

Cambridge and the Evangelical Succession



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Author's Preface

THIS SERIES OF STUDIES HAS BEEN PREPARED as a companion to the similar volume called *Oxford and the Evangelical Succession*. It is designed as a study in the lives of well-known Cambridge men whose names are held in honour by all who love and serve the Evangelical Succession. My first aim has been to tell their story from records and writings, journals and letters, of their own, or of their contemporaries. Thus each study has been cast in the form of a continuous biography, but the object has been to reach a clear view of their character, their ministry, and their contribution as representative Evangelicals to the Church of England.

William Grimshaw did not perhaps carry much of Cambridge into his life or ministry; but he was linked with all the chief men of the great Movement led by Whitefield and the Wesleys. He was the first of the Pioneers of the Revival to pass away from the scene of earthly labours and to enter into the joy of his Master's presence. His life affords us a unique illustration of the way in which a churchman combined his parish duties with itinerant labours, and his friendship with Henry Venn in his early years in Yorkshire was a formative influence of great value in the life of one of the most honoured of the Evangelical Fathers.

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John Berridge was much more closely linked with Cambridge, both before and after ordination. He was a resident of his college for twenty-one years, from 1734 to 1755, as student and Fellow; he was the incumbent of Everton for thirty-eight years, from 1755 to 1793, as pastor and preacher. Everton was a benefice in the gift of Clare and within easy reach of Cambridge, so that he was able to keep in touch with his Alma Mater to the close of his life. His friendship with Henry Venn of Yelling gave him direct contact with the wider circle of great Evangelical contemporaries, and his personal relations with Rowland Hill and Charles Simeon are of paramount interest in the development of Evangelical churchmanship.

Henry Venn, Charles Simeon and Henry Martyn form a definite succession; they let us see how the torch of truth and love passed from hand to hand and from age to age. Henry Venn was like a father to Charles Simeon; Simeon in turn was to Henry Martyn all that Venn had once been to him. They were all worthy sons of Cambridge; each was an honoured Fellow of his college. They were closely linked with Cambridge in the years that followed ordination as well as in the days when they read for degrees, and they left their impress on new generations in the student world who had to tread where they had once trod.

The Lady Huntingdon had been the intimate friend of Grimshaw, Berridge and Venn, and all three won their spurs in the field as itinerant preachers in an age when Order meant but little. But it was Venn who made the most direct impact upon Simeon and Martyn, and all three made their mark in the world as deliberate churchmen in an age when Order came to matter. They proved themselves worthy heirs of the great Reformation heroes such as Bilney and Tyndale and Ridley and Cranmer, who had sought light and found it at Cambridge in the sixteenth century. And the Succession is still unbroken; the light which they kindled must not go out.

I owe a very warm debt of gratitude to the Right Reverend Hugh Gough, Bishop of Barking, himself a Cambridge man, who has so kindly written the Foreword for these studies. It is



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my great desire that the pages which now follow will not only do full honour to the great Cambridge Evangelicals, but will also help us to catch afresh that deep inspiration from on high which made them great in love and service for their Lord and Saviour.



‘He did his utmost for God. Seldom had the sun ever run half his daily course before this minister had once or oftener declared the testimony of the Lord, which enlightens the eyes of the mind and rejoices the hearts of the poor. All intent on this work, every day had its destined labours of love, morning and evening, to fill up. Labours so great, that it is almost incredible to tell how many hours of the twenty-four were constantly employed in instructing those who dwelt in his parish or in neighbouring places. Never was any sordid child of this world more engrossed by the love of money and more laborious in heaping it up, than (William Grimshaw) in teaching and preaching the Kingdom of God!’

*Henry Venn: Funeral Sermon (cf. Cragg, Grimshaw of
Haworth, p. 106)*