'.⁷¹ In fact, he had little reason to be disappointed. He remained a politically important figure; *Reynold's Miscellany* was soon to rank him alongside Russell, Palmerston and Grey in an article on the 'four leading Cabinet Ministers'.⁷² His office was earmarked to have responsibility for legislation on public health, one of the key areas of the programme of social reform which characterised the Ministry. As seen in the last chapter, he was already privately interested in 'Condition of England' issues, including that of health, and this was therefore a logical appointment.

Morpeth's election address focused directly on the role which the Government would play in tackling the 'Condition of England' problem. Believing that the state had helped secure the people's 'material' condition through the repeal of the Corn Laws, he now hoped that it would look to their 'physical' and (what he thought more important) 'moral' condition. He spoke of the need for better sanitation and housing for the working classes, and referred to his wish to see all classes receive a 'complete moral education', ending what he called the 'monopoly' of education by the rich. He thus hoped that the Government would do all it could to 'open the way for all that can improve the condition and elevate the character of the people'.⁷³

⁷⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, July 4th 1846, p. 4.

⁷¹ J19/8/12, Diary of Lord Morpeth, July 3rd 1846.

⁷² *Reynold's Miscellany of Romance, General Literature, Science and Art*, 1:12 (January 23rd 1847), p. 185.

⁷³ Speech of Lord Morpeth reported in *Leeds Mercury*, July 25th 1846, p. 7.

However, as argued in the last chapter, he did not believe that government could solve social problems by itself. Instead, he saw it as something which might merely aid a more general moral effort in society at large. He accordingly presented his plea for state action on social questions as part of a wider, almost utopian vision, avowing his hope that England would henceforth be characterised by a ‘moral glory’:

‘the glory of descending into the receptacles of suffering, or filth, of ignorance, and of crime, in order that by descending we may raise and cleanse and illumine and amend... of drying the tears, of brightening the hopes, of elevating the character, of recasting the history of man, of making freedom the guarantee of order, toleration the ally of religion, government the object of love, and law the helpmate of virtue’.

This was powerful rhetoric, met with ‘tremendous cheering’.⁷⁴ The West Riding’s liberals could be relied on to be moved by this sort of rather vague enthusiasm for moral and social progress, for as a value this was fundamental to the liberal ethos.⁷⁵

However, there was some cause for anxiety. Particularly concerning were the references to education. It was noted in the previous chapter that the Whigs had established a system of state aid to educational societies in the 1830s. This seems to have been relatively uncontroversial among the Riding’s liberals at the time. However since then influential sections of Yorkshire’s nonconformist community had become implacably opposed to any state interference in education, and had instead adopted the ‘voluntaryist’ position: that education should be entirely left to voluntary effort.

This was a result of their opposition to Sir James Graham’s Factory Education Bill of 1843, an attempt by Peel’s Government to establish a national system of factory schools. It was proposed that these schools would offer a combined, non-doctrinal yet religious education for child factory workers of all denominations. The Bill professed to be neutral, yet in reality held out the prospect of a considerable role for the Church of England. Under the plans, teachers would have to be approved by Bishops, the

⁷⁴ Speech of Lord Morpeth reported in *Leeds Mercury*, July 25th 1846, p. 7.

⁷⁵ Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*, pp. 86-89.

clergy would head the board of trustees for each school, and dissenting parents would have to opt out if they did not wish their children to be instructed in the catechism.⁷⁶

The Bill provoked a firestorm of protests from evangelical dissent which was particularly strong in Yorkshire. Edward Baines Junior and the *Leeds Mercury* took the national leadership of this ‘voluntaryist’ movement. The resulting – and successful – petitioning campaign was one of the largest in the nineteenth century, a climatic victory for organised dissent whose legacy was to have a significant impact on Yorkshire’s politics. The campaign drew particular strength from the Congregationalist and Baptist sects, which provided the mainstay of voluntaryism.⁷⁷

The voluntaryists argued, firstly, that there was no practical need for state involvement in education. Whilst Graham’s Bill had been framed in response to perceived moral depravity in large towns, dissenters took this as an affront to the educational initiatives which they organised in those places. Baines Junior attempted to statistically prove the effectiveness of these efforts in his 1843 work *On the Social, Educational and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts*, whilst the same year saw the Congregationalist Robert Vaughan publish *The Age of Great Cities*, an impassioned defence of the superiority of urban life.⁷⁸

The voluntaryists further contended that Graham’s Bill was an attempt to increase the power of the Church of England, which, moreover, they feared was growing increasingly Popish as a result of the Oxford Movement.⁷⁹ This fear led the anti-Catholic Wesleyan Methodists to add their considerable weight to the opposition campaign, although they were not ideologically committed to voluntaryism.⁸⁰

Unsurprisingly therefore, educational voluntaryism encouraged those dissenters who

⁷⁶ G. I. T. Machin, *Politics and the Churches in Great Britain, 1832 to 1868* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 151-53.

⁷⁷ For details of the agitation, J. T. Ward, & J. H. Treble, ‘Religion and Education in 1843: Reaction to the ‘Factory Education Bill’’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 20:1 (1969), 79-110.

⁷⁸ Edward Baines Junior, *On the Social, Educational and Religious State of the Manufacturing Districts* (London, 1843); Robert Vaughan, *The Age of Great Cities* (London, 1843).

⁷⁹ Ward & Treble, ‘Religion and Education in 1843’, 84-85. The leading Leeds Congregationalist ministers and voluntaryists John Ely and Richard Winter Hamilton were both highly concerned about the rise of Tractarianism in the Church of England and felt themselves duty bound to oppose it; Richard Winter Hamilton (ed.), *Posthumous Works of the Late Rev. John Ely, with an Introductory Memoir* (London, 1848), p. lxx, civ.

⁸⁰ Machin, *Politics and the Churches*, p. 155.

argued for the separation of Church and state. The disestablishment campaign was formalised by the foundation of Edward Miall's Anti-State Church Association in 1844. Leeds' Revd. J. E. Giles, explaining the need for this body, argued that the contempt shown by Parliament towards dissenters in Graham's Bill showed the necessity for them to attack the root of their difficulties in the Establishment.⁸¹

Miall's Association does not seem to have received any substantial support in Yorkshire initially. However, any talk of disestablishment placed dissent at variance with the Whigs. Indeed, Giles suggested that they would need to sever political association with those who did not share their ideals.⁸² The Whig-dissenting alliance was further tested in 1845, when Whig support helped to carry Peel's measure to increase the grant to the Irish Catholic seminary at Maynooth near Dublin. The voluntaryists were spiritually opposed to any funding of religion by public money (especially to Catholics), and further feared that the grant would be the first step towards concurrent endowment, i.e. state payment of the Catholic clergy.⁸³

In the West Riding meetings against the grant attended by leading local Congregationalists and Baptists condemned the Whigs' support for the measure.⁸⁴ The voluntaryists' objections were based on similar theological grounds to their opposition to church rates. They believed that religion was a voluntary and private relationship between man and God. Any state involvement with religion represented (as Giles explained) a 'direct invasion of the authority of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ'.⁸⁵ In reply to accusations that this opposition to the Maynooth grant was illiberal and intolerant towards Catholics, the *Leeds Mercury* explained that true religious liberty involved not just freedom of worship, but also 'exemption from all obligation to support a different religion'.⁸⁶

⁸¹ John Eustace Giles, *Separation of Church and State: Two Lectures, Explanatory of the Objects of the Proposed Anti-State Church Conference, Delivered in South Parade Chapel, Leeds* (Leeds, 1844).

⁸² Giles, *Separation of Church and State*, p. 10.

⁸³ G. I. T. Machin, 'The Maynooth Grant, the Dissenters and Disestablishment, 1845-1847', *English Historical Review*, 82: 322 (1967), 61-85.

⁸⁴ Reports of meetings in *Leeds Mercury*, April 19th 1845, p. 7; *Leeds Mercury*, May 3rd 1845, p. 7. On opposition to the Maynooth grant in Yorkshire, see also Ram, 'Political Activities of Dissenters', pp. 253-56.

⁸⁵ Speeches of J. E. Giles and Richard Winter Hamilton, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 3rd 1845, p. 7.

⁸⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, March 25th 1845, p. 4.

As explored in Chapter One, this was very different to Morpeth's 'Liberal Anglican' idea of tolerance.⁸⁷ Morpeth was well aware of the potential for division on these issues. Writing in the run up to the election of early 1846, he spoke of his anxiety about facing 'questions about ecclesiastical endowments and matters of that kind'.⁸⁸ The dissenting temper was sufficiently hot on these matters that Baines Junior felt compelled to seek his views on concurrent endowment, warning him that many nonconformists would decide their votes by his answer despite their enthusiasm for free trade.⁸⁹ Although seeing little wrong with the idea in principle, Morpeth had already decided not to support the payment of the Catholic clergy on the practical grounds that this would alienate both Catholic and Protestant nonconformist opinion.⁹⁰ The *Mercury* printed his answer with some relief.⁹¹

Nevertheless, it was clear that there were severe differences between Morpeth and many of his nonconformist constituents on issues of Church and state. In this context, the voluntaryists looked to the Whigs' renewed interest in educational matters with considerable apprehension. The tension on this issue in Yorkshire was increased shortly before the election of July 1846 by a work by Revd. Walter Farquhar Hook, the dynamic vicar of Leeds, who proposed a state run system of secular education, leaving the religious component of education to the voluntary societies.⁹²

However, voluntaryists such as Baines Junior argued that this would still violate their principles, and further objected that to separate the 'secular' from the 'religious' would be impractical, and make it difficult for the schoolmaster to provide a moral education.⁹³ It was feared that the Whigs would adopt Hook's plan.⁹⁴ Accordingly, even as Baines Junior welcomed Morpeth's election in a *Mercury* editorial, he printed on the same page the first of a series of letters to Lord John Russell outlining the case

⁸⁷ See pp. 65-68.

⁸⁸ Lord John Russell Papers (National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/4E/306, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, December 29th 1845.

⁸⁹ J19/1/40/82, Edward Baines Junior to Lord Morpeth, December 22nd 1845.

⁹⁰ Lord John Russell papers (National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/4E/21, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, December 4th 1845.

⁹¹ *Leeds Mercury*, January 3rd 1846, p. 4.

⁹² Walter Farquhar Hook, *On the Means of Rendering More Efficient the Education of the People: A Letter to the Lord Bishop of St. David's* (London, 1846).

⁹³ Edward Baines Junior, *Letters to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, First Lord of the Treasury, on State Education* (4th edn., London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1847), pp. 55-57.

⁹⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, July 18th 1846, p. 4.

against state involvement with education. These warned that ‘any measure of State Education from your Cabinet... would break up your party in the country’.⁹⁵

In fact, the Whigs had no intention of introducing Hook’s proposals. What they had in mind was far more controversial. In the latter part of 1846, the Privy Council Committee on Education (of which Morpeth had become a member) formulated plans to dramatically increase the state’s role in the education system. These proposals, a landmark in the history of educational policy, aimed to create a class of ‘pupil-teachers’ drawn from the brightest children among the poor, who would undergo a five year paid apprenticeship under their teacher. Candidates in Church schools would have their character certified by their Anglican clergyman and by the school’s managers. To meet likely dissenting objections, this was restricted to managers alone in other schools. Likewise, whilst in Church schools candidates had to demonstrate understanding of the Anglican catechism and liturgy, the Council was content for other schools merely to certify their candidates’ religious knowledge.

If they completed this apprenticeship satisfactorily, the pupil-teachers would have the chance to compete to become ‘Queens Scholars’, receiving £20-£25 p.a. to allow them to attend a sanctioned teacher training college. This proposal was primarily aimed at supporting existing colleges run by the British and Foreign School Society (B.F.S.S) and the National Society. These would receive a grant of between £20-£30 p.a. per scholar, as well as extra assistance to erect additional buildings. The Privy Council also proposed to provide pensions for all teachers who had been under government inspection and retired after fifteen years of service, and additional stipends for any qualified teachers who had been to a sanctioned training college, or had apprentice pupils under their care. The whole system was to be overseen by an enhanced inspectorate.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Edward Baines Junior, *Letters to the Right Hon. Lord John Russell, First Lord of the Treasury, on State Education* (4th edn., London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1847), p. 115; *Leeds Mercury*, July 25th 1846, p. 4.

⁹⁶ Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, December 21st 1846 in J. Stuart Maclure (ed.), *Educational Documents: England and Wales, 1816-1967* (2nd edn., London: Chapman & Hall Ltd, 1968), pp. 53-54.

Compared to the rather miserly totals of the 1830s, all of this heralded a massive increase in the amount of financial aid granted by the state for educational purposes.⁹⁷ The overall aim was to ensure the supply of teachers and to improve their quality, respectability and comfort. This was a response to the fact that the teaching profession was low-paid and suffered from a poor reputation, making it difficult for training colleges to attract good quality applicants.⁹⁸ Having been provisionally discussed in August, the pupil-teacher proposals were detailed in a Privy Council Committee minute of December 21st 1846, but were not publicly presented until February 5th 1847. They were the product of a mixture of influences, but were partly the brainchild of James Kay-Shuttleworth, the secretary of the Committee, who had helped formulate them whilst still working for the Conservative administration.⁹⁹

As seen in the previous chapter, the Whigs had strongly engaged with the issue of teacher training. Morpeth himself patronised both Kay's training college at Battersea and that run by the National Society in York. These links to non-political ventures were now to play a key role in his political career. Indeed, his political interest in this issue was heavily strengthened by his private activities; as he explained to the National Society in York, his enthusiasm for the topic was grounded in the 'practical experience I have had within this diocese of its actual working' at its college in the city.¹⁰⁰ His position as a director of the college may have led him to further appreciate the value of state aid in assisting educational efforts. The college was perpetually under funded, and had only managed to erect badly needed new buildings as a result of a substantial Government grant.¹⁰¹ The Privy Council was to directly highlight York as an example of the benefits of state assistance.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Parry, *Rise and Fall*, p. 202 notes that the education grant had risen to £1.3 million by 1862, a direct result of the 1846 Minute and other reforms in the 1850s.

⁹⁸ Privy Council, Committee on Education, *The School in its Relations to the State, the Church and the Congregation, Being an Explanation of the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education in August and December 1846* (London, 1847), p. 44.

⁹⁹ D. G. Paz, *The Politics of Working-Class Education in Britain, 1830-50* (Manchester, 1980), pp. 129-33.

¹⁰⁰ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the York Diocesan Education Society, *The Morning Chronicle*, February 3rd 1845, pp. 2-3

¹⁰¹ Records of the York Diocesan Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (Fountains Learning Centre, York St. John University), YDS/MB/3, Training College board of management minute books, June 26th 1844, June 2nd 1845.

¹⁰² Privy Council, *The School in its Relations to the State*, p. 85.

Morpeth's experience of the conditions at York further convinced him of the need to improve the standard of its pupils; the principal of the college reported that the quality of most of his students was 'lamentable'.¹⁰³ Morpeth hoped that legislation might address these problems. In January 1846, Kay-Shuttleworth had circulated his pupil-teacher scheme around his sympathetic Whig friends, including Morpeth, who derived 'instruction and profit' from them.¹⁰⁴ Shortly afterwards he gave a speech at the York college which referred to the need for superior training and pay for teachers.¹⁰⁵ This was a direct result of his exposure to Kay's plans. His diary notes that he had discussed 'Kay-Shuttleworth's suggestions about adequate salaries and superannuation allowances for schoolmasters' at the meeting.¹⁰⁶

There was, then, a clear link between Morpeth's provincial engagement with teacher training and his involvement with the issue in Government. He later made this explicit, stating at a college meeting that 'I have the satisfaction of thinking that I have become a party... to provisions for which I had been anxious in an unofficial and private capacity'.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the line separating his private actions from his political ones was very thin. At a meeting of the National Society in York on December 22nd 1846, he suggested that there was a need for better trained and better paid teachers, and declared that state assistance for this was necessary.¹⁰⁸ Coming just a day after the Privy Council minute which set out the pupil-teacher proposals, this speech may have been designed to pave the way for the new system. It was certainly reported as a political address by a member of the Council which indicated likely legislation, adding to voluntaryist mistrust of the Whigs.¹⁰⁹

When the Whigs' scheme was made public in February, the voluntaryists' fears were realised. Edward Baines Junior was quick to suggest that the plans violated the voluntary principle. In the space of just a fortnight he published extended articles in

¹⁰³ Records of the York Diocesan Society (York St. John College), YDS/TS/3, Box 3, Report of Principal Reed to the Board of Management of the Training School, 1844.

¹⁰⁴ James Kay-Shuttleworth Papers (John Ryland's Library, University of Manchester), 293, Lord Morpeth to James Kay-Shuttleworth, January 9th 1846.

¹⁰⁵ Report in *Yorkshire Gazette*, January 17th 1846, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ J19/8/10, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 15th 1846.

¹⁰⁷ Speech of Lord Morpeth reported in *Daily News*, April 10th 1847, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Lord Morpeth's speech at a York Diocesan Society meeting, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, December 26th 1846, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, December 26th 1846, p. 8; *The Aberdeen Journal*, January 6th 1847, p. 8.

the *Mercury* which were then converted into pamphlets, one of which was dramatically titled *An Alarm to the Nation on the Unjust, Unconstitutional and Dangerous Measure of State Education Proposed by the Government*.¹¹⁰ A substantial proportion of Congregationalist and Baptist opinion soon followed, leading to an ardent campaign against the Government. It was, as one contemporary chronicler put it, a ‘crisis in Nonconformist history’.¹¹¹ As he had done against Graham’s Bill, Baines Junior led the protests through the *Leeds Mercury*.

However, this time around the campaign was not quite as widespread as it had been in 1843. One reason for this was that the Wesleyans, who had then acted with the rest of evangelical dissent, were now neutral; indeed, they came to accept state aid under the new system.¹¹² Nevertheless, the protests were extremely virulent, particularly in the West Riding. From February to August the issue dominated the region’s politics. Whilst Leeds was the national centre of the agitation, the campaign rapidly spread to nearby towns. It encompassed nearly all of the Congregationalist and Baptist liberal leadership, with figures such as Scales, Ely, Plint, Forbes, Milligan, Hamilton and Robert Leader all heavily involved.¹¹³

The reasons given for their opposition were many, and drew on arguments similar to those advanced in 1843. They argued that there was no need for state aid, which would merely retard private and voluntary efforts. This criticism focused around the idea that the private support of education was a social duty, commanded by God, which fell especially on parents. It was argued that to remove the need to perform that duty would damage the nation’s moral economy.¹¹⁴ The voluntaryists furthermore contended that the pay, pensions and patronage in the Whigs’ scheme would sap the independence (and hence effort) of teachers. The Government’s plan was thus

¹¹⁰ Edward Baines Junior, *A Letter to the Most Noble The Marquis of Lansdowne, President of the Council, on the Government Plan of Education* (London, 1847); Edward Baines Junior, *An Alarm to the Nation on the Unjust, Unconstitutional and Dangerous Measure of State Education Proposed by the Government* (London, 1847). These letters were originally published in the *Leeds Mercury* on February 13th 1847 and February 27th 1847 respectively.

¹¹¹ James G. Miall, *Congregationalism in Yorkshire: A Chapter of Modern Church History* (London, 1868), p. 202.

¹¹² Machin, *Politics and the Churches*, pp. 183-84.

¹¹³ *Leeds Mercury*, April 20th 1847, p. 5; W. H. Stowell, *Memoir of the Life of Richard Winter Hamilton* (London, 1850), pp. 404-05.

¹¹⁴ Speech of Thomas Plint reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10; Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, pp. 146-48.

somewhat unfairly presented as a centralising measure, which flew in the face of a national character which prided itself on individual initiative.¹¹⁵

The claim that the Whigs' measures represented an un-English centralisation was a common one at voluntaryist meetings. To understand this, it is necessary to place their opposition in a European perspective. The voluntaryists suspected, with some degree of justification, that the Whigs' scheme had been influenced by continental systems of state education. However, those systems were associated in the English mind with illiberal, despotic, military regimes.¹¹⁶ The voluntaryists argued that European dictators used religious education as a form of social control, which merely increased scepticism by discouraging the voluntary act of will necessary for individual salvation. As Michael Ledger-Lomas has illustrated, Congregationalists in particular were very worried that such practices might spread to England.¹¹⁷

This anxiety showed in the education debates. For instance, Richard Winter Hamilton, whose 1845 work on *Popular Education* was critical of European educational practices for the reasons above, argued that the Whigs' plans amounted to the establishment of a Ministry of Education, the 'principal agent of continental tyranny'.¹¹⁸ Another voluntaryist similarly worried that 'British freemen will become Prussian bondsmen under the centralizing power of a scheming despotism'.¹¹⁹ Much of this was pure hyperbole, but it reflected the fact that the voluntaryists' concern was not just about the plans themselves, but also the system to which they might one day lead. Baines Junior suggested that they were but the first step towards bringing all religion and all education under state control. The proposed system was consequently

¹¹⁵ Report of an anti-state education meeting at Leeds, *Leeds Mercury*, March 13th 1847, p. 10. On the association between Englishness and individuality, Peter Mandler, *The English National Character: The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair* (New Haven, 2006), pp. 53-54.

¹¹⁶ Bernard Porter, "'Bureau and Barrack': Early Victorian Attitudes towards the Continent", *Victorian Studies*, 27 (1984), 407-33.

¹¹⁷ Michael Ledger-Lomas, "'Glimpses of the Great Conflict': English Congregationalists and the European Crisis of Faith, circa 1840-1875", *Journal of British Studies*, 46:4 (2007), 826-60.

¹¹⁸ Richard Winter Hamilton, *The Institutions of Popular Education* (2nd edn., Leeds: James Y. Knight, 1846 [1st published 1845]), pp. 149-63, 243-47; Speech reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10.

¹¹⁹ Speech of Revd. J. Massie at Leeds, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, February 20th 1847, p. 5. See also the speech of Thomas Plint at Huddersfield, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10

presented as a fundamental threat to civil and religious liberties. That the plans were proposed by an unelected council seemed to confirm their despotic nature.¹²⁰

Underlying the voluntaryist opposition, however, was their theological objection to the connection between Church and state. The voluntaryists believed that the state was a corrupting influence on religion, for it was composed of inherently sinful and worldly men. It was hence argued that its involvement in religious education would ‘debauch and corrupt’ what ought to be a pure relationship between the individual and God.¹²¹ Moreover, dissenters would be compelled to support doctrines they believed to be, in the Leeds Congregationalist Revd. John Ely’s words, ‘erroneous, and essentially corrupt’.¹²² Given these views, the opposition was uncompromising. Sheffield’s Revd. T. Smith stated that ‘the question to me is one of life and death, of the favour or frown of God, the happiness or otherwise of my immortal soul’.¹²³

As such, the voluntaryists declared that they could not accept the grants offered by the Government. These would thus go exclusively to Church schools, whose extra resources would draw pupils away from dissenting schools. As Ely put it to Morpeth, they thus considered the scheme to be ‘distinctly hostile’ to dissent.¹²⁴ The Whigs hotly denied these accusations. Morpeth, for one, felt the scheme was characterised by an ‘exaggerated deference’ towards dissenters.¹²⁵ The voluntaryists, however, argued that the Government *knew* that dissenters could not accept its aid. As such, they saw the scheme as an ‘insidious’ attempt to increase the power of the Anglican Church under the cloak of fairness. The Whigs’ duplicity was a recurrent theme in their rhetoric.¹²⁶ Baines Junior, for instance, argued that they ‘know well that [the plans contain] provisions which will destroy the schools of the voluntaries’.¹²⁷

¹²⁰ Speech of Revd. John Ely, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10; Baines, *Letter to the Most Noble The Marquis of Lansdowne*, pp. 3-4, 12-16; Baines, *An Alarm to the Nation*, pp. 2-3, 8-15.

¹²¹ Speech of Revd. R. W. Hamilton at Leeds, *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10. This was the same argument used by Leeds’ Revd. John Ely for disestablishment; John Ely, *Dissent Vindicated, with Particular Reference to the Question of National Religious Establishments* (Leeds, 1837), p. 26.

¹²² Speech of Revd. John Ely reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10.

¹²³ Speech of Revd. T. Smith at a Sheffield meeting, reported in *Sheffield Independent*, April 3rd 1847, p. 2.

¹²⁴ J19/1/43/54, John Ely of Leeds to Lord Morpeth, April 5th 1847.

¹²⁵ Speech reported in the *Daily News*, April 10th 1847, p. 3.

¹²⁶ Speech of Henry Forbes at an anti-state education meeting in Bradford, *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 11; Speech of Benjamin Godwin at Bradford, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 10 *Sheffield Independent*, March 13th 1847, p. 8.

¹²⁷ Baines, *Letter to the Most Noble The Marquis of Lansdowne*, pp. 9-10, 14.

The Government's education plans had torn open the growing tensions between the Whigs and the evangelical wing of old dissent. The York-based Congregationalist Revd. James Parsons representatively suggested that what was so galling about the plans was that they 'emanated from a party to which the political attachments of those present had been so long and sincerely rendered, and which had now abandoned its own avowed principles of liberty'.¹²⁸ The *Leeds Mercury* and *Sheffield Independent* both warned the Whigs that if they persisted in the plans they would break up the liberal party.¹²⁹ Nevertheless, these threats were in fact a sign of political impotence. Having previously put their trust in the Whigs, the voluntaryists did not have enough weight in Parliament for effective opposition. Their only hope was to persuade the Whigs to abandon their plans through extra-parliamentary pressure.

As M.P. for the West Riding and a member of the Privy Council, Morpeth provided a natural point of communication. The relationships he had previously formed with voluntaryist liberals in the Riding therefore became significant. On February 24th, a deputation including Edward Baines Junior, Henry Forbes, Francis Crossley, Thomas Scales and John Ely called upon Morpeth in London to present their opposition to the Government's proposals. Morpeth then accompanied the deputation to another meeting with Russell and Lord Lansdowne, the president of the Privy Council. Ely reported afterwards that the deputation had outlined the voluntaryists' objections in the strongest terms. Morpeth was left unimpressed, incredulously noting that 'they go the whole length of objecting to any assistance or interference from the State'.¹³⁰

Having failed in this approach, the voluntaryists turned to addressing Morpeth indirectly. By mid-April, he had received at least 124 petitions, just part of a total of 4128 petitions (with over 500,000 signatures) against the scheme which were presented to the Commons by the end of the month.¹³¹ Those sent to Morpeth often

¹²⁸ Speech by Revd. James Parsons of York at a meeting held on February 18th 1847 in East Parade Chapel, Leeds, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, February 20th 1847, p. 5.

¹²⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, March 27th 1847, p. 4; *Sheffield Independent*, March 13th 1847, p. 8.

¹³⁰ Report of the meeting between the deputation and Lord Morpeth by Revd. John Ely at a meeting in West Parade chapel, Wakefield, in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 8; J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 24th 1847.

