

THE JOURNAL
of the
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HISTORY SOCIETY
 (incorporating the Congregational Historical Society,
 founded in 1899, and the Presbyterian Historical Society
 of England, founded in 1913).

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Volume 7 No 1 October 2002

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EDITORIAL

There are three United Reformed congregations in Cornwall and another three congregations include a statedly United Reformed membership: the county has clearly not been a focus of either Congregational or Presbyterian numerical strength. Nonetheless 2002 sees the bicentenary of its County Congregational Association, and Dr Lander's account of its first hundred years is as timely as it is welcome.

The Figgis family is notable for its ramifications. T. Phillips Figgis was a respectable Arts and Crafts architect, much used by the Presbyterian Church of England (he was, for example, the architect of St. Columba's Oxford). R.F. Horton of Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, married at one remove into the Figgis family. John Neville Figgis, theologian and Anglo Catholic, is seldom associated with Protestant Nonconformity but he too belonged to the family and a cousin in the next generation, Patrick Figgis, was a distinctive Congregational and (briefly) Presbyterian and United Reformed Minister. Neville Figgis is a towering figure in the Christian Socialist tradition. Patrick Figgis was more of a journeyman, though a pretty active one, and his life provokes its own questions and admiration. We are grateful for his daughter's reminiscence of her father. A fuller account is to be found in her "*Here Comes the 'God Man'*". *A Life of Patrick Figgis*,

Worthing, 1990. Reminiscence also colours the appreciation of Sydney Cave by one of his former students, Ronald Bocking.

We welcome as contributors John Lander, a son of the Congregational and United Reformed manse who has now retired to Cornwall; Alan Wilkinson, Visiting Lecturer at the University of Portsmouth and formerly Canon Theologian at Portsmouth Cathedral; Bridget Harrison, a member of Highgate United Reformed Church; and J. Gwynfor Jones, Professor of Church History, University of Wales, Cardiff.

CORNWALL'S CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION - OUTREACH, SUPPORT, OR CONTROL?

In December 1802, a body with the cumbersome title, *The Associated Independent Ministers in the County of Cornwall*, was established.¹ It is appropriate in the year of its bicentenary to attempt an assessment of its life and work, partly to recognise the dedicated effort of those who contributed to the Congregational cause in Cornwall. Of particular relevance is the history of the first hundred years. The pattern fully developed by 1902 continued in similar vein until the Association's demise in 1965 when Congregationalists in Cornwall joined with those in Devon to form one County Union. A great deal of material is available to study but if any thorough exploration of it has been undertaken no detailed work has been published. Of particular value are the minutes of the proceedings of the Association, showing the dates and places of the meetings since 1802, and the "Transactions" from 1813 onwards. The information contained in the documentation reveals interesting and, at times, extraordinary insights into the denomination during the past two centuries.

Arguably the most important feature of Independency throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the belief in the fundamental right of each congregation to govern its own affairs, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many brought up in Congregationalism would acknowledge the validity of Horton Davies's words, "the local congregation expressed fully the priesthood of all believers by appointing church officers from its midst, and by giving each member the privilege and responsibility of church government".² To what extent would the setting up of Congregational Associations, initially run by ministers, interfere with this view? As Michael Watts records, "the Presbyterian minister, freed from the control of superior church courts, had far greater authority than his

1. The full title only appears in the *Minutes of the Transactions of the Associated Independent Ministers in the County of Cornwall*. Richard Cope's Diary entries for 1802 and 1807 refer to "The Cornwall Association of Ministers" and the "Cornwall Association". Histories of St Ives and Penzance churches both refer to "Cornwall Congregational Association".
2. Horton Davies, *The English Free Churches* (London, 1963), p.50. See also, for example, M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters* Vol.2 (Oxford, 1995), pp.192-195, and A. Tucker, "Nathaniel Micklem and Ecumenism" *JURCHS* Vol.6 No.9 October 2001, p.708.

Congregational brother who was subject to the rule of the Church Meeting".³ In Cornwall the Dissenting congregations formed between 1660 and 1662 were, apparently, all Presbyterian, and it was following conscious decisions that the Congregational way was introduced during the eighteenth century. There would be understandable suspicion that hard won freedoms would be eroded. Dr Pye Smith, the distinguished Principal of Homerton College from 1806 until his death in 1851, described the role of the church meeting thus: "Here the union of believers with their Lord and with each other is presented in most pure and engaging form"⁴ In practice, the male section of the "believers" exercised control providing, of course, it was able to obtain, and retain, the support of the local church membership in general, and those who could vote at church meetings in particular. Well into the nineteenth century the formal influence of women in church government was minimal. It is the growth of the Sunday School movement that provided them "with a suitable and valuable sphere of activity where the ban on female participation in the public life of the church was not applied".⁵ Had such a prevalent, yet condescending, view of the role of women not fundamentally changed, Cornish Congregationalism would probably have disappeared long before the union, for most of the few remaining congregations, with the Presbyterians in 1972.

By 1802 associations had already been formed in many counties. In fact, Cornwall was one of the last counties in the southern half of England to establish such a group. Devon, Somerset and Dorset all had bodies by 1796. What prompted the formation of groups, most of them at around the turn of the century? It was only at this time that the denominational parameters distinguishing Presbyterians from Congregationalists were becoming clearer. The Evans List of Dissenting groups in Cornwall produced from information provided in 1718 shows thirteen congregations, of which only one, at Looe, was said to be Independent. That assessment generally confirmed the one prepared by Edmund Calamy following the ejections or resignations from the Church of England between 1660 and 1662.⁶ By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the congregations, the number of which was falling, were not then Presbyterian, but Independent, with a few Baptist. Independency was said to be "deficient in the coherence of its parts" and the associations were formed "for closer fellowship, Christian unity, and zealous co-operation for the advancement of the Kingdom of God".⁷ Congregationalism was not alone in suffering decline. Most people, many of them miners and their families, to whom the churches ministered with varying degrees of conscientiousness, saw no relevance in church attendance or membership as they struggled, often unsuccessfully, to cope with harsh economic

3. M.R.Watts, *The Dissenters* Vol.1 (Oxford, 1978), p.290.

4. R.Tudur Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962* (London 1962), p.228.

5. *Ibid.*, p.164.

6. A.G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised* (Oxford, 1934), p.xii.

7. *Congregational Year Book* (1846), "Congregational Associations. Introductory Historical Remarks", p.81.

and social conditions. However, prompted by the impact of the Evangelical Revival, led in Cornwall by the Methodists who achieved spectacular results, Congregationalists began to give increased emphasis to missionary work. Indeed, one church historian has asserted that "Congregationalism was rescued from the slough of despond.....by the Evangelical Revival".⁸ A founding aim of the Cornwall Association was "to carry the gospel into the dark and uncultivated villages and towns and to assist poor congregations",⁹ later refined, "to promote village preaching and to aid destitute churches".¹⁰ Another important function of the groups was to provide mutual support for the ministers serving in what were frequently scattered locations, especially in the more rural counties, such as Cornwall.

It is not known why the Cornwall Association was not established until several years after the other south west county groups, but there are at least three possible reasons. First, the number of congregations was much smaller than in nearby counties and the need for such a forum may not have been as pressing; secondly the isolated nature of the county would have precluded knowledge of developments elsewhere; and thirdly it was not until 1800 that the minister who was the initiator of the Cornish movement accepted an invitation to a county pastorate. *The History of Dissenters* records that in 1715 there were just twelve Dissenting congregations in Cornwall, but sixty-one in Devon and fifty-five in Somerset. By 1760 the number of Cornish congregations had reduced still further to six, of which two were Baptist, but the Devon and Somerset numbers were largely unchanged at fifty-seven and fifty-three respectively.¹¹ *The Congregational Year Book*, first published in 1846, gives the dates that the various churches then in existence were founded. Twelve are shown as having been established in 1800 or earlier.

The instigator of the Association in Cornwall was Richard Cope. Born in London in 1776, he attended Tottenham Court Chapel as a youth, became a student at Hoxton Academy in early 1798, and in the Summer of 1800 accepted an invitation to Castle Street Independent Chapel, Launceston, in east Cornwall. The initial appointment was for only a year, but in the event he served there for twenty years, and returned to the county in 1836, remaining until his death in 1856.¹² It has been claimed that Cope had ministerial colleagues who, together,

8. A.Peel, *A Brief History of Congregationalism* (London, 1931), p.65.

9. R.Ball, *Congregationalism in Cornwall* (London, 1955), p.26.

10. *Minutes of the Transactions of the Associated Independent Ministers in the County of Cornwall* 13 April 1830 [Cornwall Record Office (CRO) ref DDX682/150], hereafter MCCA.

11. D.Bogue and J.Bennett, *History of Dissenters* Vol.2 (London, 1809) p.99, and Vol.3 (London, 1810), p.330.

12. R.Cope, and R.J.Cope (Eds.), *The Autobiography and Select Remains of the Rev Richard Cope LLD* (London, 1857). Between 1820 and 1836 he was a tutor at the Irish Evangelical College in Dublin for two years, and minister of two churches at Wakefield for fourteen years. He went to Dublin with a wife, seven children, and two servants.

made "a conscious and concerted effort" to form associations in Warwickshire, Hampshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire and Surrey. That, in fact, is most unlikely.¹³ Cope soon extended his ministerial influence by preaching in villages close to Launceston, but it should not be assumed that missionary work only began with Cope's arrival in the county. In 1781, James Wildbore, the minister at Falmouth, preached in the open air at Probus, a village between Truro and St Austell, at the invitation of a Mr Crowle who led a small Independent congregation in the neighbouring village of Grampond. The local Church of England authorities, as was commonly the case, objected to Nonconformist evangelistic effort and arranged for the church bells to be rung and drums to be banged so as to disrupt the proceedings.¹⁴

The first meeting of *The Associated Independent Ministers in the County of Cornwall*, popularly known from the start as the "Cornwall Association", was held at Tregony on 28 December 1802. In addition to Richard Cope, five ministers were present: James Wildbore from Falmouth, James Angear from East Looe, Timothy Wildbore, the son of James, from Penryn, Robert McAll from St Ives, and Thomas Baron from Bodmin.¹⁵ There were other Independent churches in the county that were not represented at this inaugural meeting. According to the *Congregational Year Book*, congregations had been formed at Fowey in 1797, Liskeard in 1701, Mevagissey in 1776, Penzance in 1662, St Columb in 1790, and Truro in 1761, as well as Tregony itself in 1750, although some of the quoted dates may be inaccurate, and some relate to Presbyterian foundations. Not all the congregations had ordained ministers, but there was certainly a minister, Andrew Kessel, at Mevagissey, and at Truro where William Paddon ministered from 1790 until 1812 when he suffered a severe stroke that caused him to retire from the active ministry.¹⁶ Intriguingly, neither of these ministers attended the first meeting despite the fact that Mevagissey and Truro were much closer to Tregony than all the places that were represented. It is apparent that membership of the Association was not automatically offered to, or accepted by, all Independent ministers in the early years.

Why Tregony was chosen for the first meeting is not known. While the village then was of much greater relative importance than it is today, being a "rotten borough" returning two Members of Parliament until 1832, and being situated on one of the few routes through the county, other towns would have been more accessible to members. Convenience did not, though, seem to be a particularly important criterion as subsequent meetings in the first ten years were held at

13. R.Tudor Jones *op.cit.*, p.175. Bearing in mind that Cope was twenty-four years of age when he was appointed to Launceston and that some of the county Associations mentioned were formed in 1781 and 1793 when Cope was five and seventeen, that is improbable.

14. T.Shaw, *Methodism in Probus 1781-1961*, (n.d.) p.6.

15. R.Cope, *op.cit.*, p.50.

16. R.Ball, *op.cit.*, p.15, and P.Jennings *A History of Truro* Vol.6, "History of Truro Free Churches" (1906), pp.11-13.

St Ives, Penryn, Lostwithiel, and Bodmin, where new chapels were formally opened, at Liskeard and Fowey where ministers were ordained, as well as Falmouth, St Columb, St Agnes and Penzance. Strangely, the Association did not meet at Cope's own chapel at Launceston until September 1815. Understandably, travelling difficulties prevented a full attendance of members in the early years. Even in 1850 it took all the daylight hours to travel by stagecoach from Camborne to Plymouth, it was 1859 before the main railway line into Cornwall crossed the river Tamar, and many more years were to pass before a branch railway line network was in place.

The early minutes of the "Transactions" did not give the full list of attenders, but it is known that eight ministers were present in December 1807. An interesting aspect of that meeting was that the minister of Penzance Baptist Church, George Charles Smith, who had a particularly colourful, controversial and varied life, attended.¹⁷ Why Smith was at the meeting is uncertain, and it does not appear that ministers from other denominations attended again. It is worth noting that two of the six ministers at the first meeting were pastors at the two Countess of Huntingdon chapels at Bodmin and St Ives at a time when those churches elsewhere in the country had not fully allied themselves to the Independent cause. Indeed, both left the Association before rejoining in the middle of the nineteenth century.

For the first fifty years, the main aim of the Association was to extend Congregationalism into areas of the county where it was not represented. The thrust of the evangelistic effort was through "itinerants", employed in circuits and controlled by the Association, and the exertions of the resident ordained ministers. Itinerants were supposed to submit reports for discussion at the Association meetings but from the "Transactions" it is clear that not all were diligent in doing so. By 1813 one circuit, based on Looe in south Cornwall, had made sufficient progress for congregations at Polperro and Lanreath to share and support a minister. The itinerant involved, a Mr Wells, was unfortunate enough to be "paid off" as the price for his successful endeavours.¹⁸ Soon afterwards preaching began in several places on the eastern side of the Lizard peninsular. A house in a hamlet near St Keverne was used for preaching by an itinerant in early 1815, and within a few years missionary work had spread to several nearby villages, including Helford and Coverack. The Association's regulations, agreed in 1802, contained one that envisaged a single itinerant being employed at an annual stipend of £35, but by the 1830s at least four were operating within the county.

Long before 1830 Cope had "introduced, or continued, the gospel in no less than fifteen or sixteen different places" around Launceston.¹⁹ His work,

17. R.Cope, *op.cit.*, p.50. For more information on G.C.Smith, see obituary in *Baptist Handbook* 1864, p.121, and P.Isaac, *A History of Evangelical Christianity in Cornwall* (n.d., c.1997), pp.229-231.

18. *MCCA*, 12 October 1813. For the background to itinerancy see D.W.Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People*, (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

19. R.Cope, *op.cit.*, p.43.

supplemented by the employment of a Mr Johns, an itinerant who lived with him, was sufficiently promising for chapels to be built at Polyphant and Callington, and opened within two weeks of each other in 1817.²⁰ Elsewhere, congregations and chapels were established in other towns and villages as a result of endeavours by neighbouring ministers or committed laymen. On the Roseland peninsular chapels were built at Portscatho and St Mawes and, in other parts of south Cornwall, congregations came into being at St Austell, Herodsfoot and Trengrove, both near Liskeard, Cawsand and Torpoint, just over the border from Plymouth, Gorran Haven, near Mevagissey, Mylor Bridge, on the west side of the river Fal, just north of Falmouth, and at Newlyn, immediately west of Penzance. There were fewer churches established in the northern part of the county, but chapels were built at St Issey in 1819, and Wadebridge in 1836. This was the second attempt to establish Congregationalism in that town. Some years earlier "a chapel had been erected by an Independent Minister, at his own expense and as a private speculation".²¹ It soon closed however, and the building was sold to settle an outstanding mortgage.

The growth in the number of congregations in the first twenty years of the Association's existence was substantial. From about twelve in 1802, the number had risen to thirty-three by the time the *Congregational Magazine* for 1821 was published,²² of which no fewer than twenty-eight had been formed by 1812, a remarkable rate of expansion in the previous ten years. That progress was much greater than was achieved over the same period in Devon where the number of congregations in 1827 was fifty-seven,²³ exactly the same as in 1760. It is worth noting that Cornwall's population was rising quickly at this time, from 188,269 in 1801 to 257,447 in 1821, a 37% increase during a period of great technical advances and relative prosperity in the Cornish mining industries, and more employment opportunities for fishermen. If Congregationalism had a disproportionate share of middle-class members, as it did in other counties, that may partly account for the rapid increase in chapel building. The wealth generated, however, provided material benefit for only a few as the mining and agricultural workers continued to receive scant reward for their endeavours. By way of comparison, the Baptists had seven congregations in 1812 and twelve in 1827.²⁴ Congregationalists in Cornwall were not alone in successfully expanding their Christian witness. R. W. Dale claimed that "it was largely owing to the vigour with which these County Associations were worked, that Congregationalism grew so rapidly during the first twenty or thirty years of the nineteenth century".²⁵

20. *The London Christian Instructor or Congregational Magazine for the Year 1818*, p.711.

