if Figgis seems forbidding, I recommend this essay as a compelling account of where we are. Graham is moved by Figgis's conviction that establishment cannot save us but that disestablishment will not deliver us either: 'The solution to the dilemma of Christian identity within a pluralist society is not to seek to re-invent Christendom, but nor is it to remove religious values, symbols and organisations from public life altogether' (201).

Negotiating that challenge is a daunting task but, as this collection admirably demonstrates, a serious engagement with Figgis and his legacy is a very good place to start.

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Anne Spurgeon

Christ's Politics: A Life of William Moore-Ede

Malvern: Aspect Design, 2021. Pp. x, 312. Pb. £12.

ISBN 978-1-912078-05-9

Look at the portrait of William Moore Ede (1849–1935) at the beginning of this book: an Edwardian cleric dressed in academic gown, his hands enfolding a book and looking very much like a figure from another world. What, we may wonder, has such a figure to say to us today? Is there very much that we should bother about in the life of a former dean of Worcester of whom we have hardly heard?

For much of what became a long life, William Moore Ede was a prodigious parish priest vigorously at large in the industrial landscapes of the North. His first labours in public virtue came with a curacy at Alston in Cumberland, a bastion of nonconformity. Here he learnt much from the town's Quakers, to whom the mineral rights of the area had been leased and who used their income to reform the conditions of the town with myriad social schemes while maintaining only a small, plain meeting house. A second curacy followed in the harsh, volatile mining communities of South Shields. If there was more than enough here to provoke the sympathies of an instinctive idealist, Moore Ede also played a vigorous part in the burgeoning extension scheme of the University of Cambridge, touring the towns of Bradford, Halifax and Keighley to speak of political economy to growing numbers of students. A new move brought him to Sheffield. Here was the innovation of Ruskin's People's Museum

and already the networks of patronage that would create a new civic university. Soon, as many as 450 working men were attending his lectures. He offered little, if anything, to debates about church ritual or doctrine. 'The real worth of the Church', he insisted, 'is to render life holier' (63). By this he meant the life of society itself. In Sheffield, Moore Ede did much to found the Girl's High School and a new free public library and museum. He also established the Sheffield Café Company to provide an alternative to the public houses of the city. These ventures struck a chord and prospered mightily.

In 1881, Moore Ede was appointed rector of Gateshead by Bishop Lightfoot. Here he created a much-praised series of Sunday afternoon lectures, offering talks on 'The Armenians: Their History and Suffering' alongside 'Who Wrote the Gospels?' His vision was growing richer and bolder. At a number of conferences, he ventured to propose the establishment of a national pension fund. He was a persevering advocate of the temperance movement, something that often brought him into court when applications for licences were made in an area already flooded by public houses. 'Christ', he emphasised, 'cares for our bodies as well as our souls' (111). Indeed, he was not without critics in the town, and some were eminent and powerful. He could also be found at work for the Gateshead School Board, securing the provision of penny dinners for poor families and overseeing the Gateshead Public Dinner Company (and its famous Nelson Street restaurant, a largely vegetarian establishment). His relations with local nonconformists were warmly cordial and restlessly productive. To a congregation of civic worthies on Mayoral Sunday in 1887, he preached that to profess a conforming belief in Christian doctrine while living in indifference to the misery of society was nothing better than atheism.

By now, Moore Ede was turning his attentions to the reform of dangerous practices in the lead industry, where women were employed as cheap labour and routinely poisoned, sometimes fatally. It is not surprising to find him at the foundation of the new Dunstan Co-operative Flour Mills, which made affordable bread possible across the region, while his services as a mediator in disputes were much in demand. In the midst of all this, he managed to give the Hulsean lectures at Cambridge; the book which came from these remains his only substantial published work. He also established a branch of the London Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, widely acknowledged as a model of its kind. His wife Eleanor, meanwhile, was the mother of eight children and president of the Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, which ran a hostel in Gateshead.