¹³¹ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 19th 1847; *Parliamentary Papers*, Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions, Session 1847 (1847), p. 396.

made use of his personal links with the West Riding. Ely, for instance, sent him a petition along with a lengthy letter outlining the voluntaryist position, justifying this by the ‘few hurried hours of domestic intercourse’ he had spent with Morpeth. Ely was able to draw upon Morpeth’s knowledge of the petitioners in making his arguments, noting that ‘many signatures... will be recognised by your Lordship’.¹³²

The suggestion here was that he should give credence to the views of those whom he knew to be good liberals. The *Leeds Mercury* likewise used Morpeth’s connection with Yorkshire to try to convince him to change his mind. After a massive anti-state education rally in Leeds on March 17th, the *Mercury* addressed Morpeth as to the meaning of the meeting in an editorial;

‘We believe his Lordship understands that the majority on this occasion...comprehends the *great bulk* of the *middle classes* of Leeds, - the conscientious, industrious, respectable and thinking Dissenters of every denomination... in short, *almost the entire mass of the Liberal Electors of this Borough*. At Elections for the West Riding, nearly every hand held up against the Government measure has been held up for Lord Morpeth. If, therefore, this measure should be persisted in, his Lordship deliberately casts off his whole party’.¹³³

This was a message frequently raised by the voluntaryists. The Huddersfield Congregationalist Revd. John Cockin declared that if Morpeth and Russell persevered in their support for the measure, they would ‘stamp with disgrace the honour of their reputations’.¹³⁴ Morpeth, however, was unmoved. He had long felt that there was no subject ‘more calculated to do honour to its promoters as English education’.¹³⁵ Convinced of the value of state aid, he had already crossed swords once with the voluntaryists at a B.F.S.S. meeting in March 1844, after which he noted that he was glad to have spoken in favour of educational grants against a voluntaryist majority.¹³⁶

¹³² J19/1/43/54, John Ely of Leeds to Lord Morpeth, April 5th 1847.

¹³³ *Leeds Mercury*, March 20th 1847, p. 4, emphases in original.

¹³⁴ Speech of the Revd. John Cockin at an anti-state education meeting held at the Ramsden Chapel, Huddersfield, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 6th 1847, p. 8.

¹³⁵ Bowood Papers (British Library), B115/H1/64, Lord Morpeth to 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne, October 5th 1837.

¹³⁶ British and Foreign School Society, *Proceedings of an Educational Conference Held by the British and Foreign School Society, on the 14th and 15th March 1844* (London, 1844), p. 43; J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 15th 1844.

His greater engagement with teacher training through the National Society since then had done nothing to change his mind. Revealingly, he used his connection with the Society's college at York to deliver his first public response to the controversy, strongly defending the Government's plans at a meeting there in early April. The college had already signalled its support for the proposals by sending a petition in their favour to the Privy Council.¹³⁷ Morpeth prefaced his speech with the excuse that his audience would not object to his mentioning this topic in a philanthropic capacity.¹³⁸ However, he knew very well that his words would be reported as a political address.¹³⁹ Far from being the usual insipid speech he gave out at philanthropic occasions, this was to be a comprehensive attack on voluntarism.

Morpeth strongly rebutted the argument that the educational movement did not require state aid, suggesting that the education of the poor was 'glaringly, scandalously deficient'. Faced with the argument that the measures would retard existing labours, he accordingly stated that he 'really cannot much care'. When there was a 'vast, destitute, neglected mass, festering in our streets and alleys... without any sense of duty to earth or heaven, upon whom no word of instruction ever falls', such objections were trivial. Arriving at the problem from the Liberal Anglican idea that the differences between Christian denominations were minimal, he stated that he did not mind which fold such people joined, as long as they were taught that 'God is love'. His views were fundamentally at odds with the voluntarists' argument that providing aid to more than one denomination involved the endowment of error. Importantly, his Liberal Anglicanism meant he could not understand their position; from his perspective, this was sectarian and intolerant. The Government's plan, he argued, would allow all Christians to come together and fight against what should be their common enemy - 'vicariousness of life'.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Records of the York Diocesan Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church (Fountains Learning Centre, York St. John University), YDS/MB/3, Training College board of management minute book, March 11th 1847.

¹³⁸ Speech reported in *Daily News*, April 10th 1847, p. 3. The speech was delivered to the York Yeoman School, an annex to the college.

¹³⁹ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 8th 1847.

¹⁴⁰ Speech reported in *Daily News*, April 10th 1847, p. 3.

Morpeth had just laid down the gauntlet to the voluntaryists. He privately noted afterwards that he would ‘not have pleased the West Riding’.¹⁴¹ He was quite right in that assessment; the *Leeds Mercury*, for one, reacted furiously, accusing him of doing a ‘grievous and unaccountable injustice’ to dissenters.¹⁴² It particularly criticised a comment he had made to the effect that he would have preferred a measure which did ‘more for secular and less for religious education’, a suggestion which set him apart from his fellow Privy Council members.¹⁴³ This comment may have arisen out of a desire to arrange an acceptable compromise. Some Congregationalist leaders, notably Robert Vaughan, were prepared to support a plan of secular education along the lines suggested by Hook.¹⁴⁴ Vaughan had written to Morpeth the previous month to tell him that it was of ‘vital importance’ that if the government were to legislate on education, it should not involve religion.¹⁴⁵ Morpeth believed that Vaughan’s *British Quarterly* magazine ‘more immediately represents the Independents’.¹⁴⁶ He therefore may have felt that Vaughan’s position was more politically palatable.

There was indeed some evidence for the notion that Yorkshire’s dissenters might have been satisfied with Vaughan’s position. Ministers such as the Sheffield Congregationalist Revd. R. S. Bayley and the Bradford Congregationalist Revd. Jonathan Glyde had come out in support of secular state education, feeling that it was the Government’s duty to help educate the people. William Byles, too, upset many of his readers by adopting this moderate line in the *Bradford Observer*. Although opposed to many aspects of the Government’s scheme, especially its involvement with religion, these men denounced the extreme voluntaryist line taken by the Bainesites. They felt that nonconformists would be better advised to work with the Whigs to amend the proposals from within, changing them to a more acceptable form.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the Bainesite position was certainly the more popular one.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴¹ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 8th 1847.

¹⁴² *Leeds Mercury*, April 10th 1847, p. 4.

¹⁴³ Speech of Lord Morpeth reported in *Daily News*, April 10th 1847, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, pp. 153-54.

¹⁴⁵ J19/1/43/49, Robert Vaughan to Lord Morpeth, March 3rd 1847.

¹⁴⁶ J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, May 5th 1845.

¹⁴⁷ See *Sheffield Independent*, March 20th 1847, p. 2 (for Bayley); *Bradford Observer*, March 4th 1847, p. 4 (for Byles and Glyde); *Bradford Observer*, April 15th 1847, p. 4.

¹⁴⁸ Larsen, *Friends of Religious Equality*, pp. 139-42, 154-55.

Morpeth's public attack on the voluntaryists ended the political alliance he had enjoyed with many men who had been his keenest supporters. He recognised this in a lengthy speech to Parliament on April 20th, when he sadly noted that he was in the 'painful condition of being separated in opinion from many of those with whom I have heretofore acted'. This did not stop him from attacking their position root and branch. He called 'preposterous' the notion that a few state pensions for teachers would increase state corruption, and offered another critique of the idea that voluntary education alone was sufficient to meet the country's needs. He drew on evidence from Bradford and also from the West Riding Assizes, where he claimed the majority of criminals could not read. Thus rhetorically establishing a link with crime, he suggested that education (like policing) fell within the state's province.¹⁴⁹

The speech suggests that Morpeth had been influenced by his observations of education in America. When touring the United States he had been impressed by the emerging system of public schools, noting that this presented a 'mortifying contrast' to England.¹⁵⁰ In his Commons address, he stated that the American literacy rate shamed England by comparison. All in all, he argued, the voluntaryists were fighting the battle on a 'lower ground'; they were 'too intent on the questions of chapels, meeting-houses, tabernacles and conventions, and too careless as to the condition of the flock which attends each'.¹⁵¹ Baines Junior reacted heatedly to this attack. In a letter to *The Times* he implied that Morpeth had distorted the evidence with regards to education in Yorkshire.¹⁵² On Morpeth's side, too, politics had become rather personal. When Parliament overwhelmingly approved the extra money required for the new system in late April, he noted that this was a 'good rejoinder to Baines'.¹⁵³

The collapse of the relationship between Morpeth and his former ally was a reflection of the wider split between the Whigs and the voluntaryists. At an anti-state education rally on May 3rd 1847 in Leeds, the Revd. James Pridie of Halifax declared that he was 'no longer a Whig'. Alongside Richard Winter Hamilton, he called for dissenters

¹⁴⁹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCI, April 20th 1847, cols 1080-88.

¹⁵⁰ For Morpeth's reaction to American education, J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, October 23rd 1841.

¹⁵¹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCI, April 20th 1847, cols 1080-88.

¹⁵² *Leeds Mercury*, April 24th 1847, p. 8, reprinting Baines' Junior's letter to *The Times*.

¹⁵³ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 22nd 1847.

to put forward their own candidates at the next elections.¹⁵⁴ The *Leeds Mercury* had already declared the necessity of opposing all politicians who were against the voluntary position. It stated that dissenters were ‘thoroughly sickened with Lord John Russell and the Whigs... cast off, insulted, and injured, they will no longer be the tools of their former leaders’. The West Riding Baptist Association, too, recommended that its members should not vote for any candidate who had supported the educational minutes.¹⁵⁵ Having been hailed as a hero less than eighteen months previously, Morpeth’s position in the Riding was now in danger.

The Whigs’ proposals had alienated a substantial number of the Riding’s liberals. Yet they did not just cause a diminution of support. Rather, they contributed to a transformation in West Riding politics, whereby the traditional party lines which had long shaped the constituency broke down. Whilst the Whigs were now strongly opposed by the voluntaryists, they received support from other liberals who were in favour of their education scheme. These included men such as Thomas Dunn, an ex-Mayor of Sheffield (an unusual Congregationalist supporter), the banker, ex-Quaker and future Liberal M.P. for Wakefield, W. H. Leatham, and in Leeds such men as Samuel Smiles, T. W. Tottie, J. G. Marshall and Hamer Stansfeld.¹⁵⁶

Significantly, Tottie, Stansfeld, Smiles and Marshall were all Unitarians.¹⁵⁷ Most Yorkshire Unitarians seem to have supported the Government, led by ministers such as Revd. Charles Wicksteed of Leeds’ Mill Hill Unitarian Chapel.¹⁵⁸ The education issue helped reattach the Unitarians to Whiggery, going some way to satisfying those, like Marshall, who had felt that Whig Government in the 1830s had not done enough for the ‘intellectual, moral and religious’ improvement of the people.¹⁵⁹ As Ruth

¹⁵⁴ Report of speeches at a meeting held at East-Parade Independent Chapel, Leeds, May 3rd 1847, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 8th 1847, p. 10.

¹⁵⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, May 8th 1847, p. 4; May 29th 1847, p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Reports of meetings in *Leeds Mercury*, March 13th 1847, p. 10; March 20th 1847, p. 12; March 27th 1847, p. 10; *Sheffield Independent*, April 3rd 1847, p. 2. For Leatham’s career, Charlotte Fell-Smith, ‘Leatham, William Henry (1815–1889)’, rev. Megan A. Stephan, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16251>, accessed 8 Dec 2009].

¹⁵⁷ It is possible, however, that Marshall had converted to the Church of England by this time, for he built the Anglican parish church of St. John the Evangelist near the family’s mills at Holbeck in 1850.

¹⁵⁸ Wicksteed had earlier recorded a ‘very decided opinion among [the Unitarians] in favour of some government machinery for the promotion of Education’; William Aldam of Frickley Papers (Doncaster Archives), DDWA/P/12/13, Charles Wicksteed to William Aldam, May 13th 1843.

¹⁵⁹ James Garth Marshall to Earl Fitzwilliam, February 5th 1841, in *The Times*, February 12th 1841, p. 2.

Watts has shown, the Unitarian body had developed its own philosophy of education which drew attention to the important role this played in the formation of individual character. They were convinced this was vital for the progress of society, and had accordingly become enthusiasts for the idea of a national system of education.¹⁶⁰

Their argument for state involvement in education was thus very similar to that put forward by Morpeth, and indeed drew on some of the same influences. For instance, like Morpeth, Hamer Stansfeld derived some inspiration from William Ellery Channing, citing his work to suggest that the advancement of the working-classes would lead to a more harmonious community.¹⁶¹ This ideological similarity helped Morpeth build links with these men. This was also facilitated by his social connections to figures such as Tottie and Leatham, at whose homes he had stayed.¹⁶² On March 19th 1847, he received a deputation from the supporters of the Government's plan from Leeds, which included Marshall and Stansfeld. He recorded that they 'talked for an hour, and were all mutually satisfied'.¹⁶³

Whilst not as numerous as their opponents, the friends of state education held their own campaign and spoke up against the voluntaryists at public meetings. The passions raised by this made the spring and summer of 1847 one of the most tumultuous periods in the history of the West Riding. A massive public meeting on the question held in April in Sheffield was thought to be 'one of the most extraordinary ever held' in the town.¹⁶⁴ In Leeds, the battle between the voluntaryists and state educationalists was exceedingly bitter, and even provoked a heated debate in the chamber of the Town Council.¹⁶⁵ Former allies in the liberal cause were at loggerheads. The party, observed one Leeds liberal, was 'split to slivers'.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ Ruth Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians in England, 1760-1860* (London, 1998), pp. 33-43, 163-65.

¹⁶¹ Speech of Hamer Stansfeld, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 13th 1847, p. 11. Channing's important influence on British Unitarianism is discussed in Andrew Hill, 'Channing and British Unitarianism: Sowing the Seeds', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, 19:2 (1988), 71-77.

¹⁶² 19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 19th 1845 (for Tottie); J18/3/65/55, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, July 9th 1841; J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 19th 1843 (for Leatham).

¹⁶³ J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 19th 1847.

¹⁶⁴ *Sheffield Mercury*, April 3rd 1847, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, April 10th 1847, p. 10.

¹⁶⁶ William Aldam of Frickley Papers (Doncaster Archives), DD/WA/P/14/4, Robert Baker to William Aldam, May 17th 1847.

This debate involved an ideological dispute over the true meaning of liberalism. Both sides accused the other of abandoning the cherished principle of ‘civil and religious liberty’. The state educationalists regarded these claims as outrageous. They argued that not only they, but also the Whig proponents of the education measure, had been the consistent advocates of civil and religious liberty. Stansfeld argued that the liberties of dissenters were as safe in Morpeth’s hands as they were in their own. The Government’s proposals, from his perspective, were fair to dissent. He and his colleagues contended that it was the voluntaryists who were being illiberal, by replacing their toleration with an unchristian and bigoted sectarianism.¹⁶⁷

However, the voluntaryists no longer conceived of liberalism in the same way as their opponents. As was noted above, they believed that true religious freedom involved freedom from the requirement to support a different religion. They were coming to believe this to be impossible in a system which maintained a connection between the state and religious worship. Unsurprisingly, the education controversy increased the demand for disestablishment. Having previously been aloof, the influential Leeds Congregationalist Revd. Richard Winter Hamilton joined the British Anti-State Church Association because of the Whigs’ plans. The Revd. J. G. Miall of Bradford reported that these plans had caused several Yorkshire dissenters to join the Association, noting that they had ‘contributed most materially’ to its cause.¹⁶⁸

However, the controversy in the West Riding cannot just be seen as an internal debate within liberalism. The Whigs’ proposals also attracted backing from men who had historically been among their determined opponents. With cross-party support in Parliament, the educational plans could be viewed as a benevolent and apolitical measure which would aid the working man. They appealed to Tories such as the Wakefield squire George Sandars and the Leeds mill owner John Gott, who campaigned alongside the liberal state educationalists.¹⁶⁹ They were also attractive to some of the representatives of working-class opinion in the Riding. In Leeds, the

¹⁶⁷ Speeches of Hamer Stansfeld and James Garth Marshall before Leeds Town Council, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, April 10th 1847, p. 10.

¹⁶⁸ Speech of Revd. J. G. Miall at the conference of the British Anti-State Church Association, *Leeds Mercury*, May 8th 1847, p. 8; Stowell, *Richard Winter Hamilton*, pp. 404-05. J. G. Miall was the older brother of Edward Miall, founder of the Anti-State Church Association.

¹⁶⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, March 27th 1847, p. 10; J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 19th 1847.

Government was backed by a Mr Beaumont, a self-proclaimed working-man, and in Sheffield by Isaac Ironside, a Chartist and ardent supporter of education for all.¹⁷⁰

Most notably, the Government was also supported by the Riding's Anglican clergy, the first time this group had solidly backed a measure proposed by the Whigs. At one of the largest public meetings in Leeds, a 'large body' of clergy stood on the state education side, led by the town's vicar, Revd. W. F. Hook.¹⁷¹ This probably reflected the fact that the plans held out significant benefits to local Anglicanism through the agency of the National Society's training college in York, which Hook and the Bishop of Ripon, Charles Thomas Longley, both strongly patronised. In his 1844 charge to his clergy, Longley reiterated the need for them to support the cause of education in general and the training college in particular, presenting this as a means for the Church to combat infidelity and social disorder in Yorkshire's towns.¹⁷²

The 'Condition of England' problem made the Whigs' vision of a socially active state appealing to a wide cross section of political opinion. For instance, the supporters of the education plan pointed to the prevalence of ignorance and crime in the Riding, arguing that if the state had a duty to punish this through the prison system, then it also had a duty to prevent it through education.¹⁷³ The Government's social reform proposals, then, had introduced a new and disruptive element into the West Riding's political scene. Whereas previously this had revolved around economic, religious and constitutional questions, it now also turned on differing attitudes towards the proper role of the state. Contributing to this development were Morpeth's health proposals, the other side of the Whigs' 'Condition of England' strategy. The effect these had on the region's politics is discussed in the next section.

¹⁷⁰ *Leeds Mercury*, March 13th 1847, p. 10; *Sheffield Iris*, April 1st 1847, p. 4. However, the Chartists as a body did not necessarily support the plans; at the Halifax election of 1847 the Chartist leader Ernest Jones campaigned alongside Edward Miall, the voluntaryist candidate.

¹⁷¹ *Leeds Mercury*, March 20th 1847, p. 12.

¹⁷² Charles Thomas Longley, Lord Bishop of Ripon, *A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Ripon at the Triennial Visitation in September 1844* (London, 1844), pp. 6-16.

¹⁷³ Speeches of state-educationalists reported in *Leeds Mercury*, March 13th 1847, pp. 10-11.

'A Sort of Olympian Divinity': Morpeth and Public Health

As noted above, Morpeth had called for legislative action on public health in his address at the West Riding election of July 1846. This was a particularly relevant topic in the West Riding owing to the unsanitary and overpopulated nature of the region's major towns. Historians are now cautious of directly attributing legislation on public health to such factors, having overturned older accounts which saw this legislation as a natural product of the problems of industrialising society. Instead, they rightly point out that, as explored in the last chapter, the sanitary movement was highly ideological. Christopher Hamlin has also persuasively argued that, by focusing on defective urban infrastructure, it ignored other causes of ill-health which were more politically volatile such as hunger and overwork.¹⁷⁴

Nevertheless, this argument can be taken too far. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the sanitary movement did grow in the context of genuine social problems, which did have a devastating impact on the lives of a substantial number of England's inhabitants.¹⁷⁵ In Leeds, the antiquated system of local government struggled to cope with a population boom which saw the town's inhabitants double between 1811 and 1841. Overcrowding and poor sanitation was the inevitable result. Areas such as East Ward and the Boot and Shoe Yard in Kirkgate were notorious sites of poverty, squalor and disease.¹⁷⁶ In 1839, the Leeds surgeon Robert Baker drew attention to these conditions in a well-publicised report to the town council.¹⁷⁷ The 1840 Parliamentary Committee on the Health of Towns heard evidence from Dr James Williamson of the council, which showed that 'the greater part of the town is in the most filthy condition', in parts 'utterly impassable'.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, *passim*.

¹⁷⁵ The best account of how inadequate sanitary facilities influenced the lives of ordinary Britons remains Anthony Wohl, *Endangered Lives: Public Health in Victorian Britain* (London, 1983).

¹⁷⁶ Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, pp. 40-48; C. J. Morgan, 'Demographic Change' in Derek Fraser (ed.), *A History of Modern Leeds* (Manchester University Press, 1980), 46-71. This increase was partly due to in-migration, and partly due to natural population growth.

¹⁷⁷ M. J. Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain: The Foundations of Empirical Social Research* (Hassocks, 1975), pp. 126-31. For the local impact of Baker's report, see also Brian Barber, 'Municipal Government in Leeds, 1835-1914' in Derek Fraser, (ed.), *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* (Leicester, 1982), 62-110, esp. 65-67.

¹⁷⁸ *Parliamentary Papers*, Report from the Select Committee on the Health of Towns, 1840 (384), XI.277, pp. xi, 96-103. Williamson drew heavily on Baker's research.

In Bradford, which experienced a similar explosion in population, these problems were if anything even worse. Giving evidence before a Parliamentary commission in 1845, the sanitary investigator James Smith declared it to be ‘the most filthy town I visited’. Overcrowding and disease were a fact of life in the city’s slums. Drainage and sewerage were said to be almost nonexistent even in the better parts of the city. The streets were regularly covered in mud, refuse, filth and floodwater.¹⁷⁹ The town’s Improvement Commission had very limited powers and proved incapable of dealing with these problems.¹⁸⁰ Similar difficulties existed in Wakefield, where poor sanitation led to dissatisfaction with the town’s street commissioners and eventually precipitated a successful campaign for incorporation in 1848.¹⁸¹

By the end of the 1830s, there was growing awareness in the Riding of the need to do something to combat these problems.¹⁸² In 1842 Leeds successfully obtained an Improvement Act from Parliament. This subsumed the powers of the old Improvement Commission into the town’s corporation, which received new powers of drainage, lighting and paving. Nevertheless, this Act can be considered a failure.¹⁸³ It seems to have been used to improve the streets inhabited by the town’s wealthy ratepayers before those of the necessitous poor, and there was widespread dissatisfaction with its operation. In February 1844, a resident of the impoverished East Ward wrote to the *Leeds Mercury* to complain that the Improvement Commissioners were never seen in his district. Shortly afterwards the *Mercury* felt obliged to defend the Act against an attack on its ineffectiveness made by Lord Normanby in the House of Lords.¹⁸⁴

These criticisms were used by the sanitary movement to bolster their campaign for state intervention. In 1845 the *Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts*, which was heavily influenced by

¹⁷⁹ Evidence of J. Smith in *Parliamentary Papers*, Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, 1845 (602), XVIII.1.299, p. 315; Koditschek, *Class Formation*, pp. 106-09, 385-89; Evidence of J. Ellison in *Parliamentary Papers*, Report from the Select Committee on the Health of Towns, 1840 (384), XI.277, p. 89.

¹⁸⁰ Adrian Elliot, ‘Municipal government in Bradford in the mid-nineteenth century’ in Derek Fraser (ed.), *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* (Leicester, 1982), 112-161.

¹⁸¹ Hilary Marland, *Medicine and Society in Wakefield and Huddersfield, 1780-1870* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 20-21, 35.

¹⁸² *Leeds Mercury*, April 25th 1840, p. 5; *Leeds Mercury*, July 11th 1840, p. 5.

¹⁸³ Barber, ‘Municipal Government in Leeds’, 66-67.

¹⁸⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, February 3rd 1844, p. 7; February 10th 1844, p. 5.

the sanitary movement, suggested that Leeds town council had proved itself ‘highly incompetent’ to deal with sanitation, and generally cited the ‘defective’ nature of local authorities in the West Riding as evidence for the necessity of central state intervention.¹⁸⁵ As a member of the Health of Towns Association, Morpeth already belonged to the main group lobbying for such legislation. He now became its political leader. Those who wished to improve public health in the Riding looked to him hopefully for legislation. In November 1846, for instance, the Halifax physician William Alexander urged him to act on the issue in a letter to the *Mercury* which drew attention to inadequate sanitation in the Riding’s towns.¹⁸⁶

It was in this context that the Riding greeted Morpeth’s Health of Towns Bill, which was put before the Commons in late March 1847. His speech in introducing the Bill, which drew heavily on mortality statistics, was a plea for humanitarian action to avoid thousands of preventable deaths. Following the advice of the Health of Towns Association, and taking some inspiration from a failed public health Bill put forward by the Conservative Lord Lincoln in 1845, Morpeth made a strong case for the necessity of establishing a ‘superintending, intervening, central authority’ to assist local efforts.¹⁸⁷ He proposed a General Board of Health composed of three paid and two unpaid members, of which the Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests would be the Chair. The Board would employ inspectors, who would investigate sanitary conditions in any town in England and Wales and report necessary work.

The inspectors would have the right to question, under the threat of penalty for non-compliance, any municipal or poor law official in the locality. They could be sent as the Board deemed fit, or on the petition of the inhabitants. If the Board then deemed it necessary, it could establish a local authority to carry out sanitary improvements in the town, chargeable to the ratepayers. In incorporated towns, these powers were to be given to existing Municipal Corporations. Any local acts, such as the one at Leeds,

¹⁸⁵ *Parliamentary Papers*, Second Report of the Commissioners for Inquiring into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, 1845 (602), XVIII.1.299, pp. 13-14, 311-18. On the sanitary movement’s influence on Parliamentary Commissions on public health, see Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice*, pp. 221-24.

¹⁸⁶ William Alexander to Lord Morpeth, November 11th 1846, printed in *Leeds Mercury*, November 21st 1846, p. 12.

¹⁸⁷ Speech of Lord Morpeth in Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCI, March 30th 1847, cols 617-31.

would be subsumed into these new arrangements. In unincorporated towns, new commissioners were to be appointed, generally elected by the ratepayers but with up to a third nominated by the Board. The Bill proposed to allow the Board to extend the boundaries of Corporations as it saw fit. Inspectors were able to check upon the progress of the works and report to the Board, which would have the authority to take powers away from unsatisfactory authorities.¹⁸⁸

The Bill was confronted by some determined opposition in Parliament, which particularly focused around its proposals for the capital. These were sufficiently complex that they required separate provisions. London's structure of local government was exceedingly chaotic, with many different bodies performing different functions. Some of these, such as the vestries, were relatively democratic and hence popular among the capital's inhabitants. Morpeth, however, was proposing to consolidate the functions of these various institutions and hence take away their existing powers. The outcry was such that he had to tactically drop the metropolitan arrangements from the Bill. Nevertheless, the opposition had been sufficient to stall its passage, and thereby force the Whigs to postpone it for lack of time.¹⁸⁹

However, as J. G. Hanley's recent study of petitions on public health suggests, the Bill was in fact generally popular outside Parliament.¹⁹⁰ This was certainly the case in Morpeth's home county. The West Riding's towns helped back their representative. Petitions were sent from Bradford, Leeds, Barnsley and Halifax in support of his plans. Morpeth himself presented some of these, including one from seventy members of the Ancient Order of the Druids in Bradford.¹⁹¹ The Druids aside, the Bill received particularly strong support from the Riding's medical community which, as Hilary Marland has detailed, was professionally highly interested in the question of public health.¹⁹² Dr. Disney Thorp of the Leeds School of Medicine took up the issue

¹⁸⁸ *Parliamentary Papers*, Health of Towns: A Bill for Improving the Health of Towns in England, 1847 (244), I. 457.