21. *Minute Book of Wadebridge Independent Chapel*, CRO Ref. DDX682/103.

22. R. Ball, *op.cit.*, pp.30-31 gives the complete list of congregations in existence at the end of 1821.

23. J. Bennett, *The History of Dissenters during the last Thirty Years (from 1808 to 1838)*, Vol.3, (London, 1839) p.265.

24. *Ibid.*, pp.264-265.

25. R.W.Dale, *History of English Congregationalism* Vol.2, (London, 1927), p.603.

Shortage of money soon proved a limiting factor in the evangelistic activity, despite the receipt of modest contributions from churches and individuals to support the cost of itinerant preachers. The Association also had to make up shortfalls in the stipends of several ministers, notably those at Looe, Lostwithiel and St Ives, when churches were unable to meet their financial commitments. In 1821 two ministers, James Wildbore and John Foxell, repaid from their own resources a mortgage on the St Ives chapel as the congregation could not do so. Cash grants to itinerants, resident ministers, and to churches to enable them to settle their liabilities, inevitably led to some reduction in the independence of the congregations that received the help.

Although the denomination's coverage in Cornwall grew during the first half of the nineteenth century to a peak of about forty congregations, progress was partly offset by disappointments. The chapel and congregation at St Stephens, near Launceston, was placed "under the direction of the Association" in 1814, and a year later it was decided to sell the building to "defray the debt due thereon".²⁶ Both St Agnes and Tregony churches were in need of continuing financial help by 1814. Serious disagreements within congregations occurred at Polperro in 1815, Penzance in 1802, and at St Columb in 1829. At Callington and St Austell disputes arose with trustees concerning the ownership and use of chapel buildings. The powers of the Home Missionary Society, only formed in 1819, in the selection of ministers and other matters were questioned in 1822. The St Mawes church and congregation were said to be "in a destitute state".²⁷ In 1825 John Foxell, a well respected figure in the secular life of Penzance as well as being the Independent minister there, wrote a depressing letter to a colleague about the state of the denomination in the county. He was moved to say that "our denomination is not on the increase...St Ives and Bodmin have gone into the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, Mevagissey is in a low state".²⁸ Mevagissey's difficulties were the result of local consequences of a serious national business problem. Between 1824 and 1826 the whole country suffered from an enormous number of banking failures, and Ball's Bank in the town was forced to close, seriously affecting local people. The Ball family, who had supported the Congregational Church for two decades, left, the minister's stipend was not paid in full, or on time, and there was even the possibility that the church would have to close.²⁹

The Association also had to resolve disputes between ministerial colleagues. When two were engaged in a bitter argument, one was eventually persuaded to "quietly leave the neighbourhood",³⁰ and in 1839 much anguish surrounded "the most serious concern [at] the various moral delinquencies of James Skeat". What these "moral delinquencies" amounted to was not recorded, but Skeat, variously

26. *MCCA*, 10 April 1814, and 28 March 1815.

27. *MCCA*, 8 January 1823.

28. A.H. Moncur Sime, *Penzance Congregational Church 1662-1936*, (Penzance, 1936), p.16.

29. J. Kitto Roberts, *The Mevagissey Independents 1625-1946*, (Taunton, 1946), p.24.

30. *MCCA*, 4 January 1837.

described as Isaac, and T, as well as James, was a long serving minister in Cornwall. He took part in Association meetings from 1819 following his training at Hackney College, had been minister at Lostwithiel since 1826 and perhaps earlier, and retained the pastorate there until about 1850. The *Congregational Year Book* for 1847 notes that he and his congregation were “not acknowledged by the Association”,³¹ and the church was not recorded at all in the *Year Book* for the following three years, a sign that the antagonism lasted for a very long time.

The Association was led in the first half of the nineteenth century by a number of dedicated ministers. The contribution made by Richard Cope has been noted, but others included James and Timothy Wildbore, father and son, who between them served in the Falmouth and Penryn area for over fifty years. Timothy was the Association’s Treasurer for many years, and an obituary in 1858 recorded that “there is scarcely an Independent chapel in town or village in Cornwall in which he has not often held forth the word of life”.³² William Moore had been Secretary for even longer, twenty-five years, while serving congregations at Mevagissey for seven years and Truro for thirty-five. He died in harness in 1848 at the age of sixty-six.³³ Lay involvement gradually increased; those making financial contributions were particularly welcomed. In 1830 membership of the Association was extended to “every person subscribing 5/- annually” and the business was “conducted by a Treasurer, Secretary and Committee composed of one or more laymen in each Church in connection with its Pastor”.³⁴ This meant that churches were more widely represented but their independence was curtailed, especially those that were in financial need. It was perhaps the greater manpower resources that prompted the formation of the Congregational Sunday School Union in 1820 and, later, the Cornwall and Foreign Missionary Society, a Temperance Society, and three Bible Societies in different parts of the county.

Statistical material became progressively more available and precise in the second half of the nineteenth century. Careful study of the formal Religious Census that took place on 30 March 1851 provided much useful information, although historians have questioned its accuracy ever since the findings were published. The number of people attending each service on that day, the average attendances in the previous year, the number of Sunday School scholars, the number of “sittings”, and the date the church was formed, were all reported, providing the person who actually collated the information was thorough and accurate in completing the form. Membership numbers were not sought, but some returns contained additional comment that gave extra insight into local situations. In Cornwall thirty-five sets of statistics were completed for Congregational churches, ranging from very small causes to much larger ones. At Crosswin, in the

31. *MCCA*, 2 April 1839, and *Congregational Year Book* (1847).

32. *Congregational Year Book* (1859), p.224.

33. *Congregational Year Book* (1848), p.233. Moore’s father had been minister at Falmouth at the end of the eighteenth century.

34. *MCCA*, 13 April 1830.

parish of St Ewe, near Mevagissey, one service was held and attended by just nine people. The chapel had room to accommodate 102, and "an occasional preacher" signed the return. On the other hand, three services were being held at Launceston with congregations of 257 in the morning, 174 in the afternoon and 392 in the evening, and over 100 children were present for each of the morning and afternoon Sunday Schools. Even these substantial congregations were "lower than normal as missionary services were held at Wesleyan Methodist Chapel". The Congregational Chapel was said to have been built in 1788, had been "several times enlarged", and in 1851 could accommodate 627 people. It was clearly an influential church community. Apart from Launceston, only Cawsand and St Mawes held three services on the particular Sunday, but twenty-two had two. Not all returns showed the average size of congregations for the previous year, but in general fewer people attended services on 30 March 1851 than the usual average. Poor weather and high levels of illness are said to have accounted for that. Several churches had no regular ministry, and services in two were conducted by Baptist or Wesleyan Methodist preachers.³⁵

Perhaps prompted by the national census, the Cornwall Association attempted to collect information from its member churches in the same year. Only Bodmin, Gorran Haven, Portscatho, Mevagissey, St Columb, St Issey and Wadebridge submitted the information requested. Many of the largest ones were either not asked for data, or declined to respond. The combined results from the seven churches showed the following:-

Hearers	=	1,100
Members	=	165
Sunday School Scholars	=	430
Sunday School Teachers	=	72

This confirmed the usual experience among all denominations that the numbers attending services, classified as "hearers", were many times the committed members. That was especially the case in those denominations, notably the Congregationalists, where a thorough investigation of an individual's sincerity and suitability was undertaken before membership was granted. The statistics showed that all churches except Gorran Haven had Sunday Schools, and that St Columb and Wadebridge had substantial debts outstanding.³⁶ Taking the various factors into account, it can be tentatively suggested that the total Congregational membership in Cornwall in 1851 was between 800 and 1,000.

That the Association's main purpose had altered significantly some time after 1830 is apparent from the fact that by 1862 the first "Rule" was to "promote fraternal intercourse between the Ministers and Churches of the Congregational body in Cornwall, to aid weak and needy Churches, and diffuse Evangelical Religion throughout the county".³⁷ The wording then remained unchanged until

35. Microfilm records of the Census are held at the Cornwall Record Office.

36. *MCCA*, 1851 (no month or date shown).

37. *Annual Report of the Committee of the Cornwall Congregational Association*, (1962), pp.4-5.

1936 at least, and the revised order of the different strands of the objects reflected the role that the Association increasingly came to undertake.

Occasional efforts continued to be made to expand Congregationalism into other parts of Cornwall, but there was a disappointing outcome to one particularly strenuous effort. A special conference of the Congregational Association was held in Truro in November 1866 "to consider the spiritual state of the county, and the best ways of improving it". There was substantial lay membership of a committee set up to carry the project forward, and the first resolution passed was worded: "That in order to strengthen churches at present weak and to promote aggressive work among the unconverted population of Cornwall, special funds should be raised".³⁸ Prominent national Congregational businessmen, notably Samuel Morley of London, and H.O.Wills of Bristol, agreed to provide annual financial contributions of £200 for three years provided matching funds were raised locally. With difficulty, Cornish churches and individuals found the £200 required in the first year, and four "evangelists" were appointed to work in different parts of the county. Funds in subsequent years fell short of the sums required, and following an investigation by the Revd. J.H.Wilson at Samuel Morley's insistence, the scheme was discontinued, and the employment of the four evangelists was terminated. Wilson had produced a report in which he "expressed his decided opinion that Cornwall is different from any other county, being in fact already completely evangelised by the Wesleyans".³⁹ It is not hard to imagine the reaction of such defeatist words on the local Congregationalists who were struggling to spread the distinctive features of the denomination. In fact, Wilson was not the first person to have equated Congregationalism's relatively poor position to the strength of the Methodists. Congregationalism in Liskeard was said to have been "adversely affected from the 1830s by the vigorous expansion of the various Methodist sects".⁴⁰ Wesleyan Methodist membership in Cornwall peaked in 1850 with 26,567 members,⁴¹ and by then several Wesleyan offshoots, notably the Bible Christians and the Wesleyan Association, were also attracting significant numbers of adherents, if not members.

Financial grants continued to be made to several of the smaller churches but shortages of funds were increasingly apparent as there were no wealthy benefactors in Cornwall to finance a church building programme. Not all the concerns related to money. The church building at Wadebridge was closed for a time as the congregation had fallen to very small numbers, and there was a substantial debt outstanding, but was reopened in 1864 with help from the church at Bodmin. There were problems at Grampound that were to be investigated by

38. Minute book of *Cornwall Special Congregational Fund*, 15 November 1866.

39. *Ibid.*, 8 March 1870.

40. B.Deacon, *Liskeard and its People*, (Redruth, 1989), p.63. Matters improved in the 1860s, but decline recurred during the 1880s and 1890s.

41. T. Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism*, (Truro, 1967) p.98. As a percentage of the county's population the peak was achieved in 1840 when the membership was estimated to be 26,227.

T.B. Hart, the minister at Tregony and the proprietor of an important school in the village. A sub-committee was to consider difficult matters that related to the small congregations in the villages on the eastern side of the Lizard peninsular, and grants to those churches were suspended in 1850. The church members at Liskeard had let the chapel to the Baptists without approval at only a nominal rent, and a two day Association meeting in 1862 “emphatically condemns the present misappropriation of the chapel”.⁴² Many of the resident ministers did what they could to help weaker churches by preaching, and the provision of support and advice. A minister who accepted a call to St. Mawes was a man “who had been educated for the ministry in the Church of England, so called, but whose enlightened conscience would not permit him to conform to the laws and teaching of that communion...”.⁴³ He and his congregation needed the advice of neighbouring ministers and the Secretary of the Association. Having conducted morning service, the Penryn minister would walk the eight mile round trip to Mylor Bridge to preach every Sunday afternoon, returning in time to conduct evening worship in his own church.

The suspension of the Revd. John Bonser of Truro from the Association’s membership in May 1865 took place during a long and bitter dispute that did the church great damage. Bonser, formerly minister at Newcastle-upon-Tyne and in poor health, was ordained to the pastorate at Truro in July 1861. Soon after his arrival he accused a family of church members who regularly provided him with hospitality of serving him food that had been “drugged”. A special Church Meeting heard the minister withdraw the allegation and apologise but the Meeting decided, with many abstentions, that he should resign. He refused, and objections of both a procedural and disciplinary nature were made. As a result a further special Church Meeting was held under the direction of the Association, at which there was a large attendance. Bonser’s resignation was again sought, and refused, following which the feud escalated alarmingly. Most of the congregation began worshipping at the Town Hall, Bonser physically assaulted the Sunday School Superintendent, and the trustees closed the chapel. The minister and a few of his supporters broke down the chapel doors, extensive legal action ensued, and Bonser’s resignation was eventually tendered in June 1866, four years after the internal row started. Not surprisingly, the church emerged severely weakened, both spiritually and financially, and needed substantial grants to support a minister when, eventually, one was found to take on the task of rebuilding. Even so, less than three years later, the minister was given notice because his stipend of £180 per annum could no longer be afforded.⁴⁴

By 1868 laymen occupied most of the places on the Executive Committee of the Association, including the office of Treasurer. He became increasingly beset

42. *MCCA*, 21 and 22 April 1862.

43. Anon, *Records of the Congregational Church assembling at St Mawes, Cornwall*, [n.d. or pagination].

44. P. Jennings, *op.cit.*, pp.33-53.

with more and more appeals for financial help from churches, the total of which regularly exceeded the available resources. In 1885, ten churches, almost a half of the county's total, received help, but at reduced levels from those requested. The Church Aid Society, the central body that allocated financial grants to counties, provided only 70% of what had been sought. The following year the Society substantially reduced its grant funding again, this time by 40%, leaving the churches with only half of what they had asked for.

The support and control functions exercised by the Association led inevitably, without any great denominational change of policy, to reduced independence for local churches. In particular, financial grants were withheld from, or made conditional to, churches where concerns existed, as at St Austell where a grant would be provided if "they obtain a minister approved of by the Association".⁴⁵ In attempts to reduce problems with trustees, financial assistance was sometimes subject to the Association becoming Trustee, with the deeds and documents being deposited at Western College, then at Plymouth. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, groupings of churches began to be encouraged. Attempts to control churches in this way, however, were not always successful in the face of determined opposition from church meetings. In 1869 and several times afterwards, the Association wished Portscatho and St Mawes to share a minister, and the same was sought for Newquay and St Columb. It was, however, often claimed that travelling difficulties precluded an efficient sharing arrangement. A supplementary grant was promised to Fowey and Lostwithiel provided the two churches formed a "group", but not even the offer of financial inducement would persuade the congregations to agree. A subsequent attempt to link Lostwithiel with Bodmin was equally unsuccessful, and the Lostwithiel members finally succumbed to many years of fragility, and sold the church building in 1898.

Despite the serious problems that the Association had to deal with, there were some encouraging experiences. In 1877 during an address to mark the Church's centenary, Looe was said to have "a vigorous Christian community, a large and efficient Sunday School and abundant tokens on the Ministry of the Gospel".⁴⁶ The chapel at Penryn "soon became crowded to excess" as a result of Richard Cope's ministry there on his return to the county,⁴⁷ and in 1886 a "new and commodious chapel" was built at Newquay to accommodate "a rapidly increasing congregation".⁴⁸ An evangelical mission at St Ives in February 1899 resulted in the reception of nineteen new church members into the church,⁴⁹ increasing the total by about a quarter. The establishment of a national Twentieth Century Fund

45. MCCA, 5 April 1836.

46. J.Smyth, *A History of Looe*, (1950), p.41.

47. *Congregational Year Book*, (1857), p.172.

48. *Congregational Year Book*, (1901), p.181. See also, Edith J.Furse, *A Story of 100 Years- History of Newquay Congregational Church 1867-1967*, and, *The Western Morning News*, 14 April 1897.

49. I.Densham, *Sherwood, Selina and Salubrious Place*, *Congregational Studies Conference Papers*, (1994), pp.24-25.

prompted consideration to the start of evangelistic missions at various places on the north coast. Padstow, Tintagel, Port Isaac and Boscastle were all canvassed as possibilities. Under the auspices of the minister at Newquay, preaching began at Perranporth in the summer months, and this continued for several years around the turn of the century.⁵⁰

Just occasionally the day-to-day responsibilities were left on one side while wider religious, social and political matters were aired. Although Congregationalists in Cornwall and nationally were not in the forefront of the temperance and teetotal movements, in 1878 and again in 1886 and 1891 resolutions were passed in committee meetings calling for the closure of the county's public houses on Sundays. By the end of the nineteenth century Annual Meetings were held each spring attended by several representatives from each church. Included in the proceedings was a presidential address, the content of which covered such matters as the proposed disestablishment of the Church of Wales in 1895, which was welcomed, and, three years later, the disestablishment of the Church of England was called for in a highly political address entitled "Our Political Duty". The country's education policies were regularly attacked.

