

The canonists' task was to revise the earlier edition and then to ask whether all the principles there formulated were still common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion. Ecclesialogists and ecumenists will ponder on the significance of the changes on marriage for communion between the churches of the Anglican Communion. While for canonists the question of communion is usually binary, for ecclesialogist and ecumenists there are degrees of communion. Even imperfect or impaired communion is still communion.

Christopher Hill

Former Bishop of Guildford, President of the Ecclesiastical Law Society, UK

Paul Avis (ed.), *Neville Figgis, CR: His Life, Thought and Significance* (Anglican-Episcopal Theology and History, 7; Brill: Leiden, 2022), pp. xviii + 260. ISBN 978-9004503113.

doi:[10.1017/S1740355322000341](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355322000341)

Coming just over a century after John Neville Figgis's death, this is a welcome volume (there is only one other book-length study of Figgis, by Maurice G. Tucker in 1950). It demonstrates that Figgis's instincts resonate with political and cultural analyses that today describe themselves as postliberal and postsecular.

His pluralism – marked by an insistence that persons are formed in community, that associations have corporate personality, and that we participate in the state not as individuals but as members of these intermediate associations – offers an alternative to contemporary solidarities on the right that are monocultural and defined against an Other and, on the left, to an adversarial and fissiparous politics of identity.

Mark Chapman's opening essay describes the life and death of Figgis, drawing out the dialectical seriousness of Figgis's attack on conventional and Liberal religion and yet the vitalist impulse that recognized the world as the theatre of revelation. Andrew Grosso summarizes Figgis's critique of and riposte to Nietzsche, whose artful and passionate philosophy described best the fearful shape of life without redemption. Both Chapman and Grosso show that Figgis was no mere triumphalist but suffered the costliness of cruciform faith even as he clung to hope. The final essay by Thomas Seville, CR, presents a complementary account of Figgis *qua* monk at Mirfield, in which we glimpse a little more of his essential personality and spiritual conviction.

Peter Sedgwick's intriguing piece looks at Figgis as the public intellectual, situating him among pluralists, as an heir of Burke, and within an idealist frame in which perfectible human personhood and liberty is found in society. While other pluralists (Cole, Laski) substitute idealism for pragmatism and other theologians more openly embraced modernism, Sedgwick wonders if Figgis may have followed suit. But is it

not his tenacious hold on personalism and a Christian metaphysic that refuses mere liberalism and Whiggery that makes him a thinker for today? Indeed, Cavanaugh's essay on subsidiarity and pluralism vaunts Figgis for making a defence of modes of sociality that are free of the domination by state and corporation that characterizes modernity. Cavanaugh approvingly contrasts some of the troublesome aspects of top-down subsidiarity, where governance is granted to lower elements within a whole, to a more realistic pluralism like Figgis's, in which independent associational bodies delegate authority to arbitrate between them 'upwards'.

Jeremy Morris presents Figgis, the cultural critic, and shows his debt to Burke in his appreciation of tradition, the crucial importance of intermediate institutions and his realism about political circumstance and sinful humanity. Morris's comparison of Figgis to T.S. Eliot and Christopher Dawson suggests that Figgis's refusal of a Hookerian unity of Church and state means he never puts his eggs in the basket of state power as they both do in differing ways. In a more plural world, the Church among other associations must increasingly be defended against the growing power of Leviathan. Stephen Spencer returns to this theme in his comparison of Figgis and William Temple, showing rightly their similar emphases on civil society and suggesting Temple's advocacy of a postwar welfare state is not a capitulation to the Leviathan Figgis rightly feared half a century earlier. Anglican Social Teaching when it is wise as a serpent will find in Figgis the hero we need when the state is rogue, and look to Temple when the state is humbly benign.

James Alexander and Robert Ingram investigate Figgis the historian. Alexander's dazzling tour of historiography shows how Figgis evaded the dangers of nostalgic reverie and Whiggish progressivism. As a historian of ideas, Figgis was theologically astute, aware that the collapse of the Church–state synthesis was the crisis out of which secularism and the total state had circumstantially emerged. Ingram fleshes this out in Figgis's account of English religious history and shows how the personal and associational, indeed the ecclesiological, could never be derived from the state alone. Paul Avis's investigation of Figgis's ecclesiology looks at its Augustinian account of history with the church as a radically democratic, relational, sacramental and organic society in which authority is dispersed in complex ways.

Elaine Graham and Ephraim Radner look more closely at our own setting, as does Rowan Williams's characteristically synoptic and perspicacious foreword. Graham sees in Figgis a postsecular thinker for whom the church, as but one associational body, should contribute to society without seeking privilege and power and yet be free to do so within a state that should prevent prejudicial silencing. She suggests that with a shrinking welfare state, we may well see the 'little platoons' of civil society come again to the fore. Radner's analysis of Figgis on the family asks questions about whether the family is like other corporate bodies or whether it is pre-political. In a church divided in its debates about sex, questions about whether affinal relationships transcend the political and how they have become subject to state control are pertinent. Radner also notes that what was evident and descriptive for Figgis – that political participation happens through mediating bodies and associations, that the human person is social and formed in community – may now be more prescriptive in a world where participation is transitory, people are mobile, social media is anonymous, and isolation is increasing.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Figgis's Christian socialist anthropology resonates with a contemporary desire for identity and belonging, but it does suggest that the church has work to do to foster associative life. Seeing the church as but one association to defend in a plural environment, Figgis's catholicity could still recognize that this form of social life might still be more than a match for the wildest imaginings of Leviathan because it had fundamental reality on its side. Figgis lost not one but two manuscripts to sinking ships. Nevertheless, as these essays suggest, because of his tenacious faith in the perduring gift of associative life, such a loss would probably not have prevented him spilling more ink for the sake of even today's Church of England.

Matthew Bullimore
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, UK

Robert Tobin, *Privilege and Prophecy: Social Activism in the Post-War Episcopal Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 392. ISBN 978-0190906146 doi:[10.1017/S1740355322000389](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355322000389)

One of the enduring struggles in the history of Episcopalians has been their simultaneous instinct to rejoice in their church's Englishness and to escape from the stigma of having been an established church in the colonial period, to insist on their genuinely American credentials. The leading bishop in the early Republic, John Henry Hobart of New York, fairly trumpeted his church's republican and apostolic claims; an English admirer observed, 'Oh, it was funny to see honest democracy and sincere episcopacy fast yoked in the man's mind, and perpetually struggling for his heart.'

This is a tension which Episcopalians have never resolved. Their church has continued to be associated with a privileged elite. 'Up and down the East Coast and across the mission fields of the westward expansion, Episcopalianism appealed to the educated, the upwardly mobile, and the aesthetically sensitive' (pp. 2-3). For such a constituency, Englishness was an asset, the establishment tradition the source of an honourable ethos of leadership and service to the nation. As Bishop Stephen Bayne remarked, 'It is perhaps needless to point out that this quality of national responsibility is bred into all of us who are even the remotest children of the Church of England' (p. 13). In *Privilege and Prophecy* Robert Tobin offers a meticulously researched and brilliantly engaging account of Episcopalians' most determined assault on this legacy. A post-war generation of privileged but idealistic and principled leaders placed their church in the vanguard of progressive social reform, determined to do the right thing even at the cost of the prestige, prosperity, and unity of their church.

It is impossible not to admire the sacrificial generosity with which the clergy and laity of this generation (many of them fresh out of the armed services and determined, after so much destruction, to rebuild and reform for good) dedicated themselves to the service of the urban poor and the civil rights movement. The dust jacket