¹⁸⁹ Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 312-14; S. E. Finer, *The Life and Times of Sir Edwin Chadwick* (London, 1952), pp. 305-08.

¹⁹⁰ J. G. Hanley, 'The Public's Reaction to Public Health: Petitions Submitted to Parliament, 1847-1848', *Social History of Medicine*, 15:3 (2002), 393-411.

¹⁹¹ *Leeds Mercury*, April 24th 1847, p. 5; *Leeds Mercury*, May 1st 1847, p. 8; *Bradford Observer*, April 29th 1847, p. 8; *Parliamentary Papers*, Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Public Petitions, Session 1847 (1847), information for May 13th 1847, July 1st 1847.

¹⁹² Marland, *Medicine and Society in Wakefield and Huddersfield*, pp. 341-48.

with ‘great spirit’, collecting petitions and calling on the town’s inhabitants to back the Bill.¹⁹³ The Riding’s experience here broadly accords with that of London, where professional middle-class elites also backed the Whigs’ proposals on public health.¹⁹⁴

Morpeth benefited politically from the poor sanitary conditions in the Riding’s towns and the failure of local authorities to correct them. A Bradford meeting declared that the prevalence of disease in the town meant it was ‘pre-eminently interested in the measure’.¹⁹⁵ A meeting of the Leeds Highway Surveyors, whose purpose was to campaign against Morpeth’s Bill, was hijacked by its supporters, who drew attention to the Council’s failures. One man declared that this was a working man’s Bill, and hoped it would improve the condition of those sections of the town which had been neglected by the Council. Even the Council’s Chief Clerk of Works agreed that improvements were ‘much wanted’ and felt that Morpeth’s Bill would be better than none at all.¹⁹⁶ The *Sheffield Iris* likewise declared that local authorities had done little for public health, presenting this as an important duty of Government.¹⁹⁷ As over education, the Whigs’ willingness to tackle social problems had political appeal.

Nevertheless, the Bill faced some opposition in the Riding. Although accepting that sanitary improvements were needed, the *Sheffield Independent* and the *Leeds Mercury* came out against the Bill. Both journals protested against its ‘principle of centralisation’, with the *Independent* mocking Morpeth for assuming that the Government might be ‘a sort of Olympian divinity... capable of meddling in everything with unerring knowledge and incorruptible purity’.¹⁹⁸ ‘Centralisation’ was the buzzword of national and Parliamentary opposition to Morpeth’s plan.¹⁹⁹ Certainly, the Bill did contain some centralising tendencies, such as its proposals to allow the General Board to propose members of local boards of health and take

¹⁹³ *Leeds Mercury*, May 1st 1847, p. 5, 8.

¹⁹⁴ Weinstein, ‘Shopkeepers and Gentlemen’, pp. 107-17.

¹⁹⁵ Report of a meeting in favour of the Health of Towns Bill in Bradford, *Leeds Mercury*, May 1st 1847, p. 8

¹⁹⁶ Report of a meeting of the Highway Surveyors in *Leeds Mercury*, May 15th 1847, supplement.

¹⁹⁷ *Sheffield Iris*, April 22nd 1847, p. 5.

¹⁹⁸ *Sheffield Independent*, April 24th 1847, p. 8; *Leeds Mercury*, May 15th 1847, p. 4

¹⁹⁹ Roberts, *Victorian Origins*, pp. 72-82.

powers away from substandard local authorities. All of this made it easy for its opponents to present it as alien to the national tradition of local government.²⁰⁰

However, this opposition has arguably led some historians to exaggerate the centralising aspects of Morpeth's sanitary legislation.²⁰¹ In fact, he was adamant that he was not proposing a measure of centralisation. 'The principle of the Bill', he declared, 'was to leave all to local agency'.²⁰² All works were to be carried out by local authorities, who were given new powers; indeed, as noted in Chapter One, Morpeth hoped that this would stimulate local benevolence.²⁰³ The agents of the central state were envisaged to have a primarily enabling role, advising local efforts and disseminating knowledge. They had powers only to ensure that local functions were actually carried out.²⁰⁴

Morpeth's Bill can arguably be better seen as an attempt to extend and strengthen existing powers of local government.²⁰⁵ Speaking to the Commons on a renewed measure in 1848, Morpeth reiterated his attachment to local government and presented his plan as a means to 'carry further, to employ upon fresh objects, and to direct to higher aims, the existing functions of the municipal corporations of England'.²⁰⁶ As Hanley rightly points out, it was the fact that Morpeth proposed to empower local authorities which made his plans so attractive to the public, who were frustrated at their inability to carry out projects under existing local arrangements.²⁰⁷

The protests against Morpeth's proposals on the grounds of 'centralisation' in the Riding therefore cannot be accepted unquestioningly. It is necessary to place this in wider context. Partly, it may be attributed to particular developments in the local

²⁰⁰ On the prevailing idea among early-Victorians that the tradition of local government was in keeping with the English character, see Mandler, *English National Character*, pp. 53-57.

²⁰¹ See, for instance, Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 258-62; Roberts, *Victorian Origins*, pp. 70-85, 98-99. John Prest takes a more balanced view, seeing Morpeth's actions as a 'legislative hybrid' between centralisation and permissive legislation; John Prest, *Liberty and Locality: Parliament, permissive legislation and ratepayers' democracies in the mid-nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 25-36.

²⁰² Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCIII, July 1st 1847, cols 1102-03.

²⁰³ See p. 52.

²⁰⁴ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCIII, July 1st 1847, cols 1102-03.

²⁰⁵ This is the argument made in Lubenow, *Politics of Government Growth*, pp. 72-74, 80-82; Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces*, pp. 161-62.

²⁰⁶ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, XCVIII, May 5th 1848, col. 735.

²⁰⁷ Hanley, 'The Public's Reaction to Public Health', 400.

government of the Riding's towns. Bradford, for instance, only achieved incorporation in April 1847 after a long campaign, leading some of its residents to oppose any prospect of losing these new powers to the state.²⁰⁸ However, Halifax petitioned for incorporation precisely because its residents wanted to come within Morpeth's Bill, but wished to avoid central nomination of its local officers.²⁰⁹

Arguably, the opposition to Morpeth's health proposals was a result of the anti-statist attitude which had been generated among some of the region's liberals by the Government's education plan. The most determined opposition to it came from the voluntaryists.²¹⁰ It seemed to them that, like the education proposals, the Whigs' public health plans were un-English, unconstitutional and represented a potential danger to liberty.²¹¹ At a meeting held in Leeds in May 1847, voluntaryist speakers argued that the Ministry's reforms demonstrated a 'constant tendency... towards a system of centralisation', which might even lead to the control of private affairs. Thomas Plint suggested that Morpeth had treated the people with scorn, and argued for Parliamentary reform to maintain the liberties of the country.²¹²

It can be seen, therefore, that the Government's social reform agenda had split the liberal ranks in two. Morpeth was now opposed by a substantial number of the Riding's liberals. Indeed, in some ways this group no longer considered the Whigs to be true liberals at all. Benjamin Weinstein has traced a similar development in London's politics in this period. He detects the emergence of two opposing varieties of liberalism in the capital based around competing attitudes to the state and social reform.²¹³ The next and final section looks at how such divisions shaped West Riding politics during the remainder of Morpeth's connection with the constituency.

²⁰⁸ Elliott, 'Municipal Government in Bradford', 115-27.

²⁰⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, May 8th 1847, p. 5.

²¹⁰ The link between opposition to the Whigs 'centralising' proposals in health and education is highlighted in Roberts, *Victorian Origins*, p. 68.

²¹¹ *Leeds Mercury*, May 15th 1847, p. 4. The *Mercury* was later to feel vindicated in this position by the European revolutions of 1848, which it felt demonstrated the evil effects of centralisation; *Leeds Mercury*, October 14th 1848, p. 4.

²¹² Speeches of J. C. Barrett, Thomas Plint and Francis Carbutt reported in *Leeds Mercury*, May 22nd 1847, p. 10.

²¹³ Weinstein, 'Shopkeepers and Gentlemen', chapter three.

Free Trade to the Rescue? The West Riding Election of 1847 and After

The events explored above jeopardised Morpeth's position as the region's M.P. In May 1847, a meeting in Leeds committed the town's voluntaryists to opposing any candidates who supported state education at the next general election.²¹⁴ Morpeth had lost the political loyalty of these men. At yet another meeting against the Government, one speaker declared that whilst he was no doubt a man of 'excellent qualities', he had 'abused the confidence the nonconformists placed in him; he had touched a tender and vital point, and they could not trust him any more'. This statement was received with 'great cheering'.²¹⁵ Morpeth fully expected to be severed from the majority of his supporters at the next election, and wanted Russell to elevate him into the Lords to avoid this prospect.²¹⁶

As Derek Fraser has explored, the borough elections in the Riding of 1847 saw the liberal forces shattered; liberal fought against liberal in a host of contests. In Leeds, James Garth Marshall stood as a state educationalist and defeated the radical voluntaryist candidate Joseph Sturge. The election in Wakefield saw a Tory victory after a split in the liberal vote, whilst in Halifax the radical Edward Protheroe lost his seat due to opposition led by Francis Crossley, who backed the voluntaryist and disestablishmentarian Edward Miall. Only Conservative support and some astute tactics allowed the Whig Charles Wood to keep his seat.²¹⁷ Following his election in Bradford, the free-trader T. P. Thompson declared that he had been lucky, for the liberal party in the town had been 'blown... to pieces' by the education issue.²¹⁸

In the end, Morpeth did not face direct voluntaryist opposition at the election for the Riding in August, and it was expected that he would be re-elected alongside the sitting M.P. Edmund Denison. Nevertheless voluntaryists such as Edward Baines

²¹⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, May 8th 1847, p. 4.

²¹⁵ Speech of Mr Yewdall at a meeting of nonconformist delegates in Leeds, *Leeds Mercury*, May 8th 1847, p. 11.

²¹⁶ Lord John Russell Papers (The National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/6C/282, Lord Morpeth to Lord John Russell, May 13th [1847].

²¹⁷ Fraser, 'Voluntaryism', 206-16. On Halifax, see also J. A. Jowitt, 'Parliamentary Politics in Halifax, 1832-1847', *Northern History*, 12 (1976), 172-201.

²¹⁸ Papers of Thomas Peronnet Thompson (Brynmor Jones Library, Hull), DTH/4, T. P. Thompson to C. W. Thompson, November 22nd 1847.

were determined to abstain.²¹⁹ The Riding accordingly faced the prospect of wasting the advantage gained by the Anti-Corn Law League's activities on the register, as Denison's re-election would effectively neutralise the constituency with regards to free trade. For the League leadership, this was not to be borne. George Wilson, the former Chairman of the League, wrote to William Byles of the *Bradford Observer* urging him to stop the constituency from becoming thus 'virtually disenfranchised'. He suggested Cobden (who was out of the country) as a possible candidate.²²⁰ Wilson had previously considered using Cobden in a similar capacity for South Lancashire, and it is evident that he had carefully planned this intervention in the Riding.²²¹ His suggestion was taken up with alacrity, and a hasty placard campaign based around a joint ticket of 'Morpeth and Cobden' was instituted.

The decision that Cobden was to be put up for the Riding became generally known on August 4th, just days before the nomination. The force of free trade as an electoral issue in the Riding was enough to convince some voluntaryists that it would be necessary to vote for Morpeth at the anticipated contest. The *Sheffield Independent* advised its readers to act to this effect.²²² Recognising electoral realities, Denison withdrew and Morpeth and the absent Cobden were duly elected on August 7th. The League's intervention was not entirely welcomed in Whig circles. Earl Fitzwilliam believed that the proceedings were 'unwarrantable'. Determined to protect the Riding from the invasion of Manchester, he declared his support for Denison, thereby giving 'great offence' to the free traders.²²³ Other Whigs were more temperate, recognising that it was wise to do nothing. Morpeth's committee was nominally separate from Cobden, but happily let events take their course. His election was already doubtful;

²¹⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, August 7th 1847, p. 4.

²²⁰ Papers of William Byles (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford), 9D77, George Wilson to William Byles, August 2nd 1847.

²²¹ George Wilson Papers (Manchester City Archives), Volume 13, John Bright to George Wilson, July 16th 1847 (for Lancashire); Joseph Parkes to George Wilson, August 3rd 1847 (for the Riding).

²²² *Sheffield Independent*, August 7th 1847, p. 8; *Leeds Mercury*, August 7th 1847, p. 4.

²²³ J19/1/44/26, Earl Fitzwilliam to Lord Morpeth, August 6th 1847; Lord John Russell Papers (The National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/6E/107, Charles Wood to Lord John Russell, August 14th 1847. On Fitzwilliam's actions and the negative reaction to them, see also Thompson, 'Whigs and Liberals', 228-31.

opposing Cobden would have led to a catastrophe.²²⁴ Morpeth himself was positive, feeling nothing but ‘pleasure at being associated with such a man as Cobden’.²²⁵

On the surface then, free trade had appeared to heal the divisions between the Whigs and voluntaryists. Charles Wood optimistically felt that the region’s liberals had been ‘a good deal re-united by the success of the West Riding election’.²²⁶ In fact, tensions still ran very deep. The fact that the election did not go to a poll makes it difficult to ascertain how far voluntaryists would have supported Morpeth, but the *Leeds Mercury* felt that his return would not have been secure in the event of a contest.²²⁷ This was probably an accurate assessment. In his hustings speech, Morpeth alluded extensively to the causes of division in the liberal ranks, strongly implying that the opponents of sanitary reform and the Whigs’ educational proposals were acting contrary to Christian benevolence. In a dig at the voluntaryists, he also warned against a revival of ‘religious bigotry’, prompting angry responses in the press from Edward Baines Junior and the Leeds voluntaryist and alderman Francis Carbutt.²²⁸

These divisions were to continue into 1848, as Morpeth’s revived public health proposals once more pushed the Whigs’ social reform agenda into the political spotlight. Morpeth reintroduced his Health of Towns Bill in February 1848. Speaking on the Bill in the Commons, he was able to use evidence from his own constituency to demonstrate the necessity of intervention. He particularly highlighted Sheffield as an unsanitary town, suggesting that its present system, in which different functions were performed by different bodies, was inadequate and needed to be consolidated into one local authority.²²⁹

The new Bill largely copied the old, but had some amended clauses which Morpeth had worked out in cooperation with Edwin Chadwick. It now contained the principle that localities would have to petition the General Board to establish local boards of

²²⁴ J19/1/44/27, Charles Wood to Lord Morpeth August 6th 1847; Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (Sheffield Archives), WWM/G/11/23, Thomas Dunn to Earl Fitzwilliam, August 21st 1847.

²²⁵ J19/8/15, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 7th 1847.

²²⁶ Lord John Russell Papers (The National Archives), TNA/PRO/30/22/6E/107, Charles Wood to Lord John Russell, August 14th 1847.

²²⁷ *Leeds Mercury*, August 14th 1847, p. 4.

²²⁸ *Leeds Mercury Extraordinary*, August 14th 1847, pp. 4-5, supplement.

²²⁹ Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C.), Third Series, February 10th 1848, XCVI, cols 385-403.

health. These would be associated with corporations in incorporated towns, and be elected in others. The Board could act on receipt of a petition from 1/50 of the ratepayers. The resulting local boards would be given a variety of permissive powers, with the General Board given a certain amount of authority over their officers and finances.

The Bill was gradually watered down. The General Board was reduced to three members, only one of whom was to be paid. It lost its control over the loans which local boards were to take out for public works. It was agreed that the Board could only establish local boards where these did not alter local authority boundaries or interfere with local acts – any other cases were to be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The amount of ratepayers required to petition for a local board was raised from 1/50 to 1/10. Morpeth successfully amended this so that the Board might act regardless if a town had an average death rate of 23/1000 over seven years.²³⁰

This ‘trimming’ conciliated Parliamentary opposition and allowed the Bill to pass. Interestingly, however, the amendments may also have been a result of Morpeth’s wish to smooth ruffled feathers in Yorkshire. In March 1848 the councils of Bradford and Leeds asked Morpeth to exempt them from the Bill, and were met with a flat refusal.²³¹ However, he reacted more positively to an ‘important deputation’ from the Yorkshire and Lancashire towns later in the month, stating that this would ‘lead me to make a more thorough revision to reduce centralising powers’.²³²

Behind this lay renewed opposition to Morpeth’s proposals among the Riding’s voluntaryists. Having lost the fight on the education question, they were determined to resist any further encroachments of Ministerial ‘centralisation’. On learning of Morpeth’s new measure, the *Leeds Mercury* declared that it once again had cause to exclaim ‘save us from our former friends’.²³³ Leeds’ voluntaryists, and to some extent other members of the town’s council, objected to the Government’s assumption that it

²³⁰ Lewis, *Edwin Chadwick*, pp. 158-77; Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 322-28.

²³¹ *Leeds Mercury*, March 4th 1848, p. 4; J19/8/17, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 6th 1848.

²³² J19/8/17, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 18th 1848. Unfortunately, I have not been able to discover which particular aspects of the Bill this comment referred to.

²³³ *Leeds Mercury*, February 26th 1848, p. 4.

had the right to interfere in their affairs. Francis Carbutt, the Mayor, declared that the Bill would erode ‘free and independent local self-government’.²³⁴

The perceived attack on the council particularly touched the voluntaryists’ nerves, because they regarded it as a bastion of local freedom and dissenting power. Just as the Government’s education legislation had apparently threatened dissenting schools, now Morpeth seemed to wish to take away the rights of dissenting aldermen, riding roughshod over the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. The *Mercury* dramatically declared that municipal councils, the ‘bulwark’ of the people’s liberties, were now ‘offered up a holocaust on the altars of the newest of idols – CENTRALISATION’.²³⁵

The voluntaryists were partly mollified by the amendments to the Health Bill.²³⁶ Nevertheless, the issue had revealed the depth of their suspicion of the Whigs. Despite the peculiar circumstances of the 1847 election, the Riding’s liberals remained deeply divided. This was demonstrated following Morpeth’s succession to the peerage upon his father’s death in late 1848. Earl Fitzwilliam promoted his inexperienced son Charles as a suitable candidate at the ensuing election. However, the Earl’s temerity was condemned by many of the Riding’s liberals, and Charles Fitzwilliam was forced to withdraw.

Opposition particularly came from the voluntaryists, who had now rallied around the idea of opposition to future ecclesiastical endowments. They instead adopted the evangelical campaigner and sometime chairman of the Anti-Maynooth committee Sir Culling Eardley as their candidate.²³⁷ With the liberals split, E. B. Denison, assisted by the peeved Fitzwilliam, regained his seat. Liberal unity was rebuilt only gradually, and it was not until 1859 that the Conservatives were again kept out.²³⁸ It was a sorry state of affairs for one of the nation’s great liberal constituencies.

²³⁴ Letter from Francis Carbutt, *Leeds Mercury*, February 26th 1848, p. 5. See also the comments of the Council at a specially convened meeting, *Leeds Mercury*, February 26th 1848, p. 7.

²³⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, February 26th 1848, p. 4.

²³⁶ *Leeds Mercury*, April 8th 1848, p. 8; *Leeds Mercury*, May 27th 1848, p. 4.

²³⁷ John Wolfe, ‘Eardley, Sir Culling Eardley, third baronet (1805–1863)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8393>, accessed 9 Dec 2009].

²³⁸ Thompson, ‘Whigs and Liberals’, 231-39; Fraser, ‘Voluntaryism’, 223-31.

Summary

This chapter has traced a transformation in West Riding politics in the 1840s, mainly arising from religious differences which were heightened by the Whigs' social reforms. Morpeth was central to these developments, both as a legislator heavily involved with the 'Condition of England' problem, and as an ardent local advocate of the Whigs' proposals. His support of an enhanced role for the state in tackling social problems, although approved by some of his constituents, was rejected by the voluntarists. The resulting schism was such that even the bond of mutual attachment to free trade was insufficient to maintain the unity of the Riding's liberal forces.

However, despite the contemporary rhetoric, this split cannot readily be understood as a division between Whig 'centralisation' and liberal localism. As has been argued, Morpeth's plans were designed to improve and work through local structures. Indeed, his knowledge of and participation in these structures at local level, especially in education, informed his thought on the topic and shaped the political debate in the Riding. Arguably, Morpeth's example indicates that it is necessary to place the Whigs' social reform proposals in a provincial context in order to fully understand both their content and contemporary reactions to them.

The legacy of Morpeth's second spell as the West Riding's M.P. was therefore at best an ambiguous one. As a political figure, he and the Whigs had picked up support from some unexpected quarters, but he had lost the trust of some of the region's most ardent liberals. However, his succession to the peerage removed him from local controversy, allowing the voluntarists to view him more positively. The *Leeds Mercury* confessed that it had felt its opposition to him to be a 'political martyrdom', and graciously avowed that he was the best representative the Riding had ever had.²³⁹ Morpeth was also in the mood to build bridges. His letter to his constituents on taking leave of them was the last he signed under the name of 'Morpeth', a name which he declared had 'derived its chief illustration' from its connection with the Riding. He hoped that he would have 'future opportunities' to show his attachment to them.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ *Leeds Mercury*, October 14th 1848, p. 4.

²⁴⁰ Letter from Lord Morpeth to the electors of the West Riding, *Leeds Mercury*, October 21st 1848, p. 4.

Acting on this feeling, he maintained his philanthropic commitments in the region. The public's approval of his moral qualities, which had never really diminished, now came once more to the fore. His lectures to Mechanics' Institutes and the like fully restored his popularity in the Riding, establishing him once more in the eyes of the *Leeds Mercury* as 'one of the kindest and noblest of men, and one of the truest patriots'.²⁴¹ However, Morpeth's association with Yorkshire did not just revolve around politics and philanthropy. On succeeding to the family title, he also inherited one of the county's great estates at Castle Howard. The next chapter explores his relationship with the house and estate. As will be seen, many of the themes raised in the previous chapters are relevant to this discussion.

²⁴¹ *Leeds Mercury*, December 7th 1850, p. 4.

ILLUSTRATION FIVE: Castle Howard



CHAPTER FIVE

Whiggery, Improvement and Castle Howard

In December 1811, the then nine-year old Lord Morpeth visited the Spencer family at Althorp, their home in Northamptonshire. Whilst there, he joined the family in a horseback ride. It was to be an unfortunate episode of equestrian misadventure. Sarah Spencer reported that, whilst the rest of the party greatly enjoyed splattering through the country lanes, ‘puny little Howard’ got into a ‘considerable state of alarm’. She concluded that drastic action needed to be taken, for her young guest was clearly well on his way to becoming ‘quite a *femmelette*’. Not only was he uncomfortable on a horse, but his conversation was full of poetry and reading. The best remedy seemed to her to be a summer at sea, but in the meantime she hoped that being obliged to ‘amuse himself stoutly’ in rural pursuits with the Spencer boys might yet make a man of him.¹

However, he never did develop an interest in traditional country sports. Whereas Lord Althorp (the 3rd Earl Spencer) was a noted Master of the Hounds, Morpeth never hunted and was a terrible shot. This will come as no surprise to historians of the Whig Party. As detailed in the introduction, scholars such as Leslie Mitchell and Peter Mandler have suggested that Whiggery was an essentially metropolitan culture which disdained the country lifestyle.² Despite the fact that Whig patricians owned some of the nation’s greatest country houses, Mitchell goes as far as to say that they ‘detested’ rural living. He argues that they visited their country estates mainly to shore up their political power with their tenantry, separating themselves from the rest of rural society through exclusive house parties designed to stave off their boredom until they returned to London.³ Perhaps as a result of this interpretation, we have relatively little information about how Whiggery operated in a rural setting.⁴

¹ Sarah Spencer to the Hon. Robert Spencer, December 10th 1811, in Maud Mary Wyndham, Baroness Leconfield (ed.), *Correspondence of Sarah Spencer, Lady Lyttelton, 1787-1870* (London, 1912), pp. 124-25.

² See above, pp. 5-6.

³ Mitchell, *Whig World*, pp. 59-70.

⁴ One notable exception here is E. A. Wasson’s study of Lord Althorp, which does integrate Althorp’s activities in the rural sphere with his politics; E. A. Wasson, *Whig Renaissance: Lord Althorp and the Whig Party, 1782-1845* (London, 1987). Other, more impressionistic studies include James Lees-Milne, *The Bachelor Duke: A Life of William Spencer Cavendish, 6th Duke of Devonshire, 1790-1858*

This chapter tackles this question by examining Morpeth's relationship with Castle Howard, his estate in Yorkshire. It illustrates his strong attachment to the house, his integration into rural society, and his concern for his tenants. It highlights his involvement in estate management and agricultural improvement, and his promotion of local schemes of railway development. It also records his establishment of a number of projects designed to improve the morality and social condition of the estate population. These projects were directly linked to his wider interests as a philanthropist and statesman. In illustrating these points, this chapter challenges the 'metropolitan' interpretation of Whiggery, demonstrates that Morpeth's principles were perfectly compatible with a rural life.

'Very delicious to me': Morpeth and Castle Howard

Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh for Charles Howard (1669-1738), 3rd Earl of Carlisle, in the first half of the eighteenth century, Castle Howard remains one of England's finest country houses.⁵ It stands approximately fifteen miles north-east of York on the border of the North and East Ridings. In Morpeth's era, the house sat at the centre of an estate of 13,065 acres, a mixture of productive arable land, rich pasture and woodland. The estate also encompassed the villages of Welburn, Bulmer, Coneysthorpe, Terrington, a sizable part of Slingsby and numerous hamlets.⁶ This made the Howards one of the most important landowners in the region. To this day, the surrounding district is known as the 'Howardian Hills'.⁷

The Castle Howard estate provided only part of the wealth and status which marked out the Howards as members of the aristocratic elite. David Cannadine has categorised nineteenth-century Britain's top 250 patrician families by the fact that they all possessed more than 30,000 acres across more than one county, and had

(London, 1991), which covers Devonshire's improvements to his grounds and estate at Chatsworth, and the various works on the involvement of individual Whigs in agricultural and estate improvement cited in the introduction, footnotes 16-18.