Although a degree of energy, and much commitment, was still apparent as the nineteenth century came to a close, the chapel building programme had virtually finished fifty years before. The emigration of over one third of the county's mining families, leading to a significant decline in the county's population in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, would have been a contributory factor. In the last three decades of the century several congregations, including those at Lostwithiel, Padstow, St Blazey, Polyphant, and Coverack, had ceased to exist. In 1899, when the *Congregational Year Book* first contained full membership figures for the previous year, twenty-three churches were shown, including three that had by then been transferred to the Devon Association. Recorded membership was 967. That figure suggests that the loss of members in the many small churches that closed after 1850 was offset by increases in those that remained. If the membership roll had been static for most of the second half of the nineteenth century, and statistics taken from the returns to the Church Aid Society suggest it was, an encouraging increase of over 150 was revealed when the 1900 *Congregational Year Book* appeared. The membership peak was reached in 1903 when there were over 1,301 members in twenty-one Cornish congregations, just 0.3% of the total Congregational membership in England and Wales. From that date, several years before the national membership began to fall, a steady decline in membership, and morale, set in. Church closures occurred regularly from 1933, the total congregations having reduced to sixteen by 1950. Fifty years later there are three United Reformed Churches in the county with a combined membership of 164,⁵¹ a reduction of 87% from the peak a century ago. A further three united churches have United Reformed members as a constituent part. In addition, one

50. *MCCA*, 16 April 1900, 17 April 1901, and 11 June 1901.

51. *Congregational Year Book* (2002), Bude 23, Falmouth 56, Newquay 85.

Congregational church survives as part of the Congregational Federation, and another within the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches. A third rejected Congregationalism amid acrimonious exchanges in 1965 and 1966, and remains a member of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches.⁵²

What then can be concluded from the first hundred years of the Cornwall Association of Congregational Churches? It is clear that outreach, support and control all played a part in its affairs, the three becoming increasingly interlinked. As the twentieth century approached, evangelical activity had largely ceased, support continued to be a vital necessity, and increased control was exercised. The outreach achieved less long-term success than those who worked hard to accomplish it had hoped, and it is relevant to attempt to explain why the impact made was relatively modest.

One obvious reason for Congregationalism's comparatively weak position involves a comparison with Methodism. The 1851 Religious Census is an appropriate reference point, and the statistics graphically illustrate the comparative positions. 113,510 people were estimated to have attended various branches of Methodist worship in 734 churches on 30 March 1851. Congregational attendance, including the two Countess of Huntingdon Connexion churches, was 7,715 in forty buildings.⁵³ That fifteen times more people went to Methodist churches than Congregational ones requires explanation, especially when the experience in Devon is added to the equation. Methodist services there were held in 379 churches attended by an estimated 54,886 people, whereas Congregational worship was held in 142 buildings attended by an estimated 30,587 people.⁵⁴ As a proportion of the total population in the two counties, 31.9% went to the Methodist churches in Cornwall and 9.7% in Devon. The comparable figures for those attending Congregational churches were just 2.2% in Cornwall, but 5.4% in Devon. Why was Congregationalism so much weaker than Methodism in Cornwall, but the difference less marked in Devon? Put another way, why had Congregationalism's evangelistic work in Cornwall, on the face of it, been substantially less successful than Methodism's?

A number of explanations provide at least a partial answer. First, Cornwall was always, geographically, a Congregational outpost. Indeed, the Association's existence since 1802 was not, it seems, even known about as late as 1846 when the "Introductory Historical Remarks" appeared in the *Congregational Year Book* and made no reference to Cornwall in a table showing the chronological order of the foundation of twenty-five county associations. The committee minutes of Association meetings regularly report that representatives of such bodies as the

52. Correspondence between J. Teague, Church Secretary at Gorran Haven, and the Revd J.E.F. Moss, Secretary of the Cornwall Congregational Union. CRO Ref. DDX682/37.

53. T. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p.96, quoting the results of the "Census of Religious Worship" held on 30 March 1851.

54. N. Orme (ed.), *Unity & Variety: A History of the Church in Devon and Cornwall*, (Exeter, 1991), p.138.

Home Missionary Society, the Church Aid Society and the London Missionary Society did not visit the county, sometimes citing time and expense of journeys from London as reasons. It is likely, too, that journeys in the reverse direction were similarly limited, thus adding to the sense of isolation. In particular, there is no evidence that the formation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales in 1832 was of any real interest. Twenty-six of the thirty-four County Associations were in favour of the formation proposals,⁵⁵ including Cornwall, which according to the annual Year Book entries, “assented to the Congregational Union on 5th April 1831”. The views of the Association’s members were not recorded in the minutes, and the matter might not, of course, have ever been formally discussed. What was debated much later was the receipt of only £20 from the Twentieth Century Fund, which was described as “ridiculously small”. It was also said, “this trifle is...worthless”.⁵⁶

Methodist experience was quite different. From the time that John and Charles Wesley first visited Cornwall in 1743, frequent preaching tours were made. John came to the county nearly thirty times, and on eighteen occasions preached at Gwennap Pit, near Redruth, to congregations of several thousands. In the early years he and other preachers suffered much opposition and abuse at such places as St Ives, Illogan and Helston.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, Methodism struck a chord with the individualism of the Cornish and generated support from large numbers of them. Cornwall quickly became a centre of Methodism, the Wesley brothers becoming well-known, charismatic figures.

The Methodist arrangements for “bands” and “classes” to meet regularly for the instruction, training, support, encouragement and, at times, disciplining of members and adherents did not have any parallel in Congregationalism. Methodism was able to produce sufficient local leadership, both lay and ordained, to promote and then manage rapid growth. There were eighteen times more Methodist chapels in 1851 than Congregational ones. Congregational ministers worked hard to provide ministerial oversight to those churches that relied heavily on lay preaching, but it was only in 1895 that a proposal was made to form a Lay Preachers Association. The removal of Western College from Plymouth to Bristol in 1901, a possibility first raised at Association meetings in 1894, deprived the county of a valuable supply of ministerial training students for the conduct of Sunday services. This aggravated an existing serious shortage of lay preachers.

Perhaps the biggest single factor in the greater growth of Methodism was a different attitude to evangelism, despite the enormous efforts of Congregational county associations. The *Congregational Magazine* for 1837 included a number of letters on the subject. One correspondent claims that “our [Congregational] church rules are formed to secure purity, not numbers” and another wrote that

55. R.Tudur Jones, *op.cit.*, pp.242-243.

56. *Annual Report of the Committee of the Cornwall Congregational Association*, 1903, pp.9

57. G. Smith, *History of Wesleyan Methodism* Vol.1, “Wesley and his Times”, (London, 1862), pp.202, 205, 213.

Methodism was the “favourite with the public, for its stirring and adventurous zeal”.⁵⁸ Nine years later an assessment was made that “Although Methodism did not produce any organic change in the older churches of nonconformity, yet it cannot be denied that its indirect influence on them was most potent and salutary”.⁵⁹ Wesleyan Methodist membership in Cornwall probably exceeded Congregational membership by about 1763, only twenty years after Wesley’s first visit, was ten times the Congregational figure by 1799, and twenty times by 1840. The subject was still of concern by the end of the nineteenth century as the matter was raised in the Congregational Association’s Presidential Address in April 1898. It was sufficiently controversial for the remarks to be reported in the press, and for correspondence to follow.⁶⁰ In Devon, Methodism did not make so great an impact and Congregationalism was stronger. It is difficult to avoid a conclusion that there was a connection between the two experiences.

Congregationalism’s position was not greatly different from that of the Baptists. Although *The History of Dissenters* records no Baptist congregations in 1715, two in 1772, seven in 1812, and twelve in 1827⁶¹ indicating no great evangelical surge, there were in fact two Baptist congregations by 1700. The pattern of church closures followed the Congregational experience.⁶² In general, relations between the denominations were friendly, although an attempt jointly to celebrate the Bicentenary of the 1662 Ejectment failed. In 1893 and 1895 the Chairman of the Cornwall Baptist Association wrote to the county’s Congregational leaders seeking “the closer union between the Congregationalists and Baptists in this county”.⁶³ There was no immediate enthusiasm from the Congregational side. There had been exchanges of pulpits by ministers in St Austell on a regular basis in the 1840s,⁶⁴ and the sharing of ministers at St Erth and Grampound in 1851. The Grampound church seemed to begin life in 1820 as Baptist, was shown in *Congregational Year Books* as “Mixed Communion” for several years until 1854 when it became Congregational.⁶⁵

Elsewhere, Congregationalism was supported in the late nineteenth century by substantial financial contributions from some who became wealthy businessmen

58. *The Congregational Magazine*, (1837), pp.235-236.

59. *Congregational Year Book*, (1846), *op.cit.*, p.87.

60. *The Cornish Mercury*, 28 April 1898, and 2 May 1898.

61. D. Bogue and J. Bennett, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p.358, Vol.2, p.257, Vol.3, pp.264-265.

62. G.L.W.Beads, *A Short History of the Devon and Cornwall Baptist Association*, (n.d., c.1976), p.26, and P. Isaac, *op.cit.*, pp.205-241.

63. *MCCA*, 17 October 1893 and 22 January 1895.

64. S.O.Dixon, *The Road to Unity in Cornish Methodism*, Cornish Methodist Historical Association, Occasional Publication No. 15, (1969), pp.10-12.

65. M.Cook (ed.), *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821 : Bishop Carey's Replies to Queries before Visitation*, Vol.1, “Cornwall”, Devon and Cornwall Record Society, New Series, Vol.3, (1958), p.2. See also, G.L.W.Beads, *op.cit.*, pp.8-10, and documents relating to Grampound Congregational Church deposited with the Cornwall Record Office, ref. DDX129/2.

during the later progress of the Industrial Revolution. Samuel Morley, who became a successful hosiery manufacturer, gave a relatively minor sum to Cornwall, but very large sums nationally. Other counties benefited significantly. Sir Francis Crossley and Sir Titus Salt, both Yorkshire manufacturers, and the Wills brothers of Bristol,⁶⁶ had no Victorian Cornish counterparts. The county's lay leaders at this time were men like W. Norton of Truro, A. Dingle of Fowey, and, especially, the Croggon family, several generations of whom owned tanneries in the Grampond area, directed the chapel's affairs until it closed, and served the Association in various capacities. Indeed, W.L.P. Croggon, in addition to his business responsibilities, was a Justice of the Peace, a Cornwall County Councillor, and still found time to act as Chairman and Treasurer of the Association in the same year. The financial resources of these, and others, were modest in comparison.

So, Congregationalism in Cornwall progressed encouragingly until about 1830, held its ground with considerable difficulty for another eighty or ninety years, and then declined steadily. The evidence of the twentieth century, from documents held in the Cornwall Record Office and in local church histories, is of dedication by men and, especially, women who did what their health and physical strength would allow to maintain Congregational witness. In many cases the burden became too great, and nobody could be found to continue the work. In two different ways a full circle has been turned. First, a few churches, then a larger number, and then again very few. First the total autonomy of the local Independents, then local power eroded by the work of the Congregational Association, and now in large measure independence returned. Whether a congregation succeeds, survives or succumbs continues to depend on the success or failure of the consistent and unflagging endeavours of a handful of individuals. In other words, "where two or three are gathered together" which, of course, is where Congregationalism began. A writer of one of the standard histories of Cornwall has confidently asserted that "Cornwall is the county of lost causes".⁶⁷ The "cause" of Congregationalism, now in a number of successor bodies, is not quite "lost", but is hanging on only by the thinnest of threads.

JOHN LANDER

66. R.Tudur Jones, *op.cit.*, pp.288-230.

67. F. E. Halliday, *A History of Cornwall*, (Thirsk, 1959), p.203.

JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS AND CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

This paper falls into three parts: the first says something about the man and especially his relationship to the Community of the Resurrection (CR) of which he became a member; the second sketches some of the main features of Victorian and Edwardian Christian Socialism; the third describes how Figgis related to this movement.¹

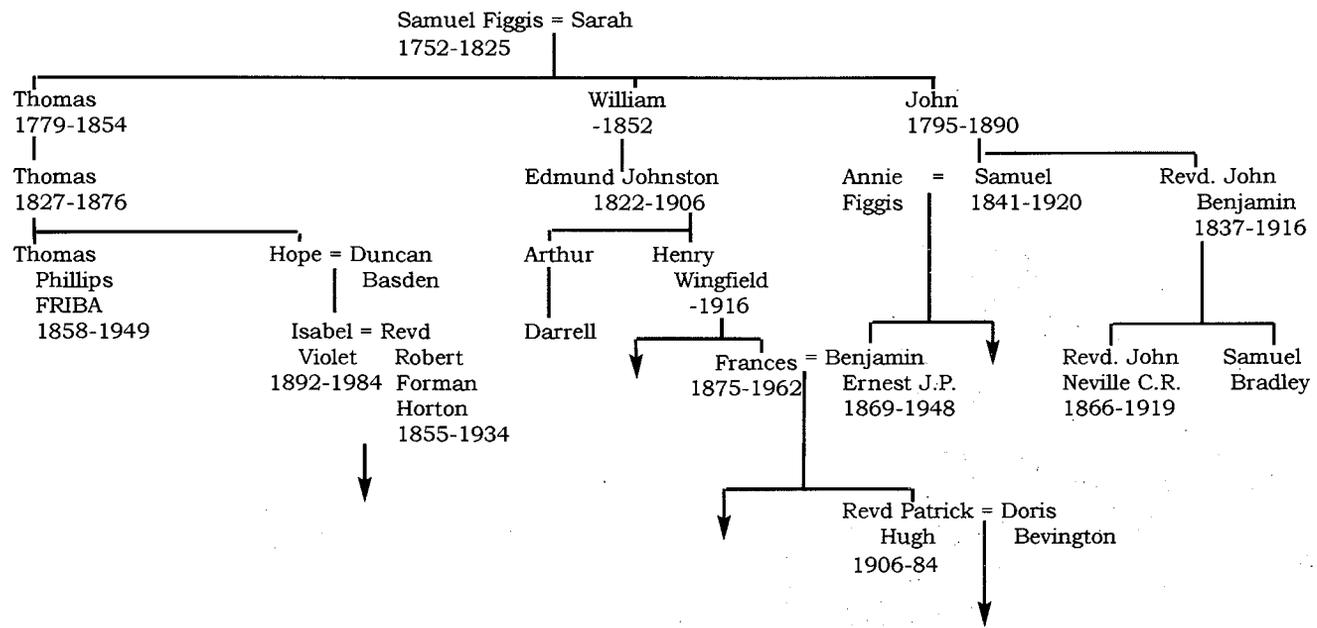
John Neville Figgis (1866-1919) was the son of John Benjamin Figgis ("Figgis of Brighton", 1837-1916) a leading minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.² At St Catharine's College Cambridge he read mathematics and then history with distinction, he dutifully joined the Cambridge University Nonconformist Union, but experienced considerable difficulties with the Christian faith. During his time in Cambridge as an undergraduate and as a lecturer he was influenced by three contrasting academics. The anti-clerical Professor F.W. Maitland (with a distant though distinguished Dissenting ancestry) awoke in him a love of the middle ages. The Roman Catholic historian Lord Acton pointed him towards a liberal Catholicism which valued freedom and was suspicious of power, especially when it was centralised and concentrated. Mandell Creighton, later Bishop of London, drew him to Anglicanism. Figgis described him as "incomparably the greatest man of the three". (CMS 229) He decided to be confirmed as an Anglican. But like his mother he suffered from uncertain mental health and at the end of his fourth year he broke down and had to withdraw for a time. Returning to Cambridge he went on to win several university prizes. But what, he wondered, should he do with life? He offered for ordination and was ordained deacon in 1894, priest 1895. After a curacy he returned to Cambridge,

1. This is a revised version of a paper originally given by Canon Alan Wilkinson, Diocesan Theologian at Portsmouth Cathedral, to the URC History Society at Portsmouth in July 1997. Abbreviations of works by J.N. Figgis, cited in the text:

AC	-	<i>Antichrist and other sermons</i> (1913)
CCR	-	<i>Civilisation at the Cross Roads</i> (1912)
CMS	-	<i>Churches in the Modern State</i> (1913)
CS	-	"The Church and the Secular Theory of the State" <i>Church Congress Report</i> (1905)
DRK	-	<i>The Divine Right of Kings</i> (1922 edn)
FOM	-	<i>The Fellowship of the Mystery</i> (1914)
GHN	-	<i>The Gospel and Human Needs</i> (1910)
HER	-	<i>Hopes for English Religion</i> (1919)
RES	-	<i>Religion and English Society</i> (1910)
SD	-	<i>Some Defects in English Religion</i> (1917)

2. On Figgis see: D.Nicholls, *The Pluralist State*, (St Martin's Press, 2nd edn 1994); M.Tucker, *John Neville Figgis* (SPCK 1950); A.Wilkinson, *The Community of the Resurrection, A Centenary History* (SCM 1992), *Christian Socialism, Scott Holland to Tony Blair* (SCM 1998). I am also indebted to David Nicholls: "Authority in Church and State" (unpublished Cambridge PhD 1962) which I have used with permission.