When the solicitous Bishop Westcott proposed that the Moore Edes move to the rectory of the quieter coastal parish of Whitburn, they duly did so. The local colliery was but a walk away, and with it came a co-operative shop, a

Methodist chapel and a large primary school. Moore Ede promptly began to hold services in a room above the shop and proposed that the almost-redundant mission hall become instead a Workmen's Institute. The managing director of the local coal company provided the money needed to inaugurate the venture, and Moore Ede paid for the billiards table. A new church was built later – along with rent-free housing for those who were elderly or disabled, which in time bore still greater fruit in the form of the Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association. For Moore Ede, housing was 'a religious question' (155). One of the fruits was Walkerville, a substantial new development built on the fringe of Newcastle.

It was Asquith who offered Moore Ede the deanery of Worcester. By now, he had acquired enough of a reputation to be feared in conservative circles as a socialist and it was not altogether easy to think that he would flourish in an ancient cathedral foundation which maintained the loyalties of a county set. But, as Anne Spurgeon notes, Worcester was 'a smoky, rather grim industrial city employing thousands of poor workers often in miserable hazardous conditions' (171). Moore Ede was soon immersed in the work of the Wayfarers' Relief Society, the Discharged Prisoners Aid Society, and the creation of open-air schools. In Leamington Spa, he opened the Milverton Coffee House, and in Birmingham he did much to create the new Digbeth Institute. In 1910, he became actively involved in the strike by women chain-makers in Cradley Heath, writing public letters to rally support and financial aid. He saw clearly how poverty, alcohol, domestic abuse and gambling fuelled each other. After the death of his first wife, he married a leading light in the local women's suffrage movement, Sarah Pattinson, and Spurgeon finds him 'progressively feminist in his thinking' (197). When, in 1914, the Church League for Women's Suffrage suspended judgment on violent campaigning methods, Moore Ede, a pacifist, resigned from it.

For many years, Moore Ede had been a member of the Peace Society. He attended the International Peace Congress of 1911 and the outbreak of the First World War found him at Lake Constance, attending the summit of the new World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. The war broke his pacifism, for he could not but think it unavoidable and just, yet he still spoke and wrote on behalf of conscientious objectors. He inspired a collaboration of local aristocracy and church interests in the foundation of a Worcester Housing Scheme and the creation of a new Worcester Garden Suburb, which opened in 1915. An estate of houses for former servicemen, Gheluvelt Memorial Park, opened two years after the war ended. Moore Ede collaborated with a local builder to show that it was possible to meet the housing shortage with new homes of credible quality built for £500, for such houses could be let at an affordable rent. These buildings, disparaged as 'the dean's cowsheds',

became a popular success. Admirers up and down the country praised the dean of Worcester for doing something while others merely talked. As the talking went on, Moore Ede began to explore new building materials and the provision of electric heating and lighting.

At Worcester Cathedral, Moore Ede raised money for a new organ and had the cathedral bells recast. He founded the Friends of the Cathedral in 1931 (after George Bell had established the first association of Friends at Canterbury, five years before). He retained a deep affection for the North-East and continued to address the Durham miners' gala each year, seeing that coal was now a declining power in the world's economy. In July 1934, Moore Ede retired. He was 85. He was made an honorary freeman of the city that he had come to see as his home. A year later, he was dead. At his funeral, Bishop Perowne remarked, 'How completely diverse from the Deans that went before him he was!' (294). Spurgeon concludes with Moore Ede's own words, 'Our social conditions are of our own making, they are what they are because of what we are. There is no law of the universe that says we should live like this' (298).

Spurgeon's biography has its root in a booklet written some fifteen years ago by that admirable historian of the Church of England, Graham Neville. She has now extended this sketch very successfully in a fine study which integrates a diverse body of material and brings both her subject and his many contexts vividly to life. She dedicates the book to the memory of Mary Jane Gray, a young Gateshead girl whose death from lead poisoning so galvanised the young Anglican curate in whose parish she had lived. The historical context is lightly touched on: there is little discussion of the wider currents of Christian socialism; Spurgeon appears mildly at sea with the radical social realism of the temperance movement. But the book remains a splendid achievement. It has been published, very creditably and very affordably indeed, not by a conventional religious press at all – these days I doubt that any of them would have wanted it, alas – but by a small printing press in Great Malvern. They deserve to be showered with praise and gratitude for what they have so quietly achieved. And when we compare our own feeble efforts with those of this extraordinary man, we should feel ashamed of what the Church has become in our hands.

University of Chichester Andrew Chandler

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