⁵ A full account of the construction of Castle Howard is provided by Charles Saumarez Smith, *The Building of Castle Howard* (London, 1990).

⁶ F5/18/5, 'Admeasurement of the Castle Howard Estate by E. Bowman, 1831'; F5/18/14, Summary of Holdings on the Castle Howard estate, dated 1867.

⁷ Revd. William Walker, *Some Account of the Parish and Village of Slingsby in Yorkshire* (York, 1845), p. 5 shows that this term was in contemporary usage.

incomes in excess of £30,000 a year.⁸ The Howards fall comfortably within this group. In addition to their Yorkshire land, they owned a fashionable London townhouse in Grosvenor Place, 17,780 acres in and around the market town of Morpeth in Northumberland, and over 47,000 acres in Cumberland, centred on their ancestral home and second residence Naworth Castle. This made a grand total of over 78,000 acres.⁹

With huge tracts of land came substantial rewards; the Castle Howard estate alone usually yielded a rental income of £11,000 p.a., which was normally increased to between £18,000 and £20,000 p.a. by devices such as the sale of timber.¹⁰ However, this estate was not of crucial financial importance to the Howards. It had none of the urban property or mineral resources which tended to inflate the incomes of the nineteenth-century's super rich patricians. In contrast, the Naworth estate contained a number of collieries, which combined with rents to generate an estimated £23,520 in 1844. Although its farmland was less productive, the Morpeth estate also had a few small mines and some valuable urban holdings, bringing in £14,600 the same year.¹¹

Moreover, it was their estates outside Yorkshire which provided the Howards with their most direct political influence. The borough of Morpeth, for which the young Lord Morpeth sat from 1826-1830, could usually be relied upon to vote for Howard family nominees, leading the *Newcastle Journal* to complain of the 'degrading bondage' of its electors.¹² The Howards also had some more circumscribed influence in Cumberland; Morpeth's brother Charles sat for the eastern division of the county between 1840 and 1879.¹³ The Howards' Yorkshire tenants do seem to have generally

⁸ David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, 1990), pp. 9-12.

⁹ John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (reprint of 1883 4th edn., Leicester, 1971), p. 78

¹⁰ F5/5, Annual Accounts for Castle Howard Estate. In exceptional years, the income might reach £25,000 per year.

¹¹ F6/7, Estimate of Receipts and Payments for All Estates, 1844; F6/8, General Balance and View of All Receipts and Payments [1827-34]. The Howards' mining interests comprised collieries at Netherton, Killingworth, Heaton and Longbenton in Northumberland, and at Talkin, Midgeholme, Farmhouse, Croglin and Hartleyburn in Cumberland, where they also owned a lime-works and quarry. Whilst these had at one time been controlled directly by the Howards through an agent, they were all leased by 1838 (F6/1, James Thompson to James Loch, April 5th 1838).

¹² *Newcastle Journal*, reprinted in *The Times*, April 1st 1840, p. 4.

¹³ The Howards' influence in Cumberland was by no means unchallenged. Morpeth's father the 6th Earl of Carlisle had been M.P. for the undivided constituency of Cumberland from 1806-1820, but was defeated at the 1820 election. After the constituency split in 1832, a tacit understanding developed between the Howards and the Tory Lowther family that the Tories would have the West and the

voted with the family, doing so particularly enthusiastically when Morpeth was their M.P. between 1830 and 1832.¹⁴ Nevertheless, as has been seen Yorkshire was far too large and dynamic a constituency for any aristocratic family to control, whilst Malton, the nearest parliamentary borough to Castle Howard, was under the influence of the Fitzwilliam family, who owned much of the town.¹⁵

It would, however, be misleading to analyse the Howards' relationship with their estates around the contribution these made to their dynastic power. Nevertheless, historians have often defined the aristocracy's association with their country homes in precisely these terms. In a classic account, F. M. L. Thompson suggested that whilst the actions of patricians on their estates reflected certain notions of aristocratic duty, they also had the utilitarian motive of keeping up their political 'interest' with a deferential tenantry.¹⁶ As noted above, this is how Mitchell understands the Whigs' relationship with their country houses. In a seminal work, Mark Girouard's likewise presented the country house as a 'power house': a means for the aristocracy to express and increase their social and political power.¹⁷ However, the idea that rural society was politically deferential has since been challenged. David Eastwood and Richard Davis have suggested that the rural electorate was often independent.¹⁸ At Castle Howard, the tenants had to be canvassed, and not all voted exactly the way the family wished. There is little evidence to suggest that they were expected to do so.¹⁹

Even those scholars who do still reserve some role for deference accept that it was largely a willing process, in which tenants identified politically with their landlords

Liberals the East. This is detailed in R. S. Ferguson, *The M.P.'s of Cumberland and Westmorland, 1660-1867* (London, 1871), pp. 228-62. Charles Howard was replaced in the representation of the county by his son and Morpeth's nephew George James Howard (1843-1911), the future 9th Earl of Carlisle, who sat for East Cumberland between 1879 and 1880 and 1881 to 1886.

¹⁴ F5/112, Papers relating to elections fought by Lord Morpeth.

¹⁵ E. A. Smith, 'Earl Fitzwilliam and Malton: A Proprietary Borough in the Early 19th Century', *English Historical Review*, 80 (1965), 51-69.

¹⁶ F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1963), pp. 204-211.

¹⁷ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 1-3. The idea that great estates allowed the aristocracy to exercise their political influence over a deferential tenantry is also suffused throughout D. C. Moore, *The Politics of Deference: A Study of the Mid-Nineteenth Century English Political System* (Hassocks, 1976), which the works in the footnote below attack (Davis engaged in a long-running battle against Moore, of which the respective books cited here are the fullest expression).

¹⁸ David Eastwood, 'Contesting the politics of deference: the rural electorate, 1820-60' in Lawrence & Taylor (eds.), *Party, State and Society* (Aldershot, 1997), 27-49; R. W. Davis, *Political Change and Continuity, 1760-1885: A Buckinghamshire Study* (Newton Abbot, 1972).

¹⁹ F5/112, Papers relating to elections fought by Lord Morpeth; N13, canvassing papers.

because of their centrality to the local community.²⁰ This seems to have been what happened at Castle Howard. Sydney Smith could thus report that his servants were in ‘ecstasy’ at one instance of Morpeth’s political success, attributing this to their being from ‘the neighbourhood of Castle Howard’.²¹ Nevertheless, what might be called the standard literature on the country house retains the idea that, in their dealings with their tenantry, aristocrats were concerned to maintain the social control and deference which underpinned their social and political authority.²²

This rather functionalist interpretation cannot explain Morpeth’s relationship with Castle Howard. There is no evidence to suggest that he ever considered it to be a ‘power house’. It represented much, much more than this to the Howard dynasty. It had long been their main residence, and as such was a place which evoked strong emotions among the family. Georgiana Carlisle wrote that they considered it to be ‘our house and our island’. One observer noted how she and her husband revelled in the house when they inherited it, commenting that it was ‘like a new toy to them, which they cannot get enough of’.²³ Morpeth shared his parents’ enthusiasm for Castle Howard. He was strongly attached to the house, being apt to give it ‘too fond a praise’.²⁴ As previously noted, he spent much of his time in Yorkshire.²⁵ Indeed, he often zipped up to Castle Howard for short breaks even in the season, noting that in comparison the only pleasant thing about London was that his bed was warmer.²⁶

Furthermore, as can be seen in Appendix One, he had a decided preference for Castle Howard over his other estates. He was sufficiently enamoured of Naworth Castle to rebuild it after a devastating fire in 1844, and yet (perhaps owing to the damage the

²⁰ Matthew Cragoe, *An Anglican Aristocracy: The Moral Economy of the Landed Estate in Carmarthenshire, 1832-1895* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 171-72.

²¹ Sydney Smith to Lady Holland, May 14th 1835, in Nowell C, Smith (ed.), *The Letters of Sydney Smith*, (2 vols, Oxford, 1953), vol. 2, p. 612, reporting his servants’ reaction to Morpeth’s appointment as Chief Secretary for Ireland.

²² For this sort of perspective, see for instance John Vincent Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 325-52; Kim Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1998), p. 129; Cragoe, *Anglican Aristocracy*, pp. 130-36.

²³ J18/2/52/41, Georgiana Morpeth to her husband Lord Morpeth, ‘Castle Howard, the 19th’, not dated; George Agar Ellis to Lady Holland, November 13th 1825, in Maud Mary Wyndham, Baroness Leconfield (ed.), *Three Howard Sisters: Selections from the Writings of Lady Caroline Lascelles, Lady Dover and Countess Gower, 1825-33* (London, 1955), p. 49.

²⁴ George W. F. Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle, *Lines on Yorkshire by the late Earl of Carlisle, written in 1832* (Printed for private circulation, 1864).

²⁵ See Chapter One, p. 69 and the figures provided in Appendix One.

²⁶ J19/8/23, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 17th 1850.

house sustained), the most time he spent there in a given year was 11.5%, and that was rare. He generally left his lands outside Yorkshire to the care of resident agents and other members of his family. His sister Elizabeth was married to Revd. Francis Grey, the rector of Morpeth, whilst Naworth became a favoured haunt of his brother Charles, who owing to his position as M.P. for Cumberland was more involved in that county's concerns. This chapter accordingly focuses mainly on the Castle Howard estate.

It is not surprising that Morpeth should have wished to spend his days at Castle Howard, for it was clearly a very pleasurable place to live. He was able to indulge his love of reading (often in the open air), play chess and charades, and even occasionally go sledging.²⁷ The house sat amidst a thousand acres of scenic parkland, to whose beauty he added in the early 1850s by employing William Andrews Nesfield to install the celebrated Atlas fountain and an elaborate (and now unfortunately lost) parterre, which can be seen in Illustration Six below. Morpeth felt that all this gave him 'many reasons... for extreme gratitude'.²⁸

Morpeth also appreciated the 'very picturesque' countryside around his estate.²⁹ Whilst his attitude to the city was at best ambiguous, he regarded the country as morally wholesome. To a man of his religious disposition, to commune with nature was to admire God's handiwork, something which might add to one's piety. His commonplace book contains a rather insipid sermon on this theme, at the bottom of which he added a poem; 'I read God's awful name emblazoned high, with golden letters on the illuminated sky / No less the mystic characters I see, wrought in each flower, inscribed on every tree'.³⁰

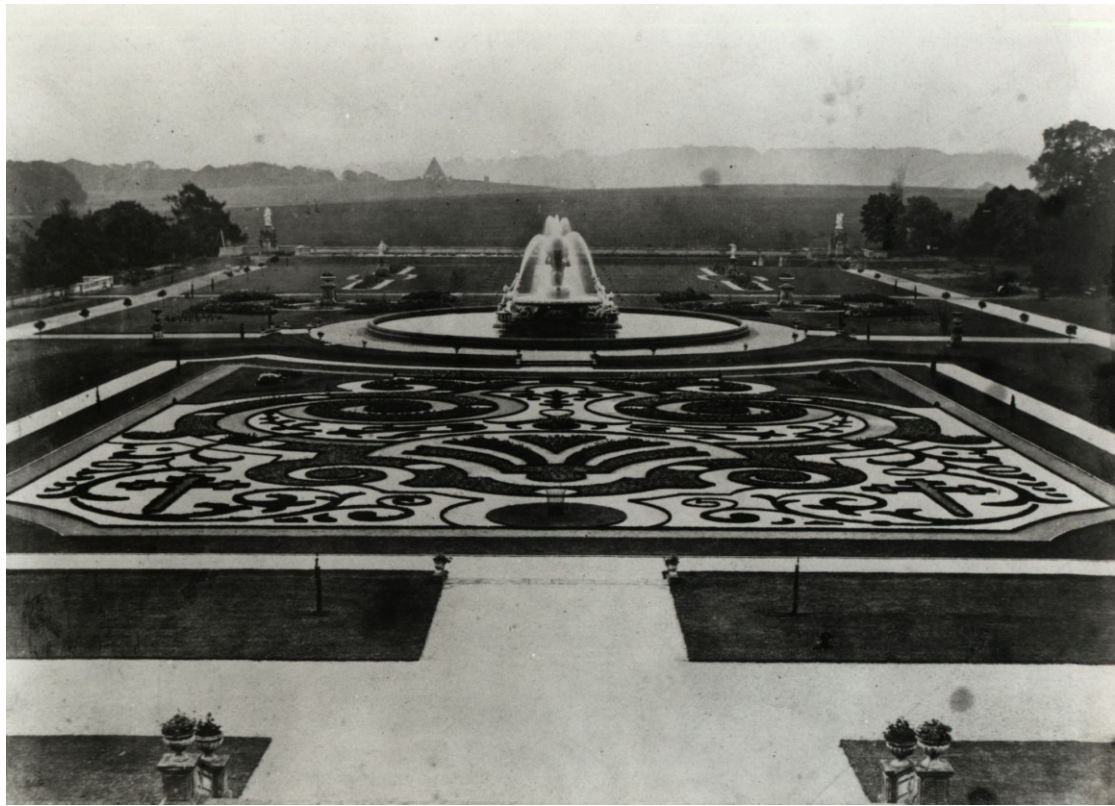
²⁷ J18/3/59/20, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, not dated; J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 11th 1845.

²⁸ J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 6th 1854. For Nesfield's work, see Christopher Ridgway, 'Design and Restoration at Castle Howard', in Christopher Ridgway (ed.), *William Andrews Nesfield: Victorian Landscape Architect* (York, 1996), 39-52.

²⁹ J19/8/23, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, May 19th 1850.

³⁰ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'Thou has made summer and winter' (Allison). This aspect of Morpeth's thought is also evident in his reaction to seeing Niagara Falls, where he commented that he was 'worshipping the Maker... in His highest temple' (J19/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth in America, October 31st 1841).

ILLUSTRATION SIX: The Atlas Fountain and Parterre at Castle Howard



This late nineteenth-century photograph in the Castle Howard Collection shows the Atlas Fountain and parterre, installed in the Castle Howard grounds by W. A. Nesfield in the early 1850s.

Above all, Castle Howard was Morpeth's 'Home'.³¹ It was the place where he had been raised, and where he felt most comfortable. Ruth Larsen has drawn attention to the fact that country houses did act as genuine family homes, giving aristocratic women a space in which to exhibit their adherence to the domestic ideal increasingly expected of them.³² However, as John Tosh has shown with respect to the middle class, this domesticity could be equally valued by men. Influenced by evangelicalism, early-Victorians regarded the home as the place where man's passions were tamed, and in which he was humanised by domestic affections.³³ Morpeth himself preached that 'domestic ties' were a valuable school for godly benevolence.³⁴

Although a lifelong bachelor, he could partake of something of this spirit through family life at Castle Howard. Lady Holland noted that he 'loves home dearly, parents, sisters, brothers'.³⁵ His mother and father resided almost permanently in Yorkshire from the mid-1830s onwards, whilst his sisters all stayed in the house until their marriages. Morpeth formed a particularly strong attachment to many of his female relations. At times, this seems to have made some of them slightly uncomfortable. He attended the birth of one of the children of his sister Blanche, 'very much in the room (next to it)', which sister Harriet thought was 'not quite right. He received I imagine many new lights, which his wife alone should have given him'.³⁶

It was, however, with his mother Georgiana that Morpeth formed the closest bond. Even by Victorian standards, they seem to have had a weirdly intense relationship. She declared that her feeling for him was 'the passion of my life', and was apparently apt to press his poetry to her 'aching face'. He reciprocated her affection, telling her that 'I fully and most gladly feel that we are married together for life'.³⁷ Georgiana's

³¹ J19/8/36, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, March 26th 1858.

³² Ruth Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2003), pp. 64-85. Larsen's study draws extensively on Castle Howard.

³³ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity in the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, 1999), *passim*.

³⁴ J19/9/15, Commonplace book, 'Likeness to God' (William Ellery Channing).

³⁵ Lady Elizabeth Holland to Henry Edward Fox, February 12th 1828, in G. S. H. Fox-Strangways, 6th Earl of Ilchester (ed.), *Elizabeth, Lady Holland to her Son, 1821-45* (London, 1946), p. 76.

³⁶ Harriet Gower to Caroline Lascelles, December 9th 1831, in Leconfield (ed.), *Three Howard Sisters*, pp. 225-26.

³⁷ J19/1/6/52, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, December 10th 1832; J19/1/52/41, Georgiana Carlisle to 7th Earl of Carlisle, December 1852; J18/3/69/3, 7th Earl Carlisle to Georgiana Carlisle, December 30th 1852.

presence drew him to Yorkshire; he noted that ‘Castle Howard in very fine weather with my mother and [sister] Mary is very delicious to me’.³⁸

Crucially, Castle Howard also provided Morpeth with an arena in which he could fulfil his spiritual need to work for the good of others. His sense of duty towards his tenants is the subject of the second half of this chapter, but he also found an outlet for this in local government. Even before he inherited the estate, he was a highly active magistrate and chairman of the local board of guardians at Malton. The business before him could be mundane (one magisterial case was of a man ‘throwing a little woman into the small pond’), but local governors did have a wide range of powers, and Morpeth clearly took his responsibilities seriously. In October and November 1843 alone he acted in this capacity six times.³⁹

These duties brought him into contact with other figures in the district. When in Malton, he often called in upon the Revd. William Carter (‘a good man’) to whom he gave the living of Slingsby in 1855; the Miss Priestmans, two Quaker sisters (‘I always feel instructed by their conversation’); and the surgeon William Copperthwaite (‘full of interesting information upon Roman and British antiquities’).⁴⁰ Morpeth’s religious beliefs significant here; his belief that what mattered in a person was their moral character meant that he was never too proud to converse with those of a lower social status. Encouraged by his Malton friends, he played a small role in the town’s religious and philanthropic organisations. At various times, he patronised its Bible Society, Temperance Society and Literary Institute.⁴¹

He also socialised with the surrounding landed families, whose members served with him in the magistracy. As has already been noted, it was Morpeth’s link to a network of families in North Yorkshire which initially helped start his career as the county’s M.P.⁴² There were several aristocrats and squires who lived in the vicinity of Castle

³⁸ Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 15th 1850, in Lascelles (ed.), *Extracts*, p. 134.

³⁹ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, entries for October and November 1843; J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 13th 1844.

⁴⁰ J19/8/33, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 12th 1855; J19/8/22, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 17th 1849; J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 9th 1844; J19/8/27, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 3rd 1851.

⁴¹ J19/8/4, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 12th 1844; September 9th 1844; J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, October 20th 1854.

⁴² See Chapter Two, p. 77.

Howard, among them the Duncombes of Duncombe Park, the Worsleys of Hovingham, the Garforths of Wiganthorpe, and the Legards of Ganton. Morpeth was on good terms with all of them. He fully participated in the ethos of sociability which characterised the contemporary rural world, regularly riding ‘in quest of visits’.⁴³ Although not a huntsman himself, he was not averse to giving breakfasts for the local hunt, a major social event for the local gentry.⁴⁴

All this socialising seems to have been something of a new phenomenon for the Howard dynasty. Andrew Duncan has recorded that the 5th Earl of Carlisle ‘fitted ill’ into county society. Morpeth’s father, the 6th Earl, was far more civil, but Morpeth noted that he too did not entertain his neighbours that often when he owned Castle Howard.⁴⁵ Upon inheriting the estate, Morpeth soon set this right by hosting large parties for the surrounding gentry families.⁴⁶

Morpeth also personally contributed to sport in the district by establishing the Castle Howard cricket club in 1845. He often scored for the club, describing this as ‘my hobby’.⁴⁷ The club was composed largely of tenants and servants, and their matches against other local clubs were popular social occasions. Morpeth identified strongly with the team, even recording their results in his diary.⁴⁸ This enthusiasm reflected his wish to promote social cohesion. Cricket was thought by its adherents to ease tensions in society by reaching across the class divide. Morpeth liked it ‘for the way it brings people and classes together’.⁴⁹ His efforts in this direction did not go unnoticed; his support of cricket was commented on approvingly by both the *Leeds Mercury* and the *Sheffield Iris* whilst he was M.P. for the West Riding.⁵⁰

⁴³ J18/3/60/8, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, Saturday 7th (not dated).

⁴⁴ J19/8/22, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 14th 1849; J19/8/25, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 7th 1851.

⁴⁵ Andrew Duncan, ‘A Study of the Life and Public Career of Frederick Howard, Fifth Earl of Carlisle 1748-1825’ (unpublished D.Phil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1981), p. 244; J19/8/19, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, October 16th 1848.

⁴⁶ J19/8/22, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 20th 1849; J19/8/23, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 3rd 1850.

⁴⁷ F5/3, Lord Morpeth to John Henderson, May 25th [1845].

⁴⁸ Morpeth also founded a vice-regal cricket team when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, doing much to foster the game in that country. A picture of him and the team can be seen below in Illustration Seven. He also established a cricket ground near Whitechapel when Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests.

⁴⁹ J19/8/33, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 18th 1855.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, October 19th 1846, p. 6, reproducing an article from the *Sheffield Iris* on ‘Lord Morpeth and Cricketing’; *Leeds Mercury*, September 18th 1847, p. 11.

ILLUSTRATION SEVEN: Lord Morpeth and Cricket



Photograph of Lord Morpeth (then 7th Earl of Carlisle) and the Irish Vice-regal cricket team, in the Castle Howard archives. Morpeth is centre of the middle-row.

Morpeth's strong links to the locality were reflected in 1847, when he followed in his father's footsteps to become Lord Lieutenant of the East Riding, the pinnacle of county society. He held this post until his death, although he does not seem to have been highly active in it.⁵¹ Beyond the immediate vicinity of Castle Howard, Morpeth was on very friendly terms with a number of Yorkshire families. He formed a particularly close bond with the family of his father's cousin Edward Harcourt (1757-1847), the Archbishop of York, who lived at Bishopthorpe Palace just outside York. The Harcourts and Howards formed a social triumvirate with the family of the Whig Lord Escrick, who lived a few miles from York at Escrick Park. He often slept at both houses, noting of Escrick that 'I always find myself comfortable here'.⁵²

Morpeth also regularly visited the city of York itself, being drawn there particularly by its ecclesiastical life. He often called in on the 'Residence' of the Canons attached to York Minster.⁵³ The Minster may be deemed the centre of his spiritual existence. He was effusive in his praise of this magnificent structure ('the most beautiful fabric of the Church of England'), telling one audience that merely looking at it helped them rise above life's 'grovelling cares and... low passions'.⁵⁴ When it was damaged by arson in 1829, the Howards donated £400 towards repairs, and Morpeth was very active on the rebuilding committee.⁵⁵

Morpeth and Estate Management

Morpeth, then, was very far from the stereotype of an exclusive, metropolitan Whig aristocrat. As will be seen in this section, he also took an active interest in improving his estate and the surrounding locality. This reflected his involvement in estate management. As heir, Morpeth was involved in this even before his inheritance, and

⁵¹ The 6th Earl of Carlisle was Lord Lieutenant of the East Riding from 1824 to 1840.

⁵² J19/8/14, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 23rd 1847.

⁵³ Among others, J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 29th 1845, February 1st 1845.

⁵⁴ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the York Diocesan Education Society, *Leeds Mercury*, December 26th 1846, p. 8. For private reflections on the beauty of the Minster, J18/3/63/60, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, December 23rd 1832; J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 30th 1845; J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 28th 1845.

⁵⁵ F5/5/5, Castle Howard accounts for year ending December 31st 1830. For the Minster's restoration committee and the various debates which went with this, see James S. Kerr, *Improvers and Preservers: A Dissertation on Some Aspects of Cathedral Restoration, 1770-1830, and in Particular the Great Screen Squabble of York Minster, 1829-1831* (York, 1973).

gradually took control of estate business from his ailing father in the late 1830s.⁵⁶ His engagement with the estate was at its most intense from around 1842 until 1855, when his appointment as Viceroy of Ireland forced him to reside in Dublin.

The running of such a large estate was a complex business. Fortunately, the Howards had secured the services of James Loch, the greatest estate commissioner of the nineteenth century. Loch, a Scottish lawyer and Whig M.P., managed the land of a number of aristocratic families, notably the Dukes of Sutherland.⁵⁷ The Sutherlands were cousins of the Howards, and became more closely related through the marriage in 1823 of Morpeth's sister Harriet to the future 2nd Duke. Loch's work must have impressed, for in 1824 he was appointed to manage all the Howard estates in a bid to work off the debts of the profligate 5th Earl, which totalled £220,000. It is fair to say that he saved the Howards from ruin. He gradually diminished these debts by cutting wasteful expenditure and instituting some astute financial management. However, whilst they were by no means impoverished, this meant that the Howards were never awash with money. Morpeth was still paying off his grandfather's debt in 1855.⁵⁸

Loch's role was primarily strategic. He installed the energetic John Henderson as resident agent in Yorkshire to look after daily operations. The management of the Castle Howard estate was therefore a co-operative effort, in which Henderson and Loch had considerable sway. Morpeth left most mundane transactions in Henderson's hands. However, he was an engaged proprietor who reserved his right to interfere directly in estate business.⁵⁹ Whilst day-to-day affairs were controlled by Henderson, no major project happened on the estate without Morpeth's knowledge and approval.

One area in which all three men fully agreed was the need to improve the productivity and hence income of the estate. As Eric Richards has noted, Loch saw this as a moral

⁵⁶ Morpeth's correspondence with the Howards' Yorkshire estate agent John Henderson (Carlisle MSS, F5/3) shows that Henderson increasingly looked to him for decisions on the estate from around 1838, the period when the 6th Earl of Carlisle's health began to deteriorate. By 1846, Morpeth was telling Henderson that estate business should ideally go directly to him. (F5/3, Lord Morpeth to John Henderson, October 26th 1846).

⁵⁷ Eric Richards, *The Leviathan of Wealth: The Sutherland Fortune in the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1973), pp. 20-32.

⁵⁸ F5/5, Annual accounts for Castle Howard; F6/58, 'Proposals for Managing Lord Carlisle's affairs' by James Loch (1824); F6/53, 'Proposals for Managing Lord Carlisle's affairs' by James Loch (1826).