THE FIGGIS CONNEXION



but in 1901 suffered another breakdown. Advised to give up academic work he took a College living in Dorset where he served for five years. He arrived a semi-agnostic, but was gradually converted by the faith of the people and of his assistant priest and became a liberal Catholic in the Gore tradition.

During a performance of one of Shaw's plays he decided to test his vocation to the monastic life with the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield. In his writings he often referred to Shaw and particularly approved of his attacks on mammon.³ He wrote to a friend in 1907:

I am going to Mirfield because I have more and more come to see that if we want people to think we are sincere in Christianity, it is desirable to live so that you...appear to *mean* it i.e. a life of poverty, but I do hope to go on with study, writing.

He also hoped that the monastic life would provide the discipline, prayer and communal support he needed for stability. He appears to have been a manic depressive. He owed more to his Free Church background than has been generally realised: for example, his exultation whenever he stood against the tide; the high value he placed on preaching; his contempt for establishment Anglicanism; his defiant gesture in joining the Community. He also had a marked distaste for clerical marriage. He blamed a quarter of the complacency of the Church of England upon the clergy and half of it on their wives. It was clerical marriage which had helped to make the Church of England so upper middle class. (SD 47) His move to Mirfield so distressed his father that he changed his will to ensure that no money went to Neville as long as he remained in the Community.

Gore had founded the Community in 1892 to be salt for society and the church as well as leaven, a foretaste of the more disciplined and socially concerned community that he wanted the Church of England to be. Figgis also wanted the Church of England to be more intensive and less extensive. The Community's life was small scale and intimate - there were only about fifteen brethren at Mirfield when Figgis arrived in 1907 plus another half dozen or so in South Africa and two or three novices like Figgis himself. It must have reminded Figgis of the intimate fellowship of chapel life. From another angle it seemed to visitors like an Oxbridge High Table incongruously transplanted into the smoky West Riding. There were some other scholars, especially Walter Frere, the liturgist, who was given a Cambridge DD in 1910. Figgis once jokingly remarked: "Frere has a high degree of talent, whereas I have perhaps just a touch of genius." The Community gave Figgis the freedom to pursue his academic interests. Though it had an episcopal Visitor and brethren had to be licensed by the Bishop

3. D. Newsome, "The Assault on Mammon: Charles Gore and John Neville Figgis", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* October 1966.

of Wakefield, it was independent, outside the parochial system and so, to the relief of most of the brethren, felt disestablished. From 1894 the State Prayers for the Royal Family were omitted - a gesture against erastianism. Figgis rejoiced in the liberal Catholic atmosphere. Written into its Rule was that freedom which Acton had taught him to value:

Nothing shall be finally required of any of the brethren which violates his conscience.

However minor aspects of the life chafed. "Whenever I begin to work, that wretched bell starts ringing" he complained. Out for a walk with a guest he heard the bell for None. "Let us be late for None," remarked Figgis "but let us not be late for tea." Fr. Keble Talbot, a fellow novice and a future Superior recalled the chaos which always surrounded Figgis:

... he was helpless before the recalcitrance of things. His untidiness was on an almost heroic scale. Despite his manful and rueful efforts, his room was a maelstrom in which collars, letters, handkerchiefs, proofs of his latest book, coal-dust were mingled in a very frenzy of disorder. His fountain pen would be found uncapped and spouting ink beneath the under-blanket of his bed.⁴

Figgis was more fulfilled at Mirfield than he was anywhere else. But he had one disappointment. One reason why he joined the Community was that he believed he would no longer be exploiting people. But he found that every piece of bread he ate and every train he travelled in were part of the economic system he thought he had renounced and left behind. (CCR 84-5) Nor was he delivered from struggles about faith:

To others faith is the bright serenity of unclouded vision; to me it is the angel of an agony, the boon of daily and hourly conflict. (GHN 15)

It is said that when Figgis arrived at the black Gothic millstone grit house at Mirfield - once a millowner's mansion - he wore a silk hat. However an eagle-eyed brother seeing him coming ran down and proffered a biretta instead. The Community had long been associated with the Christian Social Union (CSU), founded by Henry Scott Holland, Gore's closest friend, in 1889. Five of the six founding brethren had been members of CSU. Gore succeeded Bishop Westcott as President of CSU in 1901. After the departure of Gore to be Bishop of Worcester that year and of John Carter, Secretary of CSU, links between the Community and CSU weakened. But a more definite and boisterous type of

4. G.P.H. Pawson CR (ed), *Edward Keble Talbot* (SPCK 1954), pp.53-4.

Christian Socialism soon developed in and around the Community. This identified itself more with the Labour movement and with a more definite socialist programme than ever CSU had done.

After the General Election of 1906, a group of Anglican priests especially in the north, including some CR brethren, determined to strengthen the links between the Labour movement and the Church of England. Up to then the main religious influence upon the Labour movement had come from Nonconformity. Walter Frere, CR's Superior, as a curate had been a Labour member of the Stepney Board of Guardians. In 1906 and 1907 he and Fr Paul Bull CR, a vociferous socialist and missionary, organised two conferences between the church and Labour; Keir Hardie was among those who attended and spoke. They were held in the Quarry amphitheatre in the Community's grounds. Frere told the 1906 Conference that the Community was "communistic". A number of those who attended the 1906 Conference, including Frere and Bull, met a month later in Morecambe and created the Church Socialist League. From early days the Community had been denounced by Protestant groups for being Romanists. Now they were attacked as socialists as well. Donations, vital for its educational work, fell away.

Figgis arrived at Mirfield at the height of the controversy. He was too detached or too independent to ally himself with either CSU or the League, or any political party. Most socialists took the progressivist view of history. This was anathema to Figgis. During the Great War, with a good deal of satisfaction, he predicted that the war would destroy the belief in inevitable and automatic progress, pull down the curtain on the Alexandrian age dominated by Westcott, reinstate the atonement as the central truth of Christianity in place of the incarnation and destroy "the tepid weak tea of respectable choristers' Anglicanism". (HER 17,22,24,106) But, unlike the liberals he was able to set the suffering of the war within a transcendent faith - as did P.T.Forsyth.

It was during the war that his inner turmoil was exacerbated by a series of disasters. The corrected proofs of *Civilisation at the Cross Roads* had gone down with the *Titanic*. In 1915, on his way to Illinois to lecture on Nietzsche, his ship was tailed by submarines. Sailing again in 1918 to lecture in America his ship was torpedoed. He escaped in an open boat, but his manuscript on Bossuet on which he had worked for years and other papers were lost with the ship. He never recovered and was admitted to a mental hospital where he died aged fifty-three in 1919.

II

What was Victorian and Edwardian Christian Socialism and how did Figgis react and relate to it?

Edward Norman in *The Victorian Christian Socialists* (1987) characterised much of Christian Socialism as neither political nor socialist; the essential impulse behind it was (he believed) moral and educative, fuelled by concern at the alienation of working people from the church. However, if F.D. Maurice could

call himself a Christian Socialist; if Tony Blair can be a member of the Christian Socialist Movement; if Charles Gore could speak approvingly of Christian Socialism to the Pan Anglican Congress of 1908: then ought we not to expand the term to include them? It is important to remember (for example) that it was not until 1918 that the Labour Party actually committed itself to a programme of public ownership.

Victorian and Edwardian Christian Socialism was many-stranded. It included:

- (1) F.D. Maurice and his circle who in 1850 coined the term "Christian Socialist"; it was Maurice who provided a theology capable of being used politically;
- (2) the Christian, especially Anglican, Tory tradition of *noblesse oblige* expressed in university and public school missions and settlements;
- (3) the Robert Owen/Co-operative tradition;
- (4) the romantic anti-industrialism and anti-mammon tradition of Ruskin, Carlyle and Morris;
- (5) Nonconformists who helped to create the trade unions, Labour Party and the Civic Gospel of municipal socialism;
- (6) the "Christian Fabianism" of CSU which proposed a solution of social problems through state or municipal action after careful social investigation;
- (7) the Anglican Catholic socialists with their sacramentalism, belief in communal Christianity and rejection of the religious and social status quo;
- (8) the practice of self-help in the context of mutual benefit encouraged by church and chapel through (for example) friendly societies.

Yet none of the Christian Socialist societies originated as working-class organisations, nor did they include any significant numbers of working-class members. Rather they were created by middle- and upper-class people to campaign for better conditions for working people and to try to bridge the gap between them and the churches.

Was Christian Socialism a different version of socialism? No; in fact there was a good deal of overlap and interaction with secular socialism. The boundaries between the churches and society were then almost imperceptible. Many secular socialists claimed to be inspired by Christian ideals. Those who called themselves Christian Socialists claimed in a more specific way to derive their political beliefs from their Christian faith, though of course it was never as simple as that. They drew particularly upon the Old Testament prophets and the teaching and example of Jesus. Many Nonconformist socialists lacked a defined doctrinal core, shared a general liberal ideology, were theological immanentists, evolutionary optimists and identified the attainment of socialism with the Kingdom of God. Most Anglican socialists had a clearer theological basis, and drew upon the communal tradition of Catholic Christianity and emphasised the doctrines of creation,

incarnation, church, Trinity and sacraments, particularly baptism and eucharist.⁵ Scott Holland wrote "the more you believe in the Incarnation the more you care about drains".⁶ But of course there were many Christians who held highly orthodox beliefs about the incarnation who did not worry overmuch about the drains.

III

Where did Figgis fit in? He had a sensitive social conscience and was a "dissenter" all his life. He came to believe in a Catholic, corporate and sacramental faith, but he did not become a political agitator nor did he align himself with any political group. Above all he rejected that statism which characterised much socialism, Christian and secular, in favour of guild socialism and syndicalism. For Figgis the chief sin, particularly of his time, was avarice, mammon. Those most anxious to reform the present system he accused of disguising the fact because they had ceased to hold the Christian doctrine of sin. How many Christians thought that they should live a less luxurious life than non-Christians? (AC 199ff) Yet we had to face the uncomfortable fact that the culture of the few is won through the meanness and avarice of many. "Why is civilisation to me so gracious a mistress and to others so hard a stepmother?" (CCR 86-8) He particularly disliked wealthy Christians who treated the church as their preserve, but "like working men to look round our well-swept cathedrals with all the 'nice' people living in the precincts". (RES 30) Because the unions expressed "the principle of brotherhood", he regarded them as "the most thoroughgoing Christian movement of the last century". (HER 53) Human beings were naturally "associative" and only developed in society (CMS 47,88). Yet he believed more in the conversion of individuals than in legislation.

Jesus came to alter men's wants. The real economic reformer is not the man who alters the laws, but he who changes the wants of a sufficiently large group of people to affect the markets. (CCR 70-1)

He quoted J.S. Mill as an example of someone who mistakenly thought that if only all social ills were cured, he would be satisfied. Better legislation and administration can achieve much, but what does it amount to, if there is no "better country" beyond this life? (AC 175-6) "Neither pure socialism nor absolute individualism finds warrant in the Gospel." (CCR 125-6)

Figgis emerged as one of the first English proponents of pluralism. He came to believe that freedom was the goal of political action, that power could corrupt and that it should be dispersed in church as well as state. He therefore regarded the idea of a general will as dangerous. At a time when socialists, Christian and

5. P. d.'A Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival 1877-1914* (Princeton 1968), pp. 88f,306f.

6. S. Paget (ed), *Henry Scott Holland* (John Murray 1921), p. 286.

secular, and new Liberals were excitedly discovering the power of the state to better the human lot, Figgis rejected the concept of the sovereign or monist state and any tendency to deify it. Instead he believed it should be a community of communities which reflected both the variety and gregariousness of humanity. (CMS 58,80,91) He advocated a dispersed authority for the church, as in conciliarism. "Church authority is a communal fact in which every single member...has his part." (HER 38) Like Gore (and the Free Church tradition) he argued for a disciplined church, even if it meant a smaller body:

In the future, we shall be few, but intense. Christians are to be the salt of the earth, the leaven, and the sooner they give up trying to be the whole lump the better. (RES 29)

There was an unresolved conflict in the thought of Figgis and Gore between their desire for a church of the committed and their rejection of what Figgis called the tendency of Puritanism to make religion "the privilege of the few". (AC 284)

Thus we have the remarkable spectacle of this Edwardian Anglican monk advocating a neutral state. The church should claim liberty to order its own affairs and to impose its own discipline. But disestablishment was peripheral. "Establishment cannot save us...Disestablishment will not deliver us." What matters is the recognition that churches have real powers to develop themselves and are not mere creatures of the state. (CS 189,191) Above all Figgis passionately believed that church must cease to be allied to the rich and respectable. "Unless we can be the Church of the poor, we had far better cease to be a Church at all." (FOM 99) It was his urgent desire to witness against mammon which took him to Mirfield. He also was a foe of squalor and inequality. The church based on baptism was "a democracy...the commonwealth of God". (AC 284) In Christ, God shows himself not powerful and majestic but little and humble: "God in his humiliation ... changed the world more than all the armies of the emperors." (GHN 87) His belief that power should be dispersed, coupled with his admiration for the rich variety of mediaeval society led him to reject collectivism and be sympathetic to guild socialism. Strong elements of anti-liberalism and apocalyptic in his thought separated him from the evolutionary optimism of mainstream socialism. His anti-liberalism was evidenced in his rejection of what he termed "the infallibility of the modern Western mind" (CCR 171); in his unequivocal rejection of pacifism in his fervent patriotism; in his expectation of imminent social catastrophe. By contrast with *Lux Mundi* (1889) edited by Gore, Figgis proposed a recovery of the atonement as the central truth of Christianity instead of incarnationalism:

...the Alexandrian age, as I may call it, of English religion has closed - the period dominated by Westcott; that method of assimilation and culture...has come to an end. It did a very valuable work, but we have passed that stage. (HER 24)

His sense of apocalyptic set him over against mainstream socialism which portrayed history on many a trade union banner as a staircase leading through socialism into light and glory. Gore went back to the Fathers, but Figgis looked to the middle ages. The atomism he so disliked derived, he thought, from the Reformation and Renaissance. On the other hand the liberal strand in him was evident in his beliefs that the sceptical mind has a role in the church and that the purpose of politics was the production of liberty.

The guild socialism to which Figgis pointed (DRK 292) began in 1912 and was a creation, not of the workers, but of middle-class intellectuals, inspired by the anti-industrial tradition stemming from Owen, Carlyle, Ruskin and William Morris. Like Morris they rejected the orthodox political process. Figgis with his anti-collectivism and his concept of the state as a community of communities was a major inspiration to the guild socialists including R.H.Tawney in his early days.⁷

It is sad that the least satisfactory aspect of Figgis's thinking - his nostalgia for the middle ages - should have fed the most adolescent side of Christian Socialism - its ruralism, upper-class Arts and Crafts élitism, its unwillingness to get its hands dirty by working through existing political institutions, its lack of contact with working people. Eric Gill, the Roman Catholic sculptor, exemplified this tradition.⁸ We have already mentioned another criticism of Figgis's position - the contradiction between advocating a church open to all while proposing that should also be a more disciplined remnant. The third criticism of Figgis is that he assumed that it was possible for Christians and non-Christians to agree on a common view of human society.⁹ Did he unconsciously take for granted either natural ethics or Christendom - both of which he explicitly rejected? Did he assume that the values of freedom, tolerance and democracy which upheld his pluralist state would be self-sustaining? But they are not. His neutral state is thus an illusion. Raymond Plant comments: "The neutral State is incompatible with most views of the good life which require some communal realisation."¹⁰ Yet Figgis rejected any idea of the common good. If Figgis had not died at the age of fifty-three, but had lived to see Stalin and Hitler, would he have been able to maintain his basic philosophy which, despite all his talk of cataclysm, Armageddon and human sin, depended upon the continuance of a liberal Christian ethic?

ALAN WILKINSON

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7. S.T. Glass, *The Responsible Society, The Ideal of Guild Socialism* (Longmans 1966).
 8. See Wilkinson (1998), pp. 155-8. Eric Gill was, like Neville Figgis, the son of a minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Moreover, his father, Arthur Tidman Gill (1848-1933) a former Congregational minister, was the assistant minister to J.B. Figgis (minister at North Street Chapel Brighton 1861-98) from 1878 to 1896 when he resigned to study for ordination in the Church of England.
 9. Nicholls (1994), chap. 6.
 10. G. Moyser (ed), *Church and Politics Today* (T & T Clark 1985), p. 327.