⁵⁹ F5/3, Lord Morpeth to John Henderson, October 14th 1846.

duty, something which would contribute to social progress and benefit landlord and tenant alike.⁶⁰ Morpeth's ownership of the estate coincided with one of the most significant eras of agricultural improvement in English history, as landowners began to implement a capital intensive system of 'high farming' based on the application of science and machinery.⁶¹ As Joe Bord has rightly pointed out, the improvement of land was fully compatible with the Whigs' progressive ethos. It is therefore unsurprising that Whigs such as the 5th Duke of Bedford and Coke of Norfolk were among the first to embrace the possibilities of scientific agriculture.⁶²

By the 1840s, Whigs patricians such as the 7th Duke of Bedford at Woburn, the 3rd Earl Spencer at Althorp and Morpeth's brother-in-law Lord Burlington (later 7th Duke of Devonshire) at Holker and later Chatsworth were all noted for their contributions to farming. Several Whigs were members of the Royal Agricultural Society, headed by Althorp.⁶³ Although not as knee-deep in mud as some of these figures, Morpeth shared their interest in agricultural improvement. He sought to promote similar practices at Castle Howard, and occasionally even took a turn on the plough.⁶⁴

Under the 6th Earl of Carlisle, Castle Howard had been most famous in farming circles for its pedigree short-horned cattle, the pride of John Henderson. These were apparently one of the highlights of Prince Albert's visit when he and Queen Victoria came to stay at the house in August 1850.⁶⁵ Morpeth's interest, however, seems to have lain in the cultivation of land rather than in stock. He turned first to drainage, which was thought to underpin all other improvements. In this, he was supported by Loch, who had published an account of the benefits of drainage (among other

⁶⁰ Richards, *Leviathan of Wealth*, pp. 31-32.

⁶¹ Susanna Wade Martins, *Farmers, Landlords and Landscapes: Rural Britain, 1720-1870* (Bollington, 2004), pp. 13-17.

⁶² Bord, *Science and Whig Manners*, pp. 103-18; David Brown, 'Reassessing the influence of the aristocratic improver: the example of the fifth Duke of Bedford (1765-1802)', *Agricultural History Review*, 47 (1999), 182-95.

⁶³ E. A. Wasson, 'The Third Earl Spencer and Agriculture, 1818-1845', *Agricultural History Review*, 26 (1978), 89-99; Susanna Wade Martins, *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914* (Bollington, 2002), p. 146; Bord, *Science and Whig Manners*, pp. 127-29; F. M. L. Thompson, 'Cavendish, William, seventh duke of Devonshire (1808-1891)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4950>, accessed 12 Nov 2009].

⁶⁴ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 11th, November 16th 1843.

⁶⁵ *Leeds Mercury*, August 31st 1850, p. 8.

improvements) on the Sutherland estates.⁶⁶ Jon Finch has detailed how Loch implemented irrigation around Castle Howard in the late 1820s, thereby increasing hay production.⁶⁷

The Howards' tenants were also encouraged to drain through the provision of subsidised tiles.⁶⁸ Loch wished to extend drainage further around Castle Howard in the late 1830s, after experiments on the less fertile Morpeth estate had proved immensely beneficial. However, although, the 6th Earl of Carlisle was generally encouraging about drainage, he was sceptical about the likely returns on large-scale expenditure.⁶⁹ Morpeth proved to be more positive. The period in which he took control over the estate saw a marked increase in the amount spent on drainage on the Howards' Yorkshire land; the total allocated for this increased from £122 6s in 1835 to £1,039 4s in 1847.⁷⁰ A. D. M. Phillips has traced a similarly heavy investment in drainage on the Cumberland and Morpeth estates during his ownership.⁷¹ This increase may have reflected the introduction of drainage for (rather than by) tenants, as he had been impressed by this practice on the Sutherland estates.⁷²

Morpeth's enthusiasm for drainage was re-enforced and facilitated by his political involvement with the topic. He became versed in its value when managing the Crown's lands as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and also participated in consultations about the medical benefits of removing stagnant water when framing his public health legislation. Through these duties he met Josiah Parkes, the foremost Victorian expert on drainage.⁷³ Both Parkes' system of 'deep drains' and the shallow drain system favoured by James Smith of Deanston were trialled at Castle Howard,

⁶⁶ James Loch, *An Account of the Improvement on the Estates of the Marquess of Stafford* (London, 1820).

⁶⁷ Jon Finch, 'Pallas, Flora and Ceres: Landscape Priorities and Improvement on the Castle Howard Estate, 1699-1880', in Jon Finch & Kate Giles (eds.), *Estate Landscapes* (Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology Monograph, 2008), esp. 30-32.

⁶⁸ F5/5, Castle Howard accounts.

⁶⁹ F6/3, James Loch to Earl Carlisle, December 5th 1839; F6/3, 6th Earl of Carlisle to James Loch, November 12th 1841.

⁷⁰ F5/5, Castle Howard accounts.

⁷¹ A. D. M. Phillips, *The Underdraining of Farmland in England During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 95, 149-62.

⁷² J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 11th 1843.

⁷³ Phillips, *Underdraining*, p. 164; J19/8/13, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 7th 1846.

but Morpeth became convinced that ‘all evidence’ was in favour of the former.⁷⁴ Significantly for the estate, Morpeth was also one of three Inclosure Commissioners charged with administering the Public Money Drainage Act of 1846. This allowed the state to provide loans to landowners for drainage, accompanied by state inspection and advice. The Howards obtained £10,000 under this Act in 1848, and this money was soon employed to finance drainage around Castle Howard.⁷⁵

This is a useful reminder that, as the ruling elite, the landowning class was able to exploit the Parliamentary system to shape life on their own estates. As has been seen, Morpeth was highly averse to seemingly ‘selfish’ legislation which favoured the aristocracy, but he was more than willing to draw on his position as a statesman for local projects which he thought would be to the general benefit. Another instance of this is the Rye and Derwent Drainage Act of 1846. This was a response to the regular flooding of the River Derwent, which frequently devastated the crops of the Howards’ tenants near the riverbank. In conjunction with other local landowners such as Earl Fitzwilliam and Sir William Worsley of Hovingham, Morpeth formulated a private Bill to prevent the flooding by removing mill dams along the river.⁷⁶ Collectively, all this drainage had a beneficial if not spectacular effect, improving the quality and productivity of land and generating a slight increase in rent.⁷⁷

Alongside drainage, Morpeth joined his fellow Whigs in displaying an interest in high farming. He regularly attended lectures and shows organised by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society (Y. A. S.), an inspiration for the Royal Agricultural Society. Founded in 1837 by Lord Althorp among others, the Y. A. S. aimed to encourage scientific agriculture. Morpeth acted as the Society’s President in 1849 and 1855.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Chadwick Papers (University College London, Special Collections), 1055, IV, f. 552, 7th Earl of Carlisle to Edwin Chadwick, December 29th 1848.

⁷⁵ F5/5, Castle Howard accounts; F5/91, *Parliamentary Papers*, Drainage of Land: A return of applications for advances under the act 9 & 10 Victoria. c. 101, 1847 (146), XXXIV.315. Note that although this money was officially obtained under his father’s name, the 6th Earl was desperately ill during this period, so it is extremely likely that Morpeth drove the application.

⁷⁶ F5/91, Drainage Papers; J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 8th 1845; J18/3/67/62, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, May 11th [1846].

⁷⁷ F5/91, Drainage Papers; F5/8/12, Report by John Henderson on changes on the estate, 1845-54.

⁷⁸ J19/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 11th 1843; J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 4th, August 8th 1845; J19/8/9, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 9th 1845; J19/8/21, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, July 31st 1849; J18/3/69/91, 7th Earl Carlisle to Georgiana Carlisle, July 25th 1852. For a detailed account of the Society, see Vance Hall, *A History of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society 1837-1987* (London, 1987).

Stimulated by the Y. A. S., he encouraged scientific agriculture on the Castle Howard estate. The Howards owned a demesne farm which, like many, seems to have been used to showcase new techniques rather than generate profit; it sustained losses throughout the period under discussion.⁷⁹ The farm contained an agricultural laboratory (fondly known as ‘the Manure’) under Henderson’s control. After the trial of one batch of fertiliser, Morpeth was hopeful that there were ‘bits of grass made decidedly greener’. The farm also promoted the use of guano and lime. In encouraging this, Morpeth took inspiration from other landowners, having admired the use of guano on the Sutherland’s estate at Trentham. He also visited the estates of local improvers such as the Shawes of Brantingham in the East Riding, approvingly noting that ‘all that intelligence can do’ was brought to bear on the latter’s land.⁸⁰

The Howards also looked to introduce new agricultural machinery, much of which was purchased from the Beverley-based implement maker Mr Crosskill. Henderson had cause to complain to Crosskill of a faulty sub-soil plough in 1838, whilst threshing machines were being used on the estate by 1845.⁸¹ Morpeth visited Crosskill’s yard several times, purchasing a ‘highly ingenious’ if ‘impractical’ harvester from him in 1854.⁸² The local tenants do seem to have gradually taken up these new methods. By 1858, Henderson could reassure a still enthusiastic Morpeth that the estate was second to none in the modernity of its practice.⁸³

Morpeth’s most significant contribution to local agriculture, however, came outside his own estate. He played a pivotal role in the establishment of the York Yeoman School, probably his most ambitious philanthropic venture. The Yeoman School was a boarding institution designed for the sons of the local middle-class, particularly farmers. It opened in 1846 as an annex to the National Society’s teacher-training college at York, which Morpeth patronised. There was a growing demand for such

⁷⁹ F5/5, Castle Howard accounts. For the educative role of demesne farms, see Susanna Wade Martins, *The English Model Farm: Building the Agricultural Ideal, 1700-1914* (Macclesfield, 2002).

⁸⁰ J19/8/1, Diary of Lord Morpeth, October 11th, December 27th 1843; J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 8th 1845.

⁸¹ F5/2, John Henderson to Mr Crosskill, September 19th 1838; Revd. William Walker, *Some Account of the Parish and Village of Slingsby in Yorkshire* (York, 1845), p. 7.

⁸² J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, August 8th 1845; J19/8/29, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 21st 1852; J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 8th 1854.

⁸³ F5/3, John Henderson to 7th Earl of Carlisle, May 5th 1858.

schools among agriculturalists, who felt that farmer's children needed an education to match the scientific and technical developments in agriculture.⁸⁴ The need for such an institution had long been felt in Yorkshire, a fact mentioned on the off chance to Morpeth by Robert Wilberforce, the Archdeacon of the East Riding, in late 1844. Wilberforce had tried unsuccessfully for years to get the local Tories to take this up, and was surprised to find that Morpeth entered into the idea with 'great zeal'.⁸⁵

It was Morpeth who proposed to annex the school to the college, believing that it might serve as a practising institution for the trainee teachers.⁸⁶ Having drawn up a prospectus, he established a conclave of influential supporters amidst the local elite. These included Wilberforce, Lord Wenlock, the Bishop of Ripon, his neighbour George Legard and the noted agriculturalist H. S. Thompson of Kirby Hall, all of whom promised donations.⁸⁷ Upon receiving the go ahead from the college directorate, he set himself the task of raising the £3,000 necessary to establish the school, donating £100 himself.⁸⁸ He advertised for subscriptions, and circulated personal appeals to his contacts in high society. He gained donations from many members of Yorkshire's elite, particularly among the Whigs. Wilberforce recorded that the school was supported 'almost exclusively by the Whig aristocracy'.⁸⁹

The school united Morpeth's interests in agriculture, education, social cohesion and moral improvement. He believed that farmers were a 'very important chain' in society, providing a crucial link between the aristocracy and agricultural labourers, over whose 'condition and conduct' they had a large influence. To that end, he desired that the farmers of the future should receive a moral and religious education via the training college. However, he also hoped that the school would assist them in

⁸⁴ David Allsobrook, *Schools for the Shires: The reform of middle-class education in mid-Victorian England* (Manchester, 1986), pp. 29-53.

⁸⁵ Wilberforce MSS (Bodleian Library, Oxford), c.61, f. 25, Robert Wilberforce to Samuel Wilberforce, April 27th 1845.

⁸⁶ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the York Diocesan National Education Society, *The Morning Chronicle*, February 3rd 1845, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁷ J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 7th 1845; C. T. Longley Papers (Lambeth Palace Library), Longley 1, f. 275, Lord Morpeth to C. T. Longley, April 9th [1845].

⁸⁸ J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 29th 1845.

⁸⁹ J19/1/111/77, Printed prospectus of the 'York Yeoman School' and list of subscribers in Morpeth's hand; Wilberforce MSS (Bodleian Library, Oxford) c.61, folio 43, Robert Wilberforce to Samuel Wilberforce, August 18th 1845.

learning about agricultural science, declaring that ‘recent discoveries and experiments in agriculture’ had made this of ‘vital importance’.⁹⁰

Unfortunately for Morpeth, the Yeoman School was never a success. A planned practising farm – always useful in agricultural education – never materialised, and the school closed in 1858 after a series of financial disasters. Potential students had also been put off by its connection with a religious teacher training college.⁹¹ The school was, however, one of the first of its kind, predating a wave of similar institutions which opened in the 1850s. Morpeth’s central role in establishing it shows his keen interest in agriculture.

The school did not go un-criticised. Its foundation came in the midst of debates on the Corn Laws, in which many liberals argued that high farming offered a more viable future for agriculture than protection. Morpeth’s role in founding the school was linked by observers to his political views on free trade. The Revd. Edward Duncombe of Newton Kyme kept up a bad tempered and at times incoherent campaign against the school in the York press, connecting it to the Anti-Corn Law League. He argued that it was a selfish venture which would serve only to benefit a few rich landlords through increased rents, allowing them to survive free trade whilst others suffered. This was an effective reversal of the free traders’ argument against the Corn Laws.⁹²

In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that Morpeth’s agricultural practice, either in this instance or more generally at Castle Howard, was directly shaped by his views on free trade. The importance of stock to the Castle Howard estate meant that it could survive the removal of duties on corn relatively easily. He observed that the Castle Howard farmers did not ‘seem to trouble their heads much about the Corn Laws’.⁹³

⁹⁰ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the York Diocesan National Education Society, *The Morning Chronicle*, February 3rd 1845, pp. 2-3.

⁹¹ J19/1/47/49, George Hodgkinson to 7th Earl of Carlisle, October 1849; Allsobrook, *Schools for the Shires*, pp. 76-77. Malcolm Seaborne, ‘Early Theories of Teacher Education’, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 22: 3 (1974), 325-339 suggests that the idea of a middle-class boarding school being connected to a training college was repeated at Lincoln and Chichester, but this practice was not widespread.

⁹² See the letters from Duncombe (signed ‘Bide Time, Use Time’) in *Yorkshire Gazette*, February 7th 1846, p. 3, August 25th 1849, p. 1.

⁹³ J19/8/11, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 23rd 1846.

However, Morpeth was able to draw upon his own links to rural life to argue that protection was detrimental to agriculture. For instance, during the Parliamentary debates on the Corn Laws in early 1846, he quoted statistics on the price of corn and wages around Castle Howard, having first sought this information from Henderson.⁹⁴

In addition to agricultural improvement, Morpeth provided another stimulus to economic progress in the locality through the promotion of railways. This was something of a family trait; the 5th Earl of Carlisle had developed horse-drawn rail links connecting the Howards' Cumbrian collieries with the nearby market town of Brampton, which were extended and modernised by the 6th Earl of Carlisle with Loch's encouragement.⁹⁵ Morpeth inherited this interest in railways, embracing the steam train as one of the marvels of his age. As Irish Secretary he unsuccessfully promoted a scheme, concocted by Thomas Drummond, for state funded railways in Ireland.⁹⁶ Railways, he once declared, helped encourage the spread of 'material wealth' and 'progressive civilisation'.⁹⁷

This enthusiasm was matched by his willingness to invest in railway companies. By 1849 he had amassed shares totalling £38,698, a sizeable proportion of his wealth.⁹⁸ A portion of these shares were inherited from his father, who had invested in the Newcastle to Carlisle railway. Although the transactions are sketchy, it is possible that the 6th Earl was also given shares as compensation for George Hudson's York-Scarborough line, which ran along the edge of the Howards' Yorkshire estate. Castle Howard benefited from a station on the line, which opened in 1845. It is pictured below as Illustration Eight.

⁹⁴ J19/8/10, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 1st 1846; F5/2, John Henderson to Lord Morpeth, February 1846. For the speech, Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates* (H.C), Third Series, LXXXIII, February 13th 1846, cols. 807-811. Morpeth may also have used W. Coates, *The Corn-Merchants, Factors and Farmers' Guide, Comprising, A Correct and Complete Calculation of Every Description of Grain, at any Weight, Price and Quantity; Likewise Shewing the Average Price, and Quantity of British Grain at Malton, for Fourteen Years* (London, 1841), a statistical work which he patronised.

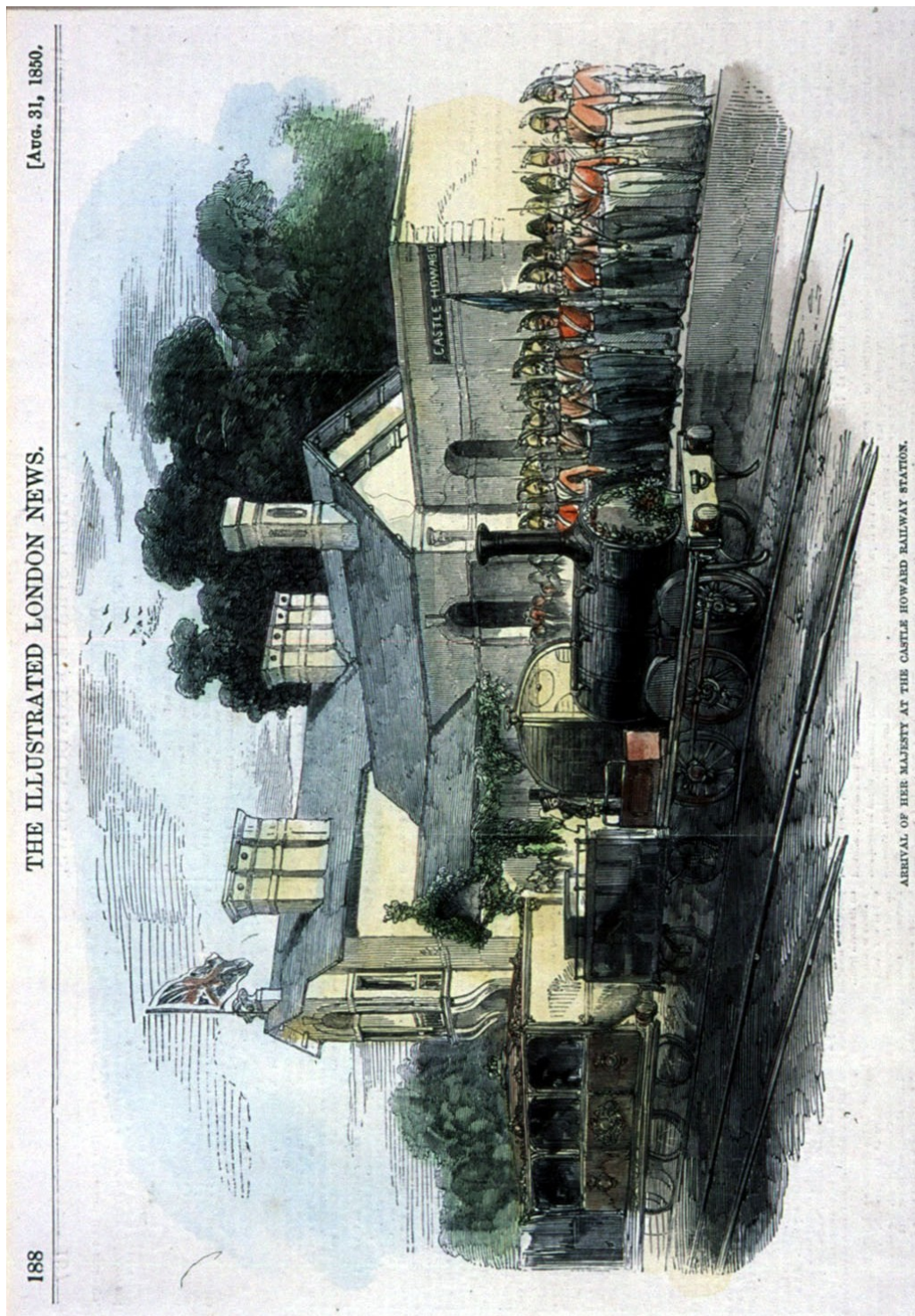
⁹⁵ Brian Webb & David Gordon, *Lord Carlisle's Railways* (Lichfield, 1978).

⁹⁶ Olien, *Morpeth*, pp. 207-211.

⁹⁷ Gaskin (ed.), *Vice-regal Speeches*, p. 229.

⁹⁸ F5/116, 'Statement of Railway Shares Belonging to the Earl of Carlisle', dated April 13th 1849.

ILLUSTRATION EIGHT: The Castle Howard Railway Station



From the *Illustrated London News* of August 31st 1850, depicting the arrival of Queen Victoria at Castle Howard Railway Station. This original colour print is in the Castle Howard Collection.

The station greatly increased the number of people who visited the house. Many of these new visitors were lower-middle class or upper-working class people from Yorkshire's towns, who thanks to the growth of the railways were able to visit country houses on inexpensive day excursions.⁹⁹ Morpeth welcomed these 'cheap trains', approvingly stating that they allowed town-dwellers to enjoy the 'healthy face of nature'.¹⁰⁰ He especially encouraged visits from the philanthropic organisations he patronised in the West Riding, such as the Leeds Mechanics' Institute, which visited Castle Howard in 1846 and made a profit of £20.¹⁰¹ Morpeth was thus able to use his own home to support the projects of moral reform he so admired.

Peter Mandler has argued that the opening of country houses to excursionists was a 'cultural and political gesture' on both sides. Aristocrats got to demonstrate their sense of liberality and civic responsibility, whilst visitors felt less alienated from aristocratic culture.¹⁰² Certainly Morpeth's generosity in opening Castle Howard was much praised, adding to the public's positive image of him.¹⁰³

Morpeth greatly benefited himself from the improved transport links wrought by the Castle Howard station, which allowed him to get to political meetings and philanthropic gatherings across Yorkshire far more easily. On one notable occasion, he travelled from Castle Howard to Leeds by rail, but missed his connection at York. Undeterred, he hopped aboard the tender of a passing freight train and settled down amidst the cinders, news which strained his mother's delicate nerves almost to breaking point. It is an episode which reveals almost as much about Morpeth's sense of duty as it does about his welcoming attitude towards railway travel.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist: A History of Country House Visiting* (London, 1998), pp. 145-50.

¹⁰⁰ Lord Morpeth quoted in *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, read at the Ninth Annual Meeting Held in Huddersfield, June 3rd 1846* (Leeds, 1846), p. 11.

¹⁰¹ F5/3, 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, September 6th 1850; Leeds Mechanics' Institute and Literary Society Records (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds), WYL/368/2, committee minute book, June 15th 1847.

¹⁰² Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, 1997), pp. 71-81.

¹⁰³ For instance, *Leeds Mercury*, September 1862, p. 5 is positively effusive in its praise of Morpeth's actions in greeting a party of railway tourists from Bradford at Castle Howard.

¹⁰⁴ J19/8/13, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 30th 1846; J19/1/43/32, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, December 31st 1846.

Apart from (one imagines) giving one startled driver a story to tell his grandchildren, Morpeth's major contribution to Yorkshire's railways came through his involvement in the Malton and Driffield Junction Railway Company. This company was founded in October 1845 to construct a line between Malton and Driffield at a proposed cost of £240,000, which was to be raised predominantly through shares. The principal movers were Morpeth, Henderson, Morpeth's friend William Copperthwaite and William Allen, the agent of Earl Fitzwilliam's Malton estate. Morpeth headed the board of directors and subscribed £1,600 of his own money.¹⁰⁵

The company's formation came in the context of a mid-1840s railway boom in Yorkshire led by the famed entrepreneur and fraudster George Hudson, who illicitly subscribed £40,000 of his own company's money to the line. Morpeth and his fellow directors hoped to connect their venture to Hudson's proposed line between Thirsk and Malton, together creating a profitable major route linking Newcastle with Hull. However, the directors also stressed the wider benefits the line would bring for the local economy, stating that it would reduce the price of coal and open up new agricultural markets. Morpeth's involvement was thus partly an extension of his leadership role in the community. He noted that he never invested in railways 'except where I feel an interest in the district'.¹⁰⁶

Work on the line began in 1847. It quickly became apparent that the directors had grossly underestimated the cost and difficulty of the project. The main source of trouble was the line's only tunnel at Burdale, which was plagued by logistical difficulties. In 1848 work was suspended due to lack of funds, whilst in 1849 the fall of the intemperate Hudson jeopardised the completion of the essential Thirsk-Malton line. The directors had to stump up money to revive this project. All these developments were keenly felt by Morpeth, who was highly involved in the company's meetings. He mournfully recorded that the project was in 'rather a fishy state'.¹⁰⁷ Whilst work resumed in 1850, the problems were overcome only by making the line single track, thus ending the company's ambitions to found a major route.

¹⁰⁵ F5/116, 'Statement of Railway Shares Belonging to the Earl of Carlisle', dated April 13th 1849; Warwick Burton, *The Malton and Driffield Junction Railway* (Halifax, 1997), pp. 5-18. The information on the company detailed in the following section is derived from this account.

¹⁰⁶ J19/8/9, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 3rd 1845.

¹⁰⁷ J19/8/24, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 5th 1850.

The line opened to the public in June 1853, years behind schedule and at a cost £80,000 in excess of the original estimate. Warwick Burton, an authority on the line, doubts that the company's shareholders ever saw a return on their investment. In 1854, the Malton and Driffield was amalgamated into the new North Eastern Railway Company. Nevertheless, the line did bring about a change in the regional economy, and Burton has suggested that it did provide its promised boon to local agriculture.¹⁰⁸ This owed something to the effort expended by Morpeth. At the opening of the line, he recorded feeling 'much emotion, at our seven years of difficulty thus conquered', revealing his significant personal involvement in the project.¹⁰⁹

'Scruples in my mind': Duty and Estate Life

The above sections have illustrated how Morpeth was highly involved with the concerns of the Castle Howard estate and its surrounding district. However, it was the well-being of his tenantry which most preoccupied him as a landowner. The estate contained around 400 families and, according to an 1845 survey, a population of 2,614 people (some of these were not tenants, but were nevertheless thought to come within the estate's sphere of care). Many of these families possessed little more than a humble cottage, and looked to the Howards for welfare, employment and security.¹¹⁰ Morpeth continued an established tradition of charity for such people. He granted peppercorn rents to the poor, provided pensions to widows, distributed wood and blankets, and subsidised charities such as the Castle Howard coal and clothing clubs, through which tenants could purchase cheap necessities.¹¹¹

These actions were a direct result of his faith. As seen in Chapter One, Morpeth was convinced that it was a Christian's duty to put others before himself. He preached from Archbishop Sumner that charity was an indispensable virtue, 'one by which the Christian must often examine himself, and prove his own soul'. Indeed, this sermon was practically a manifesto for Morpeth's actions on the estate.

¹⁰⁸ Burton, *Malton and Driffield Junction Railway*, pp. 16-24.

¹⁰⁹ J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, April 13th 1853.

¹¹⁰ F5/30/1, Rent rolls for the Castle Howard estate; F5/98, Cottage Census of the Castle Howard Estate (1845).

¹¹¹ F5/5, Annual Accounts; F5/30/1, Rent rolls; F5/96, Papers relating to village charities;

‘Have you, like the rich man in the parable, kept to yourself your good things...? Have you never thought of spreading around you, as far as your opportunities allowed, temporal comfort and religious knowledge? Have you suffered the fatherless and widows to be unfriended in their affliction, when you might have supported or consoled them? Has the ignorant man, as far as concerned you, continued in his ignorance, and the wicked died in his sin? Then you have shown yourselves wanting that quality which most certainly distinguishes the followers of Jesus... you have not possessed the spirit of a Christian’.¹¹²

Long ago, David Spring suggested that the nineteenth-century religious revival encouraged the aristocracy to take a closer interest in their estates.¹¹³ Morpeth’s life seems to support this contention. He certainly displayed a far greater concern for the welfare of his tenants than his father had done. Even before he inherited, the Revd. William Walker of Slingsby could single out Morpeth and his equally religious sister Mary as the ‘benevolent promoters of every good object’ in the locality.¹¹⁴

In 1845, he became the first proprietor of Castle Howard to order a statistical and qualitative survey of the estate which focused on the condition of the resident population rather than the state of land.¹¹⁵ This was most likely influenced by the new techniques of social investigation being pioneered by reformers such as Edwin Chadwick and James Kay-Shuttleworth, whom, as has been seen, Morpeth knew well.¹¹⁶ The survey, carried out by Henderson, identified the condition and status of each family and offered judgments as to their moral behaviour, possibly in an attempt to direct charity to those who were thought most needy and deserving.

The survey was repeated periodically, and inevitably became known as the ‘Domesday Book’. Morpeth seems to have kept it with him, and followed up on its findings in tours of the estate villages, where he called in on cottagers and raised issues influencing their well-being with Henderson. Judging by the latter’s

¹¹² J19/9/15, Commonplace book of sermons, ‘In as much as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me’ (Archbishop Sumner).

¹¹³ David Spring, ‘Aristocracy, Social Structure and Religion in the Early-Victorian Period’, *Victorian Studies*, 6:3 (1963), 263-80.

¹¹⁴ Walker, *Parish and Village of Slingsby*, p. 20.

¹¹⁵ F5/98, Cottage census.

¹¹⁶ For the role of Chadwick and Kay-Shuttleworth in pioneering new techniques of statistical social investigation, see M. J. Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain: The Foundations of Empirical Social Research* (Hassocks, 1975).

disgruntled replies, this actually served to show Morpeth's ignorance of commonplace affairs on the estate, for he seems to have frequently discussed matters which Henderson had previously settled.¹¹⁷ There was a vast gulf separating even the most conscientious patrician from the day-to-day business of his estate. Nevertheless, the survey does show Morpeth's prominent concern for the good of his tenants.

Morpeth's private papers, too, provide ample evidence of how important this was to him. Illuminating here is a fascinating bundle in the Castle Howard archives entitled 'The Case of Thomas Coates', a labourer born on the estate. Morpeth rescued Coates from the workhouse by giving him a job and housing him in a nearby village. There had been a nearer available cottage, but this required numerous repairs which were thought too expensive. The ailing Coates died soon afterwards. Morpeth worried that he had contributed to this death by making Coates walk further to work than he need have done. When he feared himself to be dying of a fever, the idea that he had disastrously placed his own self-interest above his tenant's welfare occupied his thought. He wrote that he still had 'scruples... in my mind' as to whether he had shown a 'want of due consideration' for Coates. Determined that there should be no similar instances, he set out an extensive statement of these events for the somewhat incredulous Loch, who replied that Morpeth's conduct had been 'unexampled, and indeed... uncalled for'.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, that Morpeth should have worried about this case when he thought he was about to meet his own Maker is highly revealing.

Coates was by no means the only tenant to receive Morpeth's personal attention. In 1844, for instance, he read the Bible to a dying shoemaker, returning several times to his cottage.¹¹⁹ More unusually, he also practised mesmerism on his tenants. He was one of many aristocrats to take up the fashionable craze for mesmerism which, as Alison Winter has detailed, swept early-Victorian society.¹²⁰ Like many, Morpeth's interest was catalysed in late 1844 by reading Harriet Martineau's account of her own

¹¹⁷ F5/98, Cottage census (including annotations in Morpeth's hand and Henderson's replies); John Henderson to 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 19th 1854; John Henderson to James Loch, July 27th 1854.

¹¹⁸ F5/118, Papers relating to the case of Thomas Coates, December 1853-January 1854.

¹¹⁹ J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 31st, April 4th, April 29th 1844.

¹²⁰ Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (London, 1998), which informs this section.

experiences with mesmerism.¹²¹ He was soon having a go at mesmerising people himself. This involved making passes with the hands close to the body of a subject, in the belief that the ‘animal magnetism’ of the mesmerist would induce them into a trance. Small wonder then that Morpeth’s mother Georgiana begged him to ‘be cautious’ lest this cause a scandal which might ruin his political career.¹²²

By the 1840s, mesmerism was far more popular in the provinces than in London, where it had been discredited.¹²³ Morpeth’s friends in the metropolis scoffed at his naïvety.¹²⁴ However, he was able to indulge his interest with impunity on the country house circuit in Yorkshire. He attended mesmeric demonstrations at Ravensworth, the North Yorkshire home of the Liddell family, and also struck up a friendship with the Yorkshire mesmerist Henry Thompson of Fairfield.¹²⁵ His interest in mesmerism therefore provides another interesting instance of his links to provincial culture.

Mesmerism was seen by its adherents as an exploration of the hidden powers of the mind. They claimed that it had the power to increase the intellectual capacities of subjects, and Morpeth believed that this was the case.¹²⁶ However, he was primarily drawn to mesmerism through its apparent medical applications. He lent his name to the London Mesmeric Infirmary, which offered treatments and conducted operations under the influence of mesmerism.¹²⁷ It was his conviction that mesmerism had the power to ease bodily ailments which led him to practice it on his tenants. Beginning in July 1845, he soon had a round of mesmeric ‘patients’, often visiting them to check on their welfare. He maintained this activity for around a year, until his interest in the topic gradually diminished.¹²⁸ Winter is thus correct to suggest that Morpeth’s mesmeric activities were an extension of his benevolent role as a landlord.¹²⁹

¹²¹ J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, November 25th 1844; J19/8/5, Diary of Lord Morpeth, December 12th, December 29th 1844.

¹²² J19/1/39/66, Georgiana Carlisle to Lord Morpeth, June 7th 1845.

¹²³ Winter, *Mesmerized*, pp. 109-36.

¹²⁴ J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, February 28th 1845.

¹²⁵ J19/1/40/1, Henry Thompson of Fairfield to Lord Morpeth, August 1845; J18/3/67/19, Lord Morpeth to Georgiana Carlisle, January 4th 1845, Ravensworth; J19/8/6, Diary of Lord Morpeth, January 4th 1845.

¹²⁶ J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, July 8th 1845.

¹²⁷ Winter, *Mesmerized*, p. 156.

¹²⁸ J19/8/8, Diary of Lord Morpeth, July 3rd 1845, July 10th 1845 (in Cumbria), July 24th, 27th 1845, August 11th 1845, September 4th 1845; J19/8/11, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 22nd 1846.

¹²⁹ Winter, *Mesmerized*, pp. 147-48.

Morpeth's evident concern for the poor seems to mark him out as a model Victorian paternal landowner. David Roberts has identified him as such in an account which traces the revival of paternalism among the early-Victorian elite.¹³⁰ Paternalism can be seen as involving a hierarchical, organic view of society in which all members were mutually dependent; landlords would act benevolently towards tenants, who in return would be expected to obey their superiors.¹³¹ Morpeth shared something of the paternalist mindset, being similarly concerned to promote an organic society. However, where paternalists were generally backwards-looking, aiming to enforce social hierarchies and foster dependency, Morpeth did neither. His actions on the estate aimed instead to increase the independence of his tenants and encourage their moral, spiritual and social improvement, part of the religiously-inspired attempt to encourage the progress of society which dominated his life. As will be seen in the following section, he did this through a number of projects on the estate, which had strong connections to his wider activities as a philanthropist and statesman.

Moral and Social Improvement at Castle Howard

One way in which Morpeth attempted to improve the morality of his tenants was by restraining what he saw as immoral behaviour. He thus discontinued patronage of the popular Castle Howard steeplechase because he thought it encouraged cruelty to the horses, took measures to reduce the amount of alcohol consumed by his servants, and was outraged to find that one tenant had 'contracted an illegal marriage by highly discreditable means'.¹³² In the main, he left moral discipline on the estate to Henderson, who approached the task with a certain relish; on one occasion he determined to rid the estate of the unfortunate Rose Blakey, who he described as a 'very base strumpet', the mistress of a house of 'vice and immorality'.¹³³

At first sight, this approval of authoritarianism does not seem to fit with the more progressive and benevolent sides to Morpeth's character. In fact, there was no inherent contradiction between this and the exercise of authority. As has been seen,

¹³⁰ David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London, 1979), p. 8, 232, 265.

¹³¹ Roberts, *Paternalism*, pp. 2-10 for a general definition of paternalism which informs this section.

¹³² J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 17th 1845; J19/8/36, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, April 20th 1858; F5/3, Lord Morpeth to John Henderson, March 16th 1843; 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, December 22nd [no year given, but arranged with 1849 letters].

¹³³ F5/2/3, John Henderson to Mr Lewis, November 17th 1836, emphasis in original.

liberals were concerned to foster the ‘character’ of individuals, which involved overcoming man’s inherently passionate nature. It followed that those who seemed immoral could be deemed to have become a slave to their passions. For liberals, such people were not truly free. Authority might be legitimately employed to make them so - free from the consequences of their own weakness.¹³⁴ It is perhaps in this sense that Morpeth attempted to ‘save’ one alcoholic innkeeper by removing him from his inn: a highly authoritarian act, but one which he considered to be kindly.¹³⁵

In the main, however, Morpeth’s actions on the estate were far more benign than these examples suggest. One of the first projects he set up was the provision of allotments, which were introduced at Bulmer, Slingsby, Terrington and Coneysthorpe in 1832. Estate correspondence suggests that this was done at Morpeth’s instigation, despite the fact that the 6th Earl was still very much involved in estate management at that time.¹³⁶ Allotment provision in England expanded dramatically in the early 1830s due to the efforts of the Labourers’ Friend Society (L. F. S.), which promoted the idea that allotments reduced social tension and encouraged sobriety, independence and self-reliance. As Jeremy Burchardt has detailed, although it was non-partisan, the Society’s progressive ethos particularly appealed to liberals. It received support from Whigs such as the Duke of Bedford, Viscount Ebrington, W. F. Cowper and Morpeth himself, who was one of its most politically prominent patrons in the 1830s.¹³⁷

At an L. F. S. meeting in 1834, Morpeth dwelt on the ‘striking’ contrast between those labourers who had allotments and those who had not. ‘The one class’, he opined, ‘went to the public house, deserting for the time their wife and children... the others could be seen with a spade in their hands, busily employed in making comfortable provision for their wives and families’. He further suggested that allotments showed how ‘much more good might be accomplished by voluntary exertions than by legislative enactments’, and moved that the moral effect of

¹³⁴ This represents one reading of the arguments made in Peter Mandler (ed.), *Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2006), and especially Jonathan Parry, ‘Liberalism and Liberty’ in this volume, 93.

¹³⁵ J19/8/12, Diary of Lord Morpeth, September 10th 1846.

¹³⁶ F5/2/2, John Henderson to Lord Morpeth, January 4th 1832.

¹³⁷ Jeremy Burchardt, *The Allotment Movement in England, 1793-1873* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 74-94.

allotments was such as to commend them throughout the kingdom.¹³⁸ In this light, the introduction of allotments at Castle Howard was an attempt to increase the morality and industriousness of its population. Henderson dutifully reported that they increased the diligence of the tenants.¹³⁹

However, as might be expected given his own religiosity, the major way in which Morpeth attempted to improve the morality of the estate was through religion. As has been seen, he believed all Christians should spread religious knowledge. In 1843, he undertook a project to distribute Bibles around Castle Howard, providing copies to all households in the district who did not have one (even non-tenants) at his own expense.¹⁴⁰ Churches also played an important role in his evangelism. The Howards possessed the livings of Slingsby and Hovingham. Morpeth often attended services in these and other local churches. The spectacle of the Victorian landlord checking up on his tenants from the front pew of the village church is almost a cliché, so it is worth re-emphasising that these were genuine acts of worship, expressing real and deep seated convictions. Thus, on attending a missionary meeting in Coneysthorpe, he recorded that ‘it was impossible not to feel much emotion. May I be more led to know what things one ought to live for’.¹⁴¹

Nevertheless, by attending services, he could assess the likely success of the preaching. He was particularly vexed by Revd. Hodgson, the incumbent of Coneysthorpe, whose sermons he felt too gloomy and occasionally ‘very Calvinistic’. He once despaired when Hodgson delivered a sermon attacking Tractarian essayists, whom, he noted, could ‘hardly be known to the grey-fathers and young labourers’ in the congregation.¹⁴² It is undoubtedly significant that Revd. William Carter, whom Morpeth himself appointed to the living of Slingsby, was a man whose abilities and opinions were previously well-known to him.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Speech of Lord Morpeth at the Labourers’ Friend Society annual meeting, *Morning Chronicle*, March 20th 1834, p. 4

¹³⁹ J19/1/6/22, John Henderson to Lord Morpeth [not dated].

¹⁴⁰ J19/17, ‘Distribution of Bibles on the estates by Lord Morpeth, 1843’.

¹⁴¹ J19/8/29, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, July 29th 1852

¹⁴² J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 27th 1845; J19/8/31, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 10th 1854; J19/8/6, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 7th 1858.

¹⁴³ Morpeth commented positively about Carter in his journal before appointing him; J19/8/27, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 3rd 1851; J19/8/29, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, July 29th 1852.

More significantly in terms of the landscapes of his estates, Morpeth also sought to increase the spiritual opportunities of his tenants by building new churches. He contributed to the church of St. James the Great at Morpeth, begun in 1844 by his brother-in-law Revd. Francis Grey. He also funded the church of St. John the Evangelist at Welburn, the first ever in the village, seen below in Illustration Nine. This was begun in 1859 and dedicated to the memory of his mother. His speech on laying the foundation stone of St. James' Church in Morpeth gives an insight into his motives. He hoped that it would bring 'the constraining influences of the sanctuary into the wider commerce of actual life'.¹⁴⁴

Despite this support of local Anglicanism, the Howards' Whiggish belief in religious tolerance showed in their accommodating attitude towards dissenters on the estate. This was echoed by their fellow Yorkshire Whig the 5th Earl Fitzwilliam, who granted land and money to Catholics and dissenters on his estates.¹⁴⁵ At Castle Howard, the 6th Earl of Carlisle gave a piece of ground for the local Methodist population to build a chapel at Slingsby.¹⁴⁶ As a Liberal Anglican, Morpeth naturally continued his father's tradition of toleration. He happily gave £10 to the local Catholic priest to allow him to convert a building in Coneysthorpe into a small chapel. This outraged the unfortunate Revd. Hodgson, who accused him of encouraging 'the very masterpiece of Satan' in his parish.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Speech reported in *The Morning Chronicle*, July 30th 1844, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ D. J. Gratton, 'Paternalism, Patronage and Estate Management: The Fifth Earl Fitzwilliam, 1786-1857' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Sheffield University, 1999), pp. 96-97. For Fitzwilliam's active and sometimes controversial support for the tolerant Irish education system on his Irish estates, see also D. J. Gratton, 'The Fifth Earl Fitzwilliam and the School Wars', *Irish Economic and Social History*, 29 (2002), 23-40.

¹⁴⁶ R3/1, Wesleyan Methodists to 6th Earl of Carlisle, October 31 1836; F6/1, John Henderson to James Loch, February 28th 1837.

¹⁴⁷ J19/8/2, Diary of Lord Morpeth, March 1st, 7th 1844; J19/1/37/51, Revd. C. Hodgson to Lord Morpeth, March 7th 1844.

ILLUSTRATION NINE: The Church of St. John the Evangelist, Welburn



Photograph of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Welburn, begun in the late 1850s by Lord Morpeth and dedicated to the memory of his mother, Georgiana Carlisle.

Morpeth's actions in patronising nonconformity on his land were entirely fitting given his religious beliefs, but were also politically useful. As he was a politician claiming the support of dissenters, any intolerance on the Howard estates would certainly have been remarked upon. In the 1835 West Riding election, for instance, one Methodist declared his support for Morpeth rather than his Tory opponent John Stuart Wortley on the grounds that the latter's father, Lord Wharncliffe, had driven Methodists out of his Yorkshire estate; a reminder that the actions of statesmen outside the formal political arena were far from non-political.¹⁴⁸

After religious instruction, it was to education which Morpeth most looked to encourage the moral, intellectual and spiritual improvement of the estate population. The Castle Howard estate contained a number of schools controlled or financed by the Howard family. Morpeth regarded supporting these as a key duty. After a bout of illness in 1849, he worried that he had 'not been as active as I ought about schools and management of that sort'.¹⁴⁹ This undoubtedly reflects the fact that elementary education in this period had a strong religious component. Morpeth probably also regarded the ability to read the word of God as a vital tool for religious belief. Significantly, his papers relating to the distribution of Bibles in the Castle Howard villages include a table detailing the schooling and literacy rates of local families, suggesting he believed this to be important for their religious condition.¹⁵⁰

Morpeth's stronger faith meant that he was a far keener patron of education on his estates than his father, who once turned down an application to contribute to a local Sunday School, stating that he did 'not much approve of them'.¹⁵¹ Long before he inherited the estate it was Morpeth, rather than the 6th Earl, who drove the construction of a new school for the children of miners on the Naworth estate. He also

¹⁴⁸ Letter to the editor from 'A Wesleyan', *Leeds Mercury*, May 9 1835, p. 8. Another delicious if entirely eccentric example of the political import of estate life, far too good not to record here, is provided by the visit of one Anglican to Castle Howard on an excursion in 1851. This man's eye was drawn by two cross-shaped flowerbeds under Morpeth's window. Possibly with the recent 'Papal Aggression' crisis in mind, the man wrote to remind Morpeth that crosses were the 'symbol of a very powerful agitating party', to which visitors might think he belonged. He worried that, as it was known that Morpeth had the Queen's ear, this might produce an 'unfortunate impression' (J19/1/50/35, 'A well wisher to the Church of England' to 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 30th 1851). There is no sign that any of the other visitors detected an ecclesiastical crisis looming in Castle Howard's horticulture.

¹⁴⁹ J19/8/21, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, September 12th 1849.

¹⁵⁰ J19/17, 'Distribution of Bibles on the estates by Lord Morpeth, 1843'.

¹⁵¹ F6/3, 6th Earl of Carlisle to James Loch, January 7th 1827.

personally helped finance a school at Welburn in the late 1830s.¹⁵² Educational facilities were expanded still further upon his succession to the estates. The Castle Howard accounts indicate that the amount spent on the estate schools went from £50 19s in 1830 to £128 in 1855. In the mid-1850s Morpeth paid an additional £118 for a new school for boys at Slingsby, of which he declared himself ‘very pleased’.¹⁵³

As was seen in the last chapter, Morpeth was a decided enthusiast for state involvement in education, and became embroiled in the controversy over the Whigs’ educational plans of 1847. This seems to have had an impact on his estate practice. At the height of the controversy, he ordered Henderson to place all schoolmasters ‘upon a respectable footing’, with each master to be given £50 p.a.¹⁵⁴ This may have reflected a desire to ensure that his private practice matched his public rhetoric about providing adequate salaries to schoolmasters. By the late 1850s, the estate schools at Welburn and Bulmer had been placed under state inspection, and benefited from the system of grants and apprenticeships which Morpeth had helped to introduce.¹⁵⁵

Morpeth also brought his enthusiasm for adult education to the estate. In late 1852, he established the Castle Howard United Villages Itinerating Library, a set of eight separate libraries in individual villages on or near the estate who shared books on a circulating system. This was inspired by similar ventures established elsewhere in Yorkshire under the auspices of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics’ Institutes, one of his favourite philanthropic causes. Morpeth provided money and some initial books, leaving the organisation to an effervescent preacher with the extraordinary name of Ishmael Fish, who had been a missionary among the navvies of the Malton and Driffield railway. At the same time, Morpeth promised to establish a reading room on the estate, and one was duly provided at Slingsby.

These projects were clearly designed to stimulate the moral improvement of the district. Morpeth established the reading room with a view to ‘forming the character and promoting the moral and social well-being’ of the estate population, whilst the

¹⁵² F6/3, James Loch to 6th Earl of Carlisle, May 1st 1841; L1, Castle Howard school papers.

¹⁵³ F5/5, Castle Howard Annual Accounts; J19/8/33, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 16th 1855.

¹⁵⁴ F5/3, Lord Morpeth to John Henderson, April 12th 1847.

¹⁵⁵ L1, Castle Howard school papers.

library itself was comprised of books of a useful or morally didactic kind.¹⁵⁶ The 325 subscribers could enjoy practical works on agriculture, the works of Austen and Dickens, a volume of *Working Men's Essays on the Sabbath*, and moralistic novels such as Catherine Sedgwick's *The Rich Poor Man and Poor Rich Man*, which has as its theme the idea that the virtuous but humble labourer could be happier than the wealthiest aristocrat. Fish hopefully recorded that the library was having a beneficial effect on the 'manners and morals' of the estate.¹⁵⁷

Fish dedicated himself to the task, stating that he hoped to 'exhaust' himself in 'the earnest advocacy of all matters relating to the people's advancement and elevation'. Unsurprisingly, Morpeth was drawn to the missionary, claiming to like him 'almost better than anybody' for the way he was 'full of heart and hope'.¹⁵⁸ Morpeth chose Fish to be the superintendent of another estate project which aimed at moral reform, and which again had links to his wider interests outside the estate; the Castle Howard Juvenile Reformatory. The Reformatory was established in 1855 in the context of rising concerns about juvenile crime in populous towns, part of wider worries about the baleful moral influence of the urban environment. Contemporaries worried that children were being sucked into a licentious, dissipated and criminal lifestyle as a result of being raised in godless and hedonistic urban surroundings.¹⁵⁹

More broadly speaking, Martin Weiner has argued that anxiety about juvenile crime reflected the abiding early-Victorian concern, traced throughout this thesis, with the idea of character. The spectre of adolescent criminals was so horrifying because they seemed to have given in to the savage passions which lurked within them.¹⁶⁰ Yet contemporary reformers never lost hope that they might be redeemed. In an influential work dedicated to Lord Morpeth, the prison reformer Thomas Beggs

¹⁵⁶ *Report of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes, Read at the Sixteenth Annual Meeting, Held in Thirsk, May 18th 1853* (Leeds, 1853), pp. 12-13, 26-28; F5/5, Castle Howard estate accounts.

¹⁵⁷ J19/1/53/31, Ishmael Fish to 7th Earl of Carlisle, March 15th 1853 (enclosing a library catalogue); J19/1/60/36, Ishmael Fish to 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 11th 1854.

¹⁵⁸ J19/1/51/95, Ishmael Fish to 7th Earl of Carlisle, October 16th 1852; J19/1/34, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, November 18th 1856.

¹⁵⁹ Martin Wiener, *Reconstructing the Criminal: Culture, Law and Policy in England, 1830-1914* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 17-26; Heather Shore, *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 19-23; Margaret May, 'Innocence and Experience: The Evolution of the Concept of Juvenile Delinquency in the Mid-Nineteenth-Century', *Victorian Studies*, 17:1 (1973), 7-29.

¹⁶⁰ Wiener, *Reconstructing the Criminal*, pp. 26-35.

argued that ‘the spark of Divinity resident in all God’s reasoning creatures survives to the last... in the hearts of the most abandoned, the crime-seared and the callous, there is some chord that would vibrate to the touch of kindness’.¹⁶¹ What was needed was a prison system which combined discipline with moral reform. Reformers argued that the current system failed in this, instead exacerbating the problem by sending adolescents to jail alongside hardened adult criminals, who encouraged their delinquency.¹⁶²

Responding to these concerns, the 1854 Reformatory Schools Act gave magistrates permission to send young criminals under the age of sixteen to private reformatories after a prison term of fourteen days. The Castle Howard Reformatory, pictured below as Illustration Ten, was one of sixty-one private reformatories established in England and Wales between the passing of this Act and 1871.¹⁶³ Like the majority of these institutions, it was founded by the landed elite as an extension of their roles as magistrates. Its origin can be traced to the North and East Riding Quarter Sessions of July 1855, at which concerns were expressed about the rising juvenile crime rate in Yorkshire’s towns. A Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders in the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire was established, with Morpeth as President and William Harcourt, the dynamic son of the late Archbishop of York, a driving force.

At its inaugural meeting in October, the Society recommended the formation of an institution for boys which would offer moral and religious instruction and vocational training. Morpeth offered a plot of land east of Welburn, stating that the inmates could train in agriculture on an attached farm.¹⁶⁴ As John Stack has detailed, most reformatories were established in rural locations, reflecting the belief that this was more conducive to moral behaviour than the temptations of the city.¹⁶⁵ Morpeth’s proposal was eagerly seized upon by the committee. A temporary dwelling was soon opened and replaced by a purpose-built structure in late 1856. The Government (of

¹⁶¹ Thomas Beggs, *An Inquiry into the Causes and Extent of Juvenile Depravity, Dedicated by Special Permission to the Right Hon. The Earl of Carlisle* (London, 1849), p. 41.

¹⁶² Wiener, *Reconstructing the Criminal*, pp. 131-41.

¹⁶³ John Stack, ‘The Provision of Reformatory Schools, the Landed Class, and the Myth of the Superiority of Rural Life in Mid-Victorian England’, *History of Education*, 8:1 (1979), 33-43.

¹⁶⁴ *Report of a Committee Appointed to Recommend a Plan of Reformatory Schools for the North and East Ridings of the County of York* (York, 1855).

¹⁶⁵ Stack, ‘Provision of Reformatory Schools’, 33-43.

which Morpeth was a member) provided financial assistance by funding some of the costs of the reformatory and granting an allowance for each inmate.¹⁶⁶

As superintendent, it was Ishmael Fish's job to provide moral and spiritual guidance to the inmates. He sought to teach 'moral discipline... self-control... self-denial... ready obedience... steady application' and 'fear of God', believing that the boys' problems stemmed from the fact that they were 'estranged from God in heart'.¹⁶⁷ This was in keeping with the thought of many juvenile reformers, who were generally convinced that youthful criminality had its origins in the want of a religious upbringing.¹⁶⁸ Despite this earnestness, the Reformatory caused friction on the estate, with its boys being charged with two cases of poaching by the estate staff. Morpeth had to intervene to restore harmony to his pet project.¹⁶⁹

Such setbacks aside, the Reformatory provided a perfect outlet for Morpeth's enthusiasm for moral and social reform. He considered it to be 'one of the chief attractions' of Castle Howard.¹⁷⁰ In both his political and non-political capacities, he had long been interested in prison reform. In 1848 he chaired a meeting of the Philanthropic Society, which established a juvenile reformatory to teach gardening and farm labour at Redhill in Surrey.¹⁷¹ This institution was a major influence on the men who founded the Castle Howard Reformatory. Upon visiting it in 1852, Morpeth was struck with the good manners of the inmates, and noted that 'I shall like the recollection of that summer hay field, with the 120 thieves making it'.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ *Report of the Committee of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders for the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, 1856* (York, 1857), p. 10.