PATRICK HUGH FIGGIS AND CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM

The Figgis Family can be traced to 1641 when Thomas Figgis, known to have had puritan and parliamentary views, lived in Huntingdon. In the late eighteenth century Samuel Figgis moved from Huntingdon to Dublin where he was an agent for Whitbread's. This might seem surprising because he and his wife Sarah were keen evangelicals and their family developed strong temperance sympathies. They met frequently in the Gospel Hall and their home became a centre of religious activity and influence. This tradition continued in the Figgis family with Plymouth Brother, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational involvement. The outstanding exception was Neville (1866-1919), son of John Benjamin Figgis (1837-1916), a minister well-known as "Figgis of Brighton". Neville had one brother, (Samuel) Bradley Figgis, who became a doctor. Their mother was mentally unstable. Both brothers decided that they should never marry in order to avoid passing on her genes. As it was, Neville suffered from depression throughout his life and spent time in various mental institutions.

Neville had a second cousin, Darrell Figgis, the black sheep of the family: later generations were forbidden to mention his name. He was a not undistinguished mystical writer and poet, who lived partly in England but mainly in Dublin. He appeared to have no fixed work and was, in the family's view, attracted to the less desirable aspects of society. He joined Sinn Fein, was then in trouble with the I.R.A. and spent some time in hiding. In 1926 he fathered an illegitimate child. The shame and disgrace which this brought on the family caused him to commit suicide. A house belonging to him still stands on the island of Achill off the west coast of Ireland where he was long recalled as an exciting and unusual young man.

"Figgis of Brighton" had a brother, Samuel (1841-1920), who at the age of eight was sent to the Dissenters' School in Taunton. At fifteen, ready for the world, he moved to Liverpool and thence to London. Here he worked as a commodity broker, eventually setting up his own business in Mincing Lane. The firm dealt in rubber, cocoa, pepper and ostrich feathers. He became a frequent visitor at the home of his cousin Benjamin Figgis and married Benjamin's daughter Annie.

Samuel and Annie had two daughters, Kathleen and Madge, and three sons, Howard, Maurice and Ernest. They now lived at Wildwoods, a spacious house near Hampstead Heath, and were members of the Presbyterian church at St. John's Wood. Kathleen was an artist who exhibited at the Royal Academy; her large painting of St. Bridget was displayed there. Madge was musical and both travelled the world together, bringing home trophies from unusual places. Till the end of their long interesting lives they lived together, known by the family as the Eccentric Aunts.

Their three brothers worked successfully with their father in London after Uppingham School in Rutland. It is unclear why Uppingham was thought to be suitable for them but several Figgises have been sent there since.

Ernest was the only brother to have children. He was on holiday in Waterford when he met and fell in love with his Plymouth Brother second cousin once removed, Fanny. Her father, Henry Wingfield Figgis (d.1916), was a corn merchant. Fanny was one of a dozen siblings and, following the death of her mother in childbirth, spent her time caring for the children. Aged nineteen, she came to England for the first time, a shy, musical girl who seemed homesick for the rest of her long life.

Ernest and Fanny bought a house on the outskirts of Mill Hill, long an isolated retreat for affluent Londoners but now developing into a more established part of North London. Six children were born to them in nine years, four daughters and two sons. After Patrick was born, the doctor warned Fanny that she would not survive another child. Ernest became Superintendent of a large Sunday School in Hendon, a five mile walk from home. Six days a week, he went into the City taking the pony trap to the L.N.E.R. station at Mill Hill.

Patrick Hugh Figgis (1906-1984) was the youngest child born to Ernest and Fanny. He was thus a first cousin once removed of Neville's on their father's side; religion was a force in his life too. Strict Nonconformity ruled the household. Ernest took prayers and Bible readings every day with the servants kneeling down behind the family; Fanny heard the children's prayers each night. One evening, when Patrick was aged about six, she found a packet of sandwiches under his pillow: they were for an old tramp he had seen in the lane. He seemed to have had an early awareness of the needy while living in a prosperous home. Of the twopence pocket money he received, half had to be given to church, nothing might be spent on himself. A high moral standard was expected from every child and a severe code of conduct demanded of everybody. Ernest was a stern but fair and generous employer.

Church was compulsory and attended at least twice each Sunday. No secular games or books could be enjoyed then. The Figgis family moved to Parkside, a large house in Mill Hill, which was now a flourishing suburb. Alongside the Parish and Catholic churches, a Congregational one was being built of which Ernest and Fanny were founding members. Their other founding interest was the local cottage hospital.

Patrick shared a governess with his siblings until they left to attend private schools; he joined them at eight. Aged twelve, he joined his brother Terence at Uppingham. Here he enjoyed the many activities on offer as well as winning academic prizes. He played the violin in the orchestra and represented the school in rugby and cricket.

The family moved for the last time to a substantial house called Highwood. It was surrounded by fields that Ernest leased to a local dairy as well as providing cottages for some of his servants. At eighteen, Patrick left Uppingham with highest commendations from the staff. He now joined Terence in the family business in the City. He looked the model of a business man in a dark suit, bowler hat and carrying a rolled umbrella. On Sundays, he and his eldest sister ran the

children's church and both were tireless workers among the deprived families being rehoused at Burnt Oak. He organised days in the country persuading wealthy business men in the congregation to give up their Saturday afternoons and offer their cars. He was very persuasive at getting people to help him with things he thought worthwhile and had no hesitation in asking for help. This was an important trait that remained throughout his working life, whether the request was financial or practical.

Patrick's ideas at that stage were still conventional and indeed narrow. Even so, while continuing to enjoy a prosperous way of life, he felt concerned about the less fortunate members of society. He loved the broking business, the challenges and risks he took in dealings there. He made friends in the business world, trusted by the older men for his integrity and liked by the younger ones for his sense of humour and adventure. At twenty-one he became engaged to a local girl, Doris, only daughter of Philip and Emmeline Bevington who were pacifists with strong Quaker leanings, as well as connexions with Union Chapel, Islington. Doris was born in Highbury in 1909. Her father, however, worked for Rowntrees, and on the outbreak of war moved to New Earswick, the Rowntree village just outside York. Joining-up was out of the question. Philip worked in the hospital laundry organised by the firm and his brother earned a bravery medal driving an ambulance in Belgium for the Friends' Ambulance Unit. The family received much physical and mental abuse for their pacifism.

After 1918, Philip and his brother started a fruit importing business dealing with citrus fruits from Spain. They moved to a pleasant house in Mill Hill and attended the Congregational Church. Doris went to St. Albans school, travelling by train from the local station while her brother went to Mill Hill School. But their father Philip died suddenly from pneumonia aged forty-two; Emmeline had to move to a much smaller house. Philip's brothers now paid for the children's education.

Doris was an exuberant girl, lively and enthusiastic as well as outgoing and sociable. She stood on the platform in her school uniform; on the opposite platform she saw Patrick in his smart city clothes. He also passed her sometimes in the nearby park where he raised his hat as she swung on the railings. Monthly dances were held at Highwood, Patrick's home, and he invited Doris to come. She was shy, intimidated by the correctness of the Figgis family and the unspoken criticism she sensed from Patrick's parents at her lower social status.

When she became engaged, she envisaged life as the wife of a prosperous business man. Then Patrick announced that he felt called to the ministry. Nobody expected this change of direction though it became clear that he had made copious notes about his calling and that he had discussed it fully with McEwan Lawson, the minister of his church. The older Figgises disapproved of Lawson but Patrick greatly admired him. Patrick never discussed his ideas with Doris until he was ready to make a decision: this was typical of him throughout his life.

Doris did not like the idea of becoming a minister's wife at all, especially

“having to wear a hat”. She was then running a small school with great success and enjoyed her freedom. Since Patrick had no qualifications beyond Higher Certificate, Sidney Berry, Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, contacted Dr. Selbie and recommended that Patrick be allowed to become a member of Mansfield College, Oxford.

Patrick and Doris were married from Highwood in July 1931 and moved into lodgings in Oxford. She was bored and lonely while he studied. Mrs. Selbie took her to meetings to teach her “how to become a minister’s wife.” Mrs. Whale, wife of the theologian Dr. John Whale, befriended her too and asked her to help with her three children.

Patrick became the student pastor at a small church in Woburn, on the Duke of Bedford’s estate. Here he had care of about two dozen people and took his charge very seriously. On his free day he went to read to a couple of blind members, catching the train from Oxford and often taking Doris with him. In addition to his work he represented Mansfield at tennis and played rugby for Oxford Town. Here he met Alan Robson from Cambridge and in 1936 they travelled together to see the Oberammergau passion play. This affected him deeply and a photograph of the man portraying Jesus stood on his desk all his life.

Patrick had changed radically during his time at Oxford. While Neville Figgis became obsessed with the Middle Ages and preferred books to social college life, Patrick Figgis was concerned with present-day issues. He was deeply interested in people: he joined or formed groups for discussion and for pooling ideas. As well as being keen on sport, he was also a reasonably accomplished violinist, sometimes playing with Mrs. Micklem, the wife of Dr. Nathaniel Micklem.

While Neville had a positive distaste for clerical marriage, Patrick’s marriage was an important aspect of his life. Doris ably supported him in all his ventures many of which would have been impossible without her.

During his time at Oxford, he was fortunate to have been taught by distinguished theologians: Micklem, Whale and Selbie. Peter Carter, son of Revd. Henry Child Carter of Cambridge and brother of Mrs. Whale, was one of his friends as well as Maurice Charles, who later became minister in Abercarn, South Wales.

Neville Figgis seems to have struggled against the faith while Patrick Figgis embraced it with open arms: the practical form his faith took was an exciting challenge. During the years at Mansfield, he realised that he had been too narrow in his outlook, too entrenched in his beliefs, while never doubting the validity of his calling. To his wife’s delight, he was also became a fervent pacifist (he never did anything half-heartedly). Pacifism became an essential part of his Christianity and affected much of his ministry. His way of life was changed; he never looked back.

For his second year examinations he had to write a thesis about the new book by Frank Lenwood, *Jesus: Lord or Leader?* It presented a new theology,

discredited much of the gospel story as myth and emphasised the need for practical Christianity. Patrick's work so impressed the examiners that, although he had neither completed the set course nor obtained a degree, he was placed on List A for ministers. When a vacancy arose in a suburb in Surrey, his name was put forward.

Sanderstead was a new middle-class area with men commuting to work in Croydon. It was in many ways like Mill Hill. There was no Congregational Church, just a hut in a field. The Figgises moved into a house nearby and immediately Patrick began visiting. He called at each new house as people moved in and introduced himself. This was always his approach to his ministry: visiting people, getting to know them. Soon he had helped raise enough money for an attractive building to be erected followed by facilities for badminton, tennis and indoor meetings.

Once the church was underway, they got to know people socially and entertained frequently at the Manse encouraging discussion and debate. With the church now flourishing, Patrick felt the need to get involved with less privileged people. He contacted his college friend Maurice Charles at Abercarn and went to visit him there. A strong relationship was set up with the exchanging of pulpits, regular parcels of food and clothing sent from Sanderstead, and lasting friendships forged between the contrasting areas.

From his earliest years in the ministry, Patrick showed this desire to be more involved with the disadvantaged than the better-off.

The Second World War began and after eight good years at Sanderstead, trouble arose over the pacifist issue: Patrick insisted on preaching about peace and wanted to hold peace meetings at the church. He met up with a Quaker refugee group and fostered an eight-year-old German-Jewish child, the first of many refugees whom he and Doris took in. In this case, however, it led to adoption. The deacons objected to Patrick's pacifist line and told him it was unacceptable. After a traumatic period when he refused to give in to the church's requests, the family had to leave Sanderstead, church, and many friends, and move to a small council house on a new estate in Mill Hill.

Patrick had already become involved with Dick Sheppard and his work among the people in the East End. He now moved into Kingsley Hall in Bow. This was a community centre run by two wealthy sisters, Doris and Muriel Lester, in memory of their brother Kingsley. Initially, it was opened for the benefit of factory girls who were badly catered for. This was a pioneering centre as it also organised one of the first all-day nurseries for children.

Patrick slept in a small, cell-like room in a hard, narrow bed above which hung a wooden cross. He started Sunday services, visited locally and spent most nights taking huge containers of tea or soup to the crowds in the underground shelters. London bombing was at its height and much help was needed. He also carried bags of coal for people, often paying for it himself if they had no money.

In spite of being such a practical Christian, he was also deeply religious. He

spent the first minutes of the day in silent prayer; none of his work would have been undertaken without his strong conviction that Jesus taught that it was essential to love one's neighbour.

In 1942, Patrick stood in a by-election in South Poplar as a Christian Socialist candidate. His meetings were well attended and he was given a fair hearing. He stood against the official Labour candidate but gained support from such well-known people as William Dick, minister of Trinity Church, Poplar, and Canon Raven of Cambridge. Labour won but he did not lose his deposit.

In 1943, as the bombing grew more sporadic, Patrick left Kingsley Hall to become Secretary of the Peace Pledge Union. Here he was responsible for the staff at Dick Sheppard House. Vera Brittain, Laurence Housman, Michael Tippett and John Middleton Murray were some of the people involved, whom he knew personally. Donald Soper, the Methodist preacher, was also a friend. They addressed open air meetings on a regular basis either at Hyde Park or Lincoln's Inn Fields. About four hundred people might turn up to hear Patrick speak publicly for fifty minutes during the lunch hour.

It was during these years, too, that he raised money for a Holiday Home in Mill Hill. In 1941 Ben Platten, who wrote for *The Daily Herald*, was killed in an air raid. The paper donated £600 in his memory. Patrick used it to rent a large requisitioned house; the American Air Raid Distress Committee provided the beds and the Red Cross also made substantial donations. A teacher member from the Sanderstead church undertook the running of the Home which provided cheap breaks for mothers and children and the elderly.

Neville Figgis and Patrick Figgis had something in common quite unconnected with their religion: both hated being late. Punctuality was almost an obsession. Both men, too, were notoriously untidy. If Neville's room was in disarray, Patrick's study was in chaos. Nobody was allowed in to tidy anything but he knew exactly where everything was among the piles of books (he read voraciously on almost every topic), newspaper cuttings and letters. Sermons were scrawled on the backs of envelopes.

Both men, too, came from upper middle-class families, and were educated at public schools and probably felt they owed something to society. They tried to bridge the gap between church and working class. Both put much emphasis on the sermon as the focal part of each service. They were fanatics about speaking their mind and appeared to revel in being part of the opposition. Patrick admitted that he liked swimming against the tide though he confessed before he died that he probably had been too outspoken at Sanderstead.

While Neville had all his generation's loyal patriotism, Patrick had little interest in the monarchy and all it entailed; he was devoted to "ordinary people." Neville was too detached to become an agitator while Patrick argued for social reform. He knew there were glaring wrongs and longed for social reforms to sweep the country. Pensions and wages were insufficient and he believed everyone needed a fair share of wealth and opportunity. He argued that the

hospital porter was as necessary to the hospital as the doctor and both deserved adequate pay. As Chaplain at Great Ormond Street hospital for thirty years, he was well-acquainted with all who worked there, menial and medical staff. The welfare of the individual was more important than the betterment of a few: "a competitive society where the weakest go to the wall, is wrong in the sight of God."

Towards the end of the war, a V2 rocket badly damaged the famous Presbyterian church near King's Cross: Regent Square. After three years in the Peace Pledge Union, Patrick came to take over the ministry at Regent Square, conducting services in a small hall. He visited locally and started a youth club. The area was devastated and there was much deprivation in the surrounding bombed area. People had stopped driving in to church from farther afield, so he brought in the local people. Most of all, he attracted groups of "wild" youngsters who had never been to church and had no idea what behaviour was expected of them and cared less. But he gained their respect and affection. He and Doris took parties of children to the sea or country and years after his death Doris was still visited by some of them. They never forgot that Patrick showed them respect and offered them a chance. But the older congregation did not like him. He did not conform to their views concerning manner of dress or decorum and he was not in favour of rebuilding the church. After five years as minister, he left Regent Square.

In 1950 he decided to experience the most boring job he could find. A friend from Kingsley Hall days had become training manager at the Glacier Metal Company in Wembley. After much persuading, the Personnel Manager agreed to let Patrick work for six months as a labourer in the service department. He had to sweep up metal filings around the machines from 7.30am to 5pm.

Unused to machinery of any kind (he was hopeless at any manual work except gardening), he cut his hands and came home filthy and exhausted. Initially the men were wary of him, wondering if he had just come out of prison, but he gained their confidence and spent the lunch and tea breaks talking and listening.

He left the factory to teach at Mill Hill School. He became Chaplain, took services every Sunday, taught Latin and Fives. Still keen on sport, he played rugger for the masters in a match against the boys when he was in his fifties. These public school boys were very different from the church youth group boys but they too needed help and understanding. Every Sunday afternoon he brought four different boys home for a family tea. They not only ate well but they got the chance to argue and discuss things that concerned them without criticism.

In the nineteen-fifties, Patrick stood again for parliament, this time for Barnet. The victor was the future Conservative Cabinet Minister, Reginald Maudling. "Only if society is at peace with itself can it approach aggression with peace." He invited several politicians from all parties to address his popular midweek discussion evenings.