¹⁶⁷ *Report of the Committee of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Offenders for the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, 1856* (York, 1857), p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ Heather Shore, *Artful Dodgers: Youth and Crime in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 37.

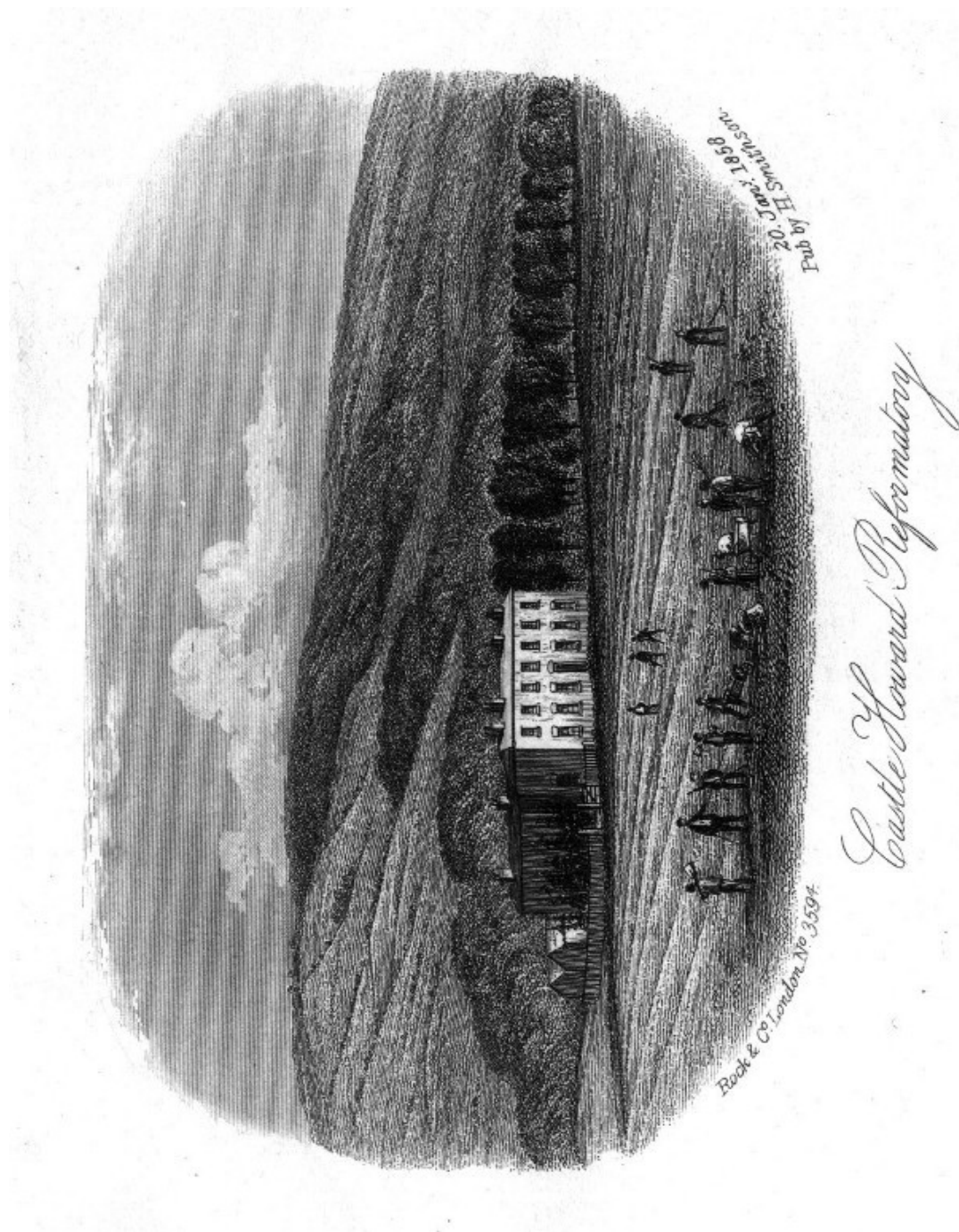
¹⁶⁹ L6/5, Reformatory papers, documents on 'The Rabbit Question'.

¹⁷⁰ J19/9/13, Handwritten speech on prison reform delivered by 7th Earl of Carlisle at the annual meeting of the Social Science Association in Liverpool, October 1858.

¹⁷¹ *The Morning Chronicle*, February 28th 1848, p. 3.

¹⁷² J19/8/29, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, July 5th 1852. Redhill's example also influenced William Harcourt's involvement in the Castle Howard Reformatory; Edward William Harcourt (ed.), *The Harcourt Papers: Vol. XIV: Memoir of William Harcourt* (Oxford, 1905), p. 207.

ILLUSTRATION TEN: Castle Howard Juvenile Reformatory School



Print of the Castle Howard Juvenile Reformatory School (1858), from the Castle Howard Collection.

Morpeth had also developed an interest in the reformation of criminals through his role as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, through which he patronised the work of the Irish prison reformer Captain Walter Crofton. Crofton's 'Irish system' started out with strict discipline, and then progressively rewarded prisoners for good behaviour, until at the end they were treated with sympathy and encouragement.¹⁷³ A similar system seems to have been in place at Castle Howard. In a speech to the Social Science Association in 1858, Morpeth linked the two organisations, arguing that they both showed that the key to reforming criminals was the provision of moral guidance from a benevolent mentor. He opined that 'the machinery which, under the blessing from above, we can mainly rely, is one human heart acting upon another human heart'.¹⁷⁴

Morpeth's projects on the Castle Howard estate were therefore linked in various ways to his wider interests as a statesman and philanthropist. One final area, in which those links are perhaps most evident, is that of health. Morpeth demonstrated an abiding concern with the health of his tenantry, and sought to improve this through a number of reforms on the estate. Many of these were initially instigated between 1846 and 1850, the same period in which his political engagement with public health was at its most intense. Rosemary Hayden has suggested that improvements made in health and housing on Lord Palmerston's estate at Broadlands in Hampshire were sparked by Palmerston's political involvement with public health in the late 1840s and early 1850s.¹⁷⁵ It seems that a similar thing happened at Castle Howard.

However, this may also have been a two-way process; it is quite possible that Morpeth became so interested in public health because he was engaged with sanitation on his estate. In 1832, the Howards' had taken steps to tackle the cholera outbreak on their Yorkshire and Cumberland estates, with the estate staff becoming

¹⁷³ Lawrence Goldman, *Science, Reform and Politics in Victorian Britain: The Social Science Association, 1857-1886* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 155-59.

¹⁷⁴ J19/9/13, Handwritten speech on prison reform delivered by 7th Earl of Carlisle at the annual meeting of the Social Science Association in Liverpool, October 1858.

¹⁷⁵ Rosemary Hayden, 'Health and Housing: Lord Palmerston as Hampshire Proprietor, c.1807-1865', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society*, 58 (2003), 254-67. Palmerston's interest in public health at estate level is also recorded in a recent article on his Irish land; Desmond Norton, 'On Lord Palmerston's Irish Estates in the 1840s', *English Historical Review*, 119:484 (2004), 1254-74.

involved in local committees formed to whitewash and clean houses in the villages.¹⁷⁶ Fatal diseases such as this periodically hit the estate, and Morpeth saw first hand the grief this caused. In April 1845, his diary records the case of Richard Spruce (father of the famed botanist), a schoolmaster at Welburn who lost three of his children to scarlet fever.¹⁷⁷

Morpeth was eager to do all he could to avoid similar cases. He seems to have felt responsible for the health of his tenantry, feeling that any appearance of fever would be a ‘personal discredit’ to him.¹⁷⁸ In 1847, he sent Henderson a list of regulations to follow to avoid typhus, and in 1854 ordered him to encourage the tenantry to be vaccinated against smallpox.¹⁷⁹ Upon inheriting the Howard estates in 1848, Morpeth wrote to Henderson to state that he was ‘really anxious about the sanitary condition of the villages’. He reiterated this to Loch, expressing his wish that ‘ingenious steps’ should be taken to improve the sanitation of all his estates, and that this was to be a priority for expenditure.¹⁸⁰ Morpeth was to take some inspiration in this from the ‘peerless’ sanitary improvements conducted by the Norcliffe family at nearby Langton, which were much admired by the Howards.¹⁸¹

The first element in the improvement programme at Castle Howard was the removal of offensive smells or ‘miasmas’ which were thought by some early-Victorian sanitary reformers such as Edwin Chadwick to spread disease. In 1854, for instance, Morpeth drew Henderson’s attention to a set of ‘wretched houses’ at Terrington, where the ‘smells from the Privy are very offensive’.¹⁸² Morpeth’s attention had been drawn to the medical importance of such ‘nuisances’ through his political involvement in public health. Partly in response to the threat of cholera, in 1846 he passed the Public Nuisance Removal Act, which empowered local authorities to

¹⁷⁶ F6/1 John Henderson to James Loch, January 7th 1832; John Ramshay to James Loch, February 4th 1832.

¹⁷⁷ J19/8/7, Diary of Lord Morpeth, April 2nd 1845. My thanks to Dr Christopher Ridgway for drawing this reference to my attention.

¹⁷⁸ F5/3, 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, November 3rd 1848.

¹⁷⁹ F5/3, Lord Morpeth to John Henderson, September 29th 1847, October 17th 1854. Morpeth’s encouragement of vaccination in the mid-1850s suggests that by this stage he may have moved away from the ‘miasmatic’ understanding of disease discussed below.

¹⁸⁰ F5/3, 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, November 3rd 1848; F6/1, 7th Earl of Carlisle to James Loch, November 7th 1848.

¹⁸¹ J19/1/46/70, Mary Howard to 7th Earl of Carlisle, January 10th 1849; J19/8/21, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, May 28th 1849.

¹⁸² F5/98, Cottage census, remarks in Morpeth’s hand on the cottages at Terrington.

remove nuisances on the testimony of medical officers.¹⁸³ In 1848, he encouraged Henderson to set up local committees around Castle Howard to deal with nuisances.¹⁸⁴ His papers also include an 1853 list of ‘offensive’ smells at Slingsby reported by the local medical officer, suggesting this was related to his Act. The list shows that these nuisances were subsequently removed, possibly by the estate staff.¹⁸⁵

When cholera once more hit Yorkshire in 1849, Morpeth’s role in local government saw him help establish a local board of health at Malton, using the powers he had established through his 1848 Public Health Act and oversaw in his capacity as the Chairman of the General Board of Health.¹⁸⁶ Morpeth also aimed to improve the sanitation on the estate through the provision of superior drainage and a healthier water supply. He was particularly concerned that Terrington’s water came from an ‘unwholesome pond’, and insisted this be replaced with a well or fountain.¹⁸⁷

Finally, he also concentrated on improving the estate’s housing. Whilst repairs to cottages had been a common feature in the estate accounts, he was the first owner of Castle Howard to apply a regular sum to such improvements.¹⁸⁸ He ordered the removal of dilapidated or overcrowded dwellings on the estate, and asked for new and more spacious ones to be built in their place.¹⁸⁹ This was part of a larger project of cottage building on the estate, started by his father in the mid-1830s and continued more extensively in the 1870s by his brother Edward, Lord Lanerton.¹⁹⁰ Morpeth’s conscience may well have been pricked here by the case of Richard Spruce detailed above; after the death of his children, Spruce asked for a healthier cottage, indirectly laying the blame for his grief at the Howards’ door.¹⁹¹

¹⁸³ *Parliamentary Papers*, Contagious Diseases Prevention: A Bill for the more speedy Removal of certain Nuisances, and to enable the Privy Council to make Regulations for the Prevention of Contagious and Epidemic Diseases, 1846 (393), I.393.

¹⁸⁴ F5/3, 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, November 3rd 1848.

¹⁸⁵ C28/10, paper headed ‘Nuisances Reported by Dr Borton’.

¹⁸⁶ J19/8/21, Diary of 7th Earl of Carlisle, August 4th 1849.

¹⁸⁷ F5/3, 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, November 3rd 1848; F5/98, Cottage census, remarks in Morpeth’s hand on Terrington.

¹⁸⁸ F5/3, 7th Earl of Carlisle to John Henderson, November 8th 1854.

¹⁸⁹ F5/98, Cottage Census, comments relating to Slingsby and Terrington [1854].

¹⁹⁰ F5/81, Cottage Building Papers. Edward Howard ran the estate in trust after Morpeth’s death on account of the mental infirmity of his elder brother (and Morpeth’s heir) William, 8th Earl of Carlisle.

¹⁹¹ F5/1, Richard Spruce to 6th Earl of Carlisle, April 13th 1845

The idea that overcrowded and ill-ventilated cottages encouraged the spread of disease had been well-publicised by Edwin Chadwick in his 1842 *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*.¹⁹² As noted in the previous chapter, Morpeth worked with Chadwick when formulating his public health proposals. After the passing of his Public Health Act of 1848, Chadwick became Morpeth's subordinate at the newly established General Board of Health. Morpeth was able to draw on Chadwick's knowledge of healthy building design when constructing new cottages on his Morpeth estate in 1849. Morpeth also sent one of the General Board's sanitary inspectors to the town, and eagerly read the subsequent report.¹⁹³ There were therefore numerous links between his concern with health as a landowner and his political involvement with sanitation.

More speculatively, his attempts to improve the housing on his estate may also have been a part of the interest he displayed in the morality of his tenantry. As seen in Chapter Three, there was an established link in early-Victorian thought between immorality and overcrowding. Victorian moralists were almost obsessed by the idea that forcing unmarried strangers and siblings of different sexes to sleep in the same room encouraged incest, promiscuity and prostitution by degrading their sense of propriety. Although these concerns were targeted mainly at urban slums, they also applied to rural cottages. It was also worried that overcrowded rural accommodation reduced domestic values and promoted intemperance by increasing the incentive to leave the cottage for the ale-house.¹⁹⁴ All of these anxieties had been well-explored in Chadwick's *Report*.¹⁹⁵ Morpeth too worried about the 'moral dangers' of overcrowding.¹⁹⁶ It is therefore quite possible that this influenced his practice on the Castle Howard estate.

¹⁹² Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*, edited and with an introduction by M. W. Flinn (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 84-86.

¹⁹³ Chadwick Papers (University College London, Special Collections), 1055, V, f. 578, 7th Earl of Carlisle to Edwin Chadwick, April 9th 1849; Chadwick Papers, 1055, VI, f. 5, 7th Earl of Carlisle to Edwin Chadwick, undated.

¹⁹⁴ John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1895* (2nd edn., London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 44-46.

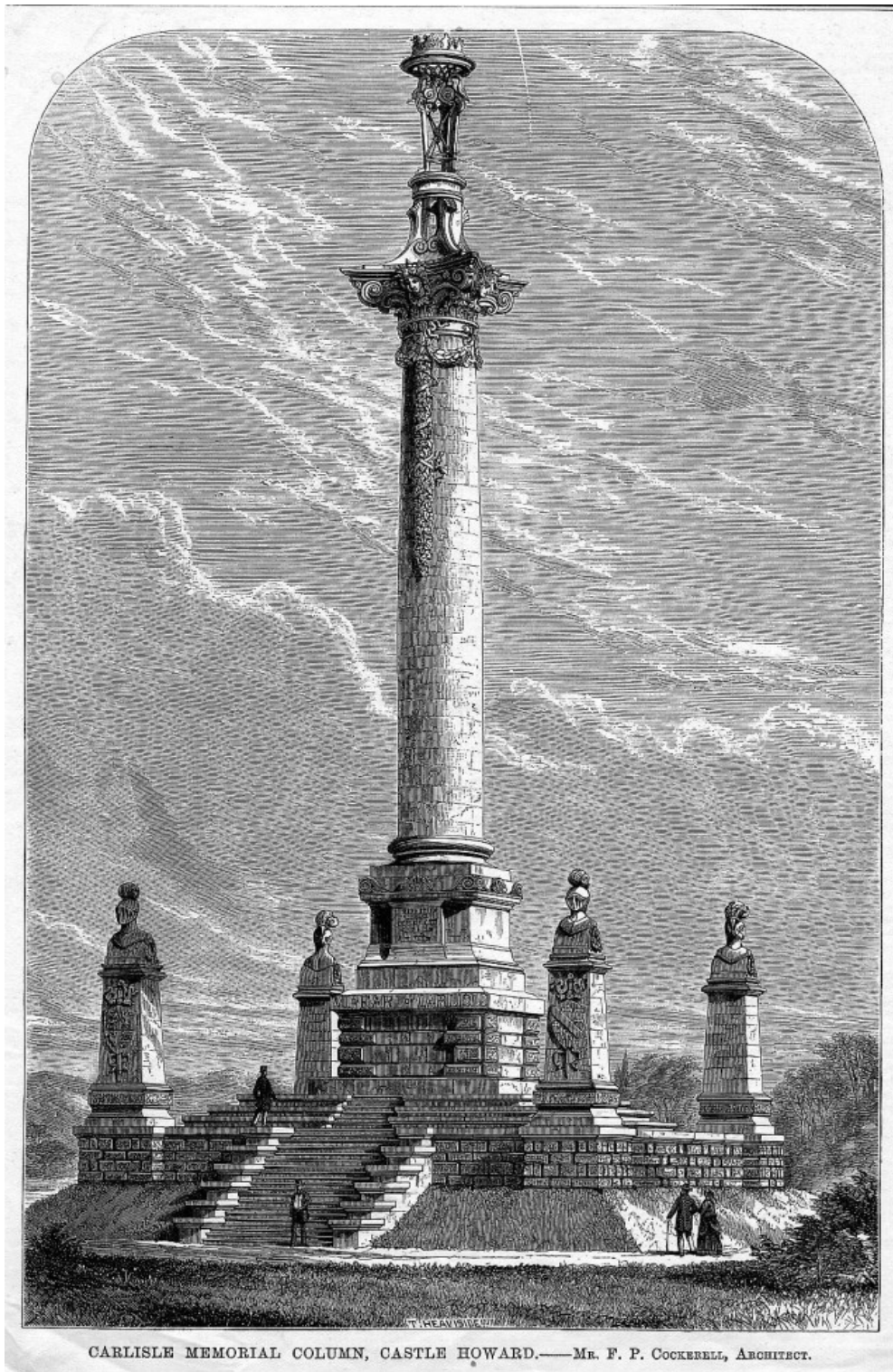
¹⁹⁵ Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population*, pp. 323-34.

¹⁹⁶ Speech of Lord Morpeth on the lodgings of female factory workers, Bradford, reported in *Leeds Mercury*, October 10th 1846, p. 7.

Summary

In summary, this chapter has suggested that Morpeth had a close relationship with the Castle Howard estate. He was highly attached to the house, and well-integrated into the local community through his participation in its social life and its structures of local administration. He was also keenly involved in attempts to improve the estate and its wider district through agricultural and railway development. At the same time, his actions on the estate cannot be divorced from his broader life. Many of his actions as a landowner, especially those concerned with the moral improvement and social condition of his tenantry, were linked to his values and activities as a philanthropist and statesman. There is arguably a need for more information about what the Whig aristocracy did on their country estates, but Morpeth's example suggests that a strong interest in rural concerns was fully compatible with the Whig ethos.

ILLUSTRATION ELEVEN: The Carlisle Memorial Column



CARLISLE MEMORIAL COLUMN, CASTLE HOWARD.—MR. F. P. COCKERELL, ARCHITECT.

Engraving of a column erected to the memory of Lord Morpeth on the approach to Castle Howard.

CONCLUSION

On December 5th 1864, Lord Morpeth, by then 7th Earl of Carlisle, died at his home of Castle Howard. In an expansive obituary, the *Leeds Mercury* declared that he would ‘never be forgotten... until the last of the present generation of Yorkshiremen is laid in his grave’.¹ It was decided to arrange a tribute to him in the county. The resulting meetings were attended by his political supporters, his friends among the region’s gentry, and many of his tenants. They lauded his public service as a politician and local governor and his benevolence as a philanthropist and landlord.² They elected to construct a column in his memory on the approach to Castle Howard. Paid for by public subscription, its foundation stone was laid in August 1867.³ It stands to this day, a lasting reminder of Morpeth’s close relationship with Yorkshire.

It has been the business of this thesis to uncover that relationship. It remains to summarise these findings, and explore what they might tell us about early-Victorian politics and society in general, and the Whigs in particular. Before doing this, it is as well to sound a cautionary note. As a case-study of a single man, however representative, this thesis cannot claim to ‘prove’ anything about Whiggery as a whole. Nevertheless, it does add to our knowledge of the Whigs, provides a critical test of some existing assumptions, and indicates some possible lines of future research.

Firstly, Morpeth’s example offers a strong challenge to accounts which present early-Victorian Whiggery as exclusive, metropolitan and worldly. As his column attests, and as this thesis has shown, he was a man who fully engaged not just with the political, but also with the social, cultural, and religious life of the provinces. Indeed, the *Leeds Mercury* revealingly suggested that this was a large part of his appeal as a public figure:

¹ *Leeds Mercury*, December 6th 1864, p. 2.

² Reports of meetings in *Leeds Mercury*, June 25th 1865, p. 8; November 30th 1865, p. 3; February 8th 1866, p. 3.

³ *Leeds Mercury*, August 14th 1867, p. 3.

‘Had the aristocracy of England manifested the vices, the corruption, the social separation from the people, displayed by the old nobility of France, they would probably long ere this have disappeared from the face of the earth. But they have always avoided these errors, and been content in many things to become the leaders, and in many ways the followers, of public opinion. Of late this spirit has been particularly active, and to no member of the aristocracy does this spirit owe its prevalence more than to our common friend... the Earl of Carlisle’.⁴

This comment might easily be presented as part of a familiar narrative tracing the gradual diminution of aristocratic power, expressed most clearly in David Cannadine’s magisterial *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*. In this view of the nineteenth-century, the rising sway of first the middle and then the working classes reduced the aristocracy’s political authority. Their legitimacy came to rest on their ability to adapt to this situation; they become directors of firms, patrons of good causes, ornaments adorning civic life. Provincial prestige took the place of influence at Westminster, and was a poor replacement for it.⁵

Without denying the overall force of this narrative, it has been seen that, for Morpeth, provincial activity went hand-in-hand with political power, informing his views of government and adding to his political appeal. This thesis has presented his career as a statesman in the context of a wider culture which valued philanthropic activity, dutiful service and moral endeavour. It was argued that he aimed to encourage this culture through social reforms. Yet his agreement with these values also led him to eschew fashionable metropolitanism, and personally participate in spheres of dutiful activity in Yorkshire. His patronage of Mechanics’ Institutes, religious missions and the like attached him to his supporters and shaped his political views. One instance of this was provided by his support of the teacher-training college in York, which influenced his thought on the contentious question of state involvement in education.

This thesis has therefore suggested that there was a close relationship between Morpeth’s political and non-political activities, and between his provincial life and

⁴ *Leeds Mercury*, October 18th 1861, p. 3.

⁵ David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, 1990), esp. pp. 35-87, 139-67, 182-222, 391-420, 557-88. There is an echo of this position in Peter Mandler’s account of the fate of the Whigs after the end of Russell’s Ministry; Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, pp. 274-80.

his career at Westminster. This is not to suggest that one somehow determined the other. However, it is to say that in order to fully understand his position and actions as a politician, it is necessary to appreciate his life in the round. Critics might object that all of this is rather self-evident. Yet this sort of holistic approach is not common in political history, whose focus on elections, meetings and Parliamentary manoeuvres frequently leaves little room for what statesmen did elsewhere.

This sort of distinction between formal political life and extra-political activity is conceptually problematic in Morpeth's case, because of the overwhelming influence his faith had on his actions. It was suggested that his religious beliefs underpinned his attachment to key liberal principles such as free trade and religious tolerance. It also led him to adopt a positive view of the role the state might play in tackling social problems, which he defined primarily in moral and religious terms. Above all, Morpeth's piety caused him to have a deep commitment to the notion of disinterested service. Whilst this drove his participation in political life and shaped his thought on topics such as economic policy, it also motivated his actions as a philanthropist and landlord.

There was accordingly a strong connection between these areas of his life, which collectively might all be seen to have reflected an emphasis on the need for individuals to subordinate their own passions and wishes to the general good. This ideological association between the political and non-political was arguably not untypical of contemporary liberalism. Let us take, by way of example, the case of Edward Baines Junior, who in 1851 published a biography of his father, *The Life of Edward Baines*. This is as rich a statement of early-Victorian liberal values as one is likely to find, in which the younger Baines presents the elder as a model citizen and exemplary liberal.⁶

Throughout this work, Baines Junior makes a rhetorical connection between his father's family life, his sense of civic duty, and his political actions. We are told that in both his private behaviour and public life, the elder Baines displayed the 'spirit of improvement' and love of progress which was characteristic of his liberalism. In one

⁶ Derek Fraser, 'The life of Edward Baines: a filial biography of the "The Great Liar of the North"', *Northern History*, 31 (1995), 208-22.

of the more eulogistic passages, his son argues that he was moved by a ‘benignant goodness’, which ‘comprehended all whom it was in his power to benefit – not only those whom it folded in its closer embrace, but his neighbour, his country, the friendless poor, the negro slave, and the benighted heathen’. Baines’ actions in all spheres are seen to have been grounded in his moral qualities, which ensured that he evinced a ‘naturally liberal spirit, without any object but the general good’.⁷

That liberals believed the public good rested on private virtue is a well-established feature in the historiography.⁸ Yet the full implications of this for nineteenth-century politics are only just beginning to be explored. Since the bulk of this thesis was written, one contribution making use of scholarship in this area has been made by Joe Bord, who has indicated that early-nineteenth-century Whig statesmen were attached to values of liberality, knowledge and rationality. Bord argues that this was demonstrated in their politics, but also signalled through their non-political activities and manner, and especially an interest in science.⁹ Although Bord’s approach is very different to that adopted here, both works indicate that Whig identity was located beyond the merely political arena, and that this was of political import.

In exploring the relationship between Morpeth’s thought and his actions, this thesis has also suggested that he might be seen as part of the liberal tradition. The question of how to distinguish Whiggery from liberalism has been the subject of some (usually implicit) debate in the historiography.¹⁰ Morpeth’s example supports those scholars who suggest that the distinction ought not to be drawn too tightly. It was argued that in Yorkshire, the Whigs’ political support was primarily drawn from liberals. Morpeth was able to build an effective political alliance with the region’s liberals based around their shared values, in particular a desire to reform ‘monopolistic’ political, economic and (to a lesser extent) ecclesiastical structures. In the wake of ‘Old Corruption’, the Whigs’ ideal of disinterested government was attractive.

The alliance developed first over parliamentary reform, which held out the promise of further reforms. At first, it worked remarkably well. For Morpeth to accrue the

⁷ Edward Baines Junior, *The Life of Edward Baines by his Son* (Leeds, 1851), pp. 19, 49, 360.

⁸ See in particular Collini, *Public Moralists*, *passim*; Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, pp. 114-28.

⁹ Bord, *Science and Whig Manners*, *passim*.

¹⁰ See the discussion of the historiography on the Whigs in the introduction to this thesis, pp. 7-9.

popularity he did in the West Riding was no mean feat, a testament not only to his own personal qualities but also the appeal of Whig government. Yet it was suggested that over time cracks began to appear in the relationship between the Whigs and their followers. This was partly because of the Government's Parliamentary weakness in the late 1830s, which made it difficult for them to reform 'monopolies' to the degree which liberals wished.

This created disillusionment with the Whigs, who were accused of timidity and conservatism. This impression was later dispelled to some extent by the Party's conversion to total repeal of the Corn Law. It was seen how Morpeth's willingness to join the Anti-Corn Law League helped to temporarily reunite the Whigs and their liberal allies in the Riding. Yet the divisions went deeper than a disagreement over the pace of reform. This thesis has traced an ongoing tension between the Anglican Whigs and some of their dissenting liberal allies over issues of Church and state. The friction caused by this in mid-Victorian liberalism has been explored in a recent account by Jonathan Parry.¹¹ This work suggests that this tension emerged in the 1830s over the issue of church rates. The dissatisfaction caused among Congregationalists and Baptists by the Whigs' inability to resolve this grievance encouraged their opposition to any connection between the state and religion, placing them at odds with the Whigs.

This difference emerged with considerable force over the Russell Ministry's proposal to increase state aid to religious education. In turn, opposition to these plans fostered an anti-statist attitude amongst these liberal dissenters, which caused them to react negatively to Morpeth's public health proposals. This argument broadly complements that put forward by Peter Mandler, who has suggested that social reform was of the key areas separating 'Whigs' from 'liberals'.¹² However, Morpeth's career suggests that this is best understood as a distinction between two different varieties of liberalism, separated primarily by religious rather than economic values.

Importantly, this dissertation has demonstrated that Morpeth himself played a pivotal role in building up Whiggery as a political force in Yorkshire. The support for the

¹¹ Parry, *Politics of Patriotism*, pp. 97-126, 172-84, 300-22.

¹² Mandler, *Aristocratic Government*, *passim*.

Whigs in the region was not just something given to a distant political party; it had to be actively created through social and political relationships. Morpeth, in effect, acted as the embodied voice of Whiggery in the county, promulgating the Party's policies and connecting it to its supporters both within and without formal political occasions. In turn, his conduct was shaped by these links. This arguably points to the need for further research into the significance of interactions between statesmen and their constituencies. Hitherto, work in this area has largely been confined to examining how far constituency pressure might have influenced votes at Westminster.¹³

Morpeth was able to draw on his constituents' views to demonstrate that public opinion was on his side on certain questions, such as free trade and parliamentary reform. However, there is little evidence to suggest that he was directly influenced by his constituents' wishes in a narrow sense. As has been seen, he was quite prepared to sacrifice political popularity on the altar of conviction. Nevertheless, his links to Yorkshire did influence his political actions in a less direct way. It was suggested, for instance, that his opinions on factory reform were moulded by his knowledge of the West Riding's mills and their owners. Discovering whether this sort of first-hand experience of provincial life affected the views of other statesmen would be an inherently impressionistic and unquantifiable exercise, but arguably an important one.

This thesis, then, has demonstrated that Morpeth strongly engaged with various aspects of Yorkshire life, and helped generate political support for the Whigs in the county. One further way in which these two spheres of his life were linked was through the effect which impressions of his character, established through non-political activity, had on his political appeal. It was argued that whilst Morpeth's private character was attacked by his opponents as a means of critiquing the Whigs' policies, it was praised by his supporters, who lauded his benevolence and virtue.

Morpeth's example sheds light on the fact that the non-political lives of early-Victorian statesmen could be of political significance. As noted in the introduction, this is an emerging area of research, unsurprisingly pioneered by historians of gender

¹³ See, for instance, Gary W. Cox, *The Efficient Secret: The Cabinet and the Development of Political Parties in Victorian England* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 148-65; Cheryl Schonhardt-Bailey, 'Linking constituency interests to legislative voting behaviour: the role of district economic and electoral composition in the repeal of the Corn Laws', *Parliamentary History*, 13 (1994), 86-118.

and particularly scholars working on masculinity.¹⁴ Some works drawing on this field have been cited throughout the thesis. In a Yorkshire context, one interesting contribution has been made by Matthew Roberts' in his work on the Conservative politician W. L. Jackson, a late-Victorian M.P. for Leeds. Roberts argues that Jackson's appeal was based around the idea that he exemplified 'manly virtue', whilst also exhibiting a physical manliness which was seen to accord with the Conservative Party's emphasis on imperial masculinity.¹⁵

Yet private character is likely to have been of equal if not of greater importance for early-Victorian liberals, for, as has been seen, liberalism was based partly around the idea that legislators should place the general good above self-interest. If, as seems to have been the case, men like Edward Baines Junior saw the political ability to do this as a corollary of private and non-political qualities, then there is surely an urgent need to explore the significance of the latter for the former. It is hoped that this thesis has gone some way to beginning this project by illustrating how Morpeth's philanthropy and amiability were seen to demonstrate the sincerity of the Whigs' rhetoric of disinterestedness, showing that he was capable of representing popular, liberal opinions.

One final area explored in this thesis was Morpeth's relationship with his Yorkshire home, Castle Howard. It was argued that he had a close emotional connection with the house, was highly engaged with the welfare of his tenants, and was moreover well-integrated into the social and economic life of the surrounding area. This provided a further challenge to the idea that the Whigs were metropolitan in ethos. It was also seen that Morpeth's actions on his estate were linked in various ways to his roles as a statesman and philanthropist, taking inspiration (and, in the case of the loan he arranged for drainage, a substantial amount of money) from these areas of his life.

This thesis accordingly contributes to a well established trend of country house scholarship, beginning with Mark Girouard's notion of the 'power house', which has

¹⁴ See in particular the historiographical introduction and conclusion to Matthew McCormack (ed.), *Public Men, Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007).

¹⁵ Matthew Roberts, 'W. L. Jackson, Exemplary Manliness and Late-Victorian Popular Conservatism', in Matthew McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke, 2007), 123-42.

argued that it is necessary to place the country house within the context of the aristocracy's position as the nation's governors.¹⁶ This offered a challenge to a prevailing tendency in the heritage industry to present the country house in primarily aesthetic terms.¹⁷ Scholarship in this area has become increasingly sophisticated in tracing the links between country houses and the wider economic, political and even international power of their owners. For example, recent research has explored how Harewood House, the Yorkshire home of the Lascelles family, was inherently connected to the Lascelles' ownership of slave plantations in Barbados.¹⁸

However, the country house arguably cannot just be seen in terms of power, domination and control. As has been seen, Morpeth's moral and religious beliefs ensured that the story of Castle Howard in his period of ownership was also one of progress, improvement and tolerance. His example suggests the necessity of placing the history of the country house within the context of the evolving cultural and religious mentalities of their owners.¹⁹ The wider importance of doing this is well illustrated by the column which introduced this section.

This is the last of a sequence of monuments which radiate from Castle Howard, directly opposite an obelisk erected by the 3rd Earl of Carlisle to commemorate his achievement in building the house. Alongside his other monuments, the 3rd Earl's obelisk was a very explicit statement of his dominance over the locality, the product

¹⁶ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*. On this theme, see also Lawrence Stone, 'The Public and the Private in the Stately Homes of England, 1500-1990', *Social Research*, 58:1 (1991), 227-51.

¹⁷ On this, see in particular David Cannadine's essay 'Beyond the Country House' in David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (London, 1994), pp. 242-45.

¹⁸ Simon Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (Cambridge, 2006). Other works have also linked the country house to the political in various ways. Annie Tindley has argued that the estate management projects of the 3rd Duke of Sutherland on his Highland estates shaped his political reputation; Annie Tindley, 'The Iron Duke: Land reclamation and public relations in Sutherland, 1868-1895', *Historical Research*, 82:216 (2009), 303-319. Terry Dooley has shown how Ireland's country houses declined in the context of the country's fraught and ultimately revolutionary political tensions; Terence Dooley, *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland: A Study of the Irish Landed Families, 1860-1960* (Dublin, 2001). Patrick Duffy goes still further, arguing that the Irish country estate was an arena in which the Anglo-Irish landholding class attempted to practice social and moral control and thus uphold 'colonial' power; Patrick Duffy, 'Colonial spaces and sites of resistance: landed estates in 19th century Ireland', in Lindsay Proudfoot & Michael Roche (eds.), *(Dis)placing Empire: Renegotiating British Colonial Geographies* (Aldershot, 2005), 15-40.

¹⁹ Works which do trace the history of the country house in terms of changes in wider culture include David Spring, 'Aristocracy, social structure and religion in the early Victorian period', *Victorian Studies*, 6:3 (1963), 283-80; Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven, 1997).

of a consummate act of dynastic self-aggrandisement.²⁰ Its Victorian counterpart was designed to serve a very different function. In constructing it, Morpeth's friends and admirers hoped that it would act as a didactic reminder of his moral virtues, stimulating passers-by to a 'similar life of usefulness to their fellow men'.²¹

The memorialists might well have been disappointed. Today, the column is a popular picnic site, but probably does not inspire deeds of moral greatness. Its original meaning has been lost, the distinction between it and its equally picturesque neighbour eroded. The reader must forgive this small sojourn into public history, for this thesis was written as part of a wider collaborative project whose aim was to recover the history and context behind some of the objects, such as the column, which are associated with Morpeth at Castle Howard.²² I hope that in uncovering the significance of early-Victorian Whiggery for this small, idyllic corner of Yorkshire, I have also illustrated the relevance of provincial life to early-Victorian Whiggery.

²⁰ Charles Saumarez Smith, *The Building of Castle Howard* (London, 1990), pp. xviii, 130-34.

²¹ *Leeds Mercury*, June 25th 1865, p. 8.

²² This project resulted in an exhibition on Morpeth's life at Castle Howard in autumn 2009, co-curated by the author and Dr Christopher Ridgway, the house's curator. It was facilitated by the Yorkshire Country House Partnership, a body designed to bring together academic and curatorial expertise on the country house. For details of the Partnership, see Christopher Ridgway & Allen Warren, 'Collaborative opportunities for the study of the country house: the Yorkshire Country House Partnership', *Historical Research*, 78:200 (2005), 162-79.

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APPENDIX ONE

An Analysis of Location Data from Lord Morpeth's Diary

The table below illustrates what share of Lord Morpeth's year was spent in various locations across an eight year sample from 1844-1852. The data is taken from his diary, in which he recorded his location on a daily basis. All figures are percentages.

Year	CH	Y	L	N*	M	O	Y, when not in L
1844	63	72	8	1	1	18	78
1845	53	65	19	0.5	0	15.5	80
1846	21	25	58	1	0.5	15.5	60
1847	17	20	59	0	1	20	48
1848	22	23	69	2.5	0	5.5	76
1849	18	20	51	11.5	0	17.5	41
1850	23	25	54	3	0.5	17.5	54
1851	21	24	54	4	0.5	16.5	52
1852	29	33	44	8	1	14	59
Average	30	34	46	3.5	0.5	15.5	60
Average when in Office	22	25	55	4	0.5	15.5	56
Average not in Office	58	69	13	0.5	0.5	17	79

Key: CH = Castle Howard; Y = Yorkshire including Castle Howard; L = London; N = Naworth Castle; M = Morpeth; O = Other Locations. Figures are given to the nearest ½ a percentage point.

* Note that the figures for Naworth Castle may be skewed owing to a disastrous fire in 1844, which temporarily made the house uninhabitable.

APPENDIX TWO

Lord Morpeth's Election Results in Yorkshire, 1830-1847

Yorkshire (Undivided Constituency)

Year	Candidates	Votes
1830:	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	1,464
	Henry Brougham (Whig/Liberal)	1,295
	Richard Bethell (Liberal Cons.)	1,123
	William Duncombe (Cons.)	1,064
	Martin Stapylton (Independent Radical)	94

N.B. – The poll closed early by the consent of all parties.

1831:	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	Uncontested
	Sir George Strickland (Liberal)	
	Sir John V. B. Johnstone (Whig)	
	J. C. Ramsden (Whig)	

West Riding of Yorkshire

1832:	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	Uncontested
	Sir George Strickland (Liberal)	
1835 (Jan):	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	Uncontested
	Sir George Strickland (Liberal)	
1835 (May):	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	9,066
	Hon. John Stuart Wortley (Cons)	6,259

N.B. – This election was caused as a result of Morpeth's appointment as Irish Secretary in the second Melbourne administration.

1837:	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	12,576
	Sir George Strickland (Liberal)	11,892
	Hon. John Stuart Wortley (Cons)	11,489

1841:	Hon. John Stuart Wortley (Cons)	13,165
	Edmund Beckett Denison (Cons)	12,780
	Lord Milton (Whig)	12,080
	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	12,031

1846 (Feb):	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	Uncontested
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N.B. – On the succession of John Stuart Wortley to the peerage as Lord Wharncliffe.

1846 (Jul):	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	Uncontested
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N.B. – On Morpeth's appointment as Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests in Lord John Russell's Ministry

1847:	Lord Morpeth (Whig)	Uncontested
	Richard Cobden (Liberal)	

Note that although many of the above elections were officially uncontested, all but that of 1832 saw some symptoms of opposition beforehand.

APPENDIX THREE

West Riding Constituencies Before and After the 1832 Reform Act

Pre-1832

County:

Yorkshire (2 seats in 1807, increased to 4 seats in 1826, 22,009 electors voted in 1807, split into three Ridings in 1832)

Boroughs:

Aldborough (2 seats, electorate of 80 in 1831, abolished 1832)

Boroughbridge (2 seats, electorate of 65 in 1831, abolished 1832)

Knaresborough (2 seats, electorate of approx. 88 in 1831, largely corrupt)

Pontefract (2 seats, electorate of 820 in 1831)

Ripon (2 seats, electorate of around 178 in 1831)

Post-1832

County:

East Riding (2 seats, 5,559 electors in 1832)

North Riding (2 seats, registered electorate of 9,539 in 1832)

West Riding (2 seats, registered electorate of 18,056 in 1832, rising to 31,215 by 1841)

Boroughs:

Bradford (2 seats, newly created, registered electorate of 1,139 in 1832)

Halifax (2 seats, newly created, registered electorate of 536 in 1832)

Huddersfield (1 seat, newly created, registered electorate of 608 in 1832)

Knaresborough (2 seats, boundary extended, registered electorate of 278 in 1832)

Leeds (2 seats, newly created, registered electorate 4,172 in 1832)

Pontefract (2 seats, registered electorate of 956 in 1832)

Ripon (2 seats, registered electorate of 330 in 1832)

Sheffield (2 seats, newly created, registered electorate of 3,508 in 1832)

Wakefield (1 seat, newly created, registered electorate of 617 in 1835)

Source: The above information is largely taken from the comprehensive electoral statistics in Mark Pack, 'Aspects of the English electoral system, 1800-1850, with special reference to Yorkshire' (2 vols, unpublished D. Phil thesis, University of York, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 292-354. Pack's information is drawn from various sources, mainly poll books and Parliamentary returns.

APPENDIX FOUR

A List of Institutions Patronised by Lord Morpeth

Bradford Mechanics' Institute
Bradford Society for Female Operatives
British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society
British and Foreign Bible Society
British and Foreign School Society
Castle Howard Coal Club
Castle Howard Clothing Club
Castle Howard Juvenile Reformatory
Castle Howard United Villages Itinerating Library
Church Building Society
East Riding Female Penitentiary
Health of Towns Association
Huddersfield College
Huddersfield Female Educational Institute
Huddersfield Horticultural Society
Hull General Infirmary
Hull Literary and Philosophical Society
Labourers' Friend Society
Leeds Hospital for Women and Children
Leeds Mechanics' Institute
Leeds Tradesmen's Benevolent Society
London Mesmeric Institute
Malton Horticultural Society
Malton Temperance Society
Manchester Athenaeum
Marischal College, Aberdeen (of which he became the Rector in 1853)
Metropolitan Society for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes
National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established
Church
North and East Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum

Ragged Schools
Religious Tract Society
Sheffield Athenaeum
Sheffield General Infirmary
Social Science Association
Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews
Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts
Scripture Readers Association
Sunday Schools
Wakefield Grammar School (provider of the 'Morpeth' prize)
West Riding House of Refuge
Wilberforce School for the Blind, York
York Church Missionary Association
York County Hospital
York Minster Restoration Committee
York and Ripon Diocesan Teacher-Training College (part of the National Society)
York Temperance Society
York Yeoman School
Yorkshire Agricultural Society
Yorkshire Philosophical Association
Yorkshire Society
Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes

APPENDIX FIVE

Biographical Details of some West Riding Urban Liberal Leaders¹

Revd. James Acworth: Bradford Baptist Minister, President of the Town's Mechanics' Institute, voluntaryist and free trader.

Edward Akroyd (1810-1887): Wealthy Halifax textile manufacturer and philanthropist, son of Jonathan Akroyd below. Free Trader and opponent of the ten-hours movement. Raised a Methodist, but later became an Anglican. Liberal M.P. for Huddersfield (1857-59) and Halifax (1861-74).²

James Akroyd: Halifax textile manufacturer, brother of Jonathan Akroyd below, determined opponent of the ten-hours movement.

Jonathan Akroyd (1782-1847): Halifax textile manufacturer, leading local activist in the Anti-Corn Law League, New Connexion Methodist.

Edward Baines (1774-1848): Editor of the *Leeds Mercury* and a man of monumental importance in Leeds liberalism. Campaigner for parliamentary reform, free trade, and the rights of nonconformists. Liberal M.P. for Leeds (1834-41). Officially became a member of Salem Congregational Chapel in 1840, but had routinely attended services there long before then. Promoted the Leeds Mechanics' Institute.³

¹ The information provided here is drawn from the main text of this thesis and from a number of sources, principally obituaries in the *Leeds Mercury*; Revd. R. V. Taylor, *Biographia Leodiensis, or Biographical Sketches of the Worthies of Leeds and Neighbourhood* (London, 1865); Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*; and Koditschek, *Class Formation*. Other sources and relevant entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* are provided in the footnotes.

² Eric Webster, 'Edward Akroyd (1810-1887). Also a brief history of James Akroyd and Son', *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society* (1987), 19-45; J. A. Hargreaves, 'Akroyd, Edward (1810-1887)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48819>, accessed 21 Dec 2009].

³ Alan G. Crosby, 'Baines, Edward (1774-1848)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1089>, accessed 21 Dec 2009]. See also David Thornton, 'Edward Baines, senior (1774-1848): provincial journalism and political philosophy in early-nineteenth-century England', *Northern History*, 40:2 (2003), 277-97; Edward Baines Jnr., *The Life of Edward Baines by his Son* (Leeds, 1851).

Sir Edward Baines (1800-1890): Son of Edward Baines above and succeeded his father at the *Leeds Mercury*, in which he was involved from the 1820s. Supporter of parliamentary reform and the Anti-Corn Law League. A Congregationalist, dissenters' champion and national leader of the movement for educational voluntarism. Liberal M.P. for Leeds (1859-74). Founder of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes.⁴

Joshua Bower (1773-1855): Leeds glass and bottle manufacturer, liberal / radical in politics, unsuccessfully contested the Leeds election of 1834. A member of the Town Council from 1835, and alderman from 1844. Involved in the Leeds Political Union, and later the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association.

William Byles (1807-1891): Editor of the *Bradford Observer*, leading liberal in Bradford. Prominent supporter of the Anti-Corn Law League. Although a nonconformist, he adopted a moderate line on state education.⁵

Francis Carbutt (d. 1874): Leeds merchant and Mayor of the town in 1847. In later life chair of the West Riding Reform and Registration Association. Educational voluntarist.

Sir Francis Crossley (1817-1872): Halifax carpet manufacturer, large employer and philanthropist. Supporter of the Anti-Corn Law League. Liberal M.P. for Halifax (1852-59), the West Riding (1859-68), and the West Riding Northern Division (1868-72). Mayor of Halifax in 1849 and 1850.⁶

⁴ Derek Fraser, 'Edward Baines' in Patricia Hollis (ed.), *Pressure from Without in Early Victorian England* (London, 1974), 183-209; J. R. Lowerson, 'Baines, Sir Edward (1800-1890)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1090>, accessed 21 Dec 2009].

⁵ David James, 'William Byles and the Bradford Observer' in D. G. Wright & J. A. Jowitt (eds.), *Victorian Bradford* (Bradford, 1982), 115-36.

⁶ G. C. Boase, 'Crossley, Sir Francis, first baronet (1817-1872)', rev. Anita McConnell, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn, Oct 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6807>, accessed 21 Dec 2009].

Revd. John Ely (1793-1847): Congregationalist minister at Leeds' East Parade Chapel, educational voluntaryist.⁷

Joseph Farrar (1805-1878): Bradford shopkeeper and liberal activist, heavily involved in the Anti-Corn Law League's work in the town. Organiser of the Bradford Mechanics' Institute.⁸

Henry Forbes (1794-1870): Bradford merchant and textile manufacturer and later Mayor of the town, business partner of Robert Milligan below. Prominent liberal activist, highly involved in the free trade campaign. A Congregationalist and educational and religious voluntaryist, co-founder of the *Bradford Observer*.

Revd. John Eustace Giles: Leeds Baptist minister, campaigner against church rates.

Revd. Jonathan Glyde (1808-54): Congregationalist Minister at Bradford Horton Lane Chapel, supported a secular system of state education in 1847.

Sir George Goodman (1792-1859): Leeds wool-stapler and Liberal M.P. for the town (1852-57). He was elected the first Mayor of Leeds in the reformed corporation and held that office 4 times, being re-elected in 1847, 1850 and 1851. He was appointed to a knighthood in 1852 on the recommendation of Lord Morpeth, in recognition of his services at the Great Exhibition. A Baptist in religion.

Revd. Benjamin Godwin (1785-1871): Baptist Minister at Bradford's Sion Chapel, anti-slavery and parliamentary reform campaigner, co-founder of the *Bradford Observer*, supporter of the Bradford Mechanics' Institute.⁹

Revd. Richard Winter Hamilton (1794-1848): Leading Congregationalist divine and minister at Leeds' Albion Chapel. Heavily involved in liberal politics in the town. Educational voluntaryist.¹⁰

⁷ Richard Winter Hamilton (ed.), *Posthumous Works of the Late Rev. John Ely, with an Introductory Memoir* (London, 1848).

⁸ Joseph Farrar, *A Few Events, Incidents and Experiences in the Life of Joseph Farrar, J.P., of Bradford, written by Himself* (Bradford, 1889).

⁹ Revd. Benjamin Godwin, 'Reminiscences of Three Score Years and Ten' (Typescript of original manuscript in Bradford Central Library, Local Studies Department).

Robert Leader (d. 1885): Editor of the *Sheffield Independent*, leading Sheffield liberal, Congregationalist and educational voluntarist.

James Garth Marshall (1802-1873): Leeds manufacturer, son of John Marshall below. Liberal M.P. for Leeds (1847-52). Unitarian, but may have converted to Anglicanism in later life. Supporter of the Anti-Corn Law League, co-founder of the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association. Backed the Whigs' education proposals of 1847.

John Marshall (1765-1845): Wealthy Leeds flax factory owner and important employer in the town. Liberal M.P. for Yorkshire (1826-1830).¹¹

Robert Milligan (1785-1862): Bradford textile entrepreneur and first Mayor of the town. Congregationalist and educational voluntarist, co-founder of the *Bradford Observer*. Liberal M.P. for Bradford 1851-57.

Thomas Plint (d. 1857): Leeds accountant. Active in the Anti-Corn Law League, liberal registration agent for the West Riding for many years. Congregationalist and educational voluntarist. Secretary of the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes.

George Rawson (1807-1889): Leeds solicitor, Congregationalist in religion. Actively involved in liberal politics, but better known as a hymn writer.¹²

Sir Titus Salt (1803-1876): Famed Bradford textile manufacturer and founder of the model village of Saltaire. Congregationalist. Second Mayor of Bradford (1848-49). Liberal M.P. for Bradford (1859-61).¹³

¹⁰ G. B. Smith, 'Hamilton, Richard Winter (1794–1848)', rev. J. M. V. Quinn, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12118>, accessed 21 Dec 2009]; W. H. Stowell, *Memoir of the Life of Richard Winter Hamilton* (London, 1850).

¹¹ Maurice Beresford, 'Marshall, John (1765–1845)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn, Oct 2006 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37739>, accessed 21 Dec 2009].

¹² J. C. Hadden, 'Rawson, George (1807–1889)', rev. Leon Litvack, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23198>, accessed 21 Dec 2009].

¹³ David James, 'Salt, Sir Titus, first baronet (1803–1876)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24565>, accessed 21 Dec 2009].

Revd. Thomas Scales (d. 1860): Leeds Congregationalist Minister at Queen Street Chapel, heavily involved in liberal politics, anti-slavery campaigner, opponent of church rates, educational voluntaryist.

Hamer Stansfeld (1797-1865): Leeds merchant. A leading local member of the Anti-Corn Law League. Co-founder of the Leeds Parliamentary Reform Association. Unitarian in religion, supported the Whigs' education proposals in 1847. Alderman and later Mayor of Leeds.

Thomas William Tottie (1773-1860): Eminent Leeds solicitor and a leader of the Whig Party in the borough and county. Acted as the Whigs' election agent at numerous Yorkshire and West Riding contests, including the 1807 Yorkshire election. For most of his life a Unitarian, but for the last ten years a member of the Established Church. Alderman and later Mayor of Leeds.

William Willans (d. 1863): Huddersfield wool merchant. Enthusiast for popular education, involved in the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institute and founder of Huddersfield College. Educational voluntaryist. Defeated Liberal candidate at the Huddersfield election of 1852.

James Williamson (1797-1845): Leeds doctor, second Mayor of the town in the reformed corporation. Apparently concerned to counter vice in the town. Took a prominent part in the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society.

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