In 1957 he was invited to preach at a small hall in Totteridge, a middle-class suburb in north London. The new minister had suddenly left and Patrick was

invited to take over the running of this little nucleus of members. The family moved into the area and, as before, Patrick visited every house, raised money and started youth clubs. A new building was erected, Doris took over the growing work with children and soon a flourishing church became a focal point in the district; indeed, it was the only church of any denomination for a considerable area.

After ten fruitful years, Patrick celebrated his sixtieth birthday. But instead of retiring, he was asked to run a small community church in Camden Town, a deprived inner area of London. He and Doris moved there and he commenced probably the happiest ministry of his life. Poverty, deprivation, ethnic problems and drug abuse all presented a great challenge to him. The social work was at least as important as the Christian ministry - he always knew the two were interrelated.

Patrick Figgis did not share Neville Figgis's obsession with human sin; he was positive and welcoming: "always give folk a second chance; you never knew what problems they have to overcome." Nobody was hopeless; with better opportunities it might be easier to improve; there was some good in everybody and in every situation.

Both Neville and Patrick Figgis had powerful convictions. Neville, pessimistic and manic-depressive, lived his Christian Socialism through the written word. He died alone and childless at the age of fifty-three; there was almost no chance of retirement. For Patrick, who achieved some of his most rewarding work after the age of sixty, and with an ever-expanding family, there was no time to retire. Both ministers bore witness to an interpretation of Christian Socialism, the one as theologian, the other as practical activist.

BRIDGET HARRISON

SYDNEY CAVE (1883-1953) - MISSIONARY, PRINCIPAL, THEOLOGIAN

Looking back at the first half of the twentieth century, Sydney Cave would probably not come readily to mind as one of the most influential ministers in Congregationalism. He was never Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, for he refused to let his name go forward as the responsibilities it carried could interfere with his college work. He served on committees where his particular responsibilities and experience were required: Candidates and India for the London Missionary Society; Ministerial and "Special"¹ for the Congregational Union. He was not a regular contributor to any denominational weekly - and only wrote letters to correct facts. He was not a popular preacher; a slight stammer was conquered by a somewhat even tone (while lecturing this did not worry him; if he was caught he would turn back to the board and recover by the time he reached it). But the church at Henleaze, where he was minister 1918-1920, records that his sermons were very helpful and they could hear him (not easy in that Norman-type building of 1906, the architect of which seems to have rated acoustics of low priority).

Yet Sydney Cave exercised influence over the students whom he educated for the ministry. From 1920 until his death in 1953 he was the Principal of a theological college (1920-33 Cheshunt, 1933-53 New, London) - a total longer than any other Principal of a Congregational college that century - to say nothing of his work in India. And he could boast that he had never missed a lecture through ill-health until struck down with leukaemia in the summer term of 1953 - though even then many courses would have been virtually completed. At first remission was secured, but a relapse in early September brought his death just four weeks before what should have been his last session before retirement. He was sixty-nine. His wife had died in December 1950.

But no career like this was in his mind when he left college and offered to the L.M.S., hoping to be sent to China. The L.M.S., however, sent him to India, to Nagercoil in Travancore and he sailed in October 1908, having been ordained at Dawes Road Congregational Church Fulham a few days earlier. In 1909 he was joined by his fiancée Elizabeth Jane Baxter, sister of fellow student Alexander Baxter (who, indeed, served the L.M.S. in China for thirty-eight years between

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1. The "Special" Committee operated the rules relating to the recognition of churches and ministers. It consisted of a small number of respected senior ministers and others, together with the Secretary of the Union of Welsh Independents. It therefore dealt with matters of ministerial discipline and its decisions are noted in the *Year Book's* list of "Admissions and Deletions".

1907 and 1950).² They were married in Madras on 25 November 1909. A daughter, Margaret, was born in November 1910, and a son, Ronald, in January 1912 (Norman, who became a minister, was born in Bristol in September 1918). Sending him to India was ultimately to affect Cave's whole life; but first we must look at his early life.

Sydney Cave's Congregational antecedents are best known on his father's side. His paternal grandmother, Harriet, was married in St. Andrew's Parish Church, Holborn, in March 1841. Her father Samuel Hackett, who signed the register, is there described as a clergyman; he may have been the son of Samuel Hackett, pastor of the Congregational Church in Market Street, Mayfair, London, from 1806 to 1825, who died in 1834. Sydney's uncle was Alfred Cave, Principal of Hackney College from 1882 until 1900 when he died from the consequences of inspecting the college drains. How far his mother's family were Dissenters I cannot tell.

Sydney's father, William Cave, had a very good business as a trunkmaker - certainly serving royalty, possibly Queen Victoria - and Sydney was born in Park Place, Regents Park, London on 18 November 1883. But the default of William's partner changed the family's prospects and they moved to Fulham, where they joined the Dawes Road Congregational Church, and Sydney learned that his educational prospects depended upon his own scholastic ability. As he put it in candidate papers to the L.M.S., "A reversal of family circumstances made it necessary for me if I was to obtain my ambition to work my way through by scholarship". He did. From the ages of nine to fifteen he was at St. Mark's School Chelsea where he was head boy of the upper school when he left by scholarship to the City of London School (1899-1902). There he gained prizes every year ending with the "Lionel Rothschild Scholarship", the highest award the School could offer.

His ambition had been to be a missionary, ever since reading Gill's *Gems from a Coral Island* before he was ten. To this end he entered Hackney College³

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2. Alexander Baxter began in Canton in 1907 and from 1916 to 1925 was on the staff of Linnan College there. Anti-British feeling compelled the British missionaries to withdraw by 1927. Baxter became the minister of the Congregational Church at Hawick until in 1933 he was reappointed as Secretary to the L.M.S. China Council. He was interned 1941-45. N. Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895-1945*, (Oxford U.P. 1954), pp. 198, 205, 207.
 3. Hackney College, founded in 1803 to supply preachers for the Village Itinerancy Society (founded 1796) moved to Finchley Road in 1887, joined with New College in 1924. From 1853 it had had the right to matriculate students for the University of London and in 1900 became a Founder College of the new Faculty of Theology in the University, and so a School of Divinity in the University. Students were internal students of the University and qualified for the B.D.(Hons) which was a subsequent degree. In 1937 the B.D. became a first degree with 1st and 2nd Class Hons and Pass. The B.D.Hons became the M.Th.

in 1902 and his scholastic prowess continued with B.A. (First Division), B.D., B.D. Hons (1st Class - Biblical & Historical Theology) and first place in Dr. Williams's Scholarship (Hebrew, Greek & Patristic Texts) followed by three months in Germany. No wonder P.T.Forsyth told the L.M.S. that he was "the most brilliant student we have ever had". He deemed him fitted for India or China, as one able to hold his own with members of any University. Wider ministerial experience came as Student Pastor of the village church at Moreton (near Ongar) in his second year and at the church at Yardley Hastings 1906-7.

Later Forsyth forcibly expressed his opinion to the L.M.S. that they were wasting Cave's talents in Nagercoil. Although the acting-Principalship of the Scott Christian College 1909-11 (to cover furlough) gave him sufficient opportunity (he told of giving daily Bible lectures to Brahmins), the main task he was given between 1911 and 1915 was to train local village pastors at the Duthie Divinity School. Cave found this frustrating, though he did a great deal to raise standards.

It seems clear from Forsyth's action, and from a long letter from Wardlaw Thompson (Foreign Secretary of the L.M.S.) to Cave (1 July 1910) that Cave had hoped for a post in the recently established Union Seminary in Bangalore. In his letter Wardlaw Thompson points out that Cave had come too recently to India to be appointed as principal; but in a letter later that month Cave says that he had not expected to be principal, but that he had hoped to lecture there. Wardlaw Thompson also refers to verbal and written representations from Forsyth and remarks that he will not take the letter to the Committee yet. All this culminated in a Minute of the Eastern Committee on 14 March, 1911: "Letter read from P.T.Forsyth protesting at retention of Sydney Cave at Nagercoil when opening in China for which he considers SC to be more fitted. *SC to be told that the Directors wanted to appoint a tutor to the theological college at Peking and they would transfer SC there if he wished*". It was a remarkable action which took Cave completely by surprise. Less surprising was the relief of the Directors when, at their meeting on 11 July 1911, it was reported that Sydney Cave had decided to remain at Nagercoil.

That decision was to have far reaching consequences, for by 1914 the recurrent illnesses of the children had led the doctors to say that they could neither remain in India, nor live there in the future. Mrs. Cave returned home with them that year, but London refused the District Committee's recommendation that Sydney's furlough should be advanced to 1915 when the Duthie course finished, and retired him to do District Duty until furlough was due in 1916. When inducted as Minister of Henleaze Congregational Church Bristol in March 1918 - after deputation - he resigned from the L.M.S. If he had decided in 1911 to accept the offer of transfer to China the climate might well have meant that his life's work would have been there.

So, why did he decide after all to stay in India? I suspect that the real reason was that he had become immersed in that study of Indian thought which issued in

his thesis "Redemption Christian and Hindu" for which he was awarded the London D.D. on 23 March 1917. Published in 1919 under the title *Redemption Hindu and Christian* (Oxford University Press), in the hope that Hindus might read the book, it was reviewed by F.L. (?Frank Lenwood) in the *LMS Chronicle* of March 1920. He wrote, "of recent years missionaries of the LMS have put out several books which have done the Society honour, but none has done it more honour than this." "When I was in India" echoed down the years, as later generations of his students recall.

Henleaze was to be his only pastorate. Why he went there I do not know - though Dr. Burford Hooke, recently retired Secretary of the Colonial Missionary Society, was giving oversight following the very early death of the previous minister. A developing suburb on the north side of Bristol, this was then the only church (the parish church came in 1927 when a new parish was carved out of the ancient parish of Westbury-on-Trym). But ere long an academic opportunity also opened.

Western College, Bristol, had closed in 1917, but reopened shortly after the end of the War. R.S. Franks was Principal and Thomas Macey had been Tutor since 1886. (Students at Western College and the Bristol Baptist College were taught by the staff of both colleges). It was not surprising that Macey intimated to the Council at the end of 1918 that he wished to retire. After discussion it was agreed that he should continue until September 1919 after which date he and Sydney Cave should share lectures until September 1920, giving time for the appointment of a successor to Macey. It was definitely a temporary appointment and it is clear that Cave lectured in Comparative Religion at least. One gets the impression that R.S. Franks would have been very glad to have Cave as a colleague after 1920; but that option was no longer open as in March of that year Sydney Cave accepted the Presidency of Cheshunt College, Cambridge. (Macey finally retired in 1924).

Cheshunt had lacked a President (the title used there) for some years and the Governors - having had a "no" from C.H. Dodd - wanted someone with experience of the mission field as many alumni of the College served through the L.M.S. (later ones included Alfred Sadd of the Gilberts and Mike Moore of the Copper Belt). Eventually they learned of Sydney Cave. A deputation visited him in Bristol with the result that he was given an unanimous invitation. (Do we see the hand of the now frail P.T. Forsyth? He had been minister of Emmanuel Congregational Church Cambridge before becoming Principal of Hackney College in 1901).

In the Annual Report for 1922 the Governors reported that the President "has quickly proved his competence, being eagerly welcomed by the churches, commanding the complete confidence of the Governors and having gained the trust and affection of the students". During his presidency the curriculum was widened and standards raised. Several of his books on Christian Doctrine or Other Religions were written here - always with the needs of the students and the churches in mind. The same purpose lay behind the books he wrote when

Principal of New College London, as it had caused him earlier to venture into authorship in Tamil. At Cambridge he lectured in Christian Doctrine and Comparative Religion. His scholarship was recognised in the University.

But Cambridge had a problem; his degrees were London ones. So to them he was Mr. Cave and in 1925 they gave him an honorary M.A. and membership of Emmanuel College. He greatly valued the Cambridge Honours degrees, but told us at New that "it was possible to fail the Cambridge pass degree, but very difficult". (To the end of his life he disapproved of the Ph.D degree which he said was introduced after the First World War when the Americans could no longer go to Germany: "not a real Doctorate, not a real Doctorate!")

In 1933 he was called back to be Principal of New College London, housed in the Hackney buildings where he had been a student. Cheshunt was sad to see him go,⁴ but recognised the importance of this appointment. For now he really came into his own. In 1934 Glasgow University conferred on him an honorary D.D. and in 1936 he was appointed Professor of Theology in his own University, London, a post which he held until his death, having been appointed Professor Emeritus in 1949. He took his full share in the University: Chairman of the Board of Studies 1938-44, Dean of the Faculty of Theology 1944-8 and a member of the Collegiate Council from 1937 until his death. With him, and the rising star of Geoffrey Nuttall - who joined the New College staff in 1945 and became a Recognised Teacher in the University - the voice of New College carried weight in the councils of the University.

The respect in which he was held in ecclesiastical circles is shown by the fact that through and after the war he represented the Free Churches on the Bishop of Maidstone's Committee which negotiated with the Government on such matters as Class B early release for students for the ministry required by the Colleges - and so to fill the ministerial vacancies caused through the war.⁵

The early years at New College were not easy as he strove to raise the academic standards. When he became Principal students could study for matriculation and some had two attempts. He first reduced this to one try, and then to requiring matriculation before a student entered College. On the other hand, in 1943 he persuaded the University Board to move Classical Greek to the list of

4. Apart from the attraction of returning to his old College and the accepting academic atmosphere of London University, he knew that New College was well endowed and that he would not face the need of the recurrent financial appeals that he had to make on behalf of Cheshunt College. He was also probably frustrated by the attitude of the architect (Morley Horder) in the protracted negotiations for the completion of the Cheshunt College Chapel.
5. Class B Release was a quicker release of men and women urgently required for civilian work. As virtually no new students had been accepted during the war years the need for theological students was urgent and a total of 1,500 for all denominations was agreed for Class B Release. Such students had to have been earlier accepted for training and would have been in College earlier except for the war.

optional subjects for the Intermediate B.D.⁶

In 1939 came the War with all its demands and uncertainties. Several Colleges of the University were evacuated to other parts of the country, but Cave was determined that New College ("Hackney & New College" became "New College" in 1936 when the new teaching block, with its fine library, was opened) should remain in the capital. Nevertheless there was always the threat of requisition and in January 1942 all except the teaching block and the Principal's House were required for the WRNS (replaced later by the Ministry of Food) and in June 1942 these too were required. So, the Caves moved to a house in Parsifal Gardens, and classes took place above a shop in the Finchley Road. Not until the summer of 1946 were all the premises derequisitioned, though the teaching block, library and the Principal's House became available earlier. During the Session 1945-6 students joined as they were released from various forms of war service: from about six at the beginning to twenty-six by the end. I was the last, after a six weeks' journey.

As a Principal Sydney Cave had a reputation as a firm disciplinarian. But he always had time to give to students when needed and was sensitive at the end of the war to the fact that students then entering College had been in the forces or down the mines or, as with one, with the Friends Ambulance Unit on the Burma Road. He therefore scrapped the many pre-war rules. Instead, on entering, we had a note that there were five simple rules preceded by these words: "We do not rely on detailed rules for the welfare of our College life, but on the Christian character and devotion of all students. Thus there are no prescribed hours of private study, but students are advised to take exercise in the afternoon, whenever possible, and to settle down to concentrated work after tea, and in the evening hours not to interrupt others in their work, or allow themselves to be needlessly interrupted."⁷ But also "the Principal wished students to feel that he will gladly discuss with them any problem or difficulty, but in the interests of his work he will be grateful if students will arrange with him a convenient time." But in emergency any time would do, as I found when my father was taken seriously ill and Cave told me that there are times when family comes first.

The younger post-war staff found him autocratic but that may have been caused by the staff he inherited. They included W.A.Davies who taught Old Testament and was known to all as Waw - a delightful man, but the epitome of the absent-minded professor; and George Horrocks (one of the oddest men I ever knew) who only appeared to lecture on Philosophy and Psychology, of whose life beyond the College we knew nothing, and who only preached in chapel just before he retired - on condition no other member of staff be present.

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6. In the late 1940s Honours in the B.D. were only possible for a student who passed Hebrew in the Intermediate B.D., though a choice was given whether to take Hebrew or English Old Testament Texts in Finals. In the Intermediate examination three optional subjects were required in addition to Hebrew and New Testament Greek.
 7. The late Kenneth Frank once remarked that Cave never told us to visit in the afternoon, but the requirement to take exercise at that time of the day subsequently had that effect.

Students naturally varied in appreciation of Sydney Cave; but if he had to come round the studies after tea he made much noise to warn of his approach. He knew when not to see or hear. And the Shovell incident illustrated his way of dealing with a student prank.⁸ He gave us a sense of stability and responsibility in our work as ministers that has stood us in good stead through the changes of the years. His nickname was "Uncle"; it had been "Uncle Syd". That says a lot. For one thing he made us realise that being evangelical did not mean being fundamentalist - which leads to him as theologian.

In Tudur Jones's words: "Of recent Congregational theologians, Cave was the most sensitive to the religious implications of the changes through which he had lived. He knew Calvinism as a child and knew it as a hollow dogmatism; in his youth he experienced the tensions between the formulae of that Calvinism and the pronouncements of science; he had known theological liberalism and felt its inadequacy and finally, the wheel came full circle with the revival of the terminology of his childhood days. Throughout, he was passionately evangelical. In all his thinking he felt he was both bound and liberated by an objective Gospel which God had revealed to men".⁹ That is a very fair statement. One of his keywords was "grace" and no New College student of those days will forget one of his favourite phrases: "We are not the good, we are the forgiven". The effect of Forsyth upon him was considerable as his replies to the LMS showed: "Before I entered College I passed through a reaction against the somewhat extreme orthodoxy in which I had been educated and when I entered College I did so with a devotion to the historical Christ that was sincere and real but with a faith that had lost all intellectual content."

He had learned through P.T.Forsyth "what the salvation which I had before so lightly accepted really meant and cost. More and more has the great reconciling act of the Cross become central alike to my thought and to my experience." When I read those words I understood what Geoffrey Nuttall, who worked with him at New for eight years, meant when he wrote "His mind was explorative, but had a circumference, and if he hit it he rebounded sharply".¹⁰

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8. A student started to sign up for a College table tennis competition, but only partly completed his name when his pen ran out. Having managed "J.D.Pick" he returned to find that someone had added "& B.A.Shovell". B.A.Shovell subsequently signed up for attendance at lectures at King's College, and notices at New (to the annoyance of the College Secretary). Then a letter appeared in an issue of *The Christian World* (a weekly) over his signature. The Principal (Sydney Cave) called aside the Senior Student after Morning Prayers for an explanation. Satisfied that it was a student prank and not a misuse of the College address, he referred to the matter at the beginning of his 11am lecture thus: "When I opened my copy of *The Christian World* this morning I saw a letter - not more stupid than most of the letters in *The Christian World*. You should note that you should not write when *in statu pupillari*, never write with a *non-de-plume*, and preferably, as far as *The Christian World* is concerned, never write at all". That was all.
9. R.T.Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662-1962*, (1962) p.454.
10. Personal correspondence.

But India also had its effect. His experience in commending the Gospel to educated Hindus and his study of Indian thought led him to respect a true experience of God. For instance, in his Haskell Lectures at Oberlin in 1939 (published as *Hinduism or Christianity*) he refers to the poetry of Tukaram (pp.139, 141). But the sub-title of the lectures is "A study in the distinctiveness of the Christian Message". Thus when many were being excited by Karl Barth, Cave, while rejoicing in his stress on the objectivity of the Gospel, could not go along with Barth's dismissive attitude to all other faiths. He was happier with Emil Brunner.

Nevertheless the Cross was central to his thinking. In the closing section of *The Christian Estimate of Man* (1944) he wrote, "It is because of Calvary, not because of Eden, that we are compelled to judge gravely of human sin....To a facile optimism, which believes that men need only to be organised aright and all will be well, the Christian estimate of man opposes the recognition of our human sinfulness and the need of a divine Redeemer"; but

Remembering Christ's life and death, the Christian cannot despair of man

Quaerens me sedisti lassus,

Redemisti crucem passus,

Tantus labor non sit cassus

'Thou didst sit weary in Thy search for me, To redeem me Thou didst bear the Cross, May toil so great be not in vain!' These ancient words express the abiding source of the Christian hope for man.¹¹

It was this centrality that gave him that central solidarity in the Gospel that he conveyed to us. As he once said: "when I was a young man I was abused as being an evangelical; now I am abused as being a liberal. I am not aware that I have changed my fundamental position very much." And no man ever gave one a greater sense of the holiness of God when he led worship.

On 24 April 1949 he preached the University Sermon in Great St.Mary's Cambridge and his texts were Luke 23/33 and 1 Corinthians 1/23. The last paragraph has phrases heard again and again:

Before Christ crucified, we know ourselves not the good but the forgiven... We adore what we have seen, we could not have foreseen what we adore. Awed by God's forgiveness, we too may feel the constraining of Christ's love, and knowing ourselves bought with a price, seek to do what he would have us do.¹²

11. S. Cave, *The Christian Estimate of Man* (1944), pp.228-9. The quotation is from the *Dies Irae*.

12. *The Cambridge Review* Vol LXX, No 1714, pp.525-7.

Sydney Cave died 8 September 1953. One can only guess what he would have said of some of the aspects of church life worship and teaching today. I think he would have welcomed the balancing emphasis on the Holy Spirit - but not in isolation or any wild way. He would have deplored the resurgence of fundamentalism as theological laziness and, faced with the kind of "Jesusism" that is about, he would remind us all, as he did then, to "Christianise your idea of God". After all, he understood Paul's great word to the Corinthians: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation." Again and again he turned to that passage for an ordination charge.

The work of this Christian minister, who gave himself fully to the part of the ministry to which he was called, is well summed up in the Minute 1277 of the Meeting of the Governors of New College after his death, in harness:

"the worth of his service can neither be measured nor adequately expressed...By his learning, by his teaching, by his many writings, by his high repute in the academic world and in particular in the University of London, he adorned his office and brought honour to the College, where he was trained under Principal Forsyth. By his quiet and courageous faith, by his reverence for the Word of God and by his pastoral care for his students he fostered with unpretentious zeal the high spiritual purpose of the College.

That sums up the life of this scholarly minister of the Gospel who never let anything come in the way of the work of the College to which he was called.

RONALD BOCKING

REVIEWS

Highgate Dissenters. Their History Since 1660. By John Handby Thompson. Pp. viii, 94. 2001. £10 (including postage) from the author at 2 Alwyne Villas, London N1 2HQ. ISBN 0-9516563-1-7.

This is a superior history of a local church in a pleasant London suburb. It is attractively produced, has twenty-four pages of illustrations, a full list of ministers (Presbyterian, Congregational/Independent and Baptist), and a good index. Nor is it over-priced.

After a brief introduction, five chapters move the narrative chronologically to the present day. Although Unitarians and Baptists briefly appear, as does Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, the book, despite its title, is mainly concerned with Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Highgate. Little time is spent on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and, concentrating (perhaps overmuch?) on the ministers, the reader soon arrives in the nineteenth century. As might be expected, more space is given to recent developments especially those leading up to the United Reformed Church in 1972 and thereafter, than to earlier periods. Notable among the Highgate ministers are Thomas Toke Lynch whose hymns led to *The Rivulet* controversy of 1855-6, Josiah Viney who successfully presided over the building of the present chapel in Pond Square, and is regarded as the "second founder" of Caterham School, William Boothby Selbie, Dugald Macfadyen, Barnard Spaul, George Bradford Caird, George Corfield and Daniel T. Jenkins. Among the 750 members whom Viney received during his twenty-five years at Highgate was James Vernon Bartlet, then a sixth-former at Highgate School, and later Selbie's colleague at Mansfield College, Oxford. Notable among the lay people at Highgate in recent years have been Christopher Driver, the journalist, and Anthony Green, the sculptor and artist.

Thompson writes well of the 1912 commemoration of the Great Ejectment of 1662 when "the case for disestablishment and free churchmanship was more forcibly and publicly argued than ecumenical niceties would allow today". He recalls sensitively the great losses of the First World War which included sons of Selbie, Macfadyen and of Alexander Ramsey, the Presbyterian minister. We learn of missionary enthusiasms, of stained glass windows, organs and, increasingly in the twentieth century, of large premises, hard-pressed congregations, and finances at full stretch.

Relations between the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians had been good for many years and, partly in response to numerical decline, talks on possible closer co-operation occurred in 1958 and 1959. They were resumed in 1964 - years before the coming of the URC - and culminated in 1967 when Union Church came into being. The united church at first met in the Presbyterian building in Cromwell Avenue and then, in 1974, the decision was taken to continue in the former Congregational building in Pond Square, the valedictory

service being held in Cromwell Avenue in July 1982.

John Thompson is to be commended for his fine book. Yet I should have liked to know more about Highgate itself. What was its (approximate) population in 1700, 1800, 1900? The poor do make appearances in Thompson's story so what should we know of the social composition of Highgate? What were the professions of the church members, if the church records reveal such facts? What impact did Highgate Congregationalists and Presbyterians make on their respective denominations? Did Highgate produce lay preachers and, if so, where did they preach? How many members went forward into the ministry? In addition I would have appreciated a local map, giving the locations of the various churches and congregations, mentioned in the text.

ALAN ARGENT

Philip Doddridge: Additional Letters: a supplement to Calendar of the Correspondence of Philip Doddridge (1977) By Geoffrey F. Nuttall. Dr. Williams's Library Occasional Paper No. 15. London: Dr. Williams's Trust, 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AR, 2001. Pp. 38. ISBN 0 852170661

This Occasional Paper celebrates its author's ninetieth birthday (8 November 2001) and the tercentenary of its subject's birth (26 June 2002). It is an invaluable calendar, alerting us to over fifty additional letters since located in "printed pieces now rare and easily overlooked" or in manuscript collections, "mainly in the United States". They include two early letters from Doddridge to Whitefield and four from Doddridge to Zinzendorf, and the manuscript sources of six letters previously known only from printed sources (three of them misdated in the printed source) have been identified.

Doddridge's epistolary motor was evangelical concern but the catholicity of that concern and its bearing on all the incidents and relationships of life give his correspondence its unique value. This is how people knew and knew of each other nationwide, indeed continent-wide. This is the daily heart-beat of Dissent. Geoffrey Nuttall's calendar brings an extraordinarily extensive and now widely dispersed correspondence within manageable and comprehensible compass.

JCGB

The Good Doctor: Philip Doddridge of Northampton - A Tercentenary Tribute. By Alan C. Clifford: Charenton Reformed Publishing, 2002. £9.95. ISBN 0952671638

Alan Clifford properly asks why we remember Watts and Wesley and their commemorative dates but let the tercentenary of the birth of Philip Doddridge in 1702 slip by unmarked, except in his Castle Hill church in Northampton.

Doddridge was beloved in his day, linking the old Puritan traditions and the new Evangelical Revival in his own person and friendships. He was a man beloved by his friends; judicious, kind and inspirational. He could give a courteous but unmoving reply to his enemies; he could raise the volunteers to resist Bonnie Prince Charlie and his papists. The hyper-Calvinists viewed him as over-tolerant and a subtle ally of Arianism. The Arminians felt he clung to election at the expense of salvation. Doddridge pursued his own course, with his own spiritual integrity, never more so than in his last journey to Lisbon and the grave which he knew awaited him there. He died in his fiftieth year having left a mark upon so many people that one would have thought that he had lived to a hundred.

All these aspects of Doddridge's life and character are vividly described in Alan Clifford's book, which is generously illustrated with appropriate prints and photographs. There is a rich collection of Doddridge's own words, not easily accessible to the general reader, including some of his hymns not in modern collections. As a general celebration the book lives up to its title. Intermingled with this excellent material is an argument about the nature of Doddridge's Calvinism in which Dr Clifford would like to place himself and Doddridge on the side of the angels, along with Martyn Lloyd Jones and others. This seems to me the least persuasive part of the volume and would have been better confined to the long appendix, which also addresses the issue. This is not because Doddridge's Calvinism is unimportant but because a general celebration of his life for the generality of readers is not the place to argue about the fine print. We do not remember Doddridge as a systematic theologian but as a teacher and a writer, who could take great truths and make them comprehensible for students and church members. Doddridge preached to touch people's souls, not to correct their dogma, though obviously he believed that the preacher needs to integrate doctrine with pastoral concern. The selections from Doddridge's own writings allow him to speak for himself on these issues. As Dr Clifford himself makes clear, Doddridge's *Family Expositor* was one of his most influential works. He took his stand on scripture and he dedicated himself to making it accessible and powerful. The result was a book constantly republished long after his death and widely influential.

The tribute also suffers from facile comparisons between the state of society in eighteenth-century England and our own day. Too much reading of good evangelical texts from the eighteenth century brings its own perils, one of which is to confuse polemic with fact. Vice and profligacy have been universal in human society since the angel with the flaming sword barred the way back to Eden. Virtue has also abounded, not always amongst the overly religious. Philip Doddridge, the Countess of Huntingdon, George Whitefield and the Wesleys are part of the eighteenth-century world, not set over against it. They display to us more of the virtues than the vices of that era, but we cannot simply sketch them and their contemporaries in black and white. The shading and the subtle colours are also needed, especially with Doddridge, who ranked as a gentleman in a

society which regarded Whitefield as merely a jumped-up tradesman.

Good people make good deaths. As tuberculosis weakened and destroyed him Doddridge was concerned as much for his wife, Mercy, his children and his friends as for himself. He was confident of merry meetings in heaven. As he set out for Lisbon in search of health which he did not believe he would find he wrote to his former pupil, Risdon Darracott: "If I survive my voyage, a line shall tell you how I bear it; if not, all will be well; as good Mr Howe says, I hope I shall embrace the wave which, when I intended Lisbon, would land me in heaven! I am more afraid of doing what is wrong than of dying." It is all there - the reference to his Puritan precursors, the eighteenth-century concern for moral and spiritual integrity, the submission to Providence, the loving concern for others and the transparent faith.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland c.1700-2000. Ed. Robert Pope, University of Wales Press, 2001, Pp.xii, 353. £25.00

This volume aims to assess nationalities and identities in two Celtic countries as revealed in their religious context from the early eighteenth century to the present day. Its main themes are surveyed by the editor in a broad-based introduction which explains that religious thought and practice are social dimensions reflecting a national identity based on historical and cultural developments. A rich selection of essays examines various aspects of the role of religious activity in the formulation of national identity in Wales and Scotland. In a secular age greater emphasis is placed on identity as a purely non-religious entity based chiefly on political and cultural cultures, but this volume discusses significant themes which focus on the formative contribution of religion to national character and historical growth. It forges significant links with current investigations into the concept of British consciousness and identity, chiefly in relation to fundamental changes in politics and society. Present day historians devote more attention to racial identities in Britain and historical concepts of a united Britain, and this volume is a valuable addition to current research in that field.

The first half is devoted to the Welsh context. Wyn James examines noteworthy parallels between Welsh identity, language and religion in his study of Welsh Methodist tradition which has a distinct Welsh contribution in maintaining existing links between religion and cultural development. Following upon that argument Geraint Tudur reflects on how early Methodist leaders, Howell Harris in particular, retained a native flavour despite the close relations between the movement and its English counterpart. The argument is taken further by W.P.Griffith who, while focusing on the preaching skills of Edward Matthews, Ewenni, evaluates the powerful role of the Welsh pulpit and its oratory in the

spread of Welsh Nonconformity and the spirit of Welshness. Roger L. Brown provides an interesting view of relations between the Anglican church and the concept of a national church in the context of language, especially in the pastoral field. He draws on sources which highlight the quest for the appointment of prelates identifiable with the native language and Welsh nationality. The theme of Frances Knight's study is the religious views of J. Arthur Price, the non-Welsh speaking chancery barrister and nationalist who believed that the Anglo-Catholic form of worship would establish and create a church more relevant to disestablishment and the religious needs of Wales. Trystan Owain Hughes contributes an important essay on the significance to Catholics and Protestants of the early Celtic Church as a concept of national identity, and D. Densil Morgan follows up themes which he has considered elsewhere, mainly the disestablishment of the church, religion and labour ideals and the relationship between concepts of identity in a changing cultural environment in the twentieth century. These contributions have much to offer in defining and evaluating the growth of Welsh national awareness in periods which saw a transformation in social values and identity.

The remainder of the volume is devoted to broad themes in the religious identity of Scotland. The first essay, by John Wolffe, bridges common identity features in the two nations as revealed in commemorations for well-known public figures in Cardiff and Edinburgh. The other essays dwell on specifically Scottish aspects of identity. Douglas Ansdell's wide-ranging contribution considers notions of collective memory, concentrating on identity, religion and social structure. Religious revival is given attention by Kenneth B. E. Roxburgh who assesses the importance of spirituality as a feature of Scottish identity as revealed in the aims of eighteenth-century Presbyterians and Evangelicals whose roots lay deeply in the Scottish Reformation and Covenanting movement. The role of Scottish Baptists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries attracts Brian Talbot, and Liam Upton examines the career of Edward Irving who advocated a Church of Scotland as a symbol of Scottish identity and who believed that the Church of Scotland and the nation should, on historical grounds, form "an integrated national and religious identity". Bernard Aspinwall probes the contribution of Roman Catholicism to Scottish identity and investigates some interesting landmarks in the nation's history, focusing at the same time on the diversity of the faith. The distinctive features of highland religious practices are traced by Donald E. Meek, based essentially on evangelicalism, traditionally associated with the Gaelic language.

This volume has much to offer the historian intent on concepts of national identity and the reader will not be disappointed with the quality of individual contributions. One strives hard, however, to find parallels between the Welsh and Scottish experiences which might have given the volume a more integrated structure. The editor admits that there are "many differences and [that] the two nations go separate ways in detail, particularly in matters relating to language and

allied cultural developments". Nevertheless, as he rightly concludes, "it is the kind of national identity, catholic, humane and unmistakably Christian...which needs to be asserted above partisan approaches to race and ethnicity". It is in this context that the volume achieves its prime aim. It is handsomely produced and contains a collection of fine scholarly essays which contribute significantly to current research undertaken by historians into aspects of "Britishness" and to an understanding of religious developments and experiences in the two Celtic countries.

J. GWYNFOR JONES

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. By Faith Cook: Banner of Truth Trust, 2001. £19.95 ISBN. 0 85151 812 5

By any reckoning Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, was one of the remarkable Englishwomen of the eighteenth century. This fact is little known, partly because she has been so unfortunate in her biographers. A. Seymour's two volume *Life*, rambling and inaccurate, obscured her for over a century. Victor Murray started work and was overcome by the size of the task. Edwin Welch wrote a handsome corrective to Seymour but, on his own confession, attempted no evaluative comment. Boyd Schlenker offered a professional biography with little understanding of, or sympathy for, the religious sentiments which drove the Methodist movement. Faith Cook now brings religious sympathy to the task, but without academic rigour or sufficient understanding of the eighteenth century. As the blurb on the jacket says, "Faith Cook has the ability to make biography exciting and readable". She also has the patience to track a great many sources and offer correctives. If excitement and readability are what you want, along with her unqualified enthusiasm for her subject, this is the book for you. Historians may want more.

Two major difficulties will make this a hard book for scholars to use. The first is Faith Cook's view of Providence, which acts as a counterpoint to the whole narrative. Unexplained and unargued, but confidently asserted, particular providences litter the narrative. "Those early years of the eighteenth century marked the birth of a number of children who would one day be of key importance in God's plans for his church, not only in Britain but also in America." These children included "William Grimshaw, much used by God in Yorkshire and beyond..." We learn also that John Wesley was born in the same year as Jonathan Edwards, Charles Wesley within four months of Selina herself. As a general providence it is unexceptionable to note that people involved in the same religious movement tend to be of the same generation. However, I am not sure that the book ever resolves the question of God's plan. Was it to revive the Church of England, create new Christian denominations, or a bit of both? It is one thing to quote Grimshaw as writing "his work of grace prospers in these parts" when reporting

on the progress of the revival in the north of England in 1761. It is quite another for the historian to comment "The floodtide of blessing grew wider and deeper as the months passed, not only in the north but across the country". Once more a "not only but also" takes us from the particular to the general with only anecdotal evidence. Other kinds of evidence, including statistics, exist and could be used to support the argument or qualify it. In Selina's declining years "God was still pleased to bless her endeavours"; indeed so. These unargued pieties add very little to the narrative and actually get in the way of our seeing what a distinguished woman she was and how the grace of God worked through her in remarkable ways.

The other major difficulty is Faith Cook's reliance on the Seymour text. She makes a spirited argument against Edwin Welch's dismissal of two letters of the Duchess of Marlborough as "forgeries" by Seymour. However, the Welch dismissal of Seymour as an objective source was grounded in a cogent analysis of a whole string of errors and overblown claims. Seymour is a necessary source but a secondary one and it comes with a health warning. Faith Cook allows for errors but asserts that Seymour has been discounted because it takes an "evangelical stance". Seymour's work has a veneer of piety but I am convinced that truly evangelical biographers of the nineteenth century would have done a much better and a more honest job than he did.

There are other minor annoyances for the academic historian. Appendix 5 is an arbitrary list of Trevecca students and their subsequent careers, not always accurate. The extensive use of material in the Cheshunt Foundation archives carries no identifying references. All pious commentators are taken at face value; all critics are discounted. Having dwelt on the corrupting influences of Lord Chesterfield's friendship with Selina's son Francis, Faith Cook offers no real explanation for the continuing trust between mother and son. Francis was even drawn in to give opinions on religious matters. Selina's feisty political views are mentioned, but only in the context of hopes that Frederick, Prince of Wales, might be converted. The book jacket carries on the back the Soldi picture of the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon with two of their children, in period costume. An enlargement of the Countess herself, with bare arms and plunging neckline, appears on the front. Yet the fashionable part of life in the Hastings family is recounted only as a backdrop to religious conversion. What Edwin Welch began to offer, but for which we yet wait, is a biography which reveals a strong-minded woman in full command of the world of society and politics, but also far more alert than her peers to the transforming energy to be found in the evangelical awakening. This fashionable woman, every bit as much as the Wesleys and Whitefield and all the other clergymen, recognised that the future of the church and of Christian religion lay in embracing "Enthusiasm" rather than dismissing it. Although this is a long book it is an easy read. This is achieved by using predictable prose which may not be to everyone's taste. Where one longed for the spare sentences of Edwin Welch to say a little more one sometimes wishes Faith

Cook would say a little less. Compare the two accounts of the death of Selina; for me the Welch is far more reverential though much more concise. Keep hold of Welch - it will always be useful - and keep on waiting for the authoritative and sympathetic biography which the Countess of Huntingdon deserves.

STEPHEN ORCHARD

The Battle over Hermeneutics in the Stone-Campbell Movement, 1800-1870. By Michael W. Casey. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998. Pp. xii, 302. \$99.95.

This book, based on Professor Casey's Ph.D. thesis, traces the hermeneutics of restorationism in the movement associated with Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone in its first seventy years of history in the U.S.A. As such it sheds some interesting light on the parallel British movement which became known as Churches of Christ. But it has a wider significance because, although this is not articulated in the book as such, it sharply raises the question of whether the Reformed understanding of the supremacy of scripture necessarily entails what is nowadays called fundamentalism.

Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address* of 1809 affirmed that nothing was binding as articles of Christian faith except that which was expressly enjoined by Christ and his apostles; and that "inferences and deductions from Scripture premises", though they might truly be called the doctrine of God's word, were not binding upon the consciences of Christians further than they perceived the connection. Thus statements such as the Westminster Confession, whilst expedient, were largely the result of human reasoning, and should not be the terms of Christian communion. Casey discusses the Presbyterian background to the Campbells, and explains the significance of their break with it, largely in terms of the adoption of inductive rather than deductive reasoning. The familiar Lockean background to this move is carefully considered, and the Scottish "common sense" school of Reid and others is treated as conservative Lockeanism rather than as something different. All this is familiar, but it is clearly set out.

The interest of Casey's book, however, is the way in which he demonstrates first, that Alexander Campbell, after a strict restorationist period in the 1820s, gradually moved to a more liberal position from 1830, in which a place was found for inferences after all, particularly in the realm of church government and the unity of Christians; and secondly that, after initial criticism of this by conservatives in the movement, they too moved towards arguments based on inferences (albeit conservative ones), which they were prepared to make binding, particularly on the use of instrumental music in worship. The benefits of this are twofold. First, it helps in a new way to make sense of the positions of those theologians in this period, who from one perspective appear to be progressive and from another to be conservative. Secondly, it exposes very sharply the extent to which there was a tension between a "monarchical" theory of interpretation, which

depended on divine command, and a “democratic” theory of interpretation, which allowed the people to decide what was best in their situation. The political context of American theology (but not only American) is thus clearly indicated - perhaps the best example being slavery. Casey’s Conclusion queries whether the same shifts in the use of logic and rhetoric are to be found in other traditions, especially Presbyterianism, as well. However, having noted that the traditional hermeneutic of command, example and necessary inference are not found in the Bible but rather in the human history of Reformed theology and the Enlightenment, Casey wonders whether an alternative restoration hermeneutic is possible. By extension the same question applies to Reformed theology itself; so this book has a wider interest than for students of Churches of Christ.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

Friends of Religious Equality: Nonconformist Politics in Mid-Victorian England. By Timothy Larsen. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999. Pp 300. ISBN 0 85115 726 2.

Timothy Larsen’s study of Nonconformist politics between 1847 and 1867 analyses how far the phrase “Nonconformist Conscience” makes sense when applied to the mid-nineteenth century. It also offers a critical appraisal of the negative picture of Nonconformity since Matthew Arnold’s influential but fundamentally flawed book, *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold was a sceptical son of an inspirational father, whose *obiter dicta* about Nonconformity (of which he knew little) are treated like the holy writ in which he did not believe.

Larsen argues that the political stance of mid-nineteenth century Nonconformists, particularly Congregationalists and Baptists, was based on a positive belief in religious equality. Furthermore this was rooted in their ecclesiology, a belief in the independence of the local congregation, which led them to deny the state a role in religion in particular, and disposed them to a minimal role for the state in other matters in general. After an introductory section on Nonconformist grievances in the early century, there are three central chapters in which disestablishment, other religious equality issues and state education are considered in detail. The more ambivalent areas of moral reform, no popery, peace, imperialism and the suffrage are considered in a concluding section.

Larsen’s argument about non-intervention is effective in his central chapters. He rightly emphasises the crucial importance of the shift in opinion over state education in the 1860s, despite the concession secured over the non-sectarian basis of religious instruction in Board Schools. His points about the reluctance of many Baptists and Congregationalists to support prohibition of the drink trade and legislative enforcement of Sunday observance, precisely because these were inappropriate objects for state intervention, are well made; as is his point that Wesleyan Methodists were more ready to accept the state as a moral policeman

than other Methodists, who were closer to other Nonconformists. Nevertheless the way in which advocates of religious equality wobbled over the Ecclesiastical Titles Act, the Crimean War and manhood suffrage makes the difficulties of Nonconformity by 1914 much more comprehensible.

Although there was an ecclesiological basis for religious equality, Larsen nevertheless tends to underestimate the contextual dimension to political decisions. His too eager dismissal of the Congregational establishment in New England as eccentric leads him to ignore the extent to which Calvinism justified theocratic politics; in England Nonconformist political thought was based on arguments for religious toleration (following Locke and others) that radically transformed the Calvinist basis for its ecclesiology. This tension had lasting effects, which deserve more subtle analysis. Larsen rightly notes that the essentially sentimental basis for evangelicalism, which characterised Methodism and Anglicanism, was no basis for any serious political position; but he underestimates the extent to which this theology of feeling (even adopted by Schleiermacher) had affected Baptist and Congregational theology by the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless Larsen's book is the best in print for this important period.

DAVID M. THOMPSON

The Contexting of a Chapel Architect. James Cubitt (1836-1912). By Clyde Binfield. The Chapels Society, Occasional Publications 2 (London 2001), Pp.111 with 73 illustrations. £30. (Available from the Society at Haughley Grange, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 3QT). Reduced price for Chapels Society members.

This is an "uncommonly stimulating, even exciting" book. The quoted words, first applied to one of James Cubitt's chapels, are equally applicable to this excellent study of the architect in his context from the mellifluous pen of Clyde Binfield. The text is, as one would expect, beautifully written in a style redolent of Victorian parlours and chapel ladies taking afternoon tea and planning the next missionary bazaar. Daring distortions of the language, such as the "Contexting" of the title, barbaric in any other hands, here appear no more out of place than the aspidistra in the corner. We are given the life and works of one of the foremost of nineteenth-century Dissenting architects - Congregational or Baptist with a dash of Welsh Calvinistic - but we are also given much more: a world of building committees and overspent budgets, cultured ambition and spiritual aspiration. Through this text we reach out towards the ineffable heart of Victorian religion. It is truly a book which cannot but be savoured and enjoyed; it feeds alike the intellect and the imagination.

James Cubitt was a son of the manse. Though all Cubitts were doubtless homogeneous in some distant Norfolk past, James was not related to Thomas Cubitt the builder, and only distantly by marriage to William, the transport

engineer. His father, also James, was an earnest preacher/teacher, “dogged by ill health and difficult flocks”, who ended his working days in the bowels of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, tutor in Spurgeon’s Pastors’ College. The connections and influences that made the son, James, the architect he became are lovingly traced. In the “battle of the styles” this scion of Puritan East Anglia had little time for the plain seventeenth-century meeting house, or the classically-fronted temple more likely to be mistaken for a theatre. His inspirations were Wren and Pugin - an unlikely combination for the uninformed reader at the start of this book: a natural union realised in the art of James Cubitt by the end. Both Pugin and Cubitt sought integrity in their buildings, the purpose of which was the reason and not merely the occasion for their gothic style and detail. Both Cubitt and Wren shared the Protestant view of worship centred on the Word proclaimed. Cubitt saw his task to be to create preaching places out of the great traditions of Gothic Europe but, because they were to be centred on the pulpit and not the altar, they could not be mere imitations of churches. For Cubitt a chapel was to be an effective box for the preaching and hearing of the Word: a true tabernacle over a protestant preaching place in which the church could gather, congregationally, and yet in which each individual could see and hear, and be seen and heard. Each God-given word of the preacher was applied to each sinner’s condition and heart, alone before God and yet encompassed by the faithful in their pews and galleries.

Cubitt was a theorist with the ability and courage to attempt to practise what he preached. That was part of his integrity. Apart from his long association with *Building News*, he made three major contributions to architectural theory: *Church Design for Congregations: Its Development and Possibilities* (1870); “Wren’s Work and Its Lessons”, published in the *Contemporary Review* (1884); and *A Popular Handbook of Nonconformist Church Building* (1892). The first staked out the position from which emerged two of his most important works, Emmanuel Congregational, Cambridge and Union Chapel, Islington. This latter survives gloriously intact, escaping wartime bombing and modern improvement alike. It is Cubitt’s St Paul’s Cathedral. Inspired by the church of Santa Fosca, Torcello, across the lagoon from Venice, he rejected the basilica for the open space under a dome. And what a dome the Congregationalists of Islington received, even if like later domes it cost more - considerably more - than was initially specified. Binfield is not lost for words: “Union is an intelligent mystery of largeness of parts, interplay of shapes and shades, counterpoint of arch and column, a consolidated rhythm.” Above all, “It works”. The later Cubitt evolved - backslid perhaps. His thirteenth-century Gothic reached forward to the fifteenth, even to Tudor, and Arts and Crafts by the end. Naves lengthened until chapels could look like parish churches. Not all attempts to build fit for purpose were equally successful. Cubitt was a Robert Browning, reaching for the heaven beyond his grasp, never a low man of limited vision and aspiration, never dull.

That is also the quality of this book. The seventy-three illustrations are as essential and integral to the text as were Cubitt’s gothic carvings to his chapels.

The captions echo the text and illustrate it; the text explicates the photographs and drawings and transports the reader from the two-dimensional word to the three dimension visual experience, as Cubitt's chapels were intended to. His were sermons in stones and buildings for sermons; this book is a scholarly feast on the printed page, a book which delights the heart.

EDWARD ROYLE

From Independence to Union. Wilbraham Road Church 1902-2002 By Roger Tomes. Obtainable from the author, 262 Withington Road, Manchester M21 0YB. Pp. 27. £1.00.

This is an apparently unassuming but in fact sharply observed history of a quietly middle-class Manchester church which for seventy years sustained a consistently intelligent ministry. It is not a "success" story. Membership was never more than respectable and funds were always stretched. The church was vulnerable to the weaknesses of Congregationalism (the author has a shrewd eye for the telling detail) but, over all, its witness was a tribute to the strengths. After 1972 the church was part of a group in an area of cumulative social change. In 1985 it united - to the satisfaction of all concerned - with the former Presbyterians of St. Ninian's, to worship at St. Ninian's. Its own premises, completed only in 1962, are now the Gita Bhavan Temple.

Wise readers will buy a copy, for this is an account of what Congregationalism in many of our churches really was like. But one contingent detail has escaped the author's eye: C.A. Neeve, whose ministry from 1922 to 1927 was long remembered with appreciation, was brought up in Emmanuel Church, Cambridge. He lived in Grantchester, where his parents took in lodgers, among them Rupert Brooke.

JCGB

Reminiscence, Reflection, Reassurance: The Davies Lecture, 2001 By Alan P.F. Sell. Caermarfon: Gwasg Pentycelyn, 2002, Pp. 45, £3.00 ISBN 1. 903314 . 43 . 7. *The Dissenting Witness Yesterday and Today: A lecture delivered ...November 6, 2001.* By Alan P.F. Sell, obtainable from the Protestant Dissenting Deputies of the Three Denominations, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH, Pp.24.

Admirers of Alan Sell's style as well as his content will want to obtain these complementary lectures. They are elegiac (the Davies Lecture coincided with his retirement from Aberystwyth), with some tantalising autobiography, considerable humour, much history, and uncompromising theology. The last point is not confrontational, for it adds the reassurance to the reminiscence and the reflection. It announces the Gospel